

Military out of schools! Against the militarisation of education



"On 1 August 1914, it was too late for pacifist propaganda, it was too late for militarist propaganda – in fact the militarists then only harvested what they have sown 200 years before. We have to sow." [1] This is what German pacifist Kurt Tucholsky wrote in an article titled "On effective pacifism", published in 1927. More than 80 years later, the militarists are still sowing. The presence of the military in schools is only the most outrageous example of the sowing and planting of militarist values into the minds of children and soon-to-be soldiers, or supporters of militarism and war. It is the most outrageous, because on the one hand schools should be about learning positive values and knowledge, and not about propaganda, and on the other hand children are most vulnerable to propaganda and indoctrination.

Militarist propaganda

A key function of military presence at schools is propaganda. This can be very obvious – as we can see in Serdar M. Değirmencioğlu's article on militarism in schools in Turkey (see page 4) – or more subtle, as the German military's use of the simulation game "Politics & International Security" in schools and universities (see Michael Schulze von Glaßer's article on page 9). This military propaganda is aimed at ingraining militarist values into the minds of children, so that they do not question the existence and use of the military in later life.

As Sergeiy Sandler writes: "Military

presence in Israeli schools is not so much about military recruitment. It is about maintaining a social order." (see page 3). This is true for most countries, with or without conscription. And it points to a bigger issue, which goes beyond antimilitarism: school itself – with or without military presence – is about maintaining a social order (the state, capitalism, the Bolivarian revolution), and not just about education and passing on knowledge. How much the military is present in schools (and how much military is used as a positive example in school – in history, science, etc.) can be seen as a marker for the level of militarisation of our societies.

Military recruitment

But military presence in schools is not only about propaganda. Especially in countries without conscription – or with a high level of "professionalisation" of the military – the military needs to actively reach out to potential new recruits from a very young age on. David Gee in his article on Britain (Soldiers in the playground, page 7) quotes the head of army recruitment strategy, Colonel David Allfrey: "Our new model is about raising awareness, and that takes a ten-year span. It starts with a seven-year-old boy seeing a parachutist at an air show and thinking 'That looks great'. From then on the army is trying to build interest by drip, drip, drip."

This "drip, drip, drip" is a long-term

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Editorial

Military out of schools — not a common theme for War Resisters' International, although obviously an important issue. As this issue of *The Broken Rifle* shows, the militarisation of our education system — be it for the purpose of indoctrination of youth, or for the purpose of military recruitment — is an extremely important issue.

With this issue, War Resisters' International follows up on *The Broken Rifle* No 78 from May 2008 on the professionalisation of the military. The increased military presence in schools is in those states that do no longer rely on conscription for recruitment an essential recruitment and propaganda tool, as we can see in several articles in this issue of *The Broken Rifle*.

In the coming years, WRI's Right to Refuse to Kill programme will focus more on counter-recruitment, and resistance to military presence in schools is one important aspect of counter-recruitment work. We plan a Europe-wide seminar/conference on counter-recruitment some time in 2012, and hope to engage the European WRI network more in this work.

Clearly, this is an area where European (and other) antimilitarist movements have a lot to learn from the depth of experience in the United States, where — unfortunately — antimilitarists had to fight against the militarisation of schools, universities and other public spaces for decades, following the abolition of conscription in the 1970s. But also in other parts of the world exists a rich experience of counter-recruitment activities, and we hope it will be possible to tap into all this to strengthen counter-recruitment work in Europe (and elsewhere). There clearly is an urgent need in Europe, where with the end of conscription the military has been mainly left alone when it comes to recruitment. It is a contradiction to mobilise huge masses for anti-war protests against the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and ..., but not to counter the daily recruitment activities of the military. This issue of *The Broken Rifle* will hopefully provide some ideas for new activities.

Andreas Speck



Israel: Schools as Recruiters

By Sergeiy Sandler, assisted by Shir Givoni and Bar Rose, New Profile.

On 1 December 2009, hundreds of Israeli high school headteachers gathered for a special conference on "preparation for meaningful service in the Israel Defence Forces", with the Chief of Staff of the Israeli military as the keynote speaker. Also present were Israel's Minister of Education and many senior officials from the Ministries of Education and Defence and senior military officers.[1]

This event is but one example of a consistent trend of increased military presence in Israeli high schools in recent years. Since 1999, soldiers in uniform, whose job is to encourage pupils to enlist and to provide them with information

(often misleading) about the military, have been stationed in almost every high school in Israel as part of a mandatory curriculum of preparation for military service. An increasing number of educational programmes and initiatives involve sending senior and middle-rank military officers to high schools to address pupils and teachers.[2]

Now, there seems to be a similar trend in many countries. Military recruiters have greater access to schools in Europe and North America in recent years than they used to, and military fairs and public events have recently started targeting children as an audience. This is often the result of the abolition of conscription: the military has to seek recruits, and uses its resources and political influence to gain

greater access to them.

However, on closer inspection, the Israeli case is different. Israel has universal conscription. The military, despite complaints to the contrary, has more conscripts than it can handle. Increasing the enlistment rate, which has been declining for more than two decades, and "combating draft evasion" are indeed cited as the main aims of the recent surge in military presence in schools, but this aim is not viewed in Israel as strictly a military aim. On the contrary, Israel's current Minister of Education, Gideon Sa'ar, has defined increasing the enlistment rate as a central aim of the educational system, and has announced a system of financial bonuses to reward schools and teachers for

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strategy, so that when someone reaches recruitment age, a career in the military seems an interesting option.

It is no surprise that military presence is often higher in schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Here, the recruiters think they can more easily prey on youth who have much less opportunities to find jobs – and so might be more easily recruited into the military. But modern armies also need highly skilled soldiers, and so the military will also target their recruitment efforts at universities.

Resistance

Within the peace and anti-war movements, there are different approaches to the presence of the military in schools. Some argue for "equal access" for the peace movement to schools, to be able to counter the military propaganda. While it can be quite effective to counter the arguments of a military recruiter or "adviser" in a direct confrontation on the school yard or in the class room, there remains the question of resources. Even if we would be allowed to – would we, as anti war activists – be able to go to every school every time the military is present there, in the class room or on the school yard? I do not only doubt it – I'm pretty sure this is impossible.

Another position – and from my perspective the more principled one – is to demand that the military has nothing to do in schools – it should be banned from any school completely. This might sound radical – after all, the military is one of the most powerful institutions in most states – but it is not more unrealistic than being able to "accompany" any military presence at schools.

Independent of these two approaches, education for peace is often promoted as a task for schools. While any form of peace education is certainly important, I

personally have my doubts how they can fit into a system which is designed for "maintaining a social order" which relies on war. Schools in itself are violent institutions, representations of structural violence. While many teachers try to subvert the structural violence inherent in our existing education systems, it is always there: the pressure of "grading", authoritarian rules and in many countries/schools even school uniforms and dress codes, designed to stifle any form of individual expression. Within this framework of structural violence (and military propaganda), peace education might seem hypocritical.

