



The Right to Refuse to Kill

The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection Newsletter

EBCO, 61 rue Henri Stacquet, B-1030 Brussels, Belgium / Tel.: +32 2 215 7908
Fax.: +32 2 245 6297 / e-mail: ebco@ebco-beoc.eu / www.ebco-beoc.eu

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PLEASE NOTE THE NEW INTERNET ADDRESS!



Dear friends,

I send my greetings to you from Jerusalem, where I moved in July with my family to continue working on peace and human rights issues in the coming years.

On my way to the Middle East I received the message from our **Turkish** correspondent Feyda SAYAN that the government intends to lower the military pressure on draft evaders and conscientious objectors. Recruiting offices shall in the future no longer have the mandate to search for conscientious objectors or call them to the army once they have been sentenced by a civilian court and only a civilian prosecutor may bring them under custody. Recruiting offices will have no longer the mandate to persecute conscientious objectors nor to bring them into arrest or prison. The ministerial order says:

"If and when the accused party is declared guilty and receives punishment (either in terms of prison sentences or fines) according to the Military Penal Code, after execution of the sentence, the person will not be taken to a Recruiting Office." "The Recruiting Offices will have no authority to oppose to the Prosecutor's judgment. The judgment will be sent to the presidency of the relevant Recruiting Office only for the purpose of information."

In future conscientious objectors in Turkey will be judged by civilian courts for draft evasion, unless an objector declares his objection when already in service. This circular is of course not a recognition of the right to conscientious objection in Turkey. However, if this circular by the Ministry of Justice is followed and implemented, it is apparently a light removal of pressure on conscientious objectors – a small step forward. It is a consequence of the verdict by the European Court of Human Rights in 2006 on the Ülke case (see RRK September 2006).

We cannot expect the Turkish Minister of Defence discovering suddenly conscientious objection as a fundamental right. But in a parliamentary reply he stated earlier this year, that the government is planning a legal framework for conscientious objectors. Every year, he confesses, nearly a million young Turks do not appear for military service but hide after receiving the call.

Turkey is the first "Muslim" country with an Islam government dealing with the right of conscientious objection. I hope also Arab countries will follow this direction to make this right of freedom of conscience, thought and religion a real global right. EBCO needs to support youth in the neighborhood of the European Union to implement the UN Convention of Human Rights, which all governments, including those of the Islam world, have signed and ratified. This should no longer remain a European or "Christian" domain. I invite all members to discuss this issue with friends in your neighborhood and organize public debates on this issue.

In August the war in **Georgia** led to an appeal by the Georgian Youth Council praising the Georgian youth for its commitment to defend the unity of the country. They addressed this appeal to the European Youth

Forum, where EBCO is a member. In a statement we requested support for those who are not willing to fight in this war and to take care of children and youth in particular, not to become victim of aggressions and illegal military actions in Georgia by Russian and Georgian troops (see page 3). The violence ended meanwhile but the conflict is still alive.

On 15th November in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, the European Youth Forum General Assembly adopted our Resolution on an **Arms Trade Treaty**, in support of the Control Arms Campaign, which has been calling for a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty, a legally binding international instrument, which will draw together and consolidate states' current obligations under international law (see pages 8-9).

Turkey and Greece have both legal provisions in their **penal codes banning criticism towards the military duty** not to speak of harassments against those who promote the right to refuse to kill. These penal codes have led to numerous legal cases against journalists and writers in Turkey thus violating the right of freedom of expression. The EBCO board will discuss during the coming Board Meeting on 22 November in Brussels a **campaign to challenge these legal restrictions of basic rights** enshrined in Conventions and Resolutions of the UN, the Council of Europe and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

On 23rd November members of the Board will meet the Secretariat of the **Committee for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament** to present the 2007 EBCO Report on Conscientious Objection in the European Union and to discuss further actions for monitoring this right in the EU and the neighborhood. In a *Resolution of the European Parliament on Conscientious Objection in the member states of the Community of 19 January 1994* (the Bandres Molet / Bindi Resolution) the Committee for Civil Liberties of the European Parliament was instructed "to draw up an annual report on the application by the Member States of its resolutions on conscientious objection and civilian service, and to involve the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection." (see: EBCO Website www.ebco-beoc.eu)

