

Activities of Scientists for a Peaceful European Union

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FRIEDA (Friedensinitiative Einiger DesyAner) and HANAWI (Hamburger NATurWissenschaftlerInnen Initiative), associations of scientists and employees in research laboratories and universities in Hamburg, started in 2002 a campaign NOT IN OUR NAME against the preparation of a war on Iraq. Since scientific research is carried out in international collaborations, the initiators felt, that they should contact their colleagues in other European research laboratories to launch a clear public statement against a war. Following an idea of a similar campaign in the US, the following text was circulated, and signatures were collected via a web-page (<http://not-in-our-name.net>):

We, the undersigned, work in research institutes and universities with many international links. We believe:

- *There is no justification for a pre-emptive strike against Iraq; a military operation in Iraq is an unjust burden on the Iraqi people who are suffering from their oppressive government and from sanctions;*
- *a war undertaken by the United States would escalate violence in the Middle East and around the world;*
- *a war on Iraq will sow the seeds for future international terrorism, rather than curb it.*

We call upon the international community to canvass the US and UK governments to discard their plans for war and call upon the UN Security Council to do all they can to prevent the war.

The campaign started in November 2002 and already one month later enough signatures and donations were collected to publish an advertisement in DIE ZEIT on 12.Dec, DIE TAZ on 21.Dec, WECHSELWIRKUNG Dec 2002 and also in the December 19-26 edition of NATURE.

The signatures collected came from Belgium, Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. The large support of scientists and employees for this campaign showed clearly the interest for a closer collaboration at least in Europe and the need for an international Network.

Report on a signature campaign to improve the EU Constitution

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The Italian psychiatrist Luigi Cancrini claims that the outmost sign of normality in a human being is the desire for peace. At the end of the last century the dream of a world government, dedicated to solve the crises and avoid wars (the dream of United Nations' Organization), was seen to be possible.

The tragedy of September 11 2001 has brought many of us to fear a globalization of violence, instead of a globalization of peace. In November 2002 the war against Iraq was approaching. For the campaign NOT IN OUR NAME alone in Italy some 250 signatures in the research and academic sector were collected, specially physicists. Amongst the signers of the petition were a Nobel prize winner in Physics (Jack Steinberger), the former president of the Max Planck Institute in Germany (H. P. Duerr), and many members of the Italian Accademia dei Lincei (going back to the times of Galileo Galilei), some being very old and having experienced already the times of the second and even the first world war.

After the war on Iraq started at the end of March 2003, we got the conviction that the following article of the Italian Constitution was becoming obsolete:

Art. 11: La Repubblica italiana ripudia la guerra come mezzo per risolvere le controversie internazionali. (Art 11: The Italian Republic repudiates war as a mean to resolve international conflicts).

A letter to the President of the Italian Republic and to other persons involved, including the Italian vice-president of the Convention for the European Constitution, Giuliano Amato, was written with the subject: "*Against the possible forfeiture of the Art. 11 of the Constitution and in the occasion of the drawing up of the European Constitution*". Explicitly the support given by the Italian government to the aggression on Iraq was criticized, implying the accuse of high treason for the premier Berlusconi. Some criticism was also directed to the President Ciampi himself, by expressing the opinion that the absence (at that time) of Italian soldiers in Iraq was not enough (contrary to what he had claimed) to assure the respect and validity of Art. 11. We concluded: "We want instead to affirm again with strength the validity of the pacific grounds of our constitutional system, in view..... and ABOVE ALL IN VIEW OF THE DRAWING UP OF THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION."

Many signatures were collected in a short time, including fifteen members of Accademia dei Lincei (including the well known physicists Giorgio Parisi and Milla Baldo Ceolin). The President of Republic Carlo Azelio Ciampi kindly replied us June 27 2003 (in a letter signed by Mr. Salvatore Sechi, his "counselor for juridical affairs and constitutional relations") that our "opinions" were legitimate and that he believed to have done his best to warrant the respect of the Constitution. However, the upcoming draft of the European Constitution was not mentioned at all.