But resistance exists – in some schools more, in others less, in some countries more, in others less. Teachers can simply refuse to invite the military into their classes, parents can withdraw their children from classes which are linked to the military, and pupils can refuse to participate in such classes, either legally or by just not showing up. Resistance exists often on an individual level, but it becomes effective and a threat when it gets organised, such as in the USA with the *National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth*, or in Germany with regional campaigns *Military out of Schools*. How these campaigns can work depends very much on the context of the country – politically and in terms of the education system. But similar campaigns are important everywhere.

We have to sow

But to get the military out of schools is not sufficient. The state and the military are sowing militarism in our schools, so that they can harvest it when needed – to go to war in Iraq, Afghanistan, or ... [fill in the next country here], and so that they can recruit the cannon fodder/professional killers (yes, soldiers are both) needed for these wars. Again Tucholsky on "effective pacifism": "What is completely missing

almost everywhere is pacifist propaganda in daily life, on the street, in the four room apartment, on public places – pacifism as a matter of course. For or five times a year we are there, at congresses, often in assemblies. And then everyone goes home, and "life" takes its right: life – this in this case is the official patriotism, which praises war; the cinema, which glorifies war; the newspaper, that doesn't dare to show war as it is; the church, that agitates for war ...; the school, which mendaciously transforms war into a bombastic panopticon; the university that celebrates war -, everywhere war."[2]

Schools – the class rooms – are an important place for pacifist propaganda and counter-propaganda. We should not expect it to become part of the curriculum, and that it can then be left to the state. Far from it. The state's business is militarism and war. Pacifist propaganda in schools needs to be organised outside of official channels – by teachers and their unions, by pupils and their own organisations, by parents.

Countering military recruitment at schools does not only start when the recruiters appear – it needs to start with the countering of the military's "drip, drip, drip" strategy, with countering the glorification of military and war everywhere in the daily teaching of a school. It has to rip out the seeds the military is sowing, and plant something else. Let's get sowing.

Andreas Speck

Notes:

[1] Kurt Tucholsky (as Ignaz Wrobel): Über wirkungsvollen Pazifismus, in *Weltbühne*, 11 October 1927, <http://www.textlog.de/tucholsky-ueber-pazifismus.html> (translation into English by the author)

[2] See footnote 1

increasing enlistment rates, especially to combat units, among their former students.[3] Enlistment is considered a social objective, and indeed a means for promoting youths from underprivileged communities, for “integrating them into the Israeli society” (in fact, military service is a central generator of social inequality, especially gender, class and ethnic inequality, in Israel, but that is a matter for a separate discussion).

The Israeli educational system is willingly and eagerly co-operating with the military on all levels and in many ways. This includes local initiatives for sending elementary school pupils to mock military training or to field trips focusing on past battlefields, and the ubiquitous practice, in schools and especially kindergartens, collecting gift packages to send to soldiers (these are often delivered in special ceremonies with the soldiers present, and the occasional weapons display too).[4] New Profile has also received reports of school counsellors passing all confidential information they gather about pupils to the military. Teachers try to convince their pupils of the importance of the curricular subjects they teach by presenting them as improving the pupils’ chances of serving in particular military units (physical education would get one to a combat unit; Arabic – to the intelligence corps). Indeed, these links are often formally sanctioned by the Ministry of Education, as several curricular subjects are officially part of the preparation for military service curriculum.[5]

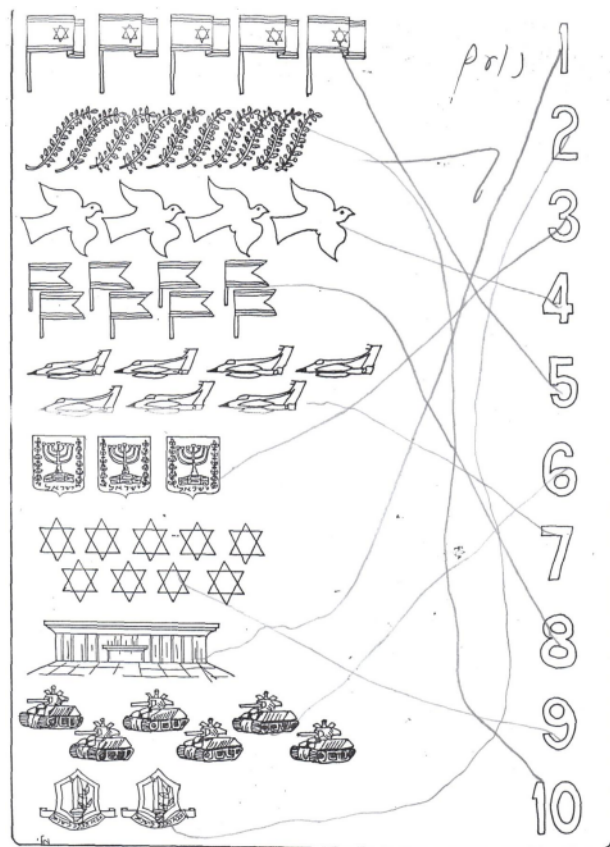
Many of the pupils themselves accept this perspective too. Private courses for physical and mental preparation to combat service are a thriving industry. Being accepted to an elite military unit is considered a status symbol for an Israeli teenager (especially among men). These young people accept the message sent by the educational system, and by society at large, that being a soldier is a natural stage in a person’s life, that military service is the exclusive, privileged, way of social participation, the one and only social duty a person has, and the only act in one’s life that really counts. Belligerent approaches to the many conflicts in which Israel keeps itself involved come naturally with all that. Young Israelis are brought up to believe that military might is the obvious solution to any problem, and that Palestinians and Arabs in general are to be thought of only as targets of military action.

So military presence in Israeli schools is not so much about military recruitment. It is about maintaining a social order. It is not surprising, then, that the little counter-recruitment work we in New Profile and others are doing is often perceived as high treason. New Profile thus has the honour of being the only organisation in Israel whose activists are officially banned from entering schools and addressing pupils. Nevertheless, we also identify growing resentment, at least in some circles, towards some of the more extreme forms of military presence in schools,

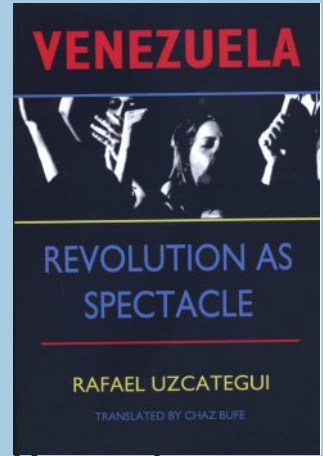
which are perceived as excessive. Opposition to the militarisation of education in Israel is also developing among youths and educators, despite the many formal and informal penalties they have to endure for opposing it. Perhaps these can create an opening for effective counter-recruitment work in Israel in the future.

