
THE «PEACE MOVEMENT» IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY: SOCIOLOGICAL SCOPE, STRUCTURE,
MOTIVATIONS AND PROBLEM OF CONTROL

Dr. Günther Schmid M. A.

THE «PEACE MOVEMENT»⁽¹⁾ IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY: SOCIOLOGICAL SCOPE, STRUCTURE,
MOTIVATIONS AND PROBLEM OF CONTROL (*)

I—*BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE «PEACE MOVEMENT»*

1) In almost all the western industrial societies, signs of a three dimensional area of conflict have been appearing since the 1970 which the so called «new social movements» that have been forming since then can be attributed to:

- Left/Right Dimension (left and liberal left supporters).
- Materialism/Post-Materialism (ecology and alternate groups, Greens etc.).
- Modernism/Anti-Modernism (provincial, small farmer, artisan milieu, for instance Elbe fishers, vinters etc.).

New in these social movements are four main features:

- Significance and universality of the resultant problems (questions of the social way of life, including the working world).
- Heterogenous membership (groups whose economic and social status is linked to industrial growth, as well as groups outside of the nucleus of power, such as youth, women, unemployd, ethnic minorities etc.); principally «new middle class» (social occupations).
- Almost simultaneous appearance, loose ties among each other, formation of an own culture sealed against the outside world («culture of the likeminded»).
- No hierarchical stratification (as in the workers movement or ideological and religious currents), high personal fluctuation, low degree of organization.

(1) This term is in quotation marks because it is a selfchosen, and therefore controversial designation, which already presupposes an identifiable subject, and therefore does not lend itself to analysis.

(*) Conferência proferida em 28 de Fevereiro de 1984, no Instituto da Defesa Nacional, ao Curso de Defesa Nacional/84.

Prominent among the «New Social Movements» are:

- The citizens' initiative movement (approximately 20 000 citizens' initiative movements in the Federal Republic, with some 4 million participants, i.e., twice as many members as in all the parliament parties together:
 - Ecological movement
 - Women's movement.
 - Civil Rights movement.
 - Pacifist movement.
 - Peace movement.

These social formations do not form a unified protest potential; they represent, rather, an addition of the most dissimilar, in part contradictory ideological trends. The heterogeneity of these movements cannot be reduced to a common denominator that could adequately express the diversity of purpose. The consequences for the entire 1980's:

Fissured social area of conflict with intensely civilization-critical characteristics.

2) Self-Understanding And Problem Perception of the «New Social Movements»:

The fundamental criticism of industrial society, the revolt against traditional belief in progress and growth, coupled with the experience of the dwindling ability to solve problems, and alienation of conventional politics and the political parties, inevitably shows the necessity for collective self-help («march out of the institutions»).

There are five basic problem areas and processes of social change, which intensified and accelerated during the 1970's and are now collectively perceived as crises by a large portion of the population:

- a) Threat to the natural fundamentals of life (water, air, environment, mineral resources);
- b) Threat of increasing military destabilization (arms race, armament, diminishing sense of security);
- c) Increased North/South problems (poverty, debts);

- d) «Silent Revolution» of values (disintegration of traditional guidelines and value patterns, segmentation of society);
- e) Loss of confidence and credibility in politics; «experiences of impotence and enstrangement» (State and politics become ever more anonymous); increasing expenditures and performance of the welfare state decreasing contentment of its citizens.

3) The Psychological Background: Reasons for the Uneasiness:

- a) «Experience — and insight gaps» are omnipresent in today's politics. The individual is feeling cut off from access to crucial areas of politics determining his fate; politics has become independent and anonymous, it has decoupled itself from every-day life (nuclear strategy debate; acid rain; census; large technology; Seveso poison). *Important:* Political, economic and social values, for example, freedom, stability, wealth and security have never been experienced as the sum of their denial by young people. They are taken for granted and have thus lost their persuasiveness!
- b) «Experiences of political impotence», «experiences of enstrangement» (Allensbach long-term study), feeling of being encroached upon by «coercive rules» («Sachzwänge»); the collapsing belief in practicability results in a fear potential (most important causes of fear: unemployment, pollution, war, crime).

II — COMPOSITION AND MOTIVATION OF THE «PEACE MOVEMENT»

1) The «peace movement» can be characterized as a merger of loosely structured groups and initiatives, typified by project-oriented articulation and activity. In contrast to the other «new social movements», the «peace movement» resulted from cooperation with already existing institutions and organizations (the protest's starting point was not the universities as in 1968, but the New Social Movements and their milieu).

2) According to formal or organizational criteria, the «peace movement» reveals a three-tiered structure:

- Old and New Left (SPD-oriented groups, for example the DGB (National Federation of Labor) and Labor Youth, Young Socialists, Young Free Democrats; German Communist Party and subsidiary organizations, «Socialist Bureau» and «Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy»; Eurocentrists, like the Russell-Peace-Foundation, Rudolf Bahro).
- Christians and Pacifists.
- Ecological and alternative life style groups (Greens, Alternative and Non-Conformist Activists).

3) The «peace movement's» basic attitude towards politics follows two directions:

- Organizations with traditional attitudes towards politics (parts of the SPD and FDP, National Federation of Labor, German Communist Party, church and pacifist groups, parts of peace and conflict research).
- Post-Material and «New Social Movements» including individuals without organizational affiliations (Greens, Alternative Groups, Federal Civil Initiative and Environmental Protection, autonomous peace initiatives, Third World initiatives, anti-imperialist and anarchical groups).

4) In its entirety, the basic motivation of the «peace movement» can be generally interpreted as moralistic-rigorous and radical-ethical («moral purity fanaticism»). A kind of «enthusiasm» to do something for themselves seems to characterize most followers and groups (self-absorption, introversion), to discover and experience alternatives, to sustain the euphoria of «Doing Something», to overcome the widespread disenchantment with modern civilization, to articulate their own fears, doubts and pressures and to practice «tangible utopias» (emotional self-realization in the immediate realm of experience).

The «peace movement» derives its emotional thrust through its occupation with doomsday fantasies and conspiracy theories. But what happens, however, if the nuclear apocalypse does not occur?

5) The reasons for the success of the peace movement are:

- First, concentrating on the smallest common denominator; the rejection of the NATO two-track decision, i.e. the prevention of the accompanying measures is the only common objective (no long-term political perspective!).
- Second, in the creation of a broad alliance that was able to sustain the loose solidarity, because conceptional differences were set aside for predominantly tactical reasons (for example about the relationship with the Soviet Union and its rearmament as well as the issue of «non-violence»). Cooperation among the various groups is only sporadic.

The five nation-wide «action conferences» (in February 1982, October 1982, April 1983, November 1983 and February 1984) clearly showed that there exists no strategy in the «peace movement» acceptable to the majority and that notions about means and purposes of peace activities are largely insurmountable (Greens, German Communist Party, Bahro-followers, German Communist Party; christian-pacifist groups versus communist groups).

The regionalization and segmentation into individual factions and groups actually amounts to a reduction of its effect on the general public, lack of orientation and inability to assert itself adequately as an organization; the «peace movement» has become increasingly difficult to survey («everybody does what he wants»).

6) Against this background, a potentially fundamental conflict between two divergent tactical and conceptional positions is becoming apparent within the movement:

- Either campaign of persuasion against realization of «INF-modernization».
- Or use of practical prevention strategies (non-violent or militant). Non-violent actions (sit-ins, die-ins, hunger-strikes, fasting, blockading casernes, etc.) will, according to past experience, not be formally organized. Modes of action ranging from legal protest to direct confrontation stand on most of the «plans of action» of peace groups («diverse forms of civil disobedience»).

7) In the Summer and Fall of 1983, profound controversies emerged in an open controversy over strategy:

- a) The Greens fear a «creeping nationalization» of the movement, that is massive attempts undertaken by the SPD and National Federation of Labor to absorb them and integrate them effectively (the so called «integration trap»). They suggest calculated trespasses of the law and provocative actions («pioneer groups» must march ahead of the mass movement and open up breaches») and basically oppose talks between the «peace movement» and the police.
- b) The independent, autonomous faction rejects mass demonstrations as «walking demos» and legalistic actions, distinguishes between using force against «participant» and «non-participant» objects (only «injuring force» against human beings is ruled out) — according to Alexander Schubart at a BAF-work meeting in Frankfurt in February 1983. Apparently this faction counts on martyr — solidarity —, and radicalizing effects. Parts of the autonomous spectrum either only resort to «non violence» for tactical considerations but not even for tactical reasons.

8) Distinct crisis symptoms, predictable splitting tendencies and dilemmas of the «peace movement» are the result of:

- The frustrating and disappointing experience that demonstrations and blockades lose both their mobilizing and activating function and become pure routine, if they are repeated frequently. They will not be able to prevent the deployment of new missiles (INF-modernization).
- The growing willingness of individual groups and persons to carry out unconventional and independent actions which are not covered by the wide spectrum of the movement and create a peace-motivated martyrdom.
- The lack of a political long-term peace perspective of the «peace movement», which has, until now, just been a movement against (especially) American nuclear intermediate-range missiles (cultivating fears about their deployment as certain beliefs) and possesses no realistic concept of policy towards the Eastern Bloc (almost totally focusing on military potentials instead of the causes of political conflict).

III—QUANTITY, QUALITY AND PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND CONTROL OF THE «PEACE MOVEMENT»

1) According to all available data and experiences, the pro-Moscow communists constitute the most unified and active group within the «peace movement» (about 100 000 persons), they are their «work horses». Although they only represent a numerical minority, they possess concrete objectives, and have at their disposal a powerful apparatus and sufficient funds.

According the information from the Department of the interior (August 1983), the extreme left portion participating in the previous mass demonstrations amounted to approximately 20%; guards, at least 40%. The communist influenced spectrum comprised more than 50% of the participants at the nation-wide action conferences. A total of some 4000 peace initiatives exist in the Federal Republic. Of the 1100 peace groups in North Rhine Westfalia, only about 70 are considered communist infiltrated.

2) It is doubtful, however, if the German Communist Party and its followers will succeed in gaining «peace movement» support for other immediate communist objectives. So far, this Party has not been successful in decisively penetrating the democratic camp! The religious and alternative camps of the «peace movement» show a distinct tendency to disassociate themselves from all hierarchically structured communist groups. An overwhelming majority of the movement rejects communist goals. Communists participate in the marches, and are involved in organizational efforts, but they neither dominate the total image of the «peace movement», nor did they initiate it.

3) The extremely moral-ethical basic motivation of the «peace movement» as a whole emerged and developed independent of a political left/right classification.

4) Published opinion in the Federal Republic (exception: The weekly newspaper DIE ZEIT) deals with the extremist parts of the movement, which removes the concerns and the engagement of the other participants out of public view allowing the portion of pro-Moscow Communists to advance

markedly into the foreground in the planning and execution of demonstrations. The mass media's typical mode of selection favors unusual, conspicuous behavior with heightened attention; the exception, not the rule, is newsworthy.

5) In many groups of the «peace movement», the awareness and sensitivity with respect to one-sided attempts at political manipulation, channelling and undermining have sharpened through specific behavior patterns of German Communist Party supporters (pro-Moscow groups were not invited to important preparatory and organizational meetings at the beginning of January and the end of February 1983!). Today a communist alliance policy attempting to gain influence and recognition within the movement must leap an increasingly higher hurdle (an example is the open controversy between Young Socialists and Greens on the one hand and communist groups on the other about the one-sidedness of the appeal and the organizers of the large demonstration in Bonn on June 10th, 1982!). There is only sporadic cooperation of communist groups with Greens, the Social Democratic Party, labour unions and churches.

6) For the «peace movement» as a whole, the central issue remains the «alliance policy», that means delimitation of those factions attempting to advance only the positions and interests of official Soviet foreign and security policy. The issue of how the «peace movement» will resolve the problem of unified cadre groups working within it («hangers-on»), may prove, whether it is able to survive as a mass movement or only as a splinter group.

IV — DIMENSION, RECRUITING POTENTIAL AND RESONANCE OF THE «PEACE MOVEMENT»

1) According to careful and realistic estimates and all available data, presumably between 1,5 and 3 million German citizens belong to the «peace movement». The individual groups (especially the communist controlled and influenced organizations) portray themselves as having obtained «far more than 2 millions» signatures to appeals and petitions. How such signature campaigns came about and how they are finally evaluated, is still open to question; likewise the question, of and in which form withdrawals of signa-

tures were and are considered (approximately 10% of the adult population in the Federal Republic have been reached by all signature campaigns!).

2) The two big EMNID-polls (conducted in October 1981 and March 1982) reveal the following empirical results regarding the «peace movement's» potential:

- a) Only 8-9% of the citizens questioned form the active core of the «peace movement».
- b) The «passive supporters» of the movement constitute the largest group with 39-44%;
- c) 14-22% of those questioned are indifferent towards the «peace movement».
- d) 29-33% reject it or express doubts.
- e) 49% of the German citizens believe that the «peace movement» has no influence on rearmament or disarmament.
- f) Generally the disillusionment with political parties and politics is largest among the 25 year old and young adults in the Federal Republic; but the most important political subject for them is that of «disarmament and peace».
- g) According to available data, the «potential peace activist» can as a rule be profiled as follows:
 - Under age 35.
 - Higher education (Abitur).
 - Not a consistent CDU/CSU voter.
 - Post-materialist attitude.
 - Tendency to «unconventional behavior patterns».

3) Although the «peace movement» neither unites a numerical majority in the population as a whole nor the young people in general, its ideas, identity, motivation and parts of its experience are reflected in a growing number of citizens. According to the comprehensive Shell-Study «Youth 1981», 50-80% of the 15 to 25 year olds are basically positive about protest movements. The recent study «Girls 1982» proves that the «peace movement» for girls between 15 and 19 represents by far the most important of the current trends aimed at change. 60-70% of all youths in the Federal

Republic approve of their own country's democratic system — accompanied, however, with distinct criticism in individual cases (higher rate of acceptance than in other Western democracies).

V — *THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE «PEACE MOVEMENT»*

1) Peace, security and armament are not solely youth's problems, nor are they problems articulated by the «peace movement» only. Rather, they comprise topics of public discussion which are of interest to all of society. In public discussion, the problems of defense through nuclear weapons has only been mastered so far by repression and distraction. Scepticism against nuclear deterrence is generally shared to a greater extent today than at the beginning of the 1970's. The main problem of the 1980's will be the strengthening of social acceptance of any security policy and military strategy especially of nuclear deterrence.

2) In its impulses and effects the «peace movement» is clearly a political movement. It has:

- Initiated a broad public debate on defense policy and removed the tabu from security policy in Western Germany.
- Paved the way for political and social trends, which could not develop in parliament and in the traditional political parties.
- Contributed to the massive spill-over of the debate on nuclear deterrence and «alternative security models» into political parties (SPD!), whereas it was formerly limited to university seminars and experts.

Dr. Günther Schmid M. A.
Center for International Politics
University of Munich