

WORKING MATERIALS

**“Global and regional efforts in the process of demilitarization -
abolishment of compulsory military service”**

**Regional conference on conscientious objection and civilian service
«To Europe Through Conscientious Objection and Civilian Service»
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«Objection for Peace»

E-mail: konferencija@prigovorzamir.org
Web site: www.prigovorzamir.org

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Andreas Speck, War Resisters' International

Demilitarisation in the global context

Presentation at the Regional conference on conscientious objection and civilian service
"To Europe Through Conscientious Objection and Civilian Service"
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Introduction

When I got involved in the peace movement, back in the early 1980s in Germany, there was a sticker that was very popular. It read "Imagine there is a war and nobody joins"¹. Of course, this is very naive, but still the idea is important, and it also points to the important fact that every war is fought by people – human beings who could also make a different decision and "not join".

My organisation, War Resisters' International, was founded back in 1921 to support people who don't want to join a war – conscientious objectors, war resisters, and deserters. But "not joining" goes beyond the mere refusal to fight, to join the military. War means that an entire society is organised to go to war – it is a mindset, and it includes participation on all levels of society. This was illustrated in detail by Bart de Ligt, a Dutch pacifist anarchist, in his "Plan of Campaign Against All War and All Preparation For War", presented at the WRI conference at Digswell Park in 1934². Almost 70 years later, War Resisters' International reaffirmed his ideas in its "Call For Conscientious Objection to War and War Preparations"³ from September 2001, a few days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. In this statement, War Resisters' International urged

- "all soldiers - in whichever forces they are supposed to fight: follow your conscience and refuse to take part: apply for conscientious objector status, refuse orders, desert, **Say No!**
- all those involved in preparations for war, in administration or in arms factories: refuse to do so, **Say No!**
- journalists and the media asked to promote war: refuse to do so, insist on writing and broadcasting the uncensored truth, **Say No!**
- all those who pay tax: demand that your taxes are used for peace, withhold the proportion of tax used for war, **Say No!**
- its members and everyone: support those refusing to participate in war and preparations for war, get involved in direct nonviolent resistance against war!"⁴

Conscientious objection and demilitarisation

Although we do not believe that just by not joining a war, we will be able to prevent or stop wars, conscientious objection to military service in all its form – legal, semi-legal, illegal – is one important step towards demilitarisation and towards a more peaceful society. When War Resisters' International was founded back in 1921, only two countries - Denmark and Sweden - recognised conscientious objection, soon to be followed by the Netherlands and Norway. Today, out of 177 countries which were included in the WRI 1998 world survey⁵, 96 countries have conscription. Out of these, 31 recognise the right to conscientious objection - although often in a very unsatisfactory way. Although this is a huge step forward compared to 1921, it also shows that there is still a lot to do, as 65 countries with conscription still do not recognise the right to conscientious objection.

But the existence of the right to conscientious objection does not make a more peaceful society. We have seen countries with the right to CO wage wars – such as the USA against Vietnam in the 1970s, and against Iraq last year, and still going on now. It is important that this right is used and promoted, and from a clear pacifist-antimilitarist perspective. In the early 1970s, then WRI Council member Pietro Pinna wrote: “C.O. is a focal point of antimilitarist action. By its witness of living adherence to the idea, it operates as a major focus of debate and mobilisation. In the wider revolutionary strategy, C.O. offers a fundamental indication, i.e. the assumption of responsibility, of autonomy and personal initiative; it serves as point of reference, as paradigm, for the extension of the concept of ‘conscientious objection’ in any other sectors of social life.”⁶ The impact of conscientious objection is also much broader than one would think if just looking at the number of COs, as Sergeiy Sandler from Israel points out: “As for the declared conscientious objectors - in terms of numbers they may be a marginal group in Israeli society, but they lead the way for many others. Every act of conscientious objection is a living and publicly visible antithesis to that would-be consensus surrounding the army as an institution and to the criminal policies implemented by the Israeli army in Palestine.”

“Every person who refuses to serve in the army, by his or her very refusal to automatically back the decisions of the generals in the army and in government, joins the political struggle against militarism in Israeli society.”⁷

Both Sergeiy Sandler and Pietro Pinna emphasize conscientious objection as – in Pietro Pinna's words – “the assumption of responsibility, of autonomy and personal initiative”. It was exactly the widespread lack of the “assumption of responsibility” which made the Third Reich and the Shoah – the genocide of Jews by Germany – possible, as was stressed by the Nuremberg Tribunal. And similarly, the lack of an assumption of responsibility lead to the breakup of Yugoslavia by violent means.

