

PROPOSAL FOR A GI CAFÉ IN KAISERSLAUTERN

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The US military currently has dozens of bases and tens of thousands of soldiers throughout Germany which are essential to continuing its current military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and which will serve as launching pads for wars that may come in the future in eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

OUR VISION

- ▶ A Germany without a large scale US military presence.
- ▶ An end to the aggressive foreign policy of the United States.
- ▶ A political culture that emphasizes peaceful means of international dispute resolution
- ▶ A reverse in the tide of increasing militarization in both German and American society.
- ▶ A debunking of the myths used to justify militarism such as nationalism and patriotism.
- ▶ A world where people are neither forced or pressured into joining the military, or forced or pressured into remaining in the military.

Our more immediate goals to help make that world possible are:

- ▶ To end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- ▶ To have a safe space for veterans and their family members to recover.
- ▶ To dispel the myth of heroism and accurately portray the effects war has on veterans and people in a war zone.
- ▶ To help the people who have suffered from the effects of war successfully reintegrate into society.
- ▶ To support GI Resistance within the US military.
- ▶ To work closely with GI Resistance movements within other country's militaries in order to successfully cooperate with them.

OUR PROJECT: A GI CAFÉ IN KAISERSLAUTERN

Kaiserslautern is a heavily militarized city in the heart of Rhineland-Pfalz. It is a centerpiece of both the US military's presence here in Germany, as well as their disastrous War on Terror. It is home to Ramstein Airbase which is an essential transportation hub to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, and Kyrgyzstan, as well as Landstuhl Regional Medical Center where many soldiers wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan are sent for immediate treatment. Kaiserslautern is currently the largest US military community outside the continental United States with around 50,000 US citizens living in and around the Kaiserslautern area and a German population of around 100,000.

Having an anti-war café in Kaiserslautern will unavoidably draw attention from the US military personnel, and is a very direct confrontation to the militarism prevalent within the community itself. It will provide an excellent headquarters for anti-militaristic work (a base against the bases!).

It will serve as an embassy to effortlessly get in direct contact with military personnel, to share alternative points of view and information and provide a safe space for soldiers, veterans, and their families away from the bases.

The café will also serve as a counseling node for the GI Rights network, which is currently represented here in Germany by the Military Counseling Network. The concept of the GI Rights network is to have a team of free counselors available to soldiers who can help them learn military regulations, pursue discharges, and reaffirm their rights in a military environment that preaches conformity and obedience.

It will also serve as a place to help veterans reintegrate into German and American society. With all of this there is great promise and hope it that it could attract several soldiers and act as an incubator for a movement of people who dissent within the US military.

INTENT AND GOALS OF THE GI CAFÉ

The immediate and most essential aspect of a GI Café's work is working with US soldiers who live in the immediate area:

- ▶ It provides a regular meeting point, and a place to get away from the overbearing environment of the US military bases in the area
- ▶ It is a very good solution to the difficulty of coming into direct contact with soldiers on a large scale and provides a permanent setting where US soldiers will come directly to us, allowing a more meaningful information exchange.
- ▶ This GI café would provide an initial starting point for developing critical voices of dissent inside the US military to be organized further in all of Europe.
- ▶ Because MCN is winding down its work here in Germany, from January 2011 Chris Capps-Schubert will continue the work of the Military Counseling Network, advising and coaching soldiers who need help dealing with their chain of command, finding out about their rights under UCMJ, or seeking a discharge.

- ▶ It will be a regularly occupied office for questions regarding discharges and military regulations for soldiers throughout Germany and wherever else outside the United States.
- ▶ It will be a location for veterans to seek help in filing claims for Veterans' benefits with the US Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ▶ The café will be run by anti-war veterans who have recently gotten out of the military themselves, who will be able to operate on a level of mutual understanding with soldiers living around Kaiserslautern that is often difficult to attain by many others.

BEYOND KAISERSLAUTERN

There are many voices of dissent within the US military who need a space and a platform where they can contribute to a critical public discourse on the war, based on their unique experiences.

Although Kaiserslautern is an essential hub for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and a key location for this work, the impact of such a Café could reach beyond Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kaiserslautern. It could affect the dialogue about the US military's presence in Germany as well as Germany's involvement in Afghanistan, similar to the way that Wikileaks has changed the dialogue on the nature of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We can influence public debate and impressions about American military operations, by mobilizing a sizeable diverse group of military personnel and veterans who are willing to speak out and tell the truth about a broad range of experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and their wider implications. If the goal of the peace movement here in Germany right now is to end the war in Afghanistan, there is no better or more direct way to influence the course of the war from within Germany than to help the people right here in Germany who dissent, but feel forced to participate, and to help them with their struggles and offer them alternatives.

A HOPE FOR PEACE

Although forming a union within the US armed forces is explicitly forbidden by US military regulations, organizing from the Café can lead to a large number of soldiers behaving in a manner directly equivalent to that of a union. The goal is to encourage GI resistance to a point where it seriously influences opinions within the military itself and spreads like a virus. The effects of that could seriously affect the viability and sustainability of US military operations, and soldiers themselves could call into question the legitimacy of such operations. While such widespread effects from the radicalization of US soldiers may sound far-fetched, it does in fact have a recent historical precedent.

During the Vietnam War thousands of soldiers were in fact radicalized, playing a critical role in making the war in Vietnam increasingly difficult and ultimately in helping end the war. GI Cafes that sprang up near several US military bases did in fact act as a powerful catalyst in incubating, supporting, and spreading this movement. The Oleo Strut at Ft. Hood was one such GI café. It was full of soldiers nearly every day after duty hours, and soldiers there would openly talk about racism, politics, the war itself, as well as their chain of command. It eventually developed into a place where they had regular meetings off-base and planned non-violent resis-

tance within the military. Today instead of the Oleo Strut there is the Under the Hood Café, a 10 minute walk from the gates of Ft. Hood, where dozens of soldiers go for help each week. There is also a growing and developing group of “regulars” who are active duty soldiers who have been energetically organizing GI resistance on Ft. Hood itself, many of whom speak out publicly against the war.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING

We are asking you to help us make this GI Café a reality. We are planning a sustainable project, and that will mean donations on an ongoing basis. The benefits of supporting such a Café are as worthwhile as any in the peace movement, and the project itself has a promising outlook for concrete results. We project in the long run that we will attract interest from foundations and a wide basis of supporters. Please give as generously as you can to the start-up funding, but every donation of any amount will help make the project a reality. We also ask peace groups we have been working with to consider taking the GI Café on as a project, both to do fundraising events on our behalf and to stay in touch with us to participate as they can in our projects. We would like to have a base of sustaining donors, as little as 75 people donating as little 15€ a month would cover nearly half of the monthly costs of operating the café.

WHAT WE HAVE, AND WHAT CAN WE PROVIDE

Iraq Veteran, and US Army deserter Chris Capps is willing to relocate to Kaiserslautern with his family from his current residence in Hanau. Additional assistance may be provided by Military Counseling Network director Marius Van Hoogstraten twice a week. Chris would work 40 hours a week: 5 hours of café opening time four days a week, 2 hours of necessary office work a day four days a week, and one day a week to travel for fundraising events, work with other organizations, travel to bases to work with soldiers, and to do some advertising for the Café.

Appropriate space has to be found in Kaiserslautern for a Café, WC, Kitchen, and Office (preferred).

ESTIMATED COSTS AND EXPENSES

Estimated Costs for setting up a Café

Renovation of Space	2,000 € = \$2,750
Kitchen Set Up	3,000 € = \$4,150
Dishes	500 € = \$700
Computers	1,000 € = \$1,400
Furniture	2,000 € = \$2,750
Rent Deposit	1,500 € = \$2,000
Rent & Utilities x 2 months (for renovation time)	1,300 € = \$1,800
Miscellaneous	1,800 € = \$2,500
Total:	13,100€ = \$18,050

Estimated Operating Expenses for 1 Year

Rent	6,000 € = \$8,300
Utilities	1,800 € = \$2,500
Telephone/ Internet	720 € = \$1,000
Net Labor Costs	12,000 € = \$16,500
Labor Taxes	7,200 € = \$9,900
Office Materials	1,200 € = \$1,650
Advertising / Fliers	500 € = \$700
Travel Expenses	1,500 € = \$2,000
Café Expenses	2,400 € = \$3,300
Total:	33,320€ = \$45,850

Estimated Start Up Costs	13,100 € = \$18,050
Estimated Operating Costs	33,320 € = \$45,850

Total Expenses: 46, 420 € = \$63,900

ESTIMATED INCOME

Estimated Income from Operation:

Coffee Sales	4,800 € = \$6,600
Speaking Fees	1,200 € = \$1,650
Merchandise Sales (T-Shirt's, CD's, etc.)	600 € = \$825
Total Income:	6,600 € = \$9,075

Total Expenses	46,420 € = \$63,900
Total Income	-6,600 € = \$9,075
Fundraising Required	39,820 € = \$54,825

PROJECTED TIMELINE:

Seek and Collect funding (continuously)

Venue Selection January, 2011

Begin Renovation and Furnishing June, 2011

Café Inauguration August, 2011

CONTACT

For Further Information please contact:

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Bank details for donations:

Recipient / Empfänger:	KDV im Krieg
Title / Verwendungszweck:	GI Café Donation
Account Number / Konto Nr.:	8022409700
Routing Number/ BLZ:	43060967
International Routing Number/IBAN:	DE42430609678022409700

Bank Account donations are tax deductible from within Germany

Donate with PayPal:

Account: GI-Cafe-Germany@gmx.net
Title / Verwendungszweck: GI Café support