

INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS (I.O.T.)
Vlaamse afdeling van de War Resisters' International



(Opnieuw) opgericht in 1965

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**Goedendag,
Bonjour,
Dear All,**

The trilingual text below shortly reminds what happened on the level of the Internationale van Oorlogstegenstanders (IOT) in the seventies (IOT = section of the War Resisters' International).

It's not possible, however, to explain in a few paragraphs what really happened and I therefore refer to the tens of reports (hundreds of pages) I have written about this awful question since the beginning of 1978. (A few of them can be read on my website www.jeanverstraeten.be under the title 'War Resistance'.)

The truth of what I reported can be checked on the basis of tens of thousands of documents, more particularly of a file of 4,000 pages I made in 1995.

Much can already be verified on the basis of the publications between 1962 and 1978 in our bulletins. You will find tens and tens of texts, two hundred pages or so written by the undersigned, none by Lasure, none by Poelman, almost none by Rutgeers and Van Thienen (Biesemans rather wrote in the paper of the BDJ : Civil Service for Youth). This was the truth at the moment when in 1978, a few full-time newcomers, having appropriated the state subsidies, stole our paper like all the rest.

The usurpers of the IOT have never verified anything. And unable to proceed on the basis of truth and justice, they thought that the most brutal violence could help them. In 1986 already Rutgeers threatened the undersigned with financial ruin. Later on, in 1995, Biesemans, Rutgeers and Lasure threatened him with repeated imprisonment and deprivation of the financial minimum (1). On what grounds? Because he had been inspired as a war resister and a world federalist from early adolescence on? Because he had declared himself an illegal conscientious objector in 1962, not knowing where that would lead to? (That changed in 1965 : I was among the half a dozen of conscripts legally recognized at the first session of the Belgian Dutch speaking Council On Conscientious Objection.) Because, unlike Lasure, I had played an initiating role in reintroducing the WRI in this region? In this connection, I remind that on the level of the CGVA/CANVP = Committee for Non-Violent Peace Action we had been discussing a possible reintroduction since 1963. This can be verified on the ground of documents like letters of Jean Van Lierde, secretary of the Belgian Internationale des Résistants à la Guerres and of agendas of meetings of the Committee for Non-Violent Peace Action. Among many other documents it is also e.g. letters of Jean Van Lierde which prove that there was a contact address for our region in Hove from 1965 till 1971 (if not later, which can be discussed).

It is to be noted that nobody in this country has ever claimed to have excluded anybody as a WRI-member. If, however, that would have been the case, the eliminators of others should have been able to give clear answers to questions like the following :

- 1) Who excluded whom?
- 2) On which grounds?
- 3) By which legitimate procedure?
- 4) How did the excluders respect the right of defence of the members they sought to eliminate?

Nobody has given any answer to such questions, not even the full-timers at the secretariat in the Van Elewijckstraat in Brussels who on the pseudo-meeting of the 12th December 1977 founded the so called v.z.w. IOT (v.z.w. : a legal non-profit organisation).

It is to be noted still that those wanting the exclusion of others should first of all have been in a position to become members of the WRI. This was not the case of Franca Poelman, a teacher detached from education for health reasons and transferred to the Van Elewijckstraat in Brussels, where a secretariat of the IOT was supposed to be since the early summer of 1976. She had never been active in the framework of the IOT/WRI; she even said she was not really motivated to do so and then... accepted her nomination as a "chairwoman" of that same IOT... Besides Poelman, Louis Fleurbay and Patrik Lasure, who both played an evil role in what happened, had not been conscientious objectors in the sense of the WRI and could not have signed its Declaration for that reason.

Jan Rutgeers and Ludo Van Thienen were conscientious objectors, but how did they treat the IOT? From May of 1976 on Rutgeers and Biesemans, both full timers on the secretariat of the Van Elewijckstraat in Brussels, should have coordinated the IOT-secretariat. In reality, they neglected it as had never been done before. This is also reflected by the fact that in twenty months time, i.e. from May of 1976 to December of 1977, the paper was edited three times only (it was supposed to be a bi-monthly). It is furthermore reflected by e.g. a leaflet in orange colour written and published by Rutgeers about CO-law. The author, a good student, had obtained a *degree in law* (??) at the age of twenty-two only. On a principle he was quite able to expose the subject. Nevertheless, the leaflet, already printed, appeared to be completely unusable and had to be thrown away. What this proved? Rutgeers, a CO doing civil service for the BDJ = Civil Service For Youth since spring of 1976, still at the end of 1977 showed no interest in the work he was supposed to do for conscientious objectors.