Notes

- [1] Dikla Schneider, “Chief of Staff: Mandatory Conscription for Everyone – To Military or National Service”, The IDF Spokesperson’s Office Website, 2 Dec. 2009, http://dover.idf.il/IDF/News_Channels/today/09/12/0201.htm [in Hebrew].
- [2] On these and other forms of military presence in schools see The New Profile Report on Child Recruitment in Israel, http://www.newprofile.org/data/uploads/child_soldiers/english.pdf and the NGO Answers to the List of Issues in connection with the consideration of the initial report of Israel for the 53rd Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, http://www.newprofile.org/data/uploads/child_soldiers/Reply_to_List_of_Issues.PDF, pp. 29–34.
- [3] Efrat Zemer, “Combat for Graduates, Money for Schools”, NRG, 18 Aug. 2009, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART1/930/993.html> [in Hebrew].
- [4] New Profile Report on Child Recruitment in Israel, pp. 16–20.
- [5] New Profile Report on Child Recruitment in Israel, pp. 23–27.



Israeli work sheets, used in kindergartens, provided by Amir Terkel



Venezuela — Revolution as Spectacle

Venezuela: Revolution as Spectacle analyses the Chávez regime from an antiauthoritarian Venezuelan perspective. It debunks claims made by Venezuelan and U.S. rightists that the Chávez government is dictatorial, as well as claims made by Venezuelan and US leftists that the Chávez government is revolutionary. Instead the book argues that the Chávez regime is one of a long line of Latin American populist regimes that — “revolutionary” rhetoric aside — ultimately have been subservient to the United States as well as to multinational corporations. The book concludes by explaining how Venezuela’s autonomous social, labour, and environmental movements have been systematically disempowered by the Chávez regime, but that despite this they remain the basis of a truly democratic, revolutionary alternative.

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You can download the Spanish edition of this book at <http://wri-irg.org/pubs/VenezuelaRevEspectaculo>. WRI is distributing the book in the UK and Europe via its webshop. You can order the book for £11 plus postage at <http://wri-irg.org/node/12285>

If you live in the USA or Canada, you might want to order this book directly from the publisher: <http://seesharpress.com/books1.html>

Militarism All Over Schools in Turkey

• Serdar M. Değirmenciöğlü

Schools provide fertile ground for militarism: there is a captive audience, a comprehensive mandate, a hierarchical structure, and a clear power differential between students and professionals. Schools can easily be turned into paramilitary institutions.

Militarism is not transmitted or sustained by direct contact with the military. Rather, schools and other civilian institutions help militarism permeate daily practices and belief systems. Unlike mandatory military service, schools are very systematic and persistent: mandatory schooling can reach almost all areas and almost all children (both boys and girls), and for a very long time. Schools can deliver militarism at a young age, as early as 5 or 6.

School as a boot camp

A typical school has the components of militarism: domination, submission, discipline and violence. Violence toward students produces violence among students, and then student violence is used to justify institutional violence in the form of militarism.

A typical school in Turkey provides a wide variety of militaristic experiences. Some experiences appear to be less militaristic than others but together they form a militaristic climate. School life is supposed to be "orderly" and "disciplined": Students are expected to follow military-style rules and routines. If they do not, they get into trouble.

School day begins with students gathering outside the school. Students do not simply walk in. Students from each classroom form a line or rank, and wait until their turn comes to enter the school. The justification for this practice is simple: schools are crowded. Students need to be controlled to avoid chaos.

Inside the school, flags and symbols of nationalism are everywhere. Kings and their conquests are glorified on walls. Commemorations are common and they are either about military victories or performed in military style. A typical school has very little to remind students of peace, non-violence and youthfulness.

Physical education is where military order – forming a rank, walking in unison, etc – is taught. From early on, students learn to assume the "position of attention" as soon as it is called for. A typical student assumes the "position of attention" countless times in elementary and high school.

Students are just like foot soldiers. They can be "at ease" when adults are not around. Students are expected to be respectful, and respect begins with submission. Students stand up when a teacher walks in. The curriculum

emphasises duties and obligations much more than rights and freedoms. Overall, the curriculum now is less nationalistic and discriminatory, but daily practices have a long way to go.



A girl recites the national anthem in uniform on Children's Day (23 April 2008)

Ceremonies and uniforms

Ceremonies are important for militarism. School ceremonies help militarism grow. School week in Turkey opens and ends with a ceremony. In the opening ceremony the flag is raised and the national anthem is sung. In nationalist eyes, this is a sacred ritual. Everybody has to assume "position of attention". Students often get scolded, humiliated or disciplined for not being "solemn" during the ceremony. In elementary schools each day begins with an archaic nationalist pledge.

Students are also expected to participate in certain official ceremonies outside of the school. On various occasions students were asked to wear a military uniform and hold a weapon. During Police Week it is common to see children in police uniforms. Children's Day (April 23) is perhaps the most conflicted event. In every city, an official event is organised in a stadium and the event is very militaristic. The degree of militarism depends on the location and the political

climate in the country.

Times of conflict

Militarism needs conflict. Open conflict is best because it justifies the war machine. If martyrdom is embraced by tradition and propagated in schools, casualties can also fuel militarism.

The Republic of Turkey was founded after the War of Liberation, and martyrdom has been an element of the nationalist ideology ever since. With time, martyrdom has become a legitimization tool for the Armed Forces. Now, martyrdom is a versatile tool for politicians who want to justify violence and its natural outcome, death. Schools get their share, too.

The state apparatus has been fighting with the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) since the mid-80s. As dead bodies piled up, martyrdom was used to glorify death, thereby legitimising the ongoing violence. In the last decade massive public relations campaigns were launched to fuel nationalism. One of them was the co-ordinated effort to commemorate the Battle of Gallipoli, often called the Çanakkale Victory in Turkey. This was not an ordinary battle. It was a war of attrition in which thousands of soldiers on both sides had to endure extreme conditions for months. Many died of hunger, disease or when they fell into open air latrines (trench toilets). But the commemorations focused on martyrdom and victory.

Militaristic school ceremonies were organised on the day associated with the victory (18 March 1915). Many schools organised trips to Gelibolu (Gallipoli) to commemorate the victory and pay homage to the martyrs. Soon this was transformed into a continuous pilgrimage. Huge numbers of students and adults were transported to Gelibolu. The message was clear: we are a strong nation and even the mightiest power cannot conquer us. We are all ready to



School play to commemorate the Battle of Gallipoli



School play to commemorate the Battle of Gallipoli

fight and to die, if necessary.

The effort to polarise public opinion continued. During a demonstration in Mersin in March 2005, two youths were handed a flag, which they quickly destroyed. This was portrayed in the media as desecration of the "Turkish" flag by Kurds. This turned out to be a setup but the scenario worked. Soon flags started appearing everywhere, including schools. Schools were infused with more signs of nationalism and militarism. About two years later, another commemoration was instituted: the day when the national anthem was adopted in 1921 was to be commemorated. Now a militaristic commemoration is held in every school on 12 March.

Co-ordinated efforts to glorify martyrdom and to pump up nationalism still continue. In recent years commemorations have been held in schools for the martyrs of the Battle of Sarikamış (December 1914-January 1915), another war of attrition.

Assumptions

Private schools in Turkey are often portrayed as model schools. Private



Private school brochure - boys in military uniform girls in flag dress (top left)

schools are not controlled by the state and therefore it is assumed that they are less militaristic. This is certainly not true. Many private schools also organised pilgrimages to Gelibolu. A very expensive private school in Bodrum organised an event where pre-school students were dressed in military uniforms or flag dresses.

