

German Lutherans: pawns and controllers in the peace movement's autumn violence

by Martina Weiss

The Lutheran Church in West Germany (Evangelische Kirche Deutschland—EKD) is more like a politicized encounter group than anything ordinarily thought of as religion. It is also, as EIR reported July 19, the breeding ground for the “hot autumn” of violent protest against the deployment of U.S. Pershing missiles in Europe and other nastiness that calls itself the “peace movement.”

If anyone doubted either of those observations, a visit to this year's annual conference of the EKD, held in Hannover June 8-12, would have proved most convincing—as the following eyewitness account suggests.

Picture a “socially significant sensitivity session” with 140,000 participants (60 percent under 25 years old)—waving lavender handkerchiefs for peace, swiveling to jazz band spirituals, eating up praises of Khomeini's “necessary” revolution, and discovering that the nature-violating arrogance of Europe and the United States is the source of most of the world's evils.

Add to this the first-ever presence of the Russian Orthodox Church: “Group leader” Archbishop Pitirim of Moscow solemnly picks up a bell inscribed with the word “Peace,” tinkles it a few time and announces, “This language anyone can understand.” In case some do not, he explains that “This means peace; this bell is happier than I am.”

The conference crammed more than 2,000 workshops into five days and nights. Along with peace and ecology, “Living Bible” sessions, and group singing and dancing, the affair was capped with peace demonstrations and street theatre. The conference's closing religious service was a presentation of “Christian aerobics.”

Some of the slogans that galvanized mass meetings held with Social Democratic peace apostle Willy Brandt and Social Democratic Party official Egon Bahr: “Institute Peace,” “Find Understanding of One Another,” “Talk with One Another,” “Project Creation.”

‘Barbarism too is necessary’

Professor El Aouni of Berlin and Social Democratic parliamentarian Hartenstein told the Lutherans that Khomeini's revolution was necessary as an essential step for the emancipation and development of the self-consciousness of Islam. Khomeini's was like the French revolution, they said. Both

involved murder and terror, but must be seen as decisive for the development of mankind. For the modern Christian's predicament, the Lutherans were given a new interpretation of the story of Jonah: Jonah was ordained by God to set the depraved city of Nineveh aright. If Jonah did not convert the city en masse within 40 days, God would destroy it. Failing an attempt to flee, Jonah returned to the city and preached its destruction. The incredible happened: the people of Nineveh repented; and God spared the city.

“And thus a king allows himself to be moved by the peace movement among his subjects; he steps down from his throne, removes his royal garments, and, clothed in grey, mourns with his people,” said Pastor Jörg Zink of Stuttgart, a friend of Lutheran president Erhard Eppler, advocate of a nuclear-free Central Europe.

“It will not be the words of the supposed realists who will save our world, but rather those who believe in the miracle of conversion and in God's salvation through Grace. . . . Count on improvement, on the complete transformation of East and West. Stop thinking in terms of ‘friend’ and ‘enemy.’ . . . I see no other hope for the future but God's grace.” Thus spake Prof. Simon, a West German federal judge.

Zink: “The time is past in which it could be thought that the mythical is the primitive and that Christian belief can be grasped better after the mythical has been cleared away.”

Affinity with the mythical, the wild, and the dead provided the backdrop for the Lutherans' conjuring the preparations for the “hot autumn.” The conference leaders showed films of their friends the Greens in hot confrontation with police over construction of the new runway at Frankfurt Airport. Pastors with considerable experience explained the theological justification for the “right of resistance,” under the motto “Had Christ been humble, he would not have been crucified.” (Or as the American Indian Movement says, “It's a good day to die.”) Simon assured the Lutherans that the peace movement is within the best traditions of the constitutional state.

Mass meetings generated hysteria about nuclear war. But neither pastors nor lay leaders offered solutions to the growing prospect of nuclear confrontation. Only members of the small European Labor Party offered the prospect of doing away with the insane Mutually Assured Destruction doctrine; their distribution of leaflets entitled “Hiroshima Was a Nuclear-Free Zone. Too” generated excited discussion among

the delegates, particularly young people, who wanted to discuss President Reagan's new strategic doctrine of Mutually Assured Survival through the development of anti-ballistic-missile directed-energy weapons.

