

October 1, 2012 "Commit Universities to peace: Yes to civil clauses!" brochure of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility (**INES**) and the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (**IALANA**)

Liberation of Universities

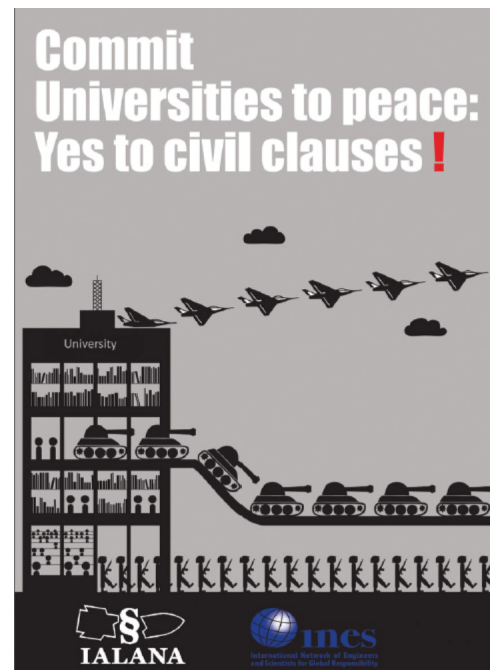
by Dietrich Schulze

"Autonomy and freedom of universities, what do they mean today? A responsibility of students, academic teachers and researchers to work for a future in peace, with equal cooperation across the globe, independence from private business and military interests."

These were the introductory thoughts of the author's article ¹ "Alternative ambassadors against military research at universities - a tale of autonomy, freedom and some more", written 2 ³/₄ years ago. It had been encouraged by the lecture "Abandonment of military research as a challenge" by peace researcher Subrata Ghoshroy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology MIT in the United States, delivered on 1 December 2009 at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology KIT in Germany, which is a merger of the previous University and Research Center of Karlsruhe. Ghoshroy spoke in the KIT's Redtenbacher lecture hall – at that time occupied by students during their education strike -, invited by the local Student's Trade Union Group.

In January 2009, the majority of students in Karlsruhe who participated in a referendum had voted against any form of participation in military research, and demanded a Civil Clause ² for the entire KIT. The campaign by the "Initiative group against military research at universities" - in which trade unions, peace groups and student representatives work together - found the support of an international appeal ³, signed by more than 150 prominent personalities from all over the world, including the Mayor of Hiroshima Tadatoshi Akiba and Physics Nobel Prize laureate Jack Steinberger.

What has happened since then? The referendum and appeal were completely ignored by the former Christian-Democrat state government, and are also opposed



¹ <http://www.stattweb.de/files/civil/Doku20100113.pdf> (German/English). – similarly (in German): NRhZ Online-Flyer Nr. 233 <http://www.nrhz.de/flyer/beitrag.php?id=14694> and BdWi Forum Wissenschaft 2/2010 <http://www.bdwi.de/forum/archiv/archiv/3781100.html>

² A Civil Clause is a binding obligation, contained in university statutes and/or state or federal legislation, committing universities only to pursue peaceful and civilian ends in their research and teaching.

³ INES Internationaler Appell Abandonment of Military Research - October Support the University of Karlsruhe/Germany /KIT to keep their Civil Clause. <http://www.inesglobal.com/abandonment-of-military-research.phtml>

by the new Green minister of science in the state of Baden-Württemberg (in office since May 2011). But this contentious dispute has inspired a Civil Clause movement, growing steadily all over Germany. Student referendums – with positive results – also took place at the universities of Cologne and Frankfurt-am-Main. The number of German universities with some form of civil clause in its statutes has doubled to 10. A nationwide coordination group “Universities for Peace – Yes to the Civil Clause” came into existence. We know of activities at some 40 universities, and three Civil Clause Conferences have been held at the universities of Braunschweig (Brunswick), Tübingen and Karlsruhe. The last one in June 2012, on the “responsibility of science”, is summarized in a new booklet “Disarm, be indignant! - Universities: workshops for the future or service providers for war?”⁴.

But at the same time we are witnessing mounting pressure from the military-industrial complex, supported by the German federal government. Research programs for new weapons like killer drones, medical research against “terrorist attacks with chemical or biological weapons” and accompanying science for military occupation and war are in the increase.

Many university officials and responsible state governments (including Social-Democrat/Green coalitions) follow this disastrous course. The German federal research minister has been in the headlines recently for directly funding defense contractors with large sums from the civilian budget. These, in turn, lure short-budgeted universities with external funding - for their own ends, of course. Universities with a high proportion of “external funding” are then rewarded with a status of “excellence”, which means extra funds from the government. A self-reinforcing civil-military cycle, so to speak. And some of those officials who are playing this game of captivity have issued warnings that universities would “lose their freedom” by introducing a civil clause. It could have been thought up by George Orwell.

It is time now to start a peaceful battle to liberate universities from being embraced by military interests. A good motto is “With weapons of mind - against the spirit of weapons”. Germany has every reason to play an active role in this international battle. Two world wars started from Germany. “No more war!” was the unanimous call of Germans in East and West after liberation. Martin Loewenberg from Munich, a survivor of the holocaust, one of the few German resistance fighters who are still alive, said in his address to one of the civil clause conferences that this motto had guided him throughout his whole life. “Without active support by the German Army, there would have been no holocaust. That's why I still fight German militarism by opposing oath-taking ceremonies, security conferences, and other militarization of everyday life.”

Universities should devote their brains on environmental, social, and human problems for a peaceful, sustainable and just world.

⁴ Jetzt entrüsten! Hochschulen: Zukunftswerkstätten oder Kriegs»Dienstleister«?
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<http://www.stattweb.de/files/civil/Doku20120819.pdf>