Last year a private school in Kayseri organised a special trip to Mount Erciyes, where students in uniforms re-enacted a battle during a snowstorm. Local authorities (education, police, and military) and media were present. Also invited were the director and the leading actor of a film glorifying child martyrs. These children supplied ammunition to troops during WWI and afterwards froze to death in a blizzard.

The head of the Provincial Education Directorate was very happy. The ceremony, he noted, taught children "love for the homeland, the flag and the country".



Ceremony on Mount Erciyes

What's in a name?

Militarism thrives on hatred. Public areas can be used to mark a conflict and instill in daily life elements that remind everyone of conflict and hatred. As institutions central to public life, schools can be used as markers of conflict and serve the function of perpetuating hatred and violence.

That is exactly what has happened in

Turkey. Many schools are now named after a martyr. This transformation of schools into tombstones was ruthless: the country is now covered with schools named after martyrs. Some other public areas (such as parks) and institutions (such as health centres) also became targets of this sort of militarism.

Some school names defy imagination: Martyrs Elementary School or Martyr Teachers Elementary School. In some cases existing school names were changed. In 2007, for instance, the Provincial Education Directorate of Kars changed the names of seven village schools with a single decision. The schools were named after the village they were located in. These schools now carry a name that has nothing to do with the village or the region. The schools have been turned into sites marking a never-ending conflict.



School named after a martyr, Bayrakli, Izmir.

Now what?

Schools can work wonders for young people or do exactly the opposite. It all depends on the kind of education that is deemed appropriate. In Turkey, militarism is an important component of nationalism and schools are contaminated with militarism. Many students resist practices they consider stupid or unjustified, but most students are influenced by nationalism and militarism. Civil opposition to nationalism and militarism in schools is growing, but it is fair to say the day when militarism in school will be over is not near.

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Writing on the forehead: "I am a soldier, too"



Venezuela: Military in the classroom

• Rafael Uzcátegui

Similarly to the other countries in Latin America, the military is the main founding myth of Venezuela. Simón Bolívar, the “father of the homeland” is remembered as a great military strategist. His figure, as a statue on horseback in a heroic gesture, or his bust, which shows his hierarchy in the so-called “liberator’s army”, marks the centre of all the important cities and towns throughout the country. Militarism is a particularly important part of Venezuelan culture and national consciousness. The saying “*Ecuador is a convent, Columbia a university and Venezuela a military barracks*” has been attributed to Bolívar himself. For 51 years during the 21st century, this former exporter of coffee and cocoa, which were then substituted by oil as the main industry in the country, was ruled by local leaders who were “charismatic, with a vast network of contacts and with considerable and constant source of resources”. Throughout these years the main Venezuelan contribution to regional sociology was the theory of “democratic Caesarism” proposing a government based on the permanent re-election of a charismatic leader, a “necessary guardian”, assiduous to the concentration of power. A Simon Bolívar ad infinitum.

Although the Venezuelan schools, colleges and universities have always reflected the dominant ideology, as well as the notion surrounding soldiers and the military as a guarantee of efficiency over a civilian corruptible universe, there has been a renewed impetus in the intention of teaching young people in the classrooms the unique values of the armed forces. This is due to the militarisation of the presidential figure with the arrival of Hugo Chavez. The previous leader with a military background governed up to 1958.

Premilitary training

In 1981, through a joint resolution between the Ministry of Defence and the Education Ministry, it was decided that pre-military training would be implemented as a compulsory subject in secondary school in the final two years of school, before going to university. The first regions where these classes were given were in the border regions (Táchira, Zulia, Apure, Amazonas and Bolívar), but the next year other states had adopted them, such as Lara, in which the author writing these lines lived at the time.

At this time, pre-military classes were only given in state schools. And they weren't in all of them, although unfortunately they had them in the school I went to. There was a theoretical part, which was basically a summary of the history of Venezuela with an emphasis on the War of Independence and Simon

Bolívar's victories. Despite this being historically false, it was and still is claimed that the Venezuelan Armed Forces are direct descendents of the military which fought for independence, which fought for the expulsion of the Spanish crown from the country. The other classes were never-ending sessions of the so called “closed order”: this involves following orders according to military customs and marching as is seen in the official marches. The final exam in the fourth year consisted of unloading and loading an assault rifle in the shortest time possible. In the fifth year, we had to complete an assault course in a real army barracks. The pre-military training was considered as important as subjects such as physics, chemistry, maths or literature. Furthermore, it was held in higher esteem than other subjects such as philosophy or vocational skills like as carpentry or studies in order to become an electrician, which would be truly useful for life in society.

In 1991, with the triumph of a member of the Armed Forces winning the Venezuelan presidency, militarising trends are being reinforced in Venezuelan culture. From this year onwards, active uniformed military staff began to hold different jobs and responsibilities in public administration, including in town halls, governments and ministries. The social base is organised in such a way as to prioritise the vertical hierarchy of solidarity, as well as a “them and us” logic. In the field of education, pre-military training classes were made obligatory for both state and private schools.

One of the first books published in support of pre-military training classes confirms the antagonism existing between the army rationality and the military values of any project with a view to change society. The text “pre-military training” by Marjorie Vásquez (Editorial Biosfera, 1999), stated: “*From the seventies ... as result of our oil bonanza, (...) there began an indiscriminate and uncontrolled avalanche of immigrants from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Cuba and other parts of Central and South America who, on the whole, did not have a formal education, were without a specific vocation, with traumas and illnesses; they have come in search of the easy Bolivarian dream, which Venezuela was offering.*” Following that, the teacher recommended encouraging European immigration. The lessons on xenophobia, unprecedented for a school textbook, did not stop there. On the reason for female Latin American immigration, the author had the audacity to ask the following question on page 59, “*How many of them give themselves to the highest bidder, in order to have children with them, so as legalise their residency in the country?*”.

The book sparked great controversy about the contents of the “pre-military” classes. However, the voices of those who called for such material to be an optional subject, were not strong enough. Marjorie Vásquez 's book was modified and the pre-military classes are still being taught today.

Teaching in the barracks

The National Experimental Polytechnic University of the Armed Forces (UNEFA) was founded in 1974 by President Rafael Caldera. The initial aim was to professionalise Armed Forces members, by teaching them in various sectors of engineering. It had three bases in just three states within the country. This emphasis changed in 1999, when president Chavez modified its status and named it the National Experimental University, which meant that from 2004, there was an increase both in terms of its size as well as academic standing. The UNEFA incorporated degrees such as hotel management, social economics, management, education and nursing, which meant that it opened its doors to people coming from the “civilian” world. The growth of this institution has been so great that the Venezuelan government has claimed that it is the university with most students, around 240,000, of any in the country.

It would be a mistake to think that having its doors open to the public, the university has changed and abandoned its military slant. The reverse is in fact the case: with the UNEFA, the world of education has just become militarised. The institution maintains its army-style discipline, and as a compulsory subject — which does not exist in any other university in the country — students are trained in military skills. The possibility of being included in the university education system means paying the price by accepting indoctrination.