I want to give two examples how conscientious objection can contribute to demilitarisation and the struggle against war, both of them are linked to the experience and history of War Resisters' International.

1. Conscientious objection and the war in Vietnam

During the Vietnam war, the numbers of conscientious objectors in the USA went up considerably. From 1964 to 1971 there were more than 150,000 conscientious objectors recognised by the CO boards⁸. In addition, tens of thousands of deserters went through prison, almost 100,000 went underground in the US, and roughly 100,000 deserters went into exile in other countries, mostly Britain, Canada, and Sweden. Comparable to the increase in the number of COs, the desertion rate went up from about 1% in 1966 and peaked at 7.3% in 1971.

However, if we put these numbers together, we still remain on a level of less than 10%. But conscientious objection and desertion were part of a much broader anti-war movement, and so had a much wider impact. In conclusion, the high levels of non-compliance with the draft, mass opposition to the war, and declining military morale ultimately forced the US government to end its involvement in Vietnam¹⁰.

2. Conscientious objection and the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa

In South Africa the End Conscription Campaign played an important role in mobilising white youth against apartheid. Formed in July 1983, it quickly spread and led to an increase in draft evasion and conscientious objection.

In apartheid South Africa, conscription was an important factor in maintaining the apartheid system. At any time there were about 64,000 conscripts serving in the SADF – serving for two years of military service, plus a total of two years of reserve duty, spread over 12 years. According to official figures, more than 7,500 conscripts and reservists did not respond to call-ups in 1985 – and the ECC estimated that those numbers rose in 1986, as the South African Ministry of Defence refused to give data for this year, claiming that the ECC had “misused” the figures for 1985¹¹. Following the success of the ECC, the South African apartheid government banned the ECC on 22 August 1988. At that time ECC estimated that the army was actively tracing 2,400 “missing” soldiers each month, and that 35,000 South African white men had emigrated to escape conscription¹².

The South African example is also important because it had a big impact on the development of conscientious objection as a human right. In 1978 – before the ECC – the UN General Assembly passed resolution 33/165 on the “Status of persons refusing service in military or police forces used to enforce apartheid”, in which it recognised “the right of all persons to refuse service in military or police forces which are used to enforce apartheid”, and called on states and UN agencies to provide assistance and asylum.¹³

Neither the South African campaign, nor the anti-Vietnam war protest and conscientious objection were strictly pacifist, but then there are many reasons for conscientious objection, and they are not limited to pacifists. Similarly to those two examples, we can today see that conscientious objection plays an important role in Israel, as a way for Israeli citizens to “assume their responsibility” and to resist the occupation of the Occupied Territories, therefore playing an important role in demilitarising the Israeli society, which will be a very important task should finally the different sides be able to agree on a negotiated settlement.

The need for the abolishment of conscription

As we can also see from the examples given above, conscription is an important factor in keeping unjust and inhuman system alive. The US were able to fight in Vietnam, because it could rely on conscription to fill the ranks. Conscription was even more important for apartheid South Africa, and now Israel relies on conscription to maintain the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Conscription came into being with the French revolution and the first taste of democracy. It was introduced in 1793, and ever since the myth of conscription as a democratic institution has been used. But “how democratic was it in fact?”, asked WRI Council member Tony Smythe in an important article in 1967. He goes on: “With his vast armies, Napoleon was able to embark upon a series of imperialist adventures. Frenchmen who did not respond to the call were soon taught a lesson. In 1807 a man who used a false document to save his son from service was

given 8 years' labour in irons, branding with a hot iron, 6 hours' exposure and a fine. Refractory conscripts were punished by death or the 'peine de boulet'-- 10 hours hard labour a day for 10 years chained to an iron ball, and solitary confinement. In 1910 a French prime minister used conscripts to break a national rail strike and his example has been repeated many times since, notably by the 1945-50 British Labour Government against the port workers"¹⁴.

But conscription should not only be abolished because it is undemocratic and can be used for wars of aggression or to maintain oppressive situation. It should also be abolished because it contributes to the militarisation of society. The German peace researcher Hanne-Margret Birckenbach says: "The 'vehicle' conscription promotes an approach which is right from the beginning militarised and not at all lead by priorities based on peace. The experiences conscripts make during the military service don't lead to problem oriented, critical positions on military violence, but to uncritical acceptance. ... This process of socialisation does not create a position critical of military, and does not create an interest in the problems of defence, in issues of security policy, but only sympathy for military solutions"¹⁵.

