

## Activity Report 2023

During the reporting period, the IFGK gained two new members and two inactive members returned to active status, bringing the total number of active employees to 12. They are: Martin Arnold, Christian Büttner, Anne Dietrich, Reinhard Eismann, Albert Fuchs, Kevin Kaisig, Gudrun Knittel, Barbara Müller, Julia Nennstiel, Achim Schmitz, Christine Schweitzer and Ulrich Wohland.

### Activities of IFGK members

**Martin Arnold:** The campaign *Wehrhaft ohne Waffen* (Defence without Weapons) remains his primary concern. He has given a series of lectures on social defence in northern, western and southern Germany and Thuringia, is involved in the steering group and several WoW working groups, and has also founded a regional social defence group in Essen.

He continues to be involved in refugee work, in the local peace group at Forum Billebrinkhöhe, in the initiative *Sicherheit neu denken* (Rethinking Security), in the *Entdeckung der Arche* (Discovery of the Ark) community (founder: Lanza del Vasto), and on the board of the *Kraft der Gewaltlosigkeit* (Power of Non-Violence) foundation. He also works on the editorial team of the new online magazine *gewaltfreie aktion* (non-violent action) (see Projects below).

Christian Büttner has been an active member of IFGK again since November 2023. He is involved in the non-violent action initiative group and is the contact person for IFGK in the project.

He is also supporting the relaunch of the IFGK website.

Anne Dietrich works as a peace expert for GIZ's Civil Peace Programme in Burundi, Eastern Congo and Rwanda in Bujumbura, Burundi, where she supports local partner organisations in training for non-violent conflict transformation. She tends to participate in IFGK activities online. She continues to work on the topic of "Subversive Love – Towards Needs Oriented Systemic Conflict Transformation".

**Reinhard Eismann:** Reinhard Eismann continues to be a member of the initiative group for the "Wehrhaft ohne Waffen" (Defence without Weapons) campaign and contributed to the general discussions there. Due to external circumstances, he participated in the meetings, which took place in person, online.

As a member of the foundation council, he provided detailed statements/individual votes on the three funding applications submitted during the reporting period for the *Foundation for the Power of Non-Violence*.

Among the general peace policy activities at the beginning of July 2023 was participation in the international conference "Arms control goodbye? How to deal with nuclear threats in Europe?" at the Protestant Academy in Loccum.

Kevin Kaisig is an active member of the editorial team of "Gewaltfreie Aktion" (see projects below).

In 2023, Dr Barbara Müller explored the topic of passive resistance against the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 and social defence in depth in several lectures (including at the BSV annual conference, the VB annual conference, the Ruhr Museum in Essen and in Freiburg).

In the second half of the year, she once again fundamentally revised the historical case for the conceptual further development of social defence and presented her initial findings at the study day in November. This work is part of a publication, financed and published by Irene Publishing: "Die Pläne des Feindes vorab durchkreuzen!" (Thwart the enemy's plans in advance!) From passive resistance against the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 to social defence (working title), which will be published in 2024.

In addition, she was actively involved in the preparation of the two study days in April and November

2024. Furthermore, as managing director, she is the contact person and is responsible for finances and association law, and is currently involved in recruiting young talent and research consulting.

Julia Nennstiel has begun a doctoral programme in Denmark on the topic of social defence. At the same time, she continues to work on the project "Rethinking social defence: New findings and open questions from international research on civil resistance over the last thirty years".

Dr Achim Schmitz worked as a social education worker in Krefeld and as a German lecturer in Mönchengladbach and Krefeld. He conducted communication training at the University of Stuttgart. He offered an online seminar in sociology at the Fliedner University of Applied Sciences in Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth.

As a representative of the IFGK, he carried out an evaluation assignment as part of the "Timeout for Peace" project (for professionals working with Ukrainian youth) run by the non-profit cooperative act for transformation.

Furthermore, social defence and support for conscientious objectors and deserters in war are his main peace policy priorities – with a speech at the Easter March in Krefeld and information events.

He remained active in the Peace Education Commission of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Dr Christine Schweitzer: In addition to her work as Managing Director of the BSV, she continues to work for the IFGK as editorial assistant and editor for the magazine Friedensforum ([www.friedenskooperative.de](http://www.friedenskooperative.de)). During the reporting year, she wrote various articles on social defence, civil peacekeeping and the war in Ukraine, and also gave lectures on these topics. Her work as a consultant for Nonviolent Peaceforce as part of the Good Practice Project, which aims to create a "community of practice", came to an end with the documentation of the final conference in Ferney-Voltaire/Geneva.

Together with Julia Nennstiel, she initiated the study on social defence mentioned below in the second half of 2022 and drafted two contributions as part of the study.

At the IFGK, she is responsible for member and prospect management, editing working papers and maintaining the current website.

## Study days

In 2023, the IFGK held two study days, on 1 April in Heidelberg and on 4 November in Karlsruhe.

### Programme of the study day in Heidelberg, 1 April 2023

#### Julia Nennstiel: Pacifism and Antimilitarism in Peace and Conflict Studies: A Critique - live

This contribution provides an overview of pacifist and anti-militarist research approaches in current academic discourse. What are the central themes and lines of discourse? And above all: How do pacifist/anti-militarist contributions relate to other areas of peace and conflict research, and to what extent are they (not) received? In this context, newer connections between pacifist/anti-militarist contributions and feminist or decolonial approaches will also be examined. Building on this brief input, we will discuss the future prospects of pacifist and anti-militarist approaches in academic discourse.