But it wasn't only the prospect of nuclear war which was used to create hysteria. The prospect of "ecological catastrophe" was unfolded again and again from the pulpits—by regional parliamentary representatives, judges, pastors, and housewives. Technology is destroying nature. We now face destruction. The crucial task for mankind outlined in the Book of Genesis—to multiply and subdue the earth—is a "misinterpretation."

"Having so much energy perverts us into self-important assertion against our *environment*; we would otherwise be *with* the environment. This leads to the world coming more

and more to resembling man," which must be stopped, said Prof. Meyer-Abich of Essen, who was slated to be federal minister of the environment in a Social Democratic government had it won the last election. "Above all, it is with touch," said the professor, "that I directly feel the resistance of the felt object against myself. When I touch, I am touched. Here we thus experience directly that we belong to Nature."

Labor Minister Norbert Blum added, "We need more praxis and less theory. We have too many college graduates. Those who think with their hands ought to be as highly regarded as university graduates."

Where is the Lutheran Church going? The ayatollah of de-schooling, Ivan Illich, gave more than a clue when he was invited to tell the 140,000, "Have the courage for poverty, even spiritual poverty."

The irrationalism in the German Protestant Church

"Poverty" and "repentance"—these are key terms in today's German Protestantism, and all the propaganda around lavender scarves has one meaning: the mystical color of repentance is violet. Although they are also central terms in Lutheran belief, the terms "poverty" and "repentance" belong more to the belief-structure of Calvinism, the fundamentalist brand of Protestantism.

This is the significance of the fact that the Protestantism of the Hanover convention is dominated by Calvinism or by the Protestant Reformism which has emerged from Calvinism. The East-West dealings run by the German Evangelical (Lutheran) Church (EKD), serving as a back channel for the Russian Orthodox Church between today's West and East Germanies, are following the tradition of the "Prussian Protestant Union," which has always been more Calvinist than Lutheran.

The presence of Moscow's Archbishop Pitirim at the Hanover EKD convention underlined the "reunion" going on between the belief and organizational structures of the Calvinists and the anti-technology Russian Orthodox.

Though nominally Lutheran, the members of the Protestant Church within the realm of the Prussian Hohenzollern monarchy, which adhered to the creed of Reformed Protestantism, were made members of the new "Union" in 1810-15 by royal decree. This decree officially ended the period of religious—and thereby political—liberalism in Prussia.

Modern anti-Semitism also stems to a large extent from that founding period of the Prussian Protestant Union. The Union became the main cultist motor for the pan-

Germanic ambitions of Prussian imperialism thereafter. The notion of a special *Mitteleuropa* destiny for German politics, which came to such a brutal high point in European history under the Nazis' Third Reich, originated in this period as well. This was the era of anti-republican repression under the dictate of the Vienna Congress Restoration of 1815.

With such ideological orientation, it was not coincidental that the Protestant Church backed the Nazis even before they came to power, and even more after they had taken power in 1933.

After 1945, the fight between Lutherans and Calvinists broke out again, and the main issue of dispute was the foundation of the German Christian Democracy. The Christian Democratic Party (CDU) was supposed to become an ecumenical merger between the Catholic and the Lutheran Church, but this concept was undermined by the Calvinists, led by their main mouthpiece, Reformed Church theologian Karl Barth, who demanded that Christians avoid party affiliations and that the churches be rebuilt after 1945 "from below," that is, by "repentance" and acceptance of the postwar poverty imposed by the occupation forces and the Marshall Plan.

The Barthians declared that revitalization of real Christianity could only be achieved through a long process of mass flagellation, called "collective guilt of the German people for all Nazi crimes." They thus became the main transmission belt for the mass brainwashing of the Germans during the military occupation period which served in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a basis for helping the EKD to build the ecology movement against modern German industry. German producers of nuclear energy were libeled, for example, as Nazis, and numerous EKD-related activists told the ecology movement following them that any further development of modern technologies would lead to a "fascist nuclear society."