Hanne-Margret Birckenbach's research was done in a country – in Germany – which recognises the right to conscientious objection. Even in such a country, conscription – so her research – leads to militarisation. While the recognition of the right to conscientious objection is an important step, a very important step towards a more peaceful and just society, it is still insufficient. War Resisters' International always condemned conscription, and in fact one of its first international campaigns was back in 1925 an international campaign against conscription. Here, on the Balkans, the abolishment of conscription alongside with the recognition of the right to conscientious objection for voluntary soldiers at any time of their service would be an important lesson to be learned from the horrible wars that tore apart this region. But the then "lack" of conscription as a recruitment tool should be seen as a "plus", and should not be replaced by more and more modern weapons and a more and more professionalised military forces, which will then again stand against each other in a hostile fashion. Conscientious objection and abolishing conscription should be seen as first step in the direction to total disarmament and demilitarisation of the entire region, which would set free huge amounts of resources to deal with the real problems this regions faces today: social problems, economical problems, problems of social justice and of healing the wounds of the past. None of these problems can be solved by military means, and it requires all our energy, all our creativity, and a peace that is more than the absence of war to work towards these goals.

Thank you.

1 More on this famous sticker at http://www.zeit.de/2002/06/Wissen/200206_stimmmts_brecht.html. It seems the sentence goes back to a US-American poet. Carl Sandburg wrote in 1936 "Sometime they'll give a war and nobody will come".

2 The War Resister No 36, September 1934. A summary of Bart de Ligt's plan is included on pages 18-27. The full plan is published in Bart de Ligt, *The Conquest of Violence - An Essay on War and Revolution*, Introduced by Aldous Huxley (New Introduction by Peter van den Dungen), Pluto Press, London, England, 1989 (First published in 1937)

3 War Resisters' International: "Say No - A Call For Conscientious Objection to War and War Preparations", 29 September 2001, <http://wri-irg.org/statemnt/sayno.htm>

4 See Footnote 3

5 Bart Horeman/Mark Stolwijk: *Refusing to bear arms. A world survey of conscription and conscientious objection to military service*. War Resisters' International, London, 1998. Some country information was updated.

- 6 Pietro Pinna: Functions and policy of WRI. War Resistance Vol 3, 1st & 2nd quarters 1973
- 7 Sergeiy Sandler: Delivering the message, loud and clear. The Broken Rifle No 53, November 2001, <http://www.wriirg.org/news/2001/pfp01-en.htm#sandler>
- 8 Lansbury House Trust Fund: Compulsory Military Service and the Objector, no 8, fourth quarter 1971, page 2-3
- 9 Jim Walch: Aid to military refugees: the case of Sweden. In: War Resistance, volume 3, 3rd & 4th quarters 1974, p 27-28
- 10 Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo: Conscientious objection. In: The Reader's Companion to American History, http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah_019400_conscientiou.htm
- 11 WRI Newsletter no 210, April/May 1986
- 12 WRI Newsletter no 221, August/September 1988
- 13 UNGA resolution 33/165, 90th plenary meeting, 20 December 1978
- 14 Tony Smythe: Conscientious Objection and War Resistance, War Resistance Vol 2, No 21, 2nd quarter 1967, <http://www.wri-irg.org/news/2004/smythe1.htm>
- 15 Hanne-Margret Birckenbach: "...besser vorbereitet auf den Krieg." Schüler – Frieden – Bundeswehr. Frankfurt, 1982. Translation by Andreas Speck

END OF CONSCRIPTION IN EUROPE

Conscription or draft is compulsory enrolment of personnel for service in the armed forces. Obligatory service in the armed forces has existed since ancient times in many cultures, including the Egyptian Old Kingdom in the 27th century BC, the samurai in Japan, warriors in the Aztec Empire, citizen militiamen in ancient Greece and Rome, and aristocrats and their peasants during the Middle Ages in Europe. In England, compulsory military service was employed on the local level in the Anglo-Saxon fyrd as early as the 9th cent.

Conscription in the modern sense of the term dates from 1793, when the Convention of the French Republic raised an army of 300,000 men from the provinces. Following Napoleon's example, Muhammad Ali of Egypt raised a powerful army in the 1830s. Compulsory peacetime recruitment was introduced (1811–12) by Prussia. The institution of conscription, which was increasingly justified by statesmen on grounds of national defence and economic stimulation, spread to other European nations and Japan in the 19th cent.

During the American Civil War both the federal government (1863) and the Confederacy instituted a draft but many draft riots occurred, so the U.S. did not use it again until entering World War I in 1917. U.S. until 1973.

WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

IRELAND

There is no conscription in Ireland, and it has never existed. It also didn't exist during the World War I, while Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. Even after gaining independence from the UK, Ireland has never introduced conscription.

UNITED KINGDOM

Conscription in Britain was introduced in 1916, but was abandoned on the end of World War I (in 1919). UK reverted to conscription when World War II threatened in May 1939. During the Cold War, Britain retained the draft until 1960, while last conscripts were discharged in 1963. Now days it is allowed to volunteer for the armed forces from the age of 16.

BELGIUM

Although it was one of the last Western European countries to pass a law on conscientious objection (1965), Belgium was one of the first to end the conscription. Conscription in Belgium was suspended on 31 December 1992 by amending the 1962 Law on Conscription, which became applicable only to conscripts drafted in 1993 and earlier. Belgian government thought that since the fall of Berlin Wall and end of Cold War, the conscription and massive army is no longer needed. Since March 1st 1995 the Belgian Armed forces consist of professional volunteers only.

NETHERLANDS

Although Dutch Constitution in its article 97 states that all individuals with Dutch nationality who can (including those who only have residential status), must help the defence of the territory or Netherlands, conscription in this country is not enforced. In 1992 the parliament decided to suspend the call-ups. On February 1996 the last conscripts were called up to perform their military service, and after January 1997 there were no more conscripts. Their armed forces are now completely professional

SPAIN

Conscription in Spain was officially to be ended by year 2003, but it did not get that far. In year 2000, between 110,000-120,000 conscripts applied for CO, while the total number of conscripts is only was 170,000. This meant that there was a 65-70% of COs in Spain in 2000, compared to 46% in the previous year. The end of conscription happened not because the Government decided it, but because the damn has already broken. The impact is more serious than conscription though. The so-called professional Armed Forces are thought to have 120,000 soldiers and today they only have 34,000. The Spanish Government decided to add up 15,000 more soldiers every year. A combined measure taken was to decrease the level of IQ demanded as a precondition for enrolment in the Armed Forces.

FRANCE

Two hundred thousand young Frenchmen were granted a reprieve when France announced that military service would end 18 months ahead of schedule, sparing the last of the potential conscripts from a 10-month service in the Army forces. Instead of ending the conscription on January 1st 2003, France abolished the compulsory military service on June 27th 2001. France's forces were expected to be comprised of 92,500 professionals with another 27,000 participating as national service volunteers by the end of 2002. Defence Minister Alain Richard said it was possible to end conscription earlier than planned because of major successes recruiting professional soldiers. But Charles Haymen, editor of Jane's World Armies, was sceptical: "I don't believe they have recruited like they say they have," he told BBC News. He suggested that with ever-decreasing defence budgets, the French could not afford both to recruit a professional army from scratch and to carry on with conscription. While conscripts are not paid very much, they are expensive to call up and then feed, clothe, house and train. And despite the investment, Mr Haymen says, they are of little use in a modern fighting force.

ITALY

The Italian parliament voted in 2001 to change its conscript army model and to change over to an all-volunteer force, and to start a process that will further reduce the size of the Italian armed forces and will give the government right to decide about sending them to foreign interventions. Parliament voted 433-17 in favour of establishing a volunteer, instead of conscript, force of 190'000 soldiers by 2005.

FORMER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

A typical example:

SLOVAKIA

From 2006 mandatory conscription in the Slovak Army will be abolished, ending various problems young conscripts now face before and after being drafted. The government approved the Slovak Army reform plan, called Model 2010, on October 24th 2003. The changes will see army staff cut in half by 2010 from the current 42,000 to 24,500, while the current nine-month conscription period will be abolished in five years. Conscripts, most of whom range in age from 19 to 26, today comprise 38% of total army staff.

Although the decision will affect mainly today's 14-year-olds, young men who have already served their time also praised the decision. Slovak men are still subject to army service from the age of 18. Before 1989, young men were obliged to serve in the army for two years before moving on to develop careers and families. But many now think the current nine-month army service, or the 13-month civil service in hospitals or social centres, which can be chosen as a substitute for military service, is a waste of human resources. Milan Ištván, a Member of Parliament for the Democratic Left Party, said that because the army was cash-strapped, more than 15,000 young conscripts were now waiting to be called for service, a process which sometimes took a year or even longer, during which time their lives were effectively on hold. "This wait is especially frustrating, because until they've gone through the army service, it's difficult for them to find a job. Employees prefer men who've already been in the army," he said, referring to a Labour Code rule, which requires employers to reserve jobs for young male employees taken to army service, just as they must do for female employees who become pregnant. He added that conscripts even frequently tried to "give bribes in order to be called to the army as soon as possible and finally get the service behind them."