In 1977 Van Thienen, as a conscientious objector in civil service, joined the other full timers in the Van Elewijckstraat in Brussels. He did hardly work for the IOT either. Both he and Rutgeers only started to be active at the end of 1977, when they were promised to receive separate state subsidies and jobs for the IOT. Instead of being active first and then possibly becoming a paid full timer, they only started working really when they got money and jobs. They acted in a way absolutely contrary to the spirit and even the letter of the WRI-Declaration.

That they did not understand the meaning of the latter was also proved by the names they gave to the IOT after they had usurped it in 1977/1978. They called it "Volksbeweging voor de Vrede" = Popular Movement for Peace, a name that contains a denial of the individual inner motivation needed to declare oneself a conscientious objector. And twelve years later they still had not understood their misconception, as they then changed the name of IOT in "Forum voor Vredesactie" = *Forum* for Peace Action.

This being said, those last decades health has allowed me only a very limited outdoors activity. This, age aiding, is now much more the case than at any time. Indoors, however, I have ever remained active somehow. I can mention e.g. that in the course of those last seven years I have

received more than 50,000 e-mails. I also have printed nearly twenty thousand pages (as I have difficulty in reading on the screen, particularly in English). After 1977/78, I have remained a coordinator of the local address of the Registry of World Citizens. Moreover, since 1983, I have seen myself faced with chilling crimes against humanity perpetrated at a distance by means of a whole of directed energy weapons. Was my own life ruined by them as well? My health had partly collapsed since the late fifties, but in the sixties, according to sources I am not entitled to reveal, I have become a victim of criminal, extremely damaging experimentations proceeded to by rogue elements within NATO. If I had not been such a victim, people like Biesemans and Rutgeers, seconded by Lasure, would probably not have been able to proceed to their intolerable and illegitimate manipulations. Isolation of the victims appears everywhere to be a tactic of the totalitarian elements who practice remote torture. In a report of the 17th April 1998 dictated by the paranormal sources of 'Dr. Y' e.g., it runs : "Jean (...) was chosen as a study object by groups (...) in the framework of their criminal experiences (...). According to these criminals, they succeeded in their aim to immobilise him, to isolate him(...)."

I am sorry for the hasty and dubious English.

In Pace,

Jean Verstraeten (x)

(1) They did so in the name of IOT and BDJ as well : to this evil action they could proceed as they cumulated the titles of chairman, secretary-general and treasurer of both non-profit organisations.

(x) I shortly mention a few things about my role as an anti-war inspired being :

- from the age of thirteen on : concerned about the eternal wars of mankind against mankind and about the question of conscription; particularly concerned about the danger of a third world war; somewhat later on : feelings of indignation also about massive hunger in the world and of uneasiness, somehow, *avant la lettre*, as to environment.

- in 1959 : in some contact with the Community of the Arch (but since the end of 1957 I had been struck by a general collapse of health, so that I postponed the possibility to become somewhat active; in December of 1960 I was also absent on the founding meeting of the Belgian reception committee of the March San-Francisco to Moscow which took the name -in Dutch and French- of Committee for Non-Violent Peace Action : at the time, it is true, I stayed in Austria.

- in 1962 : I declared myself a conscientious objector asking for an appropriate legal status; I was legally recognized at the first session, on the 24th March 1965, of the Dutch speaking Chamber of the Belgian Council for Conscientious Objection.

- also from the beginning of 1962 on : core member of the CGVA/CANVP = Committee for Non-Violent Peace Action (and, from September of 1962 on, board member of the legal non-profit organisation of that name).

- still from the beginning of 1962 on : also collaborating in the framework of the Belgian Centre of the Registry of World Citizens and member -board member since March of 1966- of the Federale Unie = Union Fédérale = Federal Union (= world federalist movement).

- co-secretary of the Dutch speaking wing of the said committee from the end of 1962 till the beginning of 1964 (there was a secretariat in Schoten near Antwerpen, where we disposed theoretically of a paid half-time administrative secretary; there was also a specific secretariat for the

French speaking region in Marcinelle (xx). (The administrative secretariat for the whole of the country was situated in Schoten.)

(xx) Lasure did not take part in all the work that needed to be done in order to establish those secretariats. Later on, in the seventies, he claimed to know better than I did what had happened in 1962/1963 and that I had not been involved in it : he said so in a spirit of unconditional depreciation and bad faith that refuses to take into account any evidence.

- in 1963 and 1965 : e.g. initiator of certain actions in connection with war tax refusal.

-in 1960 and 1968 : conscientious objector to a job.