There was a deep worry that the Italian Constitution could become obsolete (as feared by Gianni Ferrara, professor of Public Law at University "La Sapienza" in Rome) if there were no clear statements against war in the European Constitution. At present the draft for the European Constitution does not even use the word "war"

Extracts from the draft for the European Constitution:

Article 3: The Union's objectives

(1) The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.

Comment: "Aim" and "promote" are rather weak (conditioned) words.

Article 40: Specific provisions for implementing the common security and defense policy

(5) The Council of Ministers may entrust the execution of a TASK [understood: civilian or MILITARY], within the Union framework, to a group of Member States IN ORDER TO protect the Union's VALUES and SERVE ITS INTERESTS. The execution of such a task shall be governed by Article III-211.

Comment: With the argument "to serve the interests" almost all wars were and could be justified!

THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

Article III-210

(1) The tasks referred to in Article I-40(1), in the course of which the Union may use civilian and military means, shall include joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, TASKS OF COMBAT FORCES IN CRISES MANAGEMENT, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilization. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories

The words stressed in capital letters do evidently consider war as a mean for management of crises and conflicts. Preventive aggressive wars are almost explicitly accepted.

A signature campaign was launched in Italy, to add the following statement to Art. I of the European Constitution:

THE UNION REPUDIATES THE WAR AS A MEAN TO RESOLVE INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS.

Such a statement belongs already as such to the Charter of United Nations, to the French Constitution and to the Italian Constitution, and a similar statement is also present in the German constitution:

(Art. 26[Verbot der Friedensstörung])

Handlungen, die geeignet sind und in der Absicht vorgenommen werden, das friedliche Zusammenleben der Völker zu stören, insbesondere die Führung eines Angriffskrieges vorzubereiten, sind verfassungswidrig. Sie sind unter Strafe zu stellen.

(Activities, which are able and intended to destroy the peaceful living of peoples, especially to plan an aggressive attack, are not in accord with the constitution. They have to be punished.)

In spring this year signatures were collected and a letter was send to the Italian parliament, who very positively acknowledged this activities with their full support: the Italian parliament has approved with 98% majority the request to add our proposed sentence to the European Constitution !

Even now, after the the Council of Ministers accepted the proposal for the European Constitution, a strong campaign is needed to enforce the addition of an explicit rejection and repudiation of war as a mean to solve international conflicts. Based on the experience of the NOT-IN-OUR-NAME campaign a European wide signature campaign is proposed by the Italian group together with HANAWI and FRIEDA.

Short Report on the Israel/Palestine conflict

by: a colleague from Tel Aviv.

A report on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict was given. It became very clear that the Palestinian are suffering because of the closing of the borders, the hunger and the humiliation due to the Israeli occupation. It was argued that the separation wall is a barrier for getting peace between the two nations as, for example, this wall isolates Palestinian farmers in some of the villages from the farms and fields and this makes their life impossible. In addition, during the years of the ongoing conflict the infrastructure in the Palestinian territories was completely destroyed and an international effort to rebuild them is very urgently needed.

The present US policy is biased to that of the right-wings in the Likud party, which does not allow any future for a Palestinian state to be established. However, the left parties in Israel are making efforts to recover the peace process and to push it forward (Geneva declarations).

The hope was expressed, that an active European role could help to stop the aggression and the violence on both sides. Such a European policy should respects the interests of the Palestinian population and help Palestinian government to rebuild the infrastructure and political institutions.

An academic cooperations between EU universities and Palestinian ones (including a dedicated fellowship program) would be very welcome, however this can only be successful after the aggression and the violence between both sides has come to an end.

Conclusion:

Both the discussion about the EU-constitution and the Palestine/Israel conflict showed the importance of international cooperation and communication. The scientific communities offer such communications, as their work is since long based on international exchange. However on a political level, this communication is not too much advanced, which was the reason to organize this working group to start an international network (in the scientific area first) for an improved exchange of discussions and activities. One of these discussions is based around the European constitution and the European role in present and future military actions and wars and the other on academic cooperation between Palestinian and EU universities.