

Declaration of the German –French seminar

Initiated by the “No to war- No to Nato Network” with the support of “Mouvement de la paix”, France, Collectif Otan – Afghanistan – Non a la guerre- Non a l’Otan” Network France and “Kooperation für den Frieden”, Germany”

What German-French history teaches us – peace is the categorical imperative

On January 19/20 2013 (for the first time in almost 15 years), representatives of the German and French peace movements met for a two day seminar in Berlin.

This meeting was convened to highlight the holding of the gathering of members of the German Bundestag and the French National Assembly, to commemorate and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Élysée Treaties. It was these treaties that lay the foundation to the French-German friendship and peaceful relations in the second half of the 20th century.

This has been a friendship of states and governments but first and foremost a friendship of peoples – after hundreds of years of hatred and wars. Peace and reconciliation between France and Germany is a historic achievement and needs to be revived, celebrated and amplified. We believe that more commitment for peace is necessary, especially from the bottom up, as both governments currently wage military interventions while preparing to celebrate the centenary of the beginning of World War I in 2014.

Peace between Germany and France does not mean that France and Germany do not wage wars anymore! Both are currently involved in wars.

We reject the official talks of peace as their only function is to cover up the role these governments play in war and armed politics. We state: France and Germany are not at war against each other but fight in shoulder for shoulder for a neo-liberal, geo-strategic redistribution of the world and for the securing of profits and resources. They carry out these objectives in Mali, in Afghanistan, in Somalia, and in the Balkans. The so called war on terror strengthens and develops “terrorist forces” and is completely inappropriate to eradicate the social and ideological background of fundamentalism. War is terror against people. Peace and solutions to global challenges can only be achieved on the basis of civil conflict resolution, social justice, democracy, balance and reconciliation amongst the people and with nature.

We reject any form of intervention as a modern continuation of colonialism.
War does not solve but only intensifies problems!

Peace-endangering developments shall not be forgotten and covered up – on both sides of the Rhine. Especially now, since the deep politico-economic European crisis and Europe’s involvement in wars, historic developments and acute challenges have to be discussed. The German and French peace movements want to work together and in unison on this task of “peace and history of peace from the bottom up” and want to engage others, such as historians and Mayors for Peace, etc.

The aggressive role of both countries in the preparation of World War I, as well as the long-lasting, active – and often political– engagement for peace needs to be much more in our focus.

World War I was not an “accident of history” but the inevitable continuation of politics of redistribution of world control in the beginning of the 20th century.

Historically, the role of resistance in the fight against the barbarian German fascism is not properly reviewed. More light needs to be shed on the fight of the French people (with few Germans) against occupation and terror. Germany’s responsibility for two world wars must never be forgotten, especially 50 years after the signing of the Élysée Treaties. France’s crimes in the colonial fight against the freedom and independence of Algeria and at the Indo-China war, neither the military interventions in Africa should also not be covered up.

Peace and freedom advocated by the peace movements of both countries is currently being prosecuted, attacked and discredited.

Today, the European militarisation of the Lisbon Treaty stands squarely against, opposing peace and disarmament. The European Union’s global interventionist politics brings war, suffering, and destruction to many parts of the world, among others to Afghanistan and Mali.

France still is a full blown nuclear power while Germany follows an illegal politics of nuclear sharing. “Never again war”, the main fundamental lesson of two world wars has not been learned by the governments of Germany and France. We advocate a world without nuclear weapons and war.

We know: that the neo-liberal politics of the governments on both sides of the Rhine violates daily the fundamental human rights in both countries and worldwide. They created a climate of war, of concepts of enemies and banalize the consequences of war

For this weekend and for the next two years our aim is to discuss what has been forgotten, concealed, and covered-up by these political ‘celebrations’. We plan to meet for a second seminar in Verdun in the January of 2014 – 100 years later. We also want to continue the discussions of our open questions. The complexity of the international situation requires new and open answers.

Our peace seminar is also a protest against the planned official festivities. Peace, friendship among peoples, disarmament, and civil conflict resolution should be the center of all reflections and considerations. We need a demilitarization of the minds. Our aim is a culture of peace.

War does not solve any problem! Peace is the last resort!

Berlin, January 20th 2013