- in 1964 : to some extent co-founder of the Burgerdienst voor de Jeugd = Civil Service for Youth on the 11th May of 1964 (I was not in favour of creating more peace committees, but as it was decided to start a BDJ, I worked in that framework from May of 1964 till the second half of the seventies : we gave information to many conscientious objectors about the law, spread documentation about it, e.g. a booklet of 80 pages : the repeated assertion of Biesemans that the BDJ was founded at the end of 1969 must be called one of the astonishing flagrant lies spread by him).

- in 1965 : initiator of a certain reintroduction in the Dutch speaking region of this country of the Belgian War Resisters' International (= the Internationale van Oorlogstegenstanders = IOT, which remained one section with the Internationale des Résistants à la Guerre).

- from 1965 till 1971, and even somehow after 1971 : I keep a contact address for the said region of the IOT.

- from 1966 till 1968 : redaction co-coordinator of Regenboog, the periodical in Dutch of the Federal Union (in which also we regularly published news from the Internationale van Oorlogstegenstanders = IOT or from the international WRI, which we also did in Geweldoze Weerbaarheid =Non-Violent Resistance, a collective bulletin co-edited by the IOT).

- from 1968 to 1970 : member of a leftish group in which I tried to defend the priority of the peace question, the necessity of non-violent alternatives, the urgency of the realization of a world security system.

-in 1969 : co-founder of Protest as a collective bulletin of the independent peace groups in our region; (Protest formed also a continuation of Geweldoze Weerbaarheid and of the periodical Regenboog, as is explained in the editorial of its first issue) ; redaction coordinator of it till March of 1971.

- initiator of the proposal to fuse the groups editing Protest into the IOT, which fusion was decided at a meeting in Hove in January of 1971.

- that same year : contact person on the occasion of the recognition of the IOT by the WRI as a section separate from the Internationale des Résistants à la Guerre (the IOT was recognized as such by the Council of Lübeck of July 1971 : see their letter of the 28th July to the IOT in Hove).

- July 1972 : on the triennial conference in Sheffield we for the first time voted as an independent WRI-section.

- July 1972 till March 1973 : delegate to the international council of the WRI (I resigned in March 1973 : health had worsened since the second half of 1972 and did not allow me to travel anymore; moreover, I felt utterly demoralized by the malevolent attitude a newcomer like Gilbert Hubert, a conscientious objector who had asked us in Hove for information from the end of

1968 on and whom we had greatly helped in preparing his civil service, during which he would be allowed to discretely work half-time for the groups around Protest, which groups had become the IOT only since January of 1971).

- from 1973 on : "director" of a local centre of the International Registry of World Citizens, member of its international council from 1980 till 2007.

- from 1962 till 2011 : collaborating in editing newsletters from war resisters and world federalists.

- since 1983 : I have spread innumerable texts about the utterly chilling question of the use of a whole of anti-personnel, life ruining radiation weapons.

INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS



Hove, anno 1990
Vredestraat 65

Over het gebruik van dit briefhoofd (English see below.)

Op 26 oktober 1965, op een vergadering van ons gezamenlijk berichtenblad Geweldloze Weerbaarheid, beslisten we ook aan de Belgische maar eigenlijk alleen Franstalige WRI-afdeling een nieuwe opening op Vlaanderen te verschaffen. Zo ontstond de Internationale van Oorlogsbestrijders, een naam die we overnamen van een Nederlandse groep en die we enige tijd later wijzigden in INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS. Die niet erg gelukkige naamkeuze wilde een precieze tegenhanger vormen van Internationale des Résistants á la Guerre, toen immers dezelfde WRI-afdeling.

In september 1969, op een vergadering te Antwerpen, besloot de INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS deel te nemen aan de oprichting van PROTEST als gezamenlijk tijdschrift van de onafhankelijke Vlaamse "vredesgroepjes".

Die groepjes, waaronder zich ook een Comité van Wereldfederalisten bevond, beslisten eind januari 1971, op een vergadering in Hove, samen te smelten in de INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS, die zes maand later als een aparte Belgische afdeling, naast de I.R.G., erkend werd.

Vanaf december 1977 legden vier voltijdse personeelsleden van de Burgerdienst voor de Jeugd -nl. Biesemans, Van Thienen, Rutgeers en Poelman- van wie de laatste drie zich nooit als vrijwilliger actief hadden getoond in 't kader van de I.O.T., achter onze rug, door de oprichting van een v.z.w., beslag op onze vereniging en al haar middelen, in de eerste plaats op alle door de staat geleverde werkkrachten en verleende toelagen.

