

Glaube in der 2. Welt Institute: A Religious Research Center in Zollikon Near Zurich

by Gerd Stricker¹

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The research institute Glaube in der 2. Welt (G2W) was founded in 1972 by the Protestant pastor Eugen Voss with the support of the Reformed Church Council of Graubünden and the Roman Catholic bishops of Chur. Its origin was due to the special church situation that had emerged due to the East-West confrontation during the Cold War. During the Cold War era, French sociologists once divided the world as follows: the 1st world of the capitalist West, the 2nd world of the Eastern Bloc dominated by the Soviet Union and the 3rd world of the developing countries. Correspondingly the term Glaube in der 2. Welt originally meant “religion in socialist lands”.

The monthly journal of the same name (since 1973) added as subtitle the primary focus of the Institute at the time: *Zeitschrift für Religionsfreiheit und Menschenrechte* (periodical for religious freedom and human rights). Therefore, it was not so much theological questions to which the Institute with its journal devoted its attention, but above all to the relationship of church and state, or of the believers and society within the Soviet power bloc. In terms of the actual situation that meant that reports focused on religious persecution and the repression of believers, as well as on the manipulation of churches in the socialist states, including Yugoslavia.. The fact that religious freedom was a human right, “the supreme human right”, drew the attention of G2W to the problem of human rights in general, indeed beyond the sphere of the church.

From the beginning the institute was supported by most Catholic and Reformed Cantonal churches as well as the old Catholic (Christkatholisch) churches of Switzerland. Over time some regional Protestant churches and Catholic dioceses in Germany, as well as individual

¹Translated from the German original "Das Institute GLAUBE IN DER 2. WELT in Zollikon bei Zürich. Eine Religionskundliche Forschungsstelle" in *Nordost-Archive. Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte. Konfession und Nationalismus in Ostmitteleuropa. Kirchen und Glaubensgemeinschaften im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Lüneburg: Institut Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk Lüneburg. Neue Folge Band VII/1998 Heft 2 that appeared in October 2000.

congregations, joined the Swiss supporters of the institute. The German sponsoring society was founded in 1974 (Verein Glaube in der 2. Welt - Deutsche Sektion).

The establishment of an institute devoted to reporting on the problem of religious life in the socialist lands had become urgent because the reporting on the situation of believers in the Eastern Bloc by the Western secular and church media was generally one-sided, influenced by illusions, so that the Western reader was unable to form a practical understanding of the oppressive situation of church life under socialist conditions. The ecumenical organizations in Geneva - the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches - and most Protestant churches in the West such as the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and its member churches, generally fostered a positive picture of the church situation under “real socialism”, since they were striving to foster close relationships to the churches within the Warsaw Pact states.

Critical Perspectives

G2W's starting point, with its critical presentation of the churches' historical developments behind the Iron Curtain, during the phase of euphoria about Orthodoxy and the Soviet Union that the Western churches experienced, particularly in the 1970s and '80s,² automatically invited conflicts. So, to name one example, it was difficult to reconcile the picture of the distressed reality of the Orthodox church in the Soviet Union, as described by the G2W Institute, with the gilded image, so widespread in the West, of golden cupolas, over-filled churches, thriving monastic life, industrious students in beautiful seminaries for priests, magnificently garbed bishops and priests and above all the fascinating moving liturgical music.

Following the Second World War it was generally impossible for the churches within the Soviet sphere to establish contact with the West. At the time of the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 the Orthodox churches, under obvious pressure from Stalin,³ had refused to cooperate with the ecumenical movement. This applied automatically to all Orthodox and Protestant churches behind the Iron Curtain. Only after a change of policy under Nikita Khrushchev in 1961 did it become possible for these churches to work with the WCC.⁴ With this maneuver Khrushchev had sought to distract attention from the increased

²We might recall the initiative of the Evangelical Churches of Germany “Friendship with the Peoples of the USSR”, which the Baltic nationalities, for example, who were forcibly integrated into the Soviet Union against their will, could not understand and responded angrily.

³cf. *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in Russland. Dokumente ihrer Geschichte (860-1980)*. Hrsg. Peter Hauptmann & Gerd Stricker. Göttingen 1988, pp.782-791, especially p. 789: “Message to the Christians of the World”, July 17, 1948.

⁴Ibid. p. 817f.

religious persecution in the Soviet Union (1959 -1964). The church representatives from the Soviet Union (true also for the other socialist countries) were supposed to represent the church life of their home countries to the West in shining colors. Information about suppression of churches and persecution of believers were supposed to be discounted as falsehoods of the Cold War. Further, the task of the church representatives from the Soviet bloc was to present the foreign policy of the Soviet Union at numerous ecumenical forums as selfless peace making. They were to be so convincing, that the Western church representatives would exert corresponding pressure on their governments.

To a degree they were successful since during the 1970s in many church circles it was considered chic to be sympathetic to socialist ideology. This was accompanied by a latent, at times also obvious anti-Americanism. The Christian Peace Conference (Prague) enjoyed broad sympathy in many Protestant circles in the West, even though its control by Moscow was well-known. A further element of this context was the fact that there were leading representatives of Protestant churches as well as those from the ecumenical organizations in Geneva who viewed the "humane" socialist model of the Soviet type positively while rejecting the "inhumane" capitalism of the Western type. Generally speaking, the claim by one of the most influential Russian Orthodox bishops, Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk (with KGB officer rank) was heard appreciatively by Western Protestant church leaders and young pastors: "capitalism and church cannot be reconciled. Christian ethics is closer to communism."⁵

In spite of this background of close cooperation with the churches in socialism, it was concentrated mostly on the Russian Orthodox church and the other (former) Orthodox national churches of Eastern Europe. Relationships to other denominations (Catholic, Baptist, etc.) necessarily suffered due to the Orthodox heavy nature of the Western Protestant involvement.

Estonian and Latvian Lutherans

This became obvious in a most crass form in the relationships of the Evangelical Churches in Germany to the Lutheran sister churches in Estonia and Latvia whose 800 year church history was closely tied to that of German Lutheranism. Baltic church leaders who had hoped for German Lutheran solidarity for the problems threatening their existence (church suppression, Russification) were often (perhaps even usually) greatly disappointed. German delegations, whose itinerary was put together by the department of foreign affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate were "received" by the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate when making their required transit through Moscow, and given the Orthodox point of view on problems, after which they could continue their journey to Riga or Tallinn. There too the delegations first needed to

⁵cf. Norbert Kuchinke, *Gott in Russland*. Aschaffenburg 1984. P. 125.

pay their respects to the Russian Orthodox bishops who in turn would often be present during the Estonian-German or Latvian-German meetings. Baltic pastors often complained secretly, that many representatives of the German churches conducted themselves in the Baltics like representatives of the Soviet occupying powers: they would not stick to the itinerary that was prescribed by the Orthodox foreign department, but often, without any sensitivity to the situation of suffering in the Baltic republics and the needs of the Baltic churches, they showed more interest for the Russian churches - the churches of the occupying powers - than for the Lutheran hosts. Practical aid for the Baltic churches was obtained, by great personal sacrifice and the endangering of German Baltic pastors, but these relief projects had to be carried out in the greatest of secrecy without the official knowledge of the German church leadership.

Conflicts

Naturally the Western churches also wanted to help the “ecclesiae pressae” [church under pressure] in the East. But there was not much they could do. There was a latent possibility to provide the churches of the Eastern Bloc a degree of international publicity. That is, to invite them to all possible conferences, to bilateral and multilateral dialogues, to Congresses, etc. and to be invited by them in turn. A high degree of recognition in the West gave the bishops from the socialist countries in particular, a degree of personal security. Churches with Western contacts could also feel somewhat secure against too obvious attacks of suppression. Nevertheless, under such conditions the church contacts from ecumenical circles to the churches in socialist lands had the effect of fostering system stability. In order to be able to foster these contacts with the “churches in the East”, the churches in the West needed to observe the code of conduct and rules of socialist speech. That is, on the one side, verbal support for the foreign policy (above all peace policy) of the Warsaw Pact under Soviet leadership, and on the other hand, avoidance of any criticism of internal policy. So the Western churches fostering contacts needed to be on constant guard, and not just at the level of the church leadership but also from within their own churches, so that all criticism of Soviet religious policy would be avoided. So acts of repression against religious societies and believers were mostly treated with silence in the Western church press - but in response church representatives from the Eastern Bloc with their statements of harmony got published.⁶

⁶*Evangelische Pressedienst* (46/1985) and *Lutheran World Information* (46/1985), Geneva, published excerpts from an interview with Archbishop Edward Hark of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Estonia as follows: “There is today no nobler and higher task, than to defend the peace for present and future generations. All efforts of our ... church are directed to this end. The situation in the world is more precarious than ever before, the major blame for that must be borne by the USA and its partners. Like all other Soviet citizens, our (Estonian) believers see the struggle for

The Roman Catholic Church took a consistently sober, distant stance toward the socialist regimes. As a result the relationships of the Vatican to Catholic churches in Eastern Europe were often extremely complicated. Even more complicated were the Catholic relationships to the Orthodox churches of the Eastern Bloc, even though at the end of the 1970s there was an apparent *rapprochement* between the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches (this phase is linked with the name of the Russian Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov, 1929-1978), who died, strikingly, in the arms of Pope John Paul II).⁷ But there were also personalities and institutes within the Catholic fold, who placed close relationships to Orthodoxy above everything and who therefore kept the repressive nature of Soviet religious policy out of their publications.

Those who drew attention to the situation of the persecution of believers in the Soviet bloc were quickly labeled by Western church officials as “Cold Warriors”, Ewiggestriger (eternal lovers of the past), professional anticommunists etc. Data about persecution of churches were pushed from the table by church leaders with the argument, if believers in the socialist lands were truly suppressed, then the church buildings in Moscow, Leningrad, Belgrad, Bucharest or Sofia would not be so crowded, as was evident every Sunday. If one would point out however, that these churches were overcrowded because the state organs had closed most of the church buildings, then such voices - like G2W Institute - were dismissed by official Western church circles as “Liars”.

Rather quickly G2W Institute also became the target of communist attacks, which centered on the claim, that the institute was financed and controlled by the CIA. In the *Moscow Dictionary of Atheism*, G2W was defamed: G2W together with Keston College from Kent (today Keston Institute, Oxford) were regularly named in the list of "anti-Soviet" institutes.

So it was no wonder that the institute was watched by the eastern spy networks. Several times the archive (Dokumentation) of the institute was the target of a breakin. In February 1992 and in September 1994 theologians from the DDR came (as exchange students or did so following their immigration to West Germany) under the pretext of wanting to work in the library and archive of G2W, but were in fact active on behalf of Stasi.⁸ The opening of the Stasi

peace as a obligation of conscience and citizenship (...) We fully affirm the constructive proposals for disarmament in general, as well as specific arms limitation measures which the Soviet Union has presented to the world, as well as in negotiations with the USA. We are actively supporting the efforts of the World Peace Council and of the Soviet Peace committee. We support the peace movement with a gift of 10,000 rubles for the Peace Fund. We are also active participants in the Christian Peace Conference founded in Prague in 1960.”

⁷Fairy von Lilienfeld, Carl Christian Felmy, “In Memoriam. Metropolit Nikodim von Leningrad und Novgorod,” *Kirche im Osten* 21/22 (1978/79), pp.292-301; Gerd Stricker, “Zwischen Kreuz und Sowjetstern. Zum Tode von Metropolit Nikodim vor 20 Jahren, G2W (1988) 5, p.18ff.

⁸G2W (1992), Nr. 5 p.6f; G2W (1994), Nr. 12, p. 8.

archive revealed, that the “colleagues from the German brother organization” had provided the KGB with the most detailed reports on the movements of G2W associates in the Soviet Union.

Conditional Acceptance Since the Mid 1980s

During its first decade G2W suffered from the hostility of various Protestants and Catholic offices as well as some ecumenical offices. Yet since the mid 1980s both within the state churches and in the ecumenical offices in Geneva the recognition emerged that G2W, faithful to its motto “speak where others must keep silent”, was seriously and convincingly representing the concerns of the believers and their churches in Eastern Europe, who were being suppressed. The many archival documents and texts, that various Christian, Jewish or Islamic communities managed to direct to the institute and which were published by G2W, made clear in what refined yet ruthless fashion the authorities in the socialist states were constantly restricting the freedom of movement of the religious confessions, whose freedoms were already restricted.

No official recognition of the work of G2W through the national churches in Switzerland or Germany appeared before the transformations of 1989. Nevertheless a degree of cooperation developed after 1985, its tones fluctuating between “friendly” and “strained”. The head of the foreign office of the EKD church, bishop Heinz-Joachim Held of Hannover, once characterized the relationship as follows: “we in the EKD maintained the official contacts to the churches in socialism -- you at G2W are documenting the antireligious policies there.”

Major Emphases of the G2W Journal

Both in the research work of the institute and its reporting, the Soviet Union took center stage consistently. Here it was the Russian Orthodox church, above all, whose problems (manipulation of the leading bishops through the organs, the relationship of church and state, reprisals against believers in the Soviet provinces, etc.) were addressed. The Catholic Church in Lithuania usually appeared as an example of church resistance, similar to the Greek Catholic Church (Union of Brest 1596) in Galicia.. Reports on the Baltic republics usually focused on the helplessness of the leadership of the Lutheran Church over against Soviet state power, or even its submissiveness to it; and on the attempts of the Baltic peoples to protect their national and church interests nevertheless. Another regular theme was the Çeauçescu regime in Romania, as well as the problematic shifts in policy by the Roman Catholic bishops in Hungary between accommodation and firmness. Yet another persistent theme was the great variety of religious life in Yugoslavia, with the very diverse conditions for the religions in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia.

The accommodation of the Protestant churches in the CzSSR was contrasted with the stance of the Catholic Church, though the so-called peace priests also represented a problem for

the Catholics. Frequently there was occasion to highlight the unique approach of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, for example, in connection with the uprising in Gdansk, during the period of martial law 1980-81, its tension filled way together with Solidarnosc, or in parallel to it. At the same time, the journal drew attention to the religious and national minorities: Orthodox and Greek Catholic/Uniates (Russians, white Russians, Ukrainians) and their specific problems in Poland. Various Orthodox students from Poland (today all are bishops) received scholarships to study in Switzerland. Until 1989 the GDR also belonged within the geographic focus of G2W. Here the primary attention fell on the Protestant churches and the manner in which they attempted to put into practice the theses of "Church in Socialism", without ignoring the Catholic side.

Under the rubric *Rundschau* (Church Survey), which usually took up one-third of the content of the G2W Journal (format A-4, 32pp.) short news stories were printed. Mostly these concerned news about violations of human rights and about freedom of conscience in the Eastern bloc. There were reports on court trials, on the nature of the punishment in prisons and work camps, about mistreatments or suspicious deaths, about the closing of churches (rarely was one able to report the building of a new church) etc. The main section of the journal consisted of extensive reports and texts (reports usually by clergy and church members about the condition of congregations locally, statements of position by bishops or from synods, legal texts with commentary) as well as articles devoted to specific developments of religious policy in specific East European countries and about current problems in inner church life or ecumenical affairs.

In addition to the monthly journal, until the beginning of 1987 G2W published its biweekly news service (*Informationsdienst*). Here current information was reported without commentary, and usually from a Slavic language source translated into German. Before the Iron Curtain began to rust, the G2W news service provided editors in Europe and America with realistic reports on which they could base their articles.

G2W After the Transition

The developments that led to the collapse of "real existing socialism" in the individual countries, were carefully reported in the *G2W Journal*, with special attention to the church political aspects. Thus it is still most instructive today to re-read how differently developments in Estonia and Latvia proceeded, for example. On April 11-12, 1989, the entire Latvian Lutheran church leadership (including Archbishop Eriks Mesters) were voted out of office - with the argument as it had been formulated by temporarily suspended Propst Modris Plate, who was active in the movement for national renewal: "the goodwill of the Soviet authorities was

consistently more important to this church leadership than was the well-being of our churches.”⁹ The Latvian Lutheran church was to suffer for some time the consequences of this radical cure of ousting the entire leadership.

The story in Estonia was very different, even though they faced the same problems initially. On June 12-13, 1990, five of the six members of the consistory were voted down but one member of the old consistory and Archbishop Kuno Pajula retained their positions.¹⁰ Later the last member of the old consistory was replaced during elections, and the Archbishop retired on his 70th birthday. In this way the Lutheran church of Estonia avoided the *de facto interregnum* under which the Latvian church suffered for many years.

New Problems - New Profile

G2W developed a new profile following the collapse of real existing socialism. Religious freedoms and human rights in a general sense no longer constituted a highly explosive problem in the post communist states after 1991. In most of the former socialist countries following the regime change, all religious communities were freed from their previous bonds. The Soviet law on religion of October 1990 was symptomatic in that general religious freedom and absolute equality before the law for all religious societies was guaranteed, generally following western models.¹¹ Over time, the monitoring groups from the KSCE (later OSCE) and the Helsinki Watch, who were to monitor the development of human rights in post communist states, found less and less reason for protest in the religious sphere. New problem areas arose instead.

In this context, within all the post-communist states, new religious groups (partly pseudo-) arose to attract the interest of the disoriented *homo sovietiki*. Protestants and Catholics are now all involved, apparently, to draw the formerly Orthodox Slavic people into their fold. The defense strategies of the threatened churches are everywhere similar, and tend to follow the example of the disturbing radical nationalist tendencies evident in all these countries - renewed dominance of the national elements in the churches, expressed in part with an aggressive anti-western stance. The Moscow Patriarchate, for example, declared the former Soviet Union as

⁹G2W (1989), Nr. 5 p.11f; Nr. 9, p. 21ff.

¹⁰G2W (1990), Nr. 7-8, p.11f.

¹¹The unusual religious freedom removed all barriers, that had prevented the churches from developing. The basic declaration of absolute equality before the law for all religious communities in a country raised the minority churches to a legal status that they had never known in their history. This meant that in the Russian Federation from 1990-1997, for example, a new religious sect (Moon, Scientology, Children of Jesus, etc.) or a Hare Krishna Group has the same status of juridical personhood as did a congregation of the 1000 year old Russian Orthodox Church.

its "canonic territory", where the non-Orthodox (i.e. western) churches had no business. In virtually all post communist states since 1997 laws were passed, or are in process, which are intended to limit the rights of the non-Orthodox churches and to prohibit the new religious movements. At the same time the stance of the dominant Orthodox churches remains strikingly ambivalent, when new religious groups (NRMs) with Orthodox background emerge (best-known in Russia were the "White Brotherhood", the "Mother of God Center", and the new "Vissarion-Christos", etc.).

There are conflicts between various religions (Orthodox-Islam) and denominations (Orthodox-Catholic/Uniate). More common however, are splits within individual religious communities - within Islam, Judaism, Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, Baptists and others, but so far not within the Catholic church. (In light of the forced unions by the Soviet state and the suppression of all theological discussion for seventy years, one can detect in these splinterings the differentiations that had become necessary.) We need only look at Orthodoxy in the Ukraine to recall that until 1989 (also due to state imposed measures) it existed publicly only under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. Today at least four churches compete (the Ukrainian Orthodox church of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Orthodox - Patriarchate Kiev, the Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church and finally the Greek Catholic church [Union of Brest 1596]).

The Churches and Ultra-Nationalism

Former Orthodox national churches are now being forced by regimes lacking stability into the role of a state church; and often these former state churches expect to see their privileges restored. Their key concern is to be recognized as the dominant church in the land - other religious communities should receive a lesser legal status. In special measure this applies to the churches of national minorities. Thus the religious problems often mirror the difficulties of the national minorities, this at a time when hypernationalism serves to compensate for economic suffering and an ideological vacuum. The repressive nationality policies of Romania, for example, have affected the situation of the churches of the Hungarian minority and those of the Saxons of Siebenburgen. The aggressive stance of all Orthodox churches over against the Roman Catholic Church are seldom directed against Catholic Russians, Bulgarians or Serbs, of whom there are very few. Orthodox resentment against Rome is directed toward specific regions, against specific national minorities, who (in the eyes of Orthodox Slavs) bear a historical burden against Orthodoxy. That is, resentment against Polish persons in Russia, or against Hungarians in Romania.

For more than half a decade the shocking events in the Balkans have taken up an increasingly large amount of space in the journal. Alongside regular commentary on the political

developments, a key question that was constantly in the foreground, was how the individual religious communities (Orthodoxy, Islam, and the Catholic Church) were working and conducting themselves in the diverse conflicts (and their current stance), and whether, and how, they were attempting to restrain the conflict through their means of influence. Publication of documents from the Serbian Orthodox church and its associated entities, as well as the evaluation of the contrasting positions of Serbian Orthodox bishops as presented in the journal, forced the G2W Institute to the conclusion - initially against the will of the Orthodoxophile church circles of the WCC, but which eventually could no longer be ignored - that the Serbian Orthodox church (not always its bishops, but many of its priests) had contributed to developments that put the Balkans out of control.

Target Groups of *G2W Journal*

The *G2W Journal* is now sent to nearly all theological schools in the post-communist lands, as complementary copies. The journal is being taken very seriously as we can conclude from numerous letters received. An older generation of theologians is often able to read German. Hence the goal of the Institute was redefined - through church historical articles and articles that provide knowledge about a specific Christian confession, the many denominations are to become acquainted with the other religious communities which they knew about my name only during the Communist era. Underlying this approach is the assumption, that members of specific religious groups might lose their deep-seated fear of other religions or other Christian confessions as a result, and no longer treat them automatically as opponents or competition. This could happen, for example, when they experience something about the "other", when they recognize the "others" as sister Christian churches. It was part of Socialist religious policy, following the model divide and conquer, to provoke the distrust between the religious communities, indeed serious opposition. The results of that policy are still evident today. Therefore the *G2W journal* has attempted to supply the institutions for theological education in the former Eastern Bloc with religious and confessional material that is intended to forge a foundation for inter-confessional, ecumenical thinking.

In similar fashion G2W is seeking to address national conflicts that usually have a religious component, through reviewing the history of the nationalities involved and to present with clarity the overall political situation of the region, in order to make the diverse lines of development understandable. Both through their cooperation as contributors to the *G2W journal*, and through the invitation of clergy and laity of "opposing" ethnic groups to conferences and other events, such opinion leaders get to know each other, and usually get into a substantive or even friendly conversation. No more than that is needed as a beginning - the fear of the "enemy" has disappeared. Finally, through projects conducted at the intermediate or local

levels, in which “opposing” national groups (Romanians and Hungarians, Russians and Poles, Czechs and Germans, etc.) are consciously drawn into cooperation, it becomes possible to reduce ethnic tensions and prejudices.

A third challenge comes, in the form of hundreds of letters from readers, also from the former communist countries that declare - G2W is providing them with reliable information about the church situation, not only in distant countries, but the journal also “informs us what is happening in our country, in our city, yes even in our street” in terms of church affairs. “It was from G2W that we first learned about the tragic events in a congregation of a different confession in our immediate neighborhood - and we were able to respond appropriately”, said one letter from eastern Poland (1998).

Finally, the journal continues its original primary task - to inform people in the former “West” about churches and religious societies in the former Socialist states. It has finally become generally recognized, that the realistic, sober and factual reporting by G2W was in the end more helpful than the euphoric rose-tinted tales. The five researchers at the Institute get invited as lecturers or as experts to events in Switzerland and abroad on such themes as basic analyses of the political, ethnic and religious situation in the Balkans, or when experts on the religious situation in the successor states to the Soviet Union are needed (for example, with reference to the Orthodox-Catholic conflict in Russia; or on the charges by the Orthodox against the churches of the West of proselytism within the “canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox church”, that is within the region of the old Soviet Union; or about the situation of the Uniates in the Ukraine; on the new anti-semitism in Russia; the revival of the Euro-Asiatic idea; the mass migration of Russian Germans and the fate of their churches, etc.). Or there are questions about minority churches in Poland (Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed) or about the current role of the churches on Chechnya, or about the flight and deportation of the Germans.

Special Projects

The collapse of the old system made humanitarian aid necessary for the suffering population. G2W registered a branch organization in Moscow, through which relief projects are planned, organized, and supervised. This concerns fostering projects that seem worthwhile, which members of church communities or other communities started on their own initiative, but which lacked logistical and financial support. Most of the G2W sponsored projects concerned social services (assistance to street children, homes for seniors and care of the aged, help for persons with hearing disability, a carpentry training center in Moscow, the organization of services by Orthodox priests in prisons and penal colonies, the building of Orthodox chapels in such prison camps, offering legal aid to appeal unjust sentences). Social projects in Romania and Hungary are managed through trips from Switzerland to the project locations.

Still another project can be labeled "literature assistance". In general this focuses on two areas: co-financing theological and church historical publications, or the translation and distribution of urgently needed literature.

1. The series "Das Internationale Theologische Buch/ITB", initiated and co-financed by G2W now includes 34 Hungarian titles. G2W has assisted in the financing of new editions of pre-revolutionary Russian language publications by the church historian E. Golubinski and the publication of contemporary church historians (Dimitri Pospelovsky, Gerd Stricker). In addition to publication assistance and support of theological institutions in Poland, Chechnya, Slovakia, Romania (Romanian, Hungarian and Siebenburgen Saxon), Lithuania and Latvia, G2W has stressed in particular the financing of the translations of German language foundational theological literature into Estonian (in cooperation with the theological faculty in Tartu).
2. Collecting theological and church historical literature for theological schools in the former Soviet territory was not focused on specific confessional or national emphases. Depending on financial possibility G2W has attempted to respond to the many requests for books for theological seminary libraries. Basic books usually receive higher priority than specialist literature.

Publishing House and Publications

G2W Verlag (G2W Publications) also belongs to the institute. Titles on various aspects of the work have appeared, such as the following:

Anatoli Lieven, Vadim Shafrov. *Essays on the History of the Russian Church Struggles (Renovationism)*, in Russian, 1978.

Mit-Leiden. Russische Christen und Atheisten im Dialog. Preface by Lev Kopelev.(1983).

Eugen Voss, hrsg. *Die "Religionsfreiheit" in Osteuropa*. (1984).

Ottokar Basse, Hrsg. *Kirche im Sozialistischen Gesellschaftssystem. Begegnungen - Erfahