

IFGK Activity Report 2012 (until mid 2013)

In 2012, the IFGK has been joined by a new member, the journalist Mirjam Mahler (Hamburg). Thereby, the IFGK has ten active and five to six passive members. The active members are: Martin Arnold, Anne Dietrich (until end of 2012; currently she is working abroad), Reinhard Eismann, Albert Fuchs, Mirjam Mahler, Gudrun Knittel, Barbara Müller, Achim Schmitz, Christine Schweitzer und Roland Vogt. Currently inactive members are: Detlef Beck, Christoph Besemer, Björn Kunter, Giovanni Scotto, Uli Wohland und Oliver Wolleh.

Research and Education, Advising Work, Events

Martin Arnold has started to make his research on active nonviolence (satyagraha / truth force – he created a new German word, Gütekraft, to describe this force) which he has published in 2011 known by presentations, discussion circles and through active participation in various activities aiming at removing things going wrong. Among other things, he participated in the young academics conference of the professional association of German Peace Resarchers (AFK), in the conference “Gandhi 2.0?” in Frankfurt/Main, at the international meeting of the Arche Lanza del Vasto’s in St. Antoine, France, at a meeting of teachers of religion in Essen, at a meeting of the Federation for Social Defence and at a workshop on the abolition of nuclear weapons in Büchel, at a march from Offenburg – Strasbourg for the right to food and land (in solidarity with Ekta Parishad), in activities to improve public transport in his home region and for the protection of the river Elbe (pilgrimage to Hamburg).

Anne Dietrich prepared the draft of a Working Papier „Need-oriented Conflict Transformation“ and presented it at the Study Day of the IFGK in Nürnberg and at an internal meeting of the Academy for Conflict Transformation (Cologne). She supported the ‘Gütekraft’-project with advise on studies and contacts, and established contacts ot interested people. Anne will let her membership rest again from January 2013 because she is going to work again abroad in a position of the Civil Peace Service in Ethopia.

Reinhard Eismann supported the moving of the library and other administrative tasks, but otherwise had to focus on his education to become a graduated educator.

Albert Fuchs focused in 2012 mostly on the „reorientation of the German Army“, especially in the context of his participation in the *pax-christi-Commission Peace Politics* (among other things helping to draft a paper called “Soldier, where are you going?”). He also wrote reviews on various books, and is an active member of a peace group in Bonn, in the Forum Peace Psychology and in the advisory board of the magazine *Wissenschaft und Frieden*. He is preparing a Working Paper called a „Meta-critical Attempt“ on the discussion around the truth of the 9/11 narrative. He also had various tutorial contacts to students and graduates.

Mirjam Mahler is a new member of the IFGK. The graduated economist is a journalist by training, mediator and also graduated with a Master of Peace and Security Studies in Hamburg at the IFSH. From August to December 2012 she had a paid position at the IFGK to support the ‘Gütekraft’-project. In this function and in close cooperation with Martin Arnold, she placed reviews on Martin’s study in several magazines, updated the article in Wikipedia, developed proposals for the website www.guetekraft.net and identified partners for the further spreading of the ‘Guetekraft’-model. Her first own steps with practicing of the model she took with the ‘pilgrimage to protect the Elbe’ end of October 2012. This pilgrimage walked in five days from Cuxhaven to Hamburg. It was accompanied by discussions in the evenings on the consequences of the digging out of the

river Elbe, and by the handing over of some symbolic presents to Mayor Olaf Scholz.

Gudrun Knittel took part in a series of events and a radio emission on the movement of the landless in India. In this context an article by her was published in the magazine *Friedensforum* 1/2013.

Barbara Müller put her focus besides being the treasurer of IFGK on building up her free lance counselling (www.sapis.de) in the Hunsrück. The library at her place was dissolved and distributed among several other members of the IFGK to make it better accessible; a part went to the member of the advisory board Jörgen Johansen in Scandinavia.

Achim Schmitz finished in 2012 a three-year evaluation in the framework of a project called „to understand each other fairly- intercultural and social competencies in school and vocational training“ financed by XENOS. This project he did in cooperation with „act for transformation“.