In een geest van doelbewuste bedriegerij, stuurden ze ons geen ontwerp van hun "statuten" en ook de uitnodiging op hun zogenaamde "stichtingsvergadering" van 12 december 1977 zonden ze ons opzettelijk met een maand vertraging.

Sindsdien vraagt onze WRI-afdeling om een hervorming die rekening houdt met wat waar en rechtschapen is, met de tussenmenselijke eerlijkheid, de grondbeginselen van de democratie of het zelfbeheer, de elementaire ledenrechten en het bestaansrecht van menselijke personen.

Sur l'usage de cette en-tête

Le 26 octobre 1965, à une réunion de notre bulletin collectif Geweldloze Weerbaarheid (= Résistance non-violente) nous décidâmes d'offrir une nouvelle ouverture sur la Flandre à la section belge de la War Resisters'International, restée uniquement francophone ou presque dans l'après-guerre. Ainsi l'Internationale van Oorlogsbestrijders vint à naître, nom que nous empruntâmes à une section de Hollande et que nous changeâmes quelque temps après en INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS (I.O.T.).

En septembre 1969, l'I.O.T. prit part à la création de PROTEST en tant que périodique collectif des groupuscules indépendants pour la paix en Belgique néerlandophone.

En janvier 1971, comme nous l'avions proposé, ces groupuscules fusionnèrent dans l' I.O.T. et celle-ci, cette même année encore, s'est vue reconnue par la War Resisters'International comme section à part

entière, indépendante de l'Internationale des Résistants à la Guerre, soit la section en Belgique francophone.

Depuis décembre 1977, avec la complicité morale d'un Lasure, quatre membres du personnel du B.D.J. (= Service Civil pour la Jeunesse) -soit Biesemans, Van Thienen, Rutgeers et Poelman- qui hormis le premier ne s'étaient jamais montrés actifs en tant que bénévoles au sein de notre mouvement, accaparèrent, par la création d'une association sans but lucratif, toute l'I.O.T. et tous ses moyens, avant tout le personnel et l'argent fournis par l'état.

Dans un esprit de tromperie calculée, ils omirent de nous faire parvenir un projet de leurs soi-disant statuts. En plus, ils nous envoyèrent avec un mois de retard -et sans y joindre les "statuts"- leur invitation à la soi-disant réunion fondatrice du 12 décembre 1977.

Depuis lors, notre association demande à être réformée dans un esprit désireux de respecter l'honnêteté interhumaine, les principes de base de la démocratie ou de l'autogestion, les droits fondamentaux des membres et le droit à l'existence de personnes humaines.

On the use of this letter-head

On the 26th October 1965, at a meeting of our collective bulletin Geweldloze Weerbaarheid = Non-violent Resistance, the Belgian WRI-section, which in the post-war period had stayed almost French speaking only, decided to start the Internationale van Oorlogsbestrijders (I.O.B.). In the course of the next few months we changed that name, which we had taken over from a section in Holland into INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS. That name was intended to be a precise equivalent of Internationale des Résistants à la Guerre, at that time the same Belgian WRI-section.

In September 1969, at a meeting in Antwerp, the INTERNATIONALE VAN OORLOGSTEGENSTANDERS (I.O.T.) decided to take part in the creation of PROTEST as a collective bulletin of the independent small peace groups in the Dutch speaking part of this country.

At the end of January 1971, at a meeting in Hove, these small groups, on our proposal, decided to fuse into the I.O.T., which that same year was recognised by the W.R.I. as a section separate from the Internationale des Résistants à la Guerre, the section for French speaking Belgium.

From December of 1977 on, four persons who were working full time at the secretariat of B.D.J. = Civil Service for Youth -Biesemans, Rutgeers, Van Thienen and Poelman- who with the exception of Biesemans had never been active as volunteers within the framework of the I.O.T., by the creation behind our back of a v.z.w. = a non-profit form of legal association, seized our WRI-section and all its means, above all the personal and the subsidies given by the state. Whilst doing so, in a spirit of calculated imposture, they omitted to send us a project of their articles of association and they posted the invitation to their so-called foundation meeting of the 12th December 1977 a month too late. Moreover, in that invitation, to which they omitted to join the articles of association, they did not say anything about the 12th December 1977 as being the foundation date of a v.z.w. I.O.T.

Since that time our WRI-section ought to be reformed according to the principles of inter-human honesty, democracy or self-management and the members' fundamental rights.

Jean Verstraeten

P.S. As to the fusion of the groups into the I.O.T. in 1971, I remind that the BFHC = Robert Fermont's Commemorative Committee, due to its specific raison d'être, continued to exist separately.