The UNEFA shows itself to be proud of actively contributing to the training of the National Bolivarian Militia, the civil arm of the Armed Forces which was created when Bolívar's government was in power. According to official statistics, there are 13,000 members of the militia. The university authorities state that students join the militia on a “voluntary” basis, but is it possible to gain a degree if the students refuse to participate in the militia?

The National Bolivarian Army's supposed legitimacy is supported in article 326 of the constitution, which establishes the so-called “principle of shared responsibility of the citizens in defending the entirety of the nation”. This interpretation of this phrase has led to the creation of three types of civic-military activities: the Territorial army, the reserve

militia and the combatants' corps. The difference between the militia and the combatants corps is that the latter, according to the law on the Partial Reform of the Organic Law of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, approved in 2009, must be organised in public and private businesses of the country "thus ensuring the integrity and operational capacity of the institutions to which they belong". Nevertheless, the combatants' corps continue to maintain links with the educational model initiated by the so called "Bolivarian revolution": spokesmen of institutions such as the Rómulo Gallegos University (Unerg), the Simón Rodríguez University (USR) and the Nacional Abierta University (UNA), long standing institutions of higher education which are now openly controlled by the government. They have stated their commitment to organise themselves amongst the workers within these institutions. Such a commitment with the re-strengthening of the army can, in turn, be seen in the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV). Up until now there is no clear grassroots-based link between the

armies, and the initiatives are isolated with scarce coordination amongst them. However, there is evidence showing that there is the desire to create a greater level of co-operation, thus creating an institution for the "integral defence" of the nation, within the education system.

Another militarist initiative by the State has been the creation of the so-called "communications guerrilla units", which was paradoxically the brain child of a woman, the head of the government of the capital district, Jacqueline Faría, on 10 April 2010. The project involves creating units of 25 young high school students in order to tackle the issue which the government of President Chavez has called "communicational hegemony" of the private media. The teenagers were sworn in before the country's symbols and also dressed in military uniform, looking like the Latin American guerilla groups of the 1960s. They also had different instruments so as to decorate several buildings. However, this initiative did not prosper. Several human rights and social movement organisations questioned giving credibility to armed violence, whose

most visible core elements were maintained up until the elections of the National Assembly, carried out on 26 September 2010. The failure of the project suggests that media guerillas had a role based on electoral propaganda, which may be seen again in the run-up to the Presidential elections of 2012.

This leads us to reflect upon the fact that Bolivarian socialism, promoted by Caracas, is not a model which critically analyses the world and prioritises the dignity of humankind. Rather, it merely confirms the prophecy made by the writer Albert Camus decades ago, "*The main event of the 20th century has been the abandonment, by the revolutionary movement, of the values of liberty, the progressive regression of socialism of freedom which is being replaced with a military Caesar-like style of socialism. From this moment forth, a hope has left this world and a solitude has begun for every free man.*"

Soldiers in the playground

• David Gee

UK armed forces focus most of their recruitment outreach on boys with few or no qualifications living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Within this group, the main target are so-called "pre-eligibles": young people below 16, the minimum age of recruitment in Britain. To attract these, the army and air force run recruitment schemes for children as young as 13. The army's version, called Camouflage, consists of online games, free merchandise and literature that glamorises soldiering as heroic and fun, and emphasises the adventure training opportunities available. Recruiters target age groups even younger than this at village fetes and air shows. In February 2007, the head of army recruitment strategy, Colonel David Allfrey, told *The New Statesman*: "Our new model is about raising awareness, and that takes a ten-year span. It starts with a seven-year-old boy seeing a parachutist at an air show and thinking, 'That looks great.' From then on the army is trying to build interest by drip, drip, drip."

Young people without qualifications are targeted for relatively unskilled jobs such as logistics and, especially, the infantry, which is by far the largest part of the army. In 2010, infantry personnel were seven times more likely to be killed in Afghanistan than were the rest of the armed forces. Infantrymen are also more likely to be younger and poorer than the rest of the armed forces, yet it is one of the most glamorised roles.

Outreach to schools is a major part of

the recruitment strategy, particularly for the army. In 2009, army recruiters visited 40% of London's state-run secondary schools. As might be expected, the poorest fifth of schools were visited most. This could be because the army targets these, which is likely, or because teachers in poorer schools invite the army to offer career options to young people who are unlikely to do well in their exams and would struggle to find a civilian job. There is no policy against recruiters visiting primary schools and in 2009 the army visited 64 of these nationwide, although it also insisted that this was not for recruitment purposes.

It is typical for recruiters to bring military hardware onto school premises (in at least one case a military helicopter was landed in a playground) and to "train" children in military practice, such as a rifle drill. Army visits to schools are supplemented with away-days to military establishments such as army barracks and navy ships, where children handle more hardware; at the end of the day they are given a certificate of personal achievement with the address of the nearest recruiting office.

Recruiters can only visit a school with the head teacher's permission, and so the armed forces work hard to develop friendly relationships with them. To support their case, recruiters may offer to help teachers in the classroom by supporting children with maths and English problems. The army describes itself as "heavily involved" in the delivery of the school curriculum for 11- to 16-year-olds. In 2008 the Ministry of Defence launched a sophisticated series

of lesson plans for teachers to download. Indeed, only in 2009 did the army talk openly about schools visits as part of their recruitment strategy; previously they had insisted that their purpose was solely to support schools with the the curriculum and "raise awareness" of armed forces careers.

For these and also personal reasons of their own, many teachers welcome recruiters. Others are sceptical and some schools and local authorities have banned all contact. In 2008, the National Union of Teachers criticised military recruitment in schools and offered to support teachers wishing to resist the practice. School students have also successfully campaigned to stop military contact, or have challenged recruiters so effectively that they have chosen not to return. In any case, recruiters try to bypass teachers, parents and other gate-keepers by reaching young people online with sophisticated, first-person-perspective war games, in which the user plays the role of a British soldier or airman.

In the UK, a new organisation, Forces Watch, aims to support this kind of approach. Another, BeforeYouSignUp.info, tries to present balanced information about careers in the forces to counter the glamorised descriptions in official marketing material, and offers a lesson plan on the ethics of military recruitment. Perhaps one of the most effective ways of countering inappropriate recruitment tactics in the future will be to work directly with school students to increase awareness of the ethical issues that schools recruitment raises.



Winning hearts and minds over to the army and defence industry

• Laura Pollecut

Conscription propped up the apartheid government. Without its regular intake of white youth, the apartheid regime could not have stayed in power as long as it did. The movement against conscription gained ground in the 1980s and was one of the contributing factors to the then government's decision to enter negotiations. Finally after the first democratic elections in 1994, conscription became a thing of the past when South Africa introduced a voluntary professional army.

Off and on since that time various defence ministers have suggested that there should be military service, but the most forceful argument has come from the current minister of defence and military veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu. In May 2010 she announced her intention of enlisting unemployed youths in a "national service programme". She pointed out that it would not mean the reintroduction of military conscription — notwithstanding the fact that although it would not be compulsory, it would be unavoidable!