Peaceful greetings from Jerusalem,
Gerd GREUNE – EBCO President

Meeting human rights groups in Jerusalem



On the photo we see from right to left:
Susanne Drake, Regional Coordinator from **Forum Civil Peace Services**, (www.forumzdf.de)
Amir Givol, **New Profile** - Movement for the Civilization of Israeli Society, (www.newprofile.org)
Guy Elhanan, **Combatants for Peace** (www.combatantsforpeace.org)
Gerd Greune, **EBCO** President (www.ebco-beoc.eu) and
Yehuda Shaul. **Breaking the Silence** –

Military service and the army in Israel are deeply connected with the war history and occupation policy of this country. From 100.000 conscripts per year, 40-50% are "exempted" each year because of being non-Jewish Palestinians, or being orthodox Jews, or having social reasons. Generally it is not difficult to get exemptions. 4-5% are exempted during the service or during the reserve. The law mentions conscience reasons for being released from conscription. Those who refuse to be enlisted and reject cooperation with the military committee to investigate reasons for refusal or have political reasons may be arrested. Hundreds of imprisoned political conscientious objectors, including five now in jail for more than two years, have been counted throughout recent years. Actually three female conscripts are in military custody for 21 days, one for them for the third time. They reject cooperation with the army and might be arrested repeatedly. In most cases conscription ends for them with an exclusion for mental reasons.

A new national service without arms and purely civilian plans to include the non-Jewish population and finds criticism among the Arab minorities as it is discriminatory, once adopted by the Knesset. *BALADNA, Association for Arab Youth in Haifa* (www.momken.org) is organizing campaigns against this law.

A growing number of conscripts, conscientious objectors and former soldiers are under way to warn against human rights violations of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in occupied territories but also in Israel itself.

European Bureau for Conscientious Objection

PUBLIC STATEMENT

on the war in Georgia

14 August 2008

«Our thoughts are these days with those young and old - and many children - that are victims of this terrible war in Georgia. Our solidarity is with all the civilians who suffer and our protest is directed to both the Russian and Georgian authorities.» EBCO's President Gerd Greune said today.

Georgia should not have used military force against South Ossetia, just as Russia should not have used military force against Georgia. It would be wrong to blame only one side of the armed conflict, since both sides have killed many civilians. It is another example of war not being a way to resolve conflicts.

The end of bombing and shelling, the withdrawal of the military units under international control and the respect of human rights would be the only way to end violence.

War is never right irrespective of who started, who kills more or who seems to be guilty. War is always a crime against humanity.

The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection hopes that the new generation of the Caucasus is more peaceful than the generation of their ancestors and calls on the recruited soldiers to refuse to obey to war orders and go back home.

Both Georgia and Russia should respect the right to conscientious objection for the persons who for reasons of conscience refuse to perform armed service or have any other direct or indirect participation in wars or armed conflicts.

The right to conscientious objection is a legitimate exercise of the fundamental right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 18), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 9) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Article 10).



Training seminar
Experiential learning on the environment and non-violent action
21-24 August 2008
Mesta Village, Chios Island, Greece
ANTIGONE