#### Uli Wohland: Pragmatic Pacifism: A Threefold Field of Research

The aim is to outline tasks before, during and after war. Current approaches are identified and their necessary further development is highlighted, as are ways to overcome the pacifist dilemma.

#### Dalilah Shemia-Goeke: Looking for fellow campaigners: "Waging Nonviolence" in German-speaking countries – A German news site for non-violent protest

Who would like to establish something like [WagingNonviolence.org](http://WagingNonviolence.org) – a cross-network news site on nonviolent resistance – in German-speaking countries? The idea is to publish journalistic stories from various movements that inspire and encourage reflection and action. Spreading awareness of the power of nonviolence in this way could contribute to political education, networking, exchange and collective learning. As the idea is still in its infancy, the first step is to find fellow campaigners to help realise this project.

Lea Nesselhauf: "What Germany would have to do if we took the 1.5-degree limit seriously" – (The lecture was cancelled due to illness of the speaker)

The climate crisis has the potential to exacerbate numerous existing humanitarian crises and conflicts and trigger new ones. It has long been clear that we cannot stop it simply by changing our individual behaviour. The lecture explores the question of what additional systemic and legal changes would be necessary for Germany to meet its obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement. How can our civil society contribute to this?

Kevin Kaisig: How can civil resistance be successful?

(Planned dissertation project) Civil resistance must reduce violence in order to be successful. This is demonstrated by historical examples such as the Indian independence movement under Mahatma Gandhi or the civil rights movement under Martin Luther King. But how can violence be constructively eliminated and rendered useless for those who perpetrate it?

Programme for the study day in Karlsruhe, 4 November 2023

Julia Nennstiel, Dr Christine Schweitzer: Rethinking social defence: new findings and open questions from international research on civil resistance over the last thirty years

This project collects and analyses recent findings from research on civil resistance, focusing on aspects that appear particularly relevant to the potential, difficulties, impact and conditions for success of social defence. On the one hand, the project aims to make the results of recent scientific work on civil resistance accessible and more usable for those involved in social defence at the political and practical level. At the same time, it should also reveal the need for further research on social defence in order to enable and initiate further targeted studies on social defence in the future. The project team will present its initial findings.

Dr Barbara Müller: Long live context. Why social defence must be conceived beyond civil resistance

Using the case study of "passive resistance" in the Ruhr uprising of 1923, supposedly the most comprehensive example of social defence to date, it is demonstrated that a concept of social defence involves political, financial, social and conflict-related prerequisites that can determine success or failure more than knowledge and skills of resistance.

Stephan Brües: SV in practice! Every beginning is difficult, but things are moving The concept of social defence is back! The nationwide campaign

"Defence without weapons" is attempting not only to revive it conceptually, but also to implement it in practice in model regions. In doing so, those involved are breaking new political ground in the transfer from theory to practice.

The input will highlight the local aspects of implementation using the example of the Upper Rhine border region, as well as the challenges at federal level.

Jochen Neumann: Exploring SV in practice: What observations do we make, what research questions arise?

The concept of social defence is being put into practice in three model regions through the nationwide campaign "Wehrhaft ohne Waffen" (Defence without weapons). Joint research questions are being used in an attempt to at least document the experiences. We welcome feedback from the scientific community on our approach to date: Are our research questions coherent? What other questions should be investigated? What methods and resources are available for this purpose?

#### New publications

- Working paper: Outi Arajärvi, Competencies and Commitment. What is needed for effective unarmed civilian peacekeeping? This paper examines the competencies required for unarmed civilian peacekeeping. It also discusses commitment as a special bond to the organisation or concept of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. The study is based on 25 interviews conducted at Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan, the largest project of this international peace organisation.

#### Projects

##### "Rethinking social defence"

Julia Nennstiel and Christine Schweitzer have written the first chapters of the project "Rethinking Social Defence: New Findings and Open Questions from Thirty Years of International Research on Civil Resistance". This project aims to record and analyse recent findings from research on civil resistance, focusing on aspects that appear particularly relevant to the potential, difficulties, impact and conditions for success of social defence. On the one hand, the project aims to make the results of recent scientific work on civil resistance accessible and more usable for those involved in social defence at a political and practical level. At the same time, it aims to identify research needs with regard to social defence in order to enable and initiate further targeted studies on social defence in the future. The plan is now to publish completed chapters on an ongoing basis as working papers in German.

##### non-violent action

A German-language portal is to be created based on the model of the internet portal "Waging Nonviolence". A group is driving this project forward; in April 2024, the site is to be launched, which will be called "gewaltfreie aktion" (nonviolent action), in reference to a now defunct magazine published by the German branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. The IFGK supports the project, in which some of its members are involved, financially by covering the internet costs.

##### Bibliography on nonviolent action

The bibliography of German-language literature on non-violent action, social defence and civil disobedience compiled by Reiner Steinweg is to be updated and then continuously maintained. A request for support is being prepared for this purpose and will be submitted to the German Foundation for Peace Research. The IFGK is also contributing financially. Kevin Kaisig is prepared to carry out the work.

##### New website

The IFGK has to move its domain because the website host is ceasing operations. The IFGK has decided to switch to another provider and redesign its website. Christian Büttner is responsible for this work.