

EIR Special Report

World Council of Churches conclave: a first-hand report

by Vivian Freyre Zoakos

Anyone who reads the appended documentation of the speeches and proceedings of the World Council of Churches' Sixth Assembly will be forced to conclude that the policies of that institution converge in all crucial respects with the strategic aims of Soviet General Secretary Yuri Andropov. The assembly, which was held in Vancouver, British Columbia, is the highest policy-making body of the WCC, held every seven years. The Sixth Assembly took place between July 24 and Aug. 10, and included about three thousand participants.

To summarize the positions forwarded by the Council at the assembly:

- It endorsed a resolution calling for unilateral disarmament on the part of the West, and branded the production or use of nuclear weapons a "crime against humanity" and a mortal sin for any Christian;
- It demanded a ban on the development and deployment of space-based energy beam anti-ballistic missile systems by the United States—Andropov's frequently stated and most urgent foreign policy goal;
- It repeatedly featured speakers who labeled President Reagan a "warmonger" while terming Andropov a "lover of peace";
- It attacked the stationing of U.S.-manufactured nuclear missiles in Europe;
- It vehemently attacked American policy in Central America, while passing a resolution on Afghanistan which barely mentions the U.S.S.R.;
- It heralded the end of "urban industrial culture" and called for the replacement of capitalism by a new economic order of "international democratic socialism";
- It opposed high technology transfers to the developing sector;
- It endorsed the Jesuitical (but Eastern Orthodox-derived) Theology of Liberation, the channel for aid to guerrilla movements in the advanced and developing sectors fighting (exclusively *Western*) oppressors.

Most fundamentally, the WCC executive at the assembly targeted for extinction the core of values which underlies Western culture, the tradition of Judaeo-Christian morality. These are the values which can be traced to the injunction of the Book of Genesis: that man should be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth, exercising dominion over Nature. These are the ideals of the 15th-century



NSIPS Elisabeth Chambliss

Club of Life members demonstrate the relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Anglican Church.

Renaissance: the belief in progress, mediated by the application of science and technology, based on man's capacity to perfect himself and his material circumstances.

Despite the extremely tight measures through which the WCC leadership sought to prevent any real discussion and resistance to their KGB line, rumblings of opposition began to grow, leading to near-splits on several key issues. Leading the opposition to the Council was the Club of Life, an organization founded in 1982 by Helga Zepp-LaRouche to defend the principles of Judaeo-Christian and classical humanism. Club of Life organizers intervened throughout the 18-day conference, forcing debate around just those issues which the WCC had been most anxious to suppress: military policy and the necessity for high-technology development.

'One worldists'

The World Council of Churches is the principal "ecumenical" institution internationally, linking the major Western Protestant churches with Eastern Orthodoxy. While the Roman Catholic Church is not a member, "one worldists" within the Catholic hierarchy collaborate with the WCC, and two Catholic delegates attended the Vancouver conference. The basis for this alliance is a common commitment to destroy the nation-states of the West, and to replace the Augustinian tradition in Western Christianity—based upon human reason—with Eastern mysticism, or "liturgy." The counterposition of liturgy to an appeal to reason was one made quite explicitly at the Assembly by spokesmen of Eastern Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Emilianos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in a presentation at Vancouver,

emphasized that it was through this emotional-mystical approach that the Patriarchate had, many centuries ago, brought the Russians into the Orthodox fold. "The beauty of the [Orthodox] liturgy was key in Christianizing the Russians. Today theology is too rational and less liturgical," he said.

Orthodoxy's appeal to the dark emotions, the theatrics of religious ceremony, the icons and the incense, leaves a tiny step to outright "Aquarian" brainwashing of the sort made popular by LSD-promoter Aldous Huxley and the Stanford Research Institute. Indeed the "Aquarians," with their polemics against "male-dominated Western culture" and nuclear power, were well represented at the WCC gathering; they could be distinguished from the "establishment" speakers more by their dress than by any differences in world view.

The theology of the Russian Orthodox Church is the basis for the doctrine that Moscow is destined to become the seat of the "Third and Final Roman Empire"—a belief which is now the operative foreign policy orientation of the Soviet state. It was thus no surprise to find the bearded and cassocked fathers of the Russian church vigorously endorsing the policies of their "peace-loving" government. Comical incidents resulted as the WCC and the Russians attempted to put a lid on the "slander" that the KGB was lurking in the halls of the Assembly. One example was a bogus letter which made its appearance during the first week's events. Written on WCC stationery, the letter purported to be authored by the Russian delegation, and stated categorical support for the strategic and military policy of Andropov. Russian Orthodox representative Rev. Vitaly Borovoi called a press conference to denounce the letter as a forgery—but admitted that, while

he would have used different language, he could in general not fault the contents of the letter.