Conscription is no more popular among university-educated men. Many university students take part time jobs during their studies, but find that conscription stops them from pursuing their young careers, as the army is unable to make use of their skills. Major-General František Butko, head of the Defence Ministry's personnel department, admitted that this was one of the main reasons why army service was not popular among young men. "Not all conscripts can improve in what they've studied or get better in their original professions," he said. Butko admitted that due to lack of cash the army could not offer the opportunity to everyone. "Because of the limited finances, we can't even make sure that all units are properly trained. Thus, many soldiers may indeed feel useless in the army," he said. But Butko also believed the unpopularity of military service lay in the fact that the army is very different from civilian life. "Life in army barracks requires discipline. Conscripts must respect their superiors, and must obey their orders. Not all young men are prepared for such a way of life, and not all are able to cope with it," he said. "Making the army fully professional can only help. It will allow for a more intense and effective training of professional soldiers which can increase morale and discipline in the army."

CZECH REPUBLIC

In 1868, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy introduced compulsory military service for the first time in the Czech lands. In the 136 years that have passed, much has changed in the way military service is done and war is waged. With the Cold War long gone and the Czech Republic now a NATO member, the country faces no immediate threat of invasion, calling for a new image of the Czech military within the NATO alliance. As a result of this transformation process, in year 2003 the last group of young men had to enter compulsory military service. As of January 1st 2005, the Czech Army will become fully professional employing a total of 35,000 men and women. While only a decade ago, high-ranking army officials considered military service imperative, many have now changed their minds. Chief of Staff, General Pavel Stefka, even welcomes the end of conscription, saying it takes a burden off the armed forces, as the conscript army had become ineffective. General Stefka also believes that the end of military service and the release of 7,000 professional soldiers this year will not weaken the country's ability to defend itself. On the contrary, he argues that the reform will help to focus on the creation of a smaller but more effective professional army. And in the case of an emergency, it can still turn to army reservists and to the crisis-reaction force of volunteers, which train military manoeuvres twice a year, and are better trained, equipped, and motivated, than conscript units.

SLOVENIA

Conscription in Slovenia ended earlier than expected, in October 2003, and compulsory reserve service will end by 2010. Although final figures are not yet available, by the time Slovenia entered NATO in 2004, the professional force was expected to number about 6,900 soldiers and about 12,000 reservists. Number of conscientious objectors during the conscription period (1991 – 2003) was between 30 – 40% annually.

HUNGARY

On February 14th 2003 Hungarian Government declared that the conscription in that country would end in August 2005. In the transitional period those who are married, those who have children who are employed or still studying will not be obliged to do any kind of service. At the same time, the lower age limit has been moved to 23, so those who are older than 23 and still didn't do their military service will automatically be released from such a service. Hungarian Army will be based on professional soldiers and volunteers.

ROMANIA

According to the Constitution, Romanian armed forces have strictly defensive role in protection of the country's territory. Romanian army seems to enjoy popular support due to its role in 1989 revolution against the Ceausescu. Their government is fully oriented towards EU and NATO, and therefore the process of reforms of armed forces is a copy of the same process that has already happened in many EU members states. Large army consisting of 100.000 conscripts and professionals is to be replaced by 60.000 people professional army until 2007, although the option of voluntary service will also be kept.

CROATIA

Public debate about the end of conscription still continues in the Republic of Croatia. Although the Prime minister Sanader announced that he would like to see completely professional army reduced to 20.000 men (now 40.000) until 2006, it seems impossible that this could happen. A survey developed by a team of "military experts" from the Ministry of Defence presented to public shows that fully professional army would be more expensive, and that Croatia should have some kind of combined army, consisting on professionals and conscripts. It is possible that conscripts would be replaced by volunteers, as more than 50% of recruits applies for civilian service. However, the government seems to be very determined to end the conscription, and it is possible that it will end in 2010.

COUNTRIES STILL DISCUSSING ENDING THE CONSCRIPTION

GERMANY

Germany is the last major European country with mandatory military service. The Bundeswehr's 130,000 conscripts make up about 40 percent of the armed forces, with the large reserve force of former conscripts potentially increasing the forces to nearly 700,000. Conscripts, who complete nine months of military service, cannot be forced to participate in UN or Nato missions. While women have been allowed to serve since 2001, conscription is all-male.

