

The first referent to speak at the opening of the conference was Christian Bartolf of the Gandhi Information Centre (Berlin), who runs the administration and continuing development of the International Manifest you find below. By their signatures the – famous – signatories of this manifest declare amongst others that they consider conscientious objection to military taxes as a stepp towards peace (*we have put he corresponding term in bold type on next page, second line*).

notes by Gertie Brammer

This manifesto has been translated into more than 25 languages and it has been signed by many signatories, among them four Nobel Peace Laureates. It is aimed to have the Manifesto signed by more individuals who are publicly active in Peace, Ecology and Human Rights issues or in Scientific and Cultural spheres.

Please address your signature (with name, address and date) to the:

Gandhi Information Center, P.O. Box (Postfach) 210109, 10501 Berlin, Germany

MANIFESTO AGAINST CONSCRIPTION AND THE MILITARY SYSTEM

In the name of humanity,

for the sake of all civilians threatened by war crimes,

especially women and children, and

for the benefit of Mother Nature suffering from war preparations and warfare,

We, the undersigned, plead for the universal abolition of conscription as one major and

decisive step towards complete disarmament.

We remember the message of 20th century-humanists:

"It is our belief that conscript armies, with their large corps of professional officers, are a grave menace to peace. Conscription involves the degradation of human personality, and the destruction of liberty. Barrack life, military drill, blind obedience to commands, however unjust and foolish they may be, and deliberate training for slaughter undermine respect for the individual, for democracy and human life.

It is debasing human dignity to force men to give up their life, or to inflict death against their will, or without conviction as to the justice of their action. The State which thinks itself entitled to force its citizens to go to war will never pay proper regard to the value and happiness of their lives in peace. Moreover, by conscription the militarist spirit of aggressiveness is implanted in the whole male population at the most impressionable age. By training for war men come to consider war as unavoidable and even desirable." (1)

"Conscription subjects individual personalities to militarism. It is a form of servitude. That nations routinely tolerate it, is just one more proof of its debilitating influence.

Military training is schooling of body and spirit in the art of killing. Military training is education for war. It is the perpetuation of war spirit. It hinders the development of the desire for peace." (2)

We encourage all people to emancipate themselves from the military system and, therefore, apply methods of non-violent resistance on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, as they were:

Conscientious Objection (by conscripts and professional soldiers, in war and peace time), Civil Disobedience, War Tax Resistance, Non-Cooperation with military research, military production and arms trade.

In our age of electronic warfare and media manipulation, we cannot deny our responsibility to act in time, according to our consciences. It is high time to demilitarize our minds and our societies, to speak out against war and all preparations for it.

Now is the time to act, now is the time to create and to live in a way that saves the lives of others.

(1) Anti-Conscription Manifesto 1926, signed among others by Henri Barbusse, Annie Besant, Martin Buber, Edward Carpenter, Miguel de Unamuno, Georges Duhamel, Albert Einstein, August Forel, M.K. Gandhi, Kurt Hiller, Toyohiko Kagawa, George Lansbury, Paul Loebe, Arthur Ponsonby, Emanuel Radl, Leonhard Ragaz, Romain Rolland, Bertrand Russell, Rabindranath Tagore, Fritz von Unruh, H.G. Wells

(2) Against Conscription and the Military Training of Youth 1930, signed among others by Jane Addams, Paul Birukov and Valentin Bulgakov (collaborators of Leo Tolstoy), John Dewey, Albert Einstein, August Forel, Sigmund Freud, Arvid Jaernefelt, Toyohiko Kagawa, Selma Lagerloef, Judah Leon Magnes, Thomas Mann, Ludwig Quidde, Emanuel Radl, Leonhard Ragaz, Henriette Roland Holst, Romain Rolland, Bertrand Russell, Upton Sinclair, Rabindranath Tagore, H.G. Wells, Stefan Zweig

Name	Address	Date	Signature
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In following discussions about this manifest Christian Bartolf invited the participants to think about how to use it in favour of conscientious objection to military taxes and peace tax law initiatives – and also of the broader peace movement.

If you have good ideas, you may contact Christian Bartolf directly. Netzwerk Friedenssteuer would be pleased to be informed about it.

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website www.themanifesto.info

notes by Gertie Brammer