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War Profiteering and Peace Movement Responses

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Justícia i Pau (Centre Delàs), Fundació per la Pau, War Resisters' International and the European Network Against Arms Trade invite you to the seminar: “War Profiteering and Peace Movement Responses” to be held in Barcelona between 29 September and 2 October, 2011.

War profiteering is one of the main pillars that support war. The military-industrial complex has a long record of pushing for the development of a war industry and of battlefields to test its products. War profiteering has many forms and a wide range of impacts. The most notorious forms of war profiteering are the arms industry and the arms trade, but there are also many other forms, such as companies involved in war “reconstruction”, companies to which military functions are outsourced, financial institutions backing warfare, companies profiting from the extraction of resources in conflict areas and many more.

War Resisters' International (WRI) and the European Network Against the Arms Trade (ENAAT) have been cooperating for the last several years in creating links between the movement against war profiteering in Europe and other such movements from the rest of the world. There are several networks around the world working in different regions and on different aspects of war profiteering. After years of working with and within these networks, WRI and ENAAT identify a need to connect between all these different networks, campaigns and organisations working against war profiteering. We believe that for a strong movement against the war machinery it is essential to have cooperation at a global level, and to develop it we are organising an international seminar: “War profiteering and peace movement responses”.

War profiteering has been a target for the anti-war and nonviolent movement for many years. Campaigning against these deadly industries opens up many venues for protest and effective action, as war profiteering can be tackled from different directions. You may hold a rally at your local arms manufacture, attend shareholders meetings of companies engaged in the war economy, publish information on the effects that arms produced in one country have on local communities miles away, lobby your local politicians, carry a disarmament action, and conduct many other kinds of action. These different tactics are reflected in a wide range of networks, campaigns and organisations working against war profiteering.

There are thematic networks, such as The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power. There are regional networks like the ENAAT and national ones. At the same time there is cooperation among many groups in the peace movement on the issue of war profiteering, which is not necessarily part of a wider network.

Transnational cooperation is always a challenge as there is a limit of how much groups can focus internationally and how possible it is for groups to actually meet. The aim of transnational cooperation is for activists to support each other's local campaigns by learning and inspiring each other, so the first point is that transnational cooperation has to support the work of local groups, not distract from it.

The seminar will prioritise participatory workshops over lectures, some workshops will be very practical, for example offering practical tools for conducting research on war profiteers or for campaign development. The final day of the seminars will have a special focus on specific conflict situations in which campaigns against war profiteering can play an important role, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and conflicts in Latin America and in Africa.

More information: <http://wri-irg.org/node/13102>