Knowing that she was treading on sensitive ground, Sisulu explained her call by saying: *"We're very aware of the emotive issue of national service, that is why we are underlining that it is not conscription."*

Because of perceptions that the high crime rate and service delivery protests have their origins in the "ill-discipline" of the youth, she used words that carry weight, as if national service in the military was the solution to the problems. *"We would like to have a period in which we take your children and give them a bit of discipline,"* she said. In a glossy supplement selling the SANDF in the daily press and entitled "In your defence", she continues with this theme, *"...we will be taking them out of a state of idleness and mischief by providing them with a chance to become productive members of society"*, and more words to this effect. She also speaks of building "tomorrow's leaders", as if military training is the only training that can do this.

As one letter writer, Keith Gottschalk, noted on the suggestion that the South African National Defence Force be

expanded more than fivefold, this is not a good idea given that recent information has shown *"the SANDF lacks the budget and managerial competence to maintain and repair much squalid housing of its existing personnel; has soldiers leaving base with nothing to do an hour after reporting for duty; and has to leave new aircraft unused in storage"*.

At the time Minister Sisulu made the announcement, she said it was hoped that the necessary legislative changes would be passed within a year, but it would take time to prepare the infrastructure required, so it would take about two years at the outer limit. She also promised consultation on the issue but whether that will include demilitarists and anti-conscription activists is doubtful.

But notwithstanding that there is no legislation on the statute book at this point, the army is taking advantage of the fact that millions of schools leavers do not have jobs and lack opportunities to continue their studies. In January Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, welcomed over 4 000 youths — first intake for the year — into the SANDF's Military Skills Development System (MSDS). The MSDS programme is a two-year voluntary service system with the long-term goal of *"enhancing the South African National Defence Force's deployment capability. Recruits are required to sign up for a period of two years, during which they will receive military training and further functional training in their first year of service. During the second year of service, depending on the duration of their functional orientation, they will be deployed where needed and given the opportunity to apply their knowledge and develop their skills."* Not only will these "volunteers" be fully employed for two years, but they will also receive a cash bonus of R18,000 (GBP1,600) on completion. To the best of our knowledge, no other government department offers this kind of deal!

Then there is the state arms manufacturer Denel. Still top heavy with white technocrats, the company bemoans the lack of skilled technicians and says — with some irony we might add — it applies the principle of "cradle to grave" in an effort to hold on to its skilled staff!

According to the 2010 Annual Report,

the company is currently providing 83 bursaries to pre-employment students, a number of whom will remain with the company after the completion of their work-back obligations. As noted, large numbers of school leavers are without funding for tertiary education and it is therefore not surprising that star pupils are lured to the arms industry. Denel advertisements for these bursaries solicited a response of 2,600 applications.

But Denel goes further than this in seeking talent for the industry, it visits universities and works closely with individual professors in its effort to improve its ranking as a preferred employer. Through the Armscor (the defence procurement arm) Ledger Fund programme, funded by the Department of Defence, Denel has a close relationship with all universities. Denel sponsors students for post-graduate studies through this fund.

Denel is even in high schools. The Denel Youth Foundation is apparently involved in improving the performance of learners from poor communities who did not pass matric in mathematics, science, biology and accounting. Admirable we are sure — if they were not grooming them for careers in the arms trade. And like the SANDF, they too claim to be teaching these pupils "relevant life and leadership skills" in order to prepare them for "employment". Then there is the Schools outreach programme. Although not aimed at poor communities and those who did not pass matric, it has similar objectives.

The SANDF and Denel have massive communication resources at their disposal. Glossy advertising and public relations make all this seem very attractive. Those of us who argue that there are other ways to serve your country and gain skills rather than go into the SANDF or seek employment with arms manufacturers, find it difficult to inform them of the alternatives and to promote a society committed to non-violence and an anti-war stance.

Laura Pollecut works with the Ceasefire Campaign in South Africa, which recently affiliated to WRI.
<http://www.ceasefire.org.za/>

Publicity campaign in the classroom

Recruitment and publicity of the Germany military in schools

• Michael Schulze von Glaßer

The German military has two fundamental problems. The first problem is related to personnel: in 2009, the German Bundeswehr should have recruited 23,700 new soldiers [1]. But with 21,784 new recruits, the target was not reached — in the previous years the target usually was reached. In 2009, 14,000 open positions could be filled with external applicants, and almost 7,800 soldiers could be won through recruitment within the military — for example from the pool of serving conscripts. With the suspension of conscription in Germany from summer 2011, the German Bundeswehr will need to recruit completely from the civilian public.

The second problem is related to the acceptance of military operations abroad within the German population: an opinion poll of the renowned polling institute Allensbach on behalf of the conservative newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung from May 2010 concludes not only a massive rejection of the Afghanistan deployment of the Bundeswehr with 65% of those polled, but also in general opposition within the German population to military operations abroad of the Bundeswehr.[2]

Youth officers, young men and women with several years of military experience, form the spearhead of the military when it comes to influencing young people in schools. Already in 1958 — only three years after the foundation of the Bundeswehr — this unit was formed, and already back then the task was to convince the public of the purpose of the German military. Today there are about 94 full-time and 300 additional, extra-official youth officers in Germany, who are trained at the Akademie der Bundeswehr für Information und Kommunikation (Academy of the Bundeswehr for Information and Communication — AIK or AkBwInfoKom; formerly: Amt für psychologische Kriegsführung) in Strausberg near Berlin. In 2009, the youth officers did 7,245 events with 182,522 participants — among those were at least 160,000 pupils [3]. Often the youth officers, who appear very young and “cool”, talk in class rooms about topics such as “soldiers as citizens in uniform” or “Bundeswehr deployment abroad”, discuss the Afghanistan deployment of the German military, or play the simulation game “Politics & International Security” (in short POL&IS), which lasts several days, with young people. This simulation game is very attractive with teachers and in 2009 alone there were more than 365 simulations with about 16,120 pupils and their teachers as well as students and trainee teachers.[4] Through this, pupils



The German Bundeswehr promoting itself at a school

should learn that the military is a normal means of politics, and that military interventions are often unavoidable. In discussion youth officers often stress that they are not recruiters — they would only provide information on security policy and the Bundeswehr. This is questionable, because for young people it is a first step to the profession of soldiering if you are persuaded of the purpose of the army and its deployments. But often the Bundeswehr is also directly present in schools through military service advisers: at about 12,600 events military service advisers reached more than 280,000 pupils in 2009.[5]

Since 2008 eight of the 16 German states signed co-operation agreements between the respective ministry of education and the German Bundeswehr (North Rhine-Westphalia, October 2008; Saarland, March 2009; Baden-Württemberg, December 2009; Rhineland-Palatinate, February 2010; Bavaria, June 2010; Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, July 2010; Hesse, November 2010; Saxony, December 2010). Youth officers should “in the context of schools inform pupils about the instruments of politics possible and/or necessary to secure peace”, these agreements say.[6] It is known that the government and the Bundeswehr view even military interventions — in the case of the war on Yugoslavia even on the brink of being outside of international law — as an instrument necessary for politics. “In this”, continue the co-operation agreements, “information on global conflict prevention and crisis management will need to be included as well as on national interests.” The national interest of Germany includes,

according to the present strategic concept of the Bundeswehr, also the safeguarding of resources for the Germany economy by military means.