As one possible answer to Germany's growing military role, leading Social democratic and Green politicians hinted that they might examine a switch from conscription to a professional army. Personnel costs swallow about half of the German military budget, leaving relatively little for modernization and equipment investments.

Government has said it will continue the reform of the German armed forces started under former Defence Minister Rudolf Scharping and adhere largely to the proposals of the so-called Weizsäcker reform paper, which envisages above all a massive reduction in the size of the Bundeswehr. While the Greens would like to eliminate military conscription, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has so far rejected a switch to a volunteer army.

Pressure for a switch to a professional force has intensified as budgetary constraints tighten, the pool of conscripts shrinks and there are too few experts for too many tasks. In view of Germany's militarist past, others feel that mandatory service ensures better democratic control between army and society. A professional soldier of the lowest rank costs the state about twice as much as a conscript. Since an all-volunteer professional army would only have to be around half the size of the current army, it would seem that there would be no extra costs.

Yet the end of military conscription would also mean the end of alternative social services carried out by conscientious objectors with serious consequences for social services.

BULGARIA

From a legal point of view the end of conscription is possible if there are changes in the Constitution of Republic of Bulgaria. According to the Constitution of The Republic of Bulgaria, article 59, (1) "To defend the country shall be a duty and a matter of honour of every Bulgarian citizen. High treason and betrayal of the country shall be treated as crimes of utmost gravity and shall be punished with all the severity of the law. The carrying out of military obligations, and the conditions and procedure for exemption there from or for replacing them with alternative service shall be established by law."

In order to make any constitutional change it is necessary that initiative has 2/3-majority support in the Parliament. In connection with the integration of Republic of Bulgaria into the European Union, the Parliament needs to make some changes in the Constitution until 2007. Many see this as a good opportunity to push the needed changes of the Constitution regarding the conscription. If this opportunity is not taken, it is possible that next one wouldn't occur until 2015.

However, some surveys show that the constellation in the Parliament after the election in 2005 could be in favour of end of conscription in Bulgaria.

Countries or territories in which there is no conscription

Antigua and Barbuda	India	Panama
Australia	Ireland	Papua New Guinea
Bahamas	Jamaica	Qatar
Bahrain	Japan	Rwanda
Bangladesh	Jordan	San Marino
Barbados	Kenya	Saudi Arabia
Belgium	Kyrgyzstan	Sierra Leone
Belize	Lesotho	South Africa
Botswana	Luxembourg	Sri Lanka
Brunei Darussalam	Malawi	Suriname
Burkina Faso	Malaysia	Swaziland
Burundi	Maldives	Tonga
Cameroon	Malta	Trinidad and Tobago
Canada	Mauritania	Uganda
Costa Rica	Mauritius	United Arab Emirates
Djibouti	Monaco	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Fiji	Myanmar	United States of America
Gabon	Nepal	Uruguay
Gambia	Netherlands	Vanuatu
Ghana	New Zealand	Zambia
Grenada	Nicaragua	Zimbabwe
Haiti	Nigeria	
Hong Kong	Oman	
Iceland	Pakistan	

Countries in which selective conscription exists but military service is voluntary in principle

Argentina
Benin
Bhutan
Central African Republic
Chad
China
Honduras
Indonesia
Côte d'Ivoire
Mali
Niger
Senegal
Togo

Countries in which conscription exists but is not enforced

El Salvador
Namibia

Antonio PRENDA,

Journalist and military commentator of
daily newspapers "Oslobođenje"

"Possibilities for demilitarization in the Region"

- Summary -

So far, about possibilities for demilitarization in the region, especially on the territory of former SFR Yugoslavia, it was spoken in three terms: political, military-security and economic. Demilitarization itself is a positive thing as long as there are circumstances for it. With this presentation I will try to evaluate the possibilities for complete abolishment of armament and armed forces in the region through three aforementioned aspects.

Armament that exists in the region, as well as armed forces of countries, members of former SFR Yugoslavia, mainly derives from former Yugoslav National Army (JNA). After the past war, according to the Agreement on sub-regional control of armament, signed in 1996 in Florence, Bosnia and Herzegovina (with its two entities-Federation BiH and the Republic of Srpska), the Republic of Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, have established the quotas of armaments in proportion 2:2:5. It is about 5 key categories of armament: line tanks, armored combat vehicles, artillery above 75 mm of caliber, combat planes and attack helicopters.