Information & Documentation Centre on racism, ecology, peace and non violence

Discussion Group: Conscientious Objectors

- Updates of the cases of conscientious objectors facing prosecution and imprisonment:
 - 1) Turkey: Mehmet Bal was tortured and then was released with medical report for psychological reasons against his will. Halil Savda was still in prison, to be released within a couple of months. Mehmet Ali Avci is the latest conscientious objector in Turkey.
 - 2) Greece: Lazaros Petromelidis was sentenced in absentia to three years' imprisonment without suspension and waits for his appeal court. A young Greek conscientious objector whose application was rejected appealed to the European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg).
- Legislative progress and other information:
 - 1) New circular of the Turkish Minister of Justice instructs not to detain individuals for crimes against the army, to prosecute them and leave them free until their trial.
 - 2) A draft law proposal on conscientious objection was prepared in Turkey according to the UN standards. It is detailed and well-prepared and a Member of the Parliament has accepted to submit it to the Turkish Parliament. According to this draft law proposal the total objection is exempted, the alternative service is not punitive and discriminatory and it can be maximum equal in length to the military service, conscripts and even professional soldiers have right to conscientious objection, information must be adequate and the Ministry of Justice must inform the military units about the rights of the conscientious objectors.
 - 3) In the southern part of Cyprus we know no case of conscientious objector to have applied for alternative service according to the new law so far. It has lately become more difficult and bureaucratic to be exempted from the military service. Minorities are now obliged to serve too. Problems have occurred with Maronites.
 - 4) In the northern part of Cyprus the regulations after conscription are the same with those of Turkey. The police is under the security forces, namely the army. There is pressure against the conscientious objection activists even from left parties.
 - 5) In Poland the government decided to abolish conscription (see also: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/2505447/Poland-ends-army-conscription.html>).
 - 6) A new Opinion of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (No. 16/2008 Turkey, Halil Savda case) said that conscientious objection to military service rises from the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion which is protected by the Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.



- Suggestions and ideas for actions:
 - 1) We could try to prepare a draft law proposal on conscientious objection for Greece and Cyprus as well and find a member of the parliament in each country to submit it at the same time with the Turkish member of the parliament. After that we could arrange a press conference. Hulya will send us the draft law proposal in english when it will be finalised.
 - 2) Hulya offered to make evaluation of the legal situation in Greece with regards to the European Court of Human Rights. The Greek Association of Conscientious Objectors will send her the necessary documents translated in english (legal framework and relative reports of human rights institutions and organisations).
 - 3) Gina will try to learn if there is adequate information on alternative service for the persons who receive the call-up papers for military service in Cyprus. If not, EBCO could send an official letter with this and other concerns on conscientious objection.
 - 4) In Cyprus the focus could be the demilitarisation of the island in general. A good idea for joint action could be to do something jointly on 15 May 2009. We could do what our friends did in Turkey on 15 May 2005 and it was very successful: Demiliturism. It is like a guided sightseeing tour around the war monuments and militaristic symbols. Murat assured us that there are plenty of them in Nicosia. It is a peaceful symbolic action and could receive support and publicity. EBCO had already planned its meeting for that time in Cyprus and Hulya thought to suggest the same to WRI so that we have even bigger participation. It is important that both Greek and Turkish conscientious objectors and antimilitarist activists join the action. Another idea for joint action was a symbolic action outside the hospital where persons are exempted from military service.
- Relevant speeches in the seminar:
 - 1) Coskun Usterci (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey) spoke about militarism and how it includes and promotes hierarchy, authority, discipline, patriarchy, sexism and violence.
 - 2) Alekos Georgopoulos (Antigone) spoke about non-violent action: its four pillars (Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King), non violent social defence and some more successful examples (1923 in Germany, 1968 in Czechoslovakia and 1978 in Iran).
- Audiovisual material:
 - 1) Murat brought a new documentary film on the Cypriot issue entitled «Hidden in the Sand» by Vasia Markides. It is a great antimilitaristic and antinationalistic documentary which can also be used for our actions in Cyprus in May 2009.
 - 2) Turkish human right activist Ethem Özgüven showed us three antiwar video spots he has made to be used for actions for free. They are entitled «no more war» and can be downloaded from his website: <http://ozguven.bilgi.edu.tr/spots.html>.

PARTICIPANTS	ORGANIZATIONS
Coskun Usterci	Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
Hulya Ucpinar	Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
Lazaros Petromelidis	Greek Association of Conscientious Objectors
Dimitris-Lazaros Koros	Amnesty International, Greek Section
Alexia Tsouni	European Bureau for Conscientious Objection
Murat Kananti	Initiative for Conscientious Objection in Cyprus
Gina Chappa	Initiative for Conscientious Objection in Cyprus
Beran Djmal	Youth Center Cyprus
Melanie Dominiak	Prevention and Resocialization Association "AD.REM"

TURKEY

Tuesday, 14 October 2008

Dear Friends,

I would like to draw attention to a **new conscientious objector in Turkey**. His name is **Fatih Karayay**. As we have corresponded with Gerd in previous mails, he has been in the condition of a draft evader for many years, he ignored the calls to military, very much like thousands of draft evaders in the country. However, he is fed up with being an evader for he cannot integrate himself into social security scheme, he cannot do a proper registered job, etc.