The Bundeswehr and the Ministry of Defence also produce educational materials. Officially, these materials for pupils and teachers with the title “Peace & Security” are produced by the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Jugend & Bildung e.V.” (Working Group Youth & Education). When you look at this working group more closely, it becomes apparent that it is a neoliberal think tank owned partly by the neoliberal German government coalition partner FDP (Liberals). The glossy brochures are not produced badly from a pedagogical perspective: the texts are not simple pleas for military missions worldwide, but should primarily show that the Bundeswehr provides humanitarian aid — war is not visible. The exercises in the present 32-pages booklet for pupils 2009/2010 steer the thoughts of the pupils in one direction: there do not seem to be alternatives to military interventions. In 2007, schools ordered more than 325,000 copies of the booklets for pupils, and more than 16,000 of those for teachers for use in the classroom.[7] The German government provides the finance for these materials: in 2008/2009 the government spent 330,000 Euros for the production of a new pupil and teacher booklet on “Peace & Security”. [8]

The German Bundeswehr also attempts to root itself in the heads of young people via the media. Several times every year the Bundeswehr organises youth press congresses for

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Military in Schools in the United States

• Oskar Castro

Every year in the United States, millions of young people are faced with the difficult challenge of figuring out what to do with their lives after they graduate from high school. For various reasons, many of them end up considering joining the US Armed Forces, but the commonality among all of those who enlist and those who don't enlist is that they are all regularly bombarded with military recruitment propaganda pretty much from the time they are born. Whether it is on their television, their computer, at the toy store, or in their classroom, the pitch to embrace the military is everywhere.

The end of World War II saw the United States emerge as a military powerhouse due to the significant role it played in the defeat of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan. Then the Cold War materialised which meant that the perceived threat of communism by way of the powerful Soviet Union had to be met with a show of incredible force. The military propaganda machine ratcheted up and the once neutral nation was now a militaristic monstrosity with an ever-growing military industrial complex benefitting from the fear.

The increasing militaristic fervour in the US fueled the efforts to paint the military as the nation's only defence against communism. Indeed, this ideological feud with the Soviet Union provided the US military with opportunities to fight proxy wars with battlefields emerging in Korea and Southeast Asia. School children were constantly barraged with patriotic, pro-military propaganda meant to insure support for the wars the

US military was engaged in, and compliance with conscription. Shortly after the end of the US war in Vietnam, the military draft ended. This meant that the military was now an "all volunteer" force. Without a draft the US military had to embark on a campaign to recruit young people in ways it never had to before.

Arguably the best and most immediate way for the US military to use public high schools as feeder institutions is through the administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) which is the test every potential recruit must pass before they can move along in their enlistment process. More than 14,000 high schools nationwide give the test to students, and the test is designed to determine whether or not a potential recruit is qualified for the military and also what particular military jobs fit their aptitude. The US military claims the test will help a person choose a civilian career even though that is not what it was designed for. This "transferability" is what is used to paint the ASVAB as a multi-purpose career guidance tool which is offered to schools for free.

The military uses ASVAB to do targeted recruitment of young people, and military recruiters give special attention to students in the 11th or 12th grade who meet minimum standards – what they refer to as "pre-qualified leads". They use test information (scores, name, address, etc) to identify and directly reach young people they hope to sign up. Using the collected data, military recruiters contact these young people by letters, phone calls, and visits to home and school. Unfortunately, many of the underage students who take the test are never told

the test is voluntary and are often misled into signing the privacy waivers that only their parents are legally supposed to sign which means that many parents never actually know that their children have taken this test.

Another way in which the US military recruits young people is by way of its Junior Reserve Officer Training (JROTC) programme which can be found in public high schools throughout the country. JROTC was initiated as a readiness programme for the US war effort in World War I. The programme was designed to prepare young men who were in high school for the eventuality of being in a military environment. In the modern context — and despite the claims that it is simply a discipline, leadership and citizenship building programme — the programme is still used to recruit hearts and minds. The programme involves youth attending classes in military uniforms, learning military science and discipline taught by retired military. Some programmes even include a marksmanship component using guns. Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen, who served in Bill Clinton's administration, has been quoted as saying about JROTC that it is "one of the best recruiting devices that we could have". Another Department of Defense official admitted that JROTC graduates who enlist are "roughly five times greater than the proportion of non-JROTC students". Despite these sorts of admissions made by high officials, the military and other advocates of the programme continue to say that JROTC is not a recruiting tool for the military.

When the military draft ended in the

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young editors of pupils' magazines. The pupils are then supposed to write an article about their visit to the Bundeswehr, which will be printed in the magazines. The medical service of the Bundeswehr wrote in December 2010 quite openly about the purpose of such a youth press congress: "For both sides the event was a win-win situation. The pupils had the opportunity to further develop their journalist experience, and the Bundeswehr receives products for use in its recruitment – produced by young people for young people". [9] Also through paid adverts in large commercial pupils magazines – with a distribution of one million copies – the Bundeswehr attempts to win new recruits.

In recent years the expense of recruitment by the Bundeswehr increased massively. In 1998 the government spent 9.2 million Euros, but in 2010 this shot up to 27 million Euros. [10] And many of the expenses are not included in this. With the

suspension of conscription, the promotion of the Bundeswehr to the public will increase even more, because now new recruits need to be found from completely outside the walls of the barracks. [11] And if young people can't be convinced to take up arms themselves, then at least they should be convinced of the need for military interventions: the military leadership and the government want to turn the Bundeswehr into an actor operating globally, and aim long-term for the creating of stable political support within the population. Therefore, they focus their agitation on (still easily persuadable) young people – tomorrow's voters. And Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (CSU) knows where to find the young people: "the school is the right place to reach young people." [12]

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Nachwuchswerbung der Bundeswehr“.

Notes:

- [1] Bundestags-Drucksache 17/900
- [2] Peterson, Thomas: Allensbach-Umfrage – Wird Deutschland am Hindukusch verteidigt?, in: www.faz.net, 26 May 2010, accessed on 26 May 2010.
- [3] Schnitker: Jahresbericht der Jugendoffiziere der Bundeswehr 2009, Berlin, page 4.
- [4] Schnitker, *ibid*
- [5] Schnitker, *ibid*
- [6] With the exception of the co-operation agreements between the Ministries of Culture of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony, all agreements are almost identical. In these two Eastern German states, the agreements include two additional points — in terms of content all agreements are basically identical.
- [7] *ibid*
- [8] Bundestags-Drucksache 16/8852
- [9] Henning, Uwe: Jugendpressekongress 2010 – Journalismus zum anfassen, in: www.sanitaetsdienst-bundeswehr.de, 12 December 2010, accessed on 13 January 2011
- [10] N.N.: IMI-Fact-Sheet: Bundeswehr und Schule, in: www.imi-online.de, May 2010, accessed on 2 June 2010
- [11] See Schulze von Glaßer, Michael: An der Heimatfront – Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Nachwuchswerbung der Bundeswehr, Cologne 2010
- [12] Meyer, Simone: Guttenberg will Bundeswehr nicht mit dem Rasenmäher verkleinern, in: Berliner Morgenpost, 29 October 2010

1970s it happened during a period when the perception of the nation's military was at an all time low due to its questionable involvement in Southeast Asia. When the US military transformed into an all-volunteer force it realised that it could not clean up its tarnished image on its own and tactically contracted the assistance of Madison Avenue public relations firms to help them figure out how the different military service branches should be advertising in order to recruit young people. Over time it has nuanced its approach and attempted to stay in touch with the times as technology and media have rapidly evolved in the last 40 years.