The proportion is calculated in relation to number of citizens and it means that the two armaments in both entities of BiH equal the armament quantity in the Republic of Croatia. Within BiH the proportion between entities is 2:1 in favor of Federation BiH. That means that Federation BiH can own at most 273 line tanks, RS can have 137, the Republic of Croatia 410 and Serbia and Montenegro 1 025 pieces. Limits for artillery are: F BiH 1000, RS 500, Croatia 1500 and Serbia and Montenegro 3750 pieces. 41 combat planes can be owned in Federation BiH, in RS 21, in Croatia 62 and in Serbia and Montenegro 155, and there can be 14 attack helicopters in F BiH, 7 in RS, 21 in Croatia and 53 in Serbia and Montenegro.

Thanks to the fact that former Yugoslav National Army pulled out the majority of its key armaments on the territory of today's Serbia and Montenegro and the Republic of Srpska, the Serbia and Montenegro Army and the Army of the Republic of Srpska in all five categories have reached the maximum of allowed armament quantities. Armed forces of the Republic of Croatia and the Army of Federation BiH mainly own armaments seized or captured from aggressor and then bought during the war on "black market". This is why they reach the maximum only in the category of artillery. Also, the Army of Federation BiH was given by US Government some armaments, but on levels of armament standard already in possession. The characteristic of all these countries is the lack of financial resources, reserve parts and fuel, which is the reason why in all these countries significant part of these resources often is not even in operative use. As far as the eventual demilitarization is concerned, then the economic aspects show at most its possibility and even necessity.

Regarding the efficiency of any armed force today, the technological factor is expressed more than ever. In order to be efficient, an armed force must be equipped with the latest and most

powerful armaments. And today's combat means are maybe ten times more expensive than those means that were used during the Vietnamese war just 30 years ago.

Due to a bad economic and financial situation in these countries, the maintenance of existing armed systems is extremely questionable and any demilitarization would be welcome. Why spend money on means maintenance whose combat use is, from the aspect of efficiency, very questionable and limited today, if this money can be spent in hospital developments, schools and other public institutions?

While the economic aspect is quite clear, the political aspect on demilitarization possibilities is much more confused. Of course, it depends on who emphasizes it and with what aim. Without considering the attitudes of several non governmental organizations, it is clear to everyone that the demilitarization is not possible in Bosnia and Herzegovina, if it does not include neighboring countries - Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro. As for unfortunate historical reasons and for aforementioned Agreement on sub regional control of armaments, this fact makes difficult the possibility for demilitarization, for it demands that all three countries show sincere will for this idea. That requires existence of political forces in all three countries contemporarily whose ideas about demilitarization will coincide.

The security-political aspect, in my opinion, should be the most decisive one in evaluation of the possibility for demilitarization, because for some armed forces to exist and be maintained, there must be the reason for their existence.

It cannot be said that in today's situation these countries are to be menaced by their neighbors, besides maybe international terrorism. This is particularly referred to Bosnia and Herzegovina where international peace forces – SFOR, are still present. But what will happen when SFOR leaves?

Armed forces of BiH, Croatia and Montenegro adopt three military missions: defense of territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country, support for civilian structures in case of natural disaster and participation in international peace missions. If not all of these missions, then it is expected that at least the last two last for a long time (because there is nothing that threatens the territorial integrity and sovereignty of these countries). Threat will not exist because of the relation with NATO. But with protection that it will offer, the NATO will expect these countries to be on its disposition with their armed forces and soldiers for NATO's needs and needs of other member countries. It will depend on financial (im)possibilities how and to what extent will the countries of our region be able to do that. Now it seems that armed forces will be still necessary for these reasons but as smaller and better equipped formations, which these countries will be able to afford.

We live in a time when the power of a country is not evaluated by the number of barrels but by the number of allies and friends. But this comes from political and maybe more economic power. In the situation where the countries of the region have extremely low economic power, the partnership on military-security plan remains the only chance for this region to be accepted as equal part of international integrations. However, the simplest way to be accepted is by further existence of armed forces in these countries.

If, based on all of this, armed forces would have to continue to exist, then we could evaluate whether there should be a totally professional army and the compulsory drafting system should be abolished, or, on the other hand, we should still need combined systems, as it is the case at the moment.





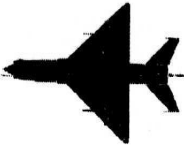
Financially powerful countries can afford a totally professional army. Recently a totally professional army has been introduced in Slovenia. However, is the same applicable in BiH? And when?

Complete assessment about what would be suitable and best for BiH should take more time. The facts should be considered thoroughly and without emotions, having in mind at the first place military-security and financial factors.