He declared his conscientious objection last Friday in Ankara and was immediately taken under custody by the police. The police talked to him for a few hours, trying to convince him to change his mind, and then they released him on condition that he will submit to the military unit in Tokat on Wednesday, October 15th (tomorrow). I have been contacting him for a week. He plans to go to Tokat, to the military unit next week. There he will declare his conscientious objection once more, after he submits to the military. Then expectedly, the same vicious cycle of military court - military prison will follow. However, it is not easy to say what exactly will happen because lately the army has started to use a mechanism to bypass the issue; which is giving the conscientious objector a health report declaring the person 'psychosocially unfit for military' (what this 'psychosocially unfit' means is quite unclear). They have used this sort of report in the cases of Halil Savda and Mehmet Bal. The court cases about these people are not closed, but they have been released from prison.

He is supported mainly by the Human Rights Association (İHD), and they provide lawyers to him. He is asking for international support; and I wanted to communicate his demand to you. What sort of a treatment he will face, we will see after he goes to the military unit. I will keep posting any information on his case.

Best Regards,

Feyda Sayan
EBCO Correspondent
Ankara



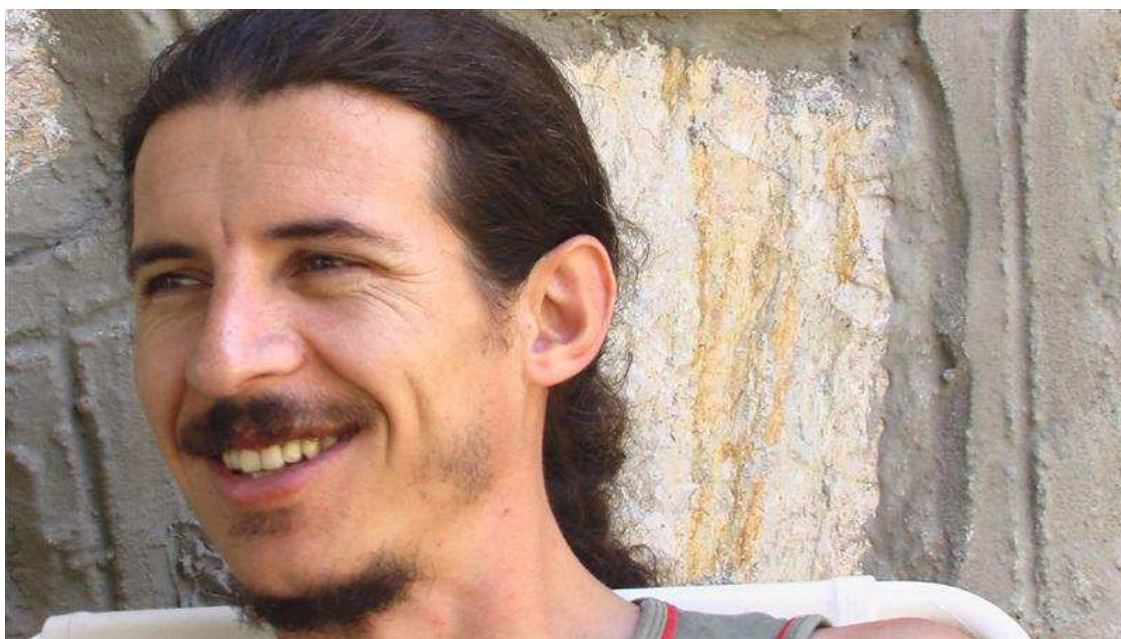
Fatih Karayay with a water bottle in his hand while he is being taken into custody after his declaration.