One of the most interesting if not morally challenging ways for the US military to sell itself to young people is through video games. For many years the US military has assisted for-profit video game developers in creating "first person shooter" games that have a war-based theme. In fact, the US military has been using computer generated simulations since the late 1970s to train its members, and developers who have created games such as "Modern Warfare", "Call of Duty", "Ghost Recon", and "Project Flashpoint" have used retired and active duty military advisers to help add a level of authenticity to games that game developers without military experience couldn't create on their own. Recently the United States Army spent millions of dollars to develop "America's Army" for the PC platform in partnership with the software giant Ubisoft.

Originally this game was made available free via server downloads and CD Rom distribution by military recruiters. It was designed to not only capture the information of the potential "gamer" but to track their proficiency as they played the game in a multi-

player universe so that targeted recruitment could occur. The game is now available for use on the Xbox and can be bought at major game retail chains in the US.

While this video game phenomenon may not appear to be explicitly related to on-campus recruitment of high school aged youth, it is something that an Army recruiter would have in their bag of tricks when visiting a high school campus. There are times, however, when the military and particularly the Army rolls out a fleet of 18-wheel trucks that transform into mobile arcades stocked with various war themed video games and weapon simulators that children are allowed to play. Sometimes these vehicles do wind up on high school campuses and it is not uncommon for other military vehicles, such as Blackhawk helicopters, to visit high schools and take impressionable youth for military flavoured joy rides.

With more than US\$4 billion dollars spent every year to enable these and other types of military recruiting practices to occur in and around public high schools it may be easy for one to think that this encroachment goes unchecked and unchallenged. The reality is that one of the fastest growing movements has been the counter-recruitment/truth-in-recruitment movement that got a big nudge at the onset of the US invasion of Iraq. While this movement began in the mid to late 1980s, it has only been recently that thousands of individuals in the US and hundreds of organisations have begun to take on this type of activism in order to ensure that young people are not lured in by deceptive tactics. For more information and to learn about this ever growing movement one can visit www.nnomy.org.

War starts here! WRI/ofog Seminar and WRI Council meeting in Luleå, Sweden

This year's WRI Council meeting will take place from 19-21 July 2011 in Luleå, in the very north of Sweden. The Council meeting itself is part of a seminar and action camp under the title "War Starts Here", organised by WRI's new Swedish affiliate ofog. The camp and seminar will begin on 22 July, and last until 29 July.

The seminar will include discussions and workshops on five broader themes:

- War starts here - let's stop it from here (military basis and infrastructure)
- Right to land and indigenous people/resistance
- The military-industrial chain
- War against women and feminist antimilitarism
- Arctic and the war on natural resources

After the seminar, there will be an opportunity to participate in nonviolent action training, and then in a range of actions against NEAT, the North European Aerospace Testrange.

NEAT is Europe's largest overland test range and consists of an area 360 by 100 km of restricted air space and 1,650 sq km of restricted land area (expandable to 3,000sq km). It is a cooperation of the Swedish organisations FMV (the Swedish Defence Material Administration) and SSC (the Swedish Space Corporation). NEAT is used as a training area for bomb dropping, for testing drones and AMRAAM (Advanced Medium Range Air to Air Missile), which could be carried by drones, and for other weapon testing and war exercises (see also the article in *The Broken Rifle* No 86, September 2010).

More information on the camp is available at <http://warstartshere.com/en>

For information on the WRI Council, please contact the WRI office at info@wri-irg.org.

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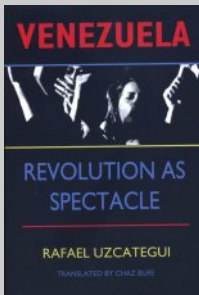
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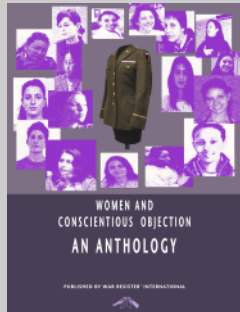
New in the WRI webshop

War Resisters' International offers a range of merchandise via its webshop. These and many other books can be ordered online — and some are even available for reading online or downloading as PDF.



Venezuela: Revolution as Spectacle analyses the Chávez regime from an antiauthoritarian Venezuelan perspective. It debunks claims made by Venezuelan and U.S. rightists that the Chávez government is dictatorial, as well as claims made by Venezuelan and U.S. leftists that the Chávez government is revolutionary. Instead the book argues that the Chávez regime is one of a long line of Latin American populist regimes that - "revolutionary" rhetoric aside - ultimately have been subservient to the United States as well as to multinational corporations. The book concludes by explaining how Venezuela's autonomous social, labour, and environmental movements have been systematically disempowered by the Chávez regime, but that despite this they remain the basis of a truly democratic, revolutionary alternative.

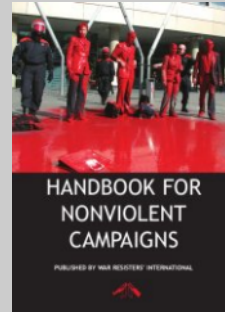
Rafael Uzcátegui
See Sharp Press, 2011
ISBN: 978-1-884365-77-5
Publication date: January 2011
Orders: £11.00 + postage



Conscientious objectors are generally seen as male — as are soldiers. This book breaks with this assumption. Women conscientiously object to military service and militarism. Not only in countries which conscript women — such as Eritrea and Israel — but also in countries without conscription of women. In doing so, they redefine antimilitarism from a feminist perspective, opposing not only militarism, but also a form of antimilitarism that creates the male conscientious objector as the 'hero' of antimilitarist struggle.

This anthology includes contributions by women conscientious objectors and activists from Britain, Colombia, Eritrea, Israel, Paraguay, South Korea, Turkey, and the USA, plus documents and statements.

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Social change doesn't just happen. It's the result of the work of committed people striving for a world of justice and peace. This work gestates in groups or cells of activists, in discussions, in training sessions, in reflecting on previous experiences, in planning, in

experimenting and in learning from others. Preparing ourselves for our work for social justice is key to its success.

There is no definitive recipe for successful nonviolent actions and campaigns. This handbook, however, is a series of resources that can inspire and support your own work, especially if you adapt the resources to your own needs and context.

This handbook has been a collaborative effort of people working in nonviolence within the WRI network from Australia, Belgium, Britain, Colombia, Chile, Germany, Italy, Israel, South Korea, Scandinavia, Spain, Turkey, and the USA.

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