In the neighboring Croatia the Ministry of Defense has just after more then a year of analysis finalized a Study on the possibilities for the professional army. It is still not completely presented to the public, but, based on what is available at the moment, the Study shows that Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia should still include both professional and draft component. Their research has shown that the completely professional army is much more expensive than the combined army. The difference is somewhat between 30 and 40 percent. According to some published calculations, in the case of the totally professional army, one soldier would cost Republic of Croatia more than 29.000 USD. As it is predicted that at the end of transformation Armed Forces would have some 18.000 soldiers, that would cost Croatia around 530 million USD per year. Today in BiH there are 12.000 soldiers. So, the numbers would in any case be pretty similar. Can BiH afford this? How near in the future?

Furthermore, these analysis, besides proving that total profesionalization of the army would not bring satisfactory savings (if there would be any savings), point out the fact that the abolishment of the conscription would downsize the operability of the army. For example, professional soldiers would more than often be having static duties such as guarding military objects. On the other hand, if there would still be drafting and compulsory military service, it would have to be much more efficient and with higher criteria, which would then result in creating a much more trained conscript soldier. And that cost, also. The solution is probably somewhere between further downsizing of the armed forces, but with better organization and training, together with combining best experiences of professional and conscript army.

Enclosed: table of allowed quantities of armaments according to the Agreement about sub regional control of armaments

					
RH	410	340	1500	21	62
FBiH	273	227	1000	14	41
RS	137	113	500	7	21
SRJ	1025	850	3750	53	155

Written Statement from
Conscience and Peace Tax International
to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights,
57th Session, 2001

This text was submitted by CPTI and appeared in UN Document E/CN.4/2001/NGO/101
The human right not to pay for war and the human duty to pay for peace

1. According to most national legislation people who kill will be prosecuted. And those who pay others to kill will likewise be prosecuted. In such way the basic human right to life is protected with the force of law

2. The United Nations recognises the right of everyone to have conscientious objections to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

3. Although many States recognise the right to conscientious objection to military service, they still train and maintain military forces with the support of their citizens' taxes. In such way, a conscientious objector may be free from the obligation to be trained for and participate in killings, but the conscientious objector is still forced to pay for the participation of others in killings.

4. Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) is an international association of people that cannot support any attempts to prepare for war and to train citizens to kill. Our consciences do not allow us to support that. Even if we are granted the right to be free from participating in the military with our bodies, we are forced to participate in the military with our tax contributions. We do not dispute the right of a State to impose taxes on its citizens. But we claim that, by spending our compulsory taxes on war and war preparation, States are making us accomplices to killing.

5. CPTI holds that such individual responsibility is explicitly stated in article 6 of the Charter of Nuremberg. This Charter states that "leaders, organizers, instigators and accomplices participating in the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such plan." CPTI believes that a taxpayer should have the right not to be made an accomplice to the use of lethal force, to the killing of fellow human beings.

6. The UN recently declared the first decade of the new millennium to be the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. CPTI stresses that the right not to pay for war and war preparation should be strongly linked with the taxpayers' wishes to pay for peace promotion. Although CPTI recognises that it is up to the democratic decision-making structures of any State to allocate its collected taxes, CPTI notes that the budgets of military expenditure are far greater than the amount of money spent on civilian peace-building activities.

7. CPTI therefore thinks that the right to conscientious objection to taxes that are used for military purposes should be recognised by all States. CPTI is calling on the Commission on Human Rights to recognise the right of conscientious objection to military taxes as a legitimate expression and manifestation of the freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

PRIGOVOR za MIR

Regional network for conscientious objection «Objection for Peace»

www.prigovorzamir.org

E-mail: konferencija@prigovorzamir.org



Peace Action-Macedonia

Točila 1 A3/23, 75000 Prilep – Macedonia

++389 48 401 888, gamanet@mt.net.mk



EBCO Balkan

Makednoska 22/II, Belgrade, Serbia

++381 (0) 11 3340 359,

office@ebcobalkan.org www.ebcobalkan.org



Antiwar Campaign Croatia

Medulićeva 17/II, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

Tel./fax: ++385 1 48 48 720, e-mail: ark@zamir.net



Nansen dialogue centre - Montenegro

Vukice Mitrović 881 000 Podgorica

Tel: 081 / 230 681, 081/ 230 646, Fax: 081 / 231 105

info@ndcmn.org, www.nansen-dialogue.net



Campaign for Conscientious objection in

BiH – Central Office Sarajevo

Muse Ćazima Ćatića 25, 71000 Sarajevo, BiH

Tel/fax: (+387) 33 239 201

info@prigovorbih.org www.prigovorbih.org