Mehmet Bal's unusual path to conscientious objection

Turkish conscientious objector Mehmet Bal was released from military prison on June 24, 2008. He was taken into custody on June 8th in Istanbul, after a routine ID-check on the basis of being a deserter. The decision to release Bal was given based on a preliminary military hospital report that "he is not fit for military service". However, he is still on trial for "consistent disobedience to military orders". There were various reports about the torture and ill-treatment that Bal had gone through during his stay in Adana military hospital.

Bal had first declared his conscientious objection in October 2002, after serving 9,5 months in the army. He was tried and acquitted for charges of "disobedience" and "alienating the public from military service". However, he is being charged for the same "offence" due to the legal loophole in Turkish legal system which does not define and recognize the right to conscientious objection. This legal loophole condemns conscientious objectors to a vicious cycle of "military unit – military court – military prison"; making it possible to be charged and tried for an indefinite number of times.

Mehmet Bal's story is particularly interesting, for he used to be an ultra-nationalist. Before he started military service, he had been involved in the murdering of a goldsmith with two other people in his hometown, Uşak. When the police investigation finally discovered Bal's role in the crime, he was doing his military service. He was put in the military prison during the court case; at the end of which he was convicted for murder. In his years of military prison, he met the conscientious objector Osman Murat Ülke (Ossi) who was there for having refused military service. Mehmet Bal was influenced by Ossi's ideas, as well as his rich library. In an interview to Turkey's Hürriyet newspaper, Bal says he started reading and questioning himself: "I started reading whatever I found. All the Russian classics, everything... Books helped me put my experience in perspective. I was in great pain for what I did. I internalized the feeling that whatever the reason, killing a person can never have a justification. I questioned everything in my life". The book that had the greatest effect on him was Dostoyevski's 'Crime and Punishment': "Crime and Punishment was totally about me; the only difference was the name of the character".



After a total of 7 years in prison, he was taken back to his military unit to finish military service. He refused to touch weapons and declared his conscientious objection in October 24, 2002. He says "it was not only an objection to militarism, it was an objection to all sorts of violence, in every realm of life".

Mehmet Bal is still struggling for his right to conscientious objection, and suffering the "civil death" problem that awaits conscientious objectors of Turkey.

Feyda Sayan
EBCO Correspondent
Ankara



RESOLUTION ON AN ARMS TRADE TREATY ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**13-15 November 2008
Rotterdam (the Netherlands)**

SUBMITTED BY EBCO

Every year 740.000 people – most of them children and youth – die by small weapons which makes it the fourth deadly reason to die for people between the age of 14 and 44 years, a recent report by the French Institut de haute etudes et de développement reported in Geneva. There are at least 640 million firearms in the world today. That's one for every ten people on the planet. Between one third and three quarters of all grave human rights violations reported by Amnesty International involve the use of small arms and light weapons. Between 10 and 14 billion units of military small arms ammunition are produced every year – that's roughly two bullets for every man, woman and child on the planet. Every year, at least 1 million firearms are lost or stolen worldwide. Nearly 60% of the world's firearms are in the hands of private individuals.
(<http://www.controlarms.org/en/documents%20and%20files/killer-facts2>)

Despite the suffering and poverty fuelled by irresponsible arms transfers, there is still no comprehensive, binding international treaty on the control of trade in conventional arms. Whereas the global family succeeded to overcome a huge number of diseases like pest and cholera this illness is far from being cured.

Since October 2003 the Control Arms Campaign (jointly run by Amnesty International, IANSA and Oxfam) has been calling for a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), a legally binding international instrument, which will draw together and consolidate states' current obligations under international law. If properly implemented, such an ATT would reduce the human cost associated with the proliferation of conventional arms. It would prevent unscrupulous arms suppliers finding the weakest point in the supply chain, and ensure that all arms exporters and importers are abiding by the same high standards regarding the use, management and transfer of arms, leading to a more secure world.

The idea of a global ATT was inspired by Nobel Peace Laureates and developed by lawyers, human rights organisations, and humanitarian NGOs. It now enjoys the support of a growing number of governments, as well as more than 800 civil society organisations and over one million people worldwide.

In December 2006, 153 governments voted in favour of a global Arms Trade Treaty in the UN General Assembly. This work has started now.

