

A Quantum of Solace? European Peace Movements during the Cold War and their Elective Affinities Peace movements can be defined as social movements that aim to protest'

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(Hieronder enkele relevante pagina's).

While Protestant peace activists in the Federal Republic during 1970s and 1980s were preoccupied with the specific trajectory of German history in the twentieth century, Christians in the Netherlands were trailblazers in their attempts to formulate a coherent European approach to the politics of peace and disarmament. Many of these ideas and initiatives were formulated by the Interchurch Peace Council (*Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad*, IKV), which emerged as a key player and »leading force« in attempts to overcome the bloc confrontation through »détente from below«. ⁷² Based on an initiative by the Dutch section of Pax Christi, the IKV had been founded in 1966 as a steering committee and think-tank that should advise the churches on issues of peace and war. While initially supported by the Catholic church and the two major reformed, Calvinist churches, the *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* and the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*, six smaller Protestant denominations quickly joined the IKV. While the council was the decision-making body of the IKV and could alone represent it authoritatively in public, many local and parish level groups supported the work with discussions and initiatives. Shortly after the campaign against the neutron bomb had started in 1977, about 300 local groups worked in the framework of the IKV. ⁷³

68 Werner Dierlamm, Biographisches zu unserer Aktion Ohne Rüstung Leben, 15.9.1987, BfZ, Ohne Rüstung Leben, file 42.

69 Benjamin Ziemann, The Code of Protest. Images of Peace in the West German Peace Movements, 1945–1990, in: CEH 17, 2008, pp. 237–261, here: p. 250–252; see Jörg Arnold, »Krieg kann nur der Wahnsinn der Menschheit sein!« Zur Deutungsgeschichte des Luftangriffs vom 22. Oktober 1943 in Kassel, in: Dietmar Süß (ed.) Deutschland im Luftkrieg. Geschichte und Erinnerung, Munich 2007, pp. 135–149, here: pp. 147 f.; on the context, see Mary Nolan, Germans as Victims during the Second World War. Air Wars, Memory Wars, in: Central European History 38, 2005, pp. 7–40.

70 Katharina Kunter, »... daß die Welt zähneknirschend das Wort vom Frieden vernehmen muß«. Protestantische Kontroversen zur europäischen Entspannungspolitik in den beiden deutschen Staaten, in den Niederlanden und im Ökumenischen Rat der Kirchen in den achtziger Jahren, in: *Stadtland*, Friede auf Erden, pp. 275–289, here: p. 279.

71 Cited *ibid.*, p. 279.

72 Wittmer, Toward Nuclear Abolition, p. 140.

73 Leon Wecke/Ben Schennink, Die »neue« Friedensbewegung in den Niederlanden, in: *Steinweg*, Die neue Friedensbewegung, pp. 284–309, here: pp. 286–289.

From the beginning, the ecumenical work of the IKV began to reflect on the European dimension of reconciliation and security and envisaged a form of peace work that should transcend the Iron Curtain. Consequently, the IKV had welcomed the *Ostpolitik* announced by the incoming government of Willy Brandt in 1969, and had condemned the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968. Already in 1972, the IKV had published a report on »The Future of Europe«, which criticised the bipolar system of nuclear deterrence and called upon governments in East and West to respect human rights and to overcome the division of Europe. In its campaign against the Euromissiles from 1979 onward, the IKV continued to insist on the inextricable link between disarmament and human rights and to speak out on behalf of dissidents in Czechoslovakia, Poland and the GDR. During the rally in Amsterdam on 21 November 1981, for instance, which brought together 400,000 people in protest against the dual-track solution, Mient Jan Faber, one of the key strategists of the IKV, read out and supported a declaration by the Czechoslovakian dissidents of Charter 77. A couple of weeks later, after the declaration of martial law in Poland and the suppression of the Solidarność movement, Faber drew a parallel between the development of the peace movement in Western Europe and the struggle for democracy in the East. Under the heading »Europe for Europeans«, IKV-activists continued to connect with independent peace movements in Eastern Europe.⁷⁴

When the dual-track decision triggered a new wave of peace mobilization in Western Europe, the Dutch activists had already had a considerable advantage in the organization of protest events and the formulation of statements. Since 1967, for instance, the IKV had organised an annual »peace week« in the third week of September, which served as a platform for different opinions and initiatives.⁷⁵ In the aftermath of the NATO-decision, the IKV head office was flooded with queries and invitations from West German activists to give papers and visit local groups in the Federal Republic. Since January 1980, the IKV employed a German secretary to coordinate these contacts. Volkmar Deile, the Protestant minister in charge of the West German group »Action Symbol for Atonement/Peace Services« (*Aktion Sühnezeichen/Friedensdienste*, ASF), described the infrastructure and influence of the IKV as a »dreamlike idea«. Following a visit in spring 1980, ASF began to emulate both the example of the »peace week« and the peace newspaper issued by the IKV.⁷⁶

Not only the top-level IKV strategists were attempting to establish a network of cross-European contacts. Also the local IKV-branches and initiatives, many of which were based at the parish level, were since 1978 involved in a growing network of contacts with Protestant Christians in the GDR. In 1977, the Dutch protests against the Neutron Bomb, which had included a group close to the Dutch Communist Party, »Christians against the

74 *Beatrice de Graaf*, *Über die Mauer. Die DDR, die niederländischen Kirchen und die Friedensbewegung*, Münster 2007, pp. 63–65, 116–118, 170–173. Contrary to the contemporary critique of »Hollanditis«, the Europeanism of the IKV did not involve an official commitment to Dutch neutrality. See *Remco van Diepen*, *Hollanditis. Nederland en het kernwapendebat, 1977–1987*, Amsterdam 2004, pp. 235–243.

75 *Wecke/Schennink*, *Friedensbewegung*, p. 288.

76 Cf. *de Graaf*, *Über die Mauer*, p. 120; »Action Reconciliation« is partly incorrect and too weak as a translation for the name of ASF, as used by *Wittmer*, *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, p. 23. ASF meant to give a »symbol« (*Zeichen*) for reconciliation, but it was based on the fundamental need for an »atonement« (*Sühne*) of the special German guilt with regard to the Holocaust. For this reason, ASF was during the 1980s not only involved in antinuclear campaigning, but also continued to organise its traditional tours to Auschwitz and other sites of former Nazi concentration camps in Poland and the Soviet Union and to Israel. See *Jonathan Huener*, *Anti-fascist Pilgrimage and Rehabilitation at Auschwitz: The Political Tourism of Aktion Sühnezeichen and Sozialistische Jugend*, in: *German Studies Review* 24, 2001, pp. 513–532, here: p. 521.

Bomb«, had led to contacts with officials from the »League of Protestant Churches« in the GDR (*Bund Evangelischer Kirchen*, BEK). In the following years, the two reformed churches in the Netherlands intensified these contacts with the GDR. Facilitated by talks with church officials, the number of direct contacts between parish communities in the two countries grew from 20 in 1978 to 140 in 1984. While only very few representatives of the BEK could travel to the Netherlands, Dutch Protestants repeatedly visited their counterparts at the local level. During these contacts, members of local IKV-groups did not mince words about the shared responsibility of *both* superpowers for the nuclear arms race. They also promoted their proposals for unilateral disarmament and thus worked like a Trojan horse in the GDR. In theological terms, these contacts were based on a shared feeling of guilt for the reliance on nuclear weapons for international security. But also the German guilt due to complicity with the Nazi-regime played a crucial role for both sides. While East German church members referred positively to the *Darmstädter Wort* from 1947, which had acknowledged the guilt of Protestants vis-à-vis the Nazi regime, and in particular their mistake to see socialism as a key enemy, the Dutch Protestants compared the dangers emanating from nuclear armaments with those posed by the Nazi-regime.⁷⁷ These contacts across the Iron Curtain were not only facilitated by a shared rejection of the lunacy of the nuclear arms race and a Protestant guilt consciousness. Protestants from the Netherlands and the GDR were also driven to develop a détente from below as they lived in the two most secularised societies in Europe. Their shared interest in peace work was also a search for encouragement and new orientation for Christians in a secular society.⁷⁸

77 See *de Graaf*, *Über die Mauer*, pp. 140–162, figure p. 149; compare *Martin Greschat*, The Potency of »Christendom«. The example of the *Darmstädter Wort* 1947, in: *Hugh McLeod/Werner Ustorf* (eds.), *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 130–142.

78 Cf. *de Graaf*, *Über die Mauer*, p. 150; on secularization in the GDR, see *Benjamin Ziemann*, Religion and the Search for Meaning in a Secular Society, 1945–1990, in: *Helmut Walser Smith* (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, Oxford 2010 (forthcoming); for the Netherlands, see *James C. Kennedy*, Recent Dutch Religious History and the Limits of Secularization, in: *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kirchengeschichte* 99, 2005, pp. 79–92.