He also finished a study financed by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation on the protests around the new railway station in Stuttgart (‘Stuttgart 21’). There he explores which instruments civil society uses to achieve social change to more democracy, more nonviolent conflict transformation and a society which functions in solidarity. The online version (in German) is available under http://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/Studien/Studie_Schwabenstreich_web.pdf.

And he gave courses at the Ludwig Schlaich Akademie in Waiblingen (Fachschule für Arbeitserziehung/Arbeitstherapie) on nonviolent conflict resolution and communication.

Christine Schweitzer concluded an evaluation of Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka. A second focus was continuation of the project „Citizens prevent wars“. In addition there have been diverse presentations and articles, among others a dossier for the Monitoring Project „Civil Conflict Transformation“ of the *Kooperation für den Frieden* on Syria.

There were sporadic tutorial contacts to young researchers.

Two weeks she spent on the mentioned reorganisation and move of the IFGK library. Another focus was the ongoing editing work for the magazine *Friedensforum*, among others with being responsible for the issues on Nonviolent Intervention ((1/12) and Dealing with the Past (4/12).

Since October 2012 Christine has a part-time position (0.50) as Coordinator at the Federation for Social Defence (www.soziale-verteidigung.de).

Roland Vogt shares with Achim Schmitz representation in the project „Peace Education“ in Rheinland-Pfalz.

Study Days

In spring 2012 (28.4.12) the IFGK together with the Hamburg *Archiv Aktiv* conducted a study day in Hamburg on the subject „trainings in nonviolent action“. The well frequented day dealt with the development of trainings in nonviolence since the 1970s. There were two inputs by Achim Schmitz and Renate Wanie after which the participants discussed various questions in a *World Café*.

The study day in autumn 2012 took place on the 13 October in Nürnberg, in cooperation and in the rooms of the *Peace Museum Nürnberg*. Georg Adelman (Bremen) presented his thesis on Empathy and Nonviolence, Benno Fuchs (Basel) talked about „Circus Education in Therapy for Child Soldiers“ and finally Anne Dietrich (Cologne) spoke about “Needs-based Conflict Transformation”.

The study day in spring 2013 took place in Essen on the 13th of April. Theodor Ziegler

spoke about ethics of nonviolence in religion classes in school. Renate Bruckner presented the life and work of Clara Wichmann. Melanie Husser spoke on the understanding of „peace“ in different societies, and Christine completed the day with a presentation of findings of her (still not finished) study „citizens stop or prevent war“.

Looking ahead:

The upcoming Study Day of the IFGK, in Cooperation with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Northrhine-Westfalia, has the title: „Why not civil? Can the European Union, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace, still be stopped on its way to becoming a military super power“? We expect among others Alexandro Rossi, former NP European Coordinator, and another member from EPLO (Brussels) to present. More information you find on our website.

International networking, cooperation and representation.

Martin Arnold continued to represent the IFGK at the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (AFK)* (the professional association of peace researchers in Germany).

Achim Schmitz and Roland Vogt represented the IFGK at the *Network Peace Education Rheinland-Pfalz*.

Christine Schweitzer represented the IFGK at the Council meeting of the *War Resisters' International (WRI)* in Bilbao. There she was elected a Board member of WRI.

Several members of the IFGK took part in the annual conference of the *Bund für Soziale Verteidigung (BSV)* (Federation for Social Defence) in March 2012.

Administration and PR Work

The administration of the IFGK continues to be taken care of by job share. Barbara Müller handles the finances and personnel; Achim Schmitz is responsible for the website and makes sure that there are regular reports to the BSV newsletters. Christine Schweitzer is dealing with the organisation of study days and takes care of the IFGK distribution list, the information folder and the annual report. Other tasks like the planning of study days are done on a rotating basis. Chairs of the legal association of the IFGK are Achim Schmitz and Martin Arnold; treasurer is Barbara Müller.

In February 2013 the website has been updated and is now administered using the programme Typo 3 which allows the IFGK to make new entries themselves rather than having to rely on a webmaster. The restructuring was done by Christine.

All core work of the IFGK is done on a volunteer basis.