The European Youth Forum:

Expresses its deep concern that every day, over one thousand people most of them youth under age of 21 die as a consequence of armed violence while thousands more are victims of severe human rights violations;

Underlines the importance of an Arms Trade Treaty to strictly control the global arms trade in order to protect everyone's rights and lives;

Urges governments to support the Arms Trade Treaty process at the UN, and ensure it moves swiftly to a negotiation phase and is brought to a successful conclusion;

Requests to reduce radically the production of small weapons and put them under international control and effectively sanction illegal weapons transfer into conflict zones;

Asks for a global Arms Trade Treaty based on the following "5 Golden Rules" not allowing States to authorise international transfers of conventional arms or ammunition where they will:

(i) be used or are likely to be used for gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international human rights law.

(ii) have an impact that would clearly undermine sustainable development or involve corrupt practices;

(iii) provoke or exacerbate armed conflict in violation of their obligations under the UN Charter and existing treaties.

(iv) contribute to an existing pattern of violent crime.

(v) risk being diverted for one of the above outcomes or for acts of terrorism.



Our resolution was adopted with the national youth organisations voting 20 yes, 3 no and 5 abstentions and the international youth organisations voting 30 yes, 0 no and 5 abstentions.

*Alexia Tsouni
EBCO General Secretary
Athens*

JEAN-JACQUES DE FELICE

Our friend Jean-Jacques de Felice has passed away. As Vice-President of the Human Rights League (LDH) he was, after Jean Gauchon, the main barrister for conscientious objectors. He defended dozens of conscientious objectors and absentee soldiers. He was an eminent member of the Union Pacifiste Francaise (UPF) and always took part in our meetings, bringing to them his active participation and enthusiastic support. He was also President of the Comité Louis Lecoin for supporting the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection. We could always count on him for a legal opinion or for a trial. How many times have we called on him to defend a conscientious objector? He himself called on us when he needed a witness for an isolated conscientious objector.

Nor will we forget the UPF, represented by our Secretary Thérèse Collet, who faced a trial in 1977 for sticking up posters with drawings by Cabu that were considered insulting to the army. This was a truly anti-militarist court case, with important witnesses, notably Maurice Laisant, Henri Rosier and Theodore Monod. Jean-Jacques had invited two other barristers, including one from England who appeared in his wig! That gave the trial an international dimension. He defended Larzac, and also defended those without papers. Some people were surprised to see this non-violent man defending former terrorists, in particular Nathalie Menigon: the French government should keep to its commitments.

He was known at an international level for his appearances in other countries, notably in Madrid during the Franco era, in Athens during the time of the colonels and in Tahiti and Nouméa in the Overseas Territories; he was there to defend great causes. During the Algerian war he defended both the FLN (National Liberation Front) and the conscientious objectors. He was also often asked to give talks and lectures in favour of pacifism and non-violence.



It was Jean-Jacques de Felice, together with Louis Joinet (France's representative at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva), who, at the request of Maurois, formed the working group to put forward proposals for the new law on conscientious objection in 1983. Groups of conscientious objectors and the movements that supported them were represented. He was always present, and combined his legal skills with his commitment to human rights, his pacifist convictions, his compassion for the victims of injustice and his friendship for activists. He had moral authority in respect of institutions and, simultaneously, the complete confidence of those whom he defended.

Nearly three hundred people, in spite of the summer holidays, were present at the Père Lachaise Cemetery to pay him their last respects. Former conscientious objectors whom he had defended were there, as were representatives of associations, members of the LDH and of CIMADE; colleagues were also there, activists from Larzac came up to Paris, and a former member of the FLN came specially from Algiers. Our friend Lucio lent us his room so that we could get together after the ceremony.

We will always be grateful to Jean-Jacques for having defended conscientious objectors and for allowing our convictions to be recognised.

Maurice Montet
Delegate Union Pacifiste Francaise
Paris

Book Publication: “History of Conscientious Objection in Europe”

...is expected to be realised in 2009.

Those interested in receiving copies for distribution please write to ebco@ebco-beoc.eu

The background of the project is the work on the exhibition “History of Conscientious Objection in Europe”. This exhibition was conceived and carried out by **Dr. Guido Grünewald** [Historian; board member of the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) and international speaker of the German Peace Society - United War Resisters (DFG-VK)] and **Günter Knebel** [Director of the Protestant Association for the Care of Conscientious Objectors (EAK)/Germany - EBCO Member Organisation]. It is now permanently installed in the European Peace Museum in Stadtschlaining/Austria.

The exhibition consists of six units:

- (1) *From Antiquity to World War I;*
- (2) *World War I until the 1920s;*
- (3) *Between the Wars: Antimilitaristic Discussion in Europe;*
- (4) *After World War II;*
- (5) *State and Conscientious Objection;*
- (6) *The Struggle for the Human Right of Conscientious Objection.*

In each of these units the issue of conscientious objection is being looked at with consideration of the social and political background and circumstances of the specific time and region. The explanatory texts and comments as well as several anecdotes and stories of activists, campaigns and organisations are richly illustrated by photos, posters and other material. For the first time the history of conscientious objection is looked at from a truly European perspective rather than merely combining national perspectives. Thus typical elements in the development of conscientious objection from an idea to an organized movement and (partial) state recognition are illustrated by examples from various countries without neglecting national particularities or missing individual stories.

We intend to extend the history of conscientious objection beyond the very limited space of an exhibition and to reach more people. Therefore we plan to publish a book (about 220 pages) with a parallel text both in English and German. The book will be based on sound historical scholarship and simultaneously be popular and appealing to a broader public with the use of photos and rather short text documents.

In a first edition about 1.500 copies will be printed. We plan to distribute the book via EBCO and its member organizations as well as via other organizations sympathetic to conscientious objection and via peace museums.

Dr. Guido Grünewald
Historian; board member of EBCO
Cologne

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Resp.: Gerd Greune, Brussels/Jerusalem

Contributions from:

Feyda Sayan, Ankara
Alexia Tsouni, Athens
Maurice Montet, Paris
Dr. Guido Grünewald, Cologne

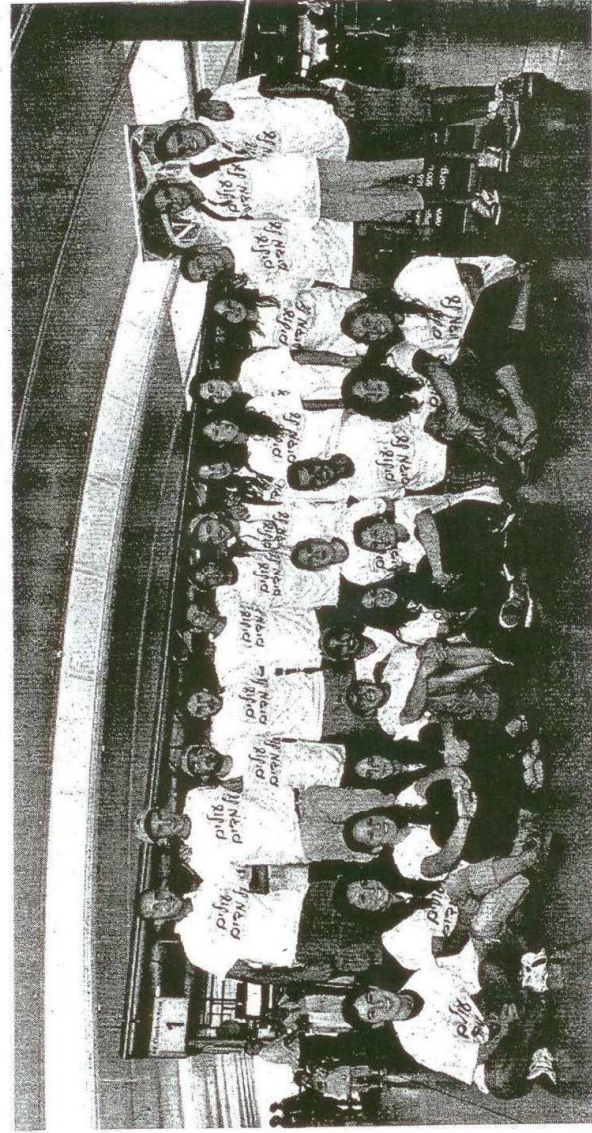
Pacifists assail Israel Scouts for recruiting army enlistees overseas

By Chanan Liphshitz

Local pacifists this week sharply criticized the Israel Scouts movement for recruiting ex-Israelis and Diaspora Jews to enlist into the Israeli military, saying its project "cynically brainwashes children into joining Israel's foreign legion." Over the past five years, the Garin Tzabar project, which the Israel Scouts founded in 1991, has seen a 500-percent spike in participation. This week, the final members of a record-breaking cohort of 160 army-age Jews from the West, predominantly from the U.S., arrived in Israel. They are set to enlist in the coming weeks.

Twenty of the participants of the program, which the movement runs in partnership with the Israel Defense Forces, the Jewish Agency, MASA and the Absorption Ministry, are new immigrants. The remaining 140 are children of ex-Israelis.

"The cooperation between the Israeli military and Israel's branch of the Scouts movement, the result of which is 'Garin Tzabar,' is incredibly scandalous," says Russian-born Sergely Sandler from New Profile — a movement devoted to countering militarism in Israeli society. Ruth Hiller, New Profile's U.S.-born co-founder, said the organization has been monitoring Garin Tzabar for a long time. New Profile's youth group coordinator, Raanan Forshner, said he



Eugene Gologorsky

Garin Tzabar recruits on Tuesday at JFK Airport in New York just before coming to Israel.

raeli parents who wanted an Israel-oriented base of support for their children. "We give a social framework and facilitate enlistment issues for the recruits — that's all," he said.

New Profile's Sandler said, "The recruitment effort is here disguised as a seemingly harmless youth activity, backed by the 'brand name' of the Scouts." Calling the use of scout symbols "doubly deplorable," he added, "The Israeli Scouts movement should be disaffiliated from the international one and should not be allowed to use the name or symbols of the Scouts in any future activity, for using this name and these symbols in such a cynical way and for such immoral purposes."

The Geneva-based World Organization of the Scout Movement did not reply to Anglo File's requests for a reaction to these complaints.

According to data compiled by the organizers of Garin Tzabar, 80 percent of the project's graduates immigrate to Israel. The families of more than 30 percent of graduates eventually follow them and move to Israel. Acknowledging this as an achievement, Raanan Forshner, New Profile youth coordinator, said, "Let Israel appeal to young American Jews by boasting a modern, advanced society, instead of brandishing a powerful army. Surely, we have better things to offer."

indistinguishable from any American his age.

Boasting an impressive knowledge of IDF combat units, which he says he picked up on the internet, Daniel Wolowitz, 20, came to Garin Tzabar specifically to request facilitation of his enlistment. Wolowitz, who was born in New York to ex-Israeli parents, said he picked Tzabar after consulting with friends on the best way to enlist.

One Tzabar guide said most recruits are not Scouts gradu-

of the program's recruits, several said they had contacted Garin Tzabar, and not the other way around, after deciding to enlist. "I talked about joining the army for years," Edan Ben-Atar, 20, from Maryland said at the Nordia Guesthouse near Netanya, where some of the recruits currently reside.

"But I don't think it would have happened if it weren't for the [Garin Tzabar] program."

Tzabar participants do express enthusiasm about joining the army. But in a conversation on Tuesday with some

was "alarmed" at the growth in the numbers. "Equipped with very little if any information and understanding of the complicated network of conflicts in the Middle East, and children are ideal targets for such recruitment efforts," said Sandler. "It is not hard to turn them into enthusiastic 'volunteers' to the army."

Tzabar participants do express enthusiasm about joining the army. But in a conversation on Tuesday with some

ates or trainees at all, and join Garin Tzabar and the Israel Scouts groups in the U.S. for the sole purpose of entering the IDF through the program. The Garin Tzabar staff, he said, is made up of fewer than 10 individuals.

"We don't indoctrinate or convince any of the recruits," said Idan Ivanovici, himself a Tzabar graduate who worked as an emissary of the program in the U.S. Ivanovici explained the Israel Scouts abroad started out as a solution for ex-