The Club of Life's challenge

Club of Life representatives flooded this tightly controlled environment with leaflets, posters, and "street theater," demanding that the KGB-backed "peace movement" be junked in favor of a real peace policy and defense policy for the West. President Reagan's March 23 announcement of a new strategic doctrine based on anti-ballistic missile defense provides the sound basis for such a policy, the Club of Life maintains.

From the moment of President Reagan's speech, it has been the unabashed priority of Soviet policy to sabotage this program. Club of Life co-founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., who a year before President Reagan's historic announcement recommended such a U.S. policy as probably the only measure that could prevent World War III, has become the target of particular venom from Soviet spokesmen, including most emphatically the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. In May 1982, shortly after LaRouche's public recommendation of a U.S. beam-weapon policy, Patriarch Pimen, the head of the Russian church, declared that "military experts confirm that it is absolutely possible to install laser weapons and radioactive armaments in space. . . . It would be very opportune to include the treaty approved by the U.N. General Assembly prohibiting the installation of space-based weapons of any kind."

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In Vancouver, the name LaRouche drew remarkable reactions among the higher echelons of the WCC and particularly the Orthodox. At one point this reporter was discussing a possible interview with Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk, head of the Russian delegation. Archbishop Vladimir—who already knew the reporter—rushed over at the velocity of a Russian SS-20 missile to protect the unsuspecting prelate and divert the reporter with hearty greetings and promises of other interviews. Filaret, unaware that he had just been "saved" from questioning by a LaRouche associate, looked upon the impertinent Vladimir with a face that was a study in affronted dignity. No doubt he later sighed with relief when briefed on his narrow escape.

One of the more effective tactics used by Club of Life

organizers was the staging of a skit involving an "Orthodox priest" holding an "Anglican minister" by a dog's leash. The Orthodox attempted to whip the Anglican while the latter attempted to resist the Orthodox domination. This skit, witnessed by a crowd of about 1,000 delegates, drew out the tension between the Orthodox and Anglican churches (mirroring that between the British and Soviet governments and power elites), as Moscow pursues its Third Rome policy. The response of the crowd was to root for either the Orthodox or Anglican actor.

Club of Life organizers held up large signs to delegates entering the plenary sessions, prompting intense discussion. There was a near-riot when signs appeared reading: "I Am Not a Racist—But Would You Let Your Son Marry an Orthodox Monk?" and "Lenin Was Right: Preserve Christianity: Hang the Orthodox Priests!" Catholics and Anglicans laughed heartily. The Orthodox were apoplectic, and the liberals generally were the most outraged.

On the final day the Club of Life signs read: "The Superiority of Western Civilization is Derived from Plato—Soviet Marxism is a Product of Aristotle," and "Aristotle Represents Bestiality." This elicited acute discussion of the issues dividing Plato and Aristotle. The Russian delegates who approached the Club of Life members not only did not attempt to dispute the truth of the signs, but agreed that the issue of Plato versus Aristotle defined the unbridgeable differences between West and East, including the "communist" Soviet Union.

As the conference proceeded, the WCC executive began to come under attack from a large minority of delegates. One component of the opposition was the conservative evangelical delegates from the United States. For the first time in WCC history, they sent back for major theological overhaul a major position paper on "Witnessing the Christian Faith," arguing that the WCC was "adopting a Marxist precept" concerning the poor and was "seeing history in a materialistic context." The issue split the evangelical movement within the Council straight down the middle, and led to the publication by traditionalist delegates of harsh position papers targeting the Marxism and pro-Sovietism of the Council and concluding with the declaration that they plan to work with "new institutions" which, unlike the Council, are not "false prophets."

The most dramatic intervention was made by a member of the Brazilian delegation, speaking on behalf of the Brazilian bishop. She told the plenary that her country will accept neither the anti-technology, poor-is-beautiful premises of the WCC resolutions, nor the genocidal conditionalities imposed by the International Monetary Fund. Instead, she said, Brazil will organize for an Ibero-American debtors' cartel to force the creation of a more just, development-oriented economic order. WCC moderator Archbishop Ted Scott was forced to declare a temporary halt in the proceedings in order to prevent discussion of the issues the delegate raised.