

A (Dutch) impression of the Easter march on April 18, 2014 in (German) Gronau

In a not too large a group of just four persons we biked this morning from the Dutch city of Enschede tot the German city of Gronau where at 0.30 P.M. the North-Rhine Westphalian series of Easter Marches would start at the Urenco main entrance. It was for the fourth year anti-nuclear and peace activists protested together against uranium enrichment which is both essential for nuclear energy as well as for nuclear arms. This was reflected in the title of the Easter March in Gronau: "Stoppt die Urananreicherung für Atomkraft und Atombomben" (Stop uranium enrichment for nuclear energy and nuclear arms).



When we arrived in Gronau we met some other Dutch activists as well as the sounds of singer Martina. Later we heard that it was a protest song sung in German, Dutch and English: the languages of the countries in which Urenco is located.



Udo Buchholz read some important parts of the instructions given to the organizers by the police. It was forbidden to carry fire arms or to endanger the continuation of the essential processes of Urenco. According to Udo it would have been nice when the government would have given similar restrictions to the Urenco-factory, like the prohibition to use Urenco's knowledge and products in a military context or to endanger the lives of the population of the city Gronau.



The first speech was delivered by Hannelore Tölke, member of the board of the North-Rhine Westphalian section of the German peace organisation DFG-VK (Deutsche FriedensGesellschaft – Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen; German Peace Society – United War Resisters). She reminded the public that the tradition of the Easter Marches started in 1958 in England with a four days protest march from London to Aldermarston where the British nuclear arms were developed. During the Cold War the Easter Marches were primarily organized against the nuclear arms based at different locations in Europe, but according to Tölke, today in Gronau we returned to the origins of the Easter March.



In fact, the existing facilities of Urenco in Gronau are able to produce the fuel for nuclear arms. Moreover, today we are not only talking about already existing (and almost forgotten) nuclear arms but the peace movement should resist the development of a completely new stock, modernized nuclear arms aimed to replace the current ones.



The second speech was from Anthony Lyamunda representing the organization CESOPE from Tanzania. Supported by the Russian nuclear corporation Rosatom and Urenco the government of Tanzania aims to stimulate uranium mining in the country and wants to become the seventh producer of uranium in the world. According to the government it would be beneficial for the development of the country and its population, but according to Anthony and his organisation uranium mining elsewhere in Africa (Niger, Namibia) shows that the population is not at all aided by it and is, on the contrary, cut off from its resources and put at risk because the uranium waste is everywhere.



Genocide via uranium mining and enrichment!



The third and last speech at the main gate of Urenco Gronau was given by Dirk Siefert of Robin Wood. He appealed to have a public debate on the planned sale of Urenco. In this context he emphasized that this company formed a large security risk when it comes to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear arms.



After this third speech we started to walk from the main entrance of Urenco Gronau to the other side of the company where one hall after another was built to store the large amounts of depleted uranium that is produced as waste of the enrichment process. It turned out we were with about 400 people, press and police not included.





Stop the nuclear states – German-Dutch Conference against nuclear factories in the Euregio/Münsterland



Dutch banner: No peace with nuclear energy



At the Chapel of Mary in the woods behind the Urenco plant Stefan Kubel of the Aktionsbündnis Münsterland gegen Atomanlagen (Union of Activists in Münsterland against Nuclear Factories) presented an overview of various aspects of the Urenco plant. In his speech he mentions that the depleted uranium waste was exported to Russia for years, but that a few years ago a joint action of German, Dutch and Russian antinuclear activists put an

end to this. Since then the waste has to remain on the grounds surrounding the factory. It shows the extend of Urenco's position as the world's number one uranium enrichment plant. Stefan also emphasizes that Urenco Gronau was completely left out in the German government's decision to close down all Germany's nuclear plants by 2021. So, when the very last German nuclear plant will be closed in seven years, Urenco's production will still continu for the rest of the world.



He also emphasized that the planned sale of Urenco is a result of the need of the German owners RWE and Eon to get the financial means to invest in other ways of energy production. It took a long time and a lot of energy before the German government answered the questions on this sale asked by the political party of Die Linke (the Lefties). These answers give rise for the impression that the German government even considers the possibility the Urenco shares will be sold on the market. Stefan is very positive on the "open discussion" on this issue currently going on in the Netherland [although we, as Dutch, have a different impression – JS] and would like the German government takes this as an example.



The very last speech that was announced was delivered by Angelika Claussen of the German branch of the IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War). Of course the biggest threat on this moment is the crisis in Ukraine where the two biggest nuclear powers in the world stand against each other. The nuclear chain is also present, however, in a smaller (at first sight) conflict: the French army uses depleted uranium munitions in Mali, although earlier uses of depleted uranium in the Gulf War and the Kosovo War showed that this had huge and also enduring impact on the health of the population of these war regions. In Mali also German (and Dutch) military are deployed and Angelika appealed to protest this use of depleted uranium munitions.



Although it was not announced, the last speech was by a representative of the Osnabrücker FriedensInitiative (OFrI – Osnabrück Peace Initiative) who read a statement of OFrI on the current tensions within and around Ukrain. A Cold War is something from the past and should remain so. Cooperation instead of confrontation should be the message.



And finally there were some appeals to the upcoming elections for the European Parliament:



For a social Europa without nuclear power



Forbid the export of arms (shown by Kathrin Vogler, MP in the German Bundestag for Münster)