

Press Release  
17.09.2015

The Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler [“VDW” - Federation of German Scientists] and the German Section of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (“IALANA”) present the

## **2015 Whistleblower Award**

equally to

the **former US drone pilot Brandon Bryant** and

the **molecular biologist Prof. Gilles-Eric S eralini**  
from the University of Caen (Normandy, France)

as well as the

## **Posthumous Honorary Whistleblower Award**

to

the survivor of National Socialist persecution,  
German-French **physicist Dr. L on Gruenbaum** (1934-2004).

The awards will be presented on

**Friday, 16 October 2015, at 7.30pm,  
in the B rgersaal of Karlsruhe City Hall**

in the presence of the Mayor Dr. Frank Mentrup .

The selection of the award recipients was made following the **recommendation of the joint jury** of VDW and IALANA. The members of the jury are:

Gerhard Baisch, lawyer (Bremen) \* Dr. Dieter Deiseroth, Federal Judge (Leipzig/D usseldorf) \* Prof. Dr. Hartmut Grassl (former Director of the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, Hamburg) \* Dr. Angelika Hilbeck, molecular biologist (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich) \* Christine Vollmer, lawyer (Bremen)

The jury gave the following reasons for its **selection recommendations**:

**Brandon Bryant** served from 2006 to 2011 with the US Air Force as a drone pilot. After a period struggling with his conscience, he voluntarily quit active service and left the US armed forces in July 2011. For reasons of ethics, he rejected and still rejects the secret worldwide drone war carried out by the US, particularly because of the innumerable civilian victims and the severe psychological consequences for the drone pilots involved in the killings. Many pilots are suffering serious health problems because of this. He no longer wanted to be jointly responsible for this and today he regrets having been a co-perpetrator of these extra-legal killings. As an insider, in

December 2012 Brandon Bryant gave many interviews to expose how this global drone war is being fought. Of particular significance to Germany, he publicly revealed the core role played by the relay station and the “Air and Space OPs Center (AOC)” at the Ramstein US airbase in Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany. The base is absolutely essential to the drone program in its current extent. In making these revelations, he was fully aware he would be prosecuted under military and criminal law and subject to social isolation. His revelations allow us to recognise that the transatlantic high-speed glass fibre cables via the relay station in Ramstein make possible the almost latency-free real-time contact to the drones from the USA. However, the facilities in Ramstein are not just limited to data transfer: at the base: there are up to 650 soldiers and image analysers working to provide intelligence useful for the commanders responsible for choosing targets. In the eyes of many countries and a large majority of specialists in international law, the US drone attacks are not reconcilable with Articles 51 and 57 of Protocol Additional 1 to the Geneva Convention, especially because they are carried out in full awareness that they will lead to a large number of civilian victims. Attacks contravene this international law if the ‘collateral damage’ is predictable and they do not “take all feasible precautions in the choice of means and methods of attack with a view to avoiding [or] minimizing incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects” or if they “may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects ... which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated”. For attacks allowed under the law, “effective advance warning” still needs to be given if they affect the civilian population “unless circumstances do not permit”. The US drone attacks against targets in countries such as Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia are also clearly a “threat or use of force against the territorial integrity” of these states and thus a violation of Article 2.4 of the UN Charter. They cannot be legitimised as self-defence (Art. 51 UN Charter) since there are no current military offensives against the USA originating in these countries. And there is no authorisation from the UN Security Council as per Articles 39 and 42 of the UN Charter. Brandon Bryant also provided details to refute the German government’s claim that the mobile telecommunication data provided by German intelligence agencies to US authorities could not be used to locate the target of a drone attack. As he has shown, the GILGAMESH modules of the technical equipment onboard a drone can use this data to locate the mobile telephone of a possible target to within one metre – in turn enabling the killing of that target. The US government has at no point refuted or contradicted the information he revealed. Bryant’s information was an impulse taken up by numerous investigative journalists, resulting in further detailed research and revelations. It is due to his information that the debate in Germany on the globally fought US drone war can concentrate more strongly on the activities of the USA in Ramstein. The German government is also committing an offence under international law by tolerating these activities on its territory. So there is now a quite justifiable public call for the termination of the release agreement with the USA (Art. 48.3 of the SA to the SOFA) for Ramstein and a drastic intervention by German authorities in order to effectively bring an end to the numerous breaches of international law which are being committed on German soil there. The full reasoning of the jury will be published shortly.

**Professor Dr. Gilles-Eric Séralini**, as a scientist at the University of Caen, France, was the first to publish animal test results demonstrating the toxic and carcinogenic properties of the most commonly used herbicide worldwide, the glyphosate-based “Roundup” by carrying out a two-year feeding test on rats. Immediately after the

publication of his research study in 2012 in the journal *Food and Chemical Toxicology* (FCT), published by Elsevier, he was attacked in a vehement campaign by 'interested circles' from the chemical industry as well as the industry-financed British Science Media Centre. This led to Elsevier withdrawing the paper on grounds of "inconclusiveness", which meant his data were no longer to be cited. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) ruled that this procedure was a clear breach of international publishing ethics, since withdrawing papers and the data they contain is only justified in cases of severe offences such as demonstrable falsification or manipulation, "honest error" or plagiarism. Prof. Séralini managed to re-publish his paper in another journal, *Environmental Sciences Europe* (Springer), thus preserving the data for scientific analysis and application. This included its use in the recently published new assessment of glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic" by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) on behalf of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The IARC study not only confirmed the carcinogenic effect which Prof. Séralini also observed and reported, but further demonstrated that many of the tumours caused are malignant. (Despite many claims to the contrary, this aspect was not included in Prof. Séralini's research.) Faced with all of these scientific and personal attacks, including some which were even proven in court to be baseless, Prof. Séralini unwaveringly refused to abandon his professional ethics during any of these conflicts. Instead, with a great deal of stamina and decisiveness, he countered the arguments at a high scientific level. This gained him the worldwide support of many scientists who defended the methods he chose and deemed his research results to represent genuine scientific progress. With this, he greatly furthered the scientific debate on the health risks of the glyphosate-based herbicide Roundup. He revealed systemic weaknesses in the accreditation process for herbicides in particular and pesticides in general. So once again it can clearly be seen that the preservation of our health depends on whistleblowers. These risk their own personal integrity and career to assume their professional, ethical responsibility because national and European authorities are insufficiently fulfilling the responsibility we have given them. So these whistleblowers deserve our respect and support. This excellent, selfless intervention from Prof. Séralini fulfils the criteria of the joint IALANA-VDW jury for the Whistleblower Award and should be deservedly honoured. The full reasoning of the jury will be published shortly.

This year also sees the first-ever award of a Posthumous Honorary Whistleblower Award, to **Dr. Léon Gruenbaum**, a German-French physicist and child survivor of National Socialist persecution who was formerly employed at the Karlsruhe Nuclear Research Centre (KFZ) but lost his employment there after he protested against NS-friendly utterances from senior-level staff there, who had previously been employed within the NS regime. The actions which this award is honouring include his uncovering of the misconduct of the Honorary Senator of Karlsruhe University (KIT) and the former Administrative Managing Director of the KFZ Karlsruhe, Dr. Rudolf Greifeld, and his work on the centre's involvement in the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The full reasoning of the jury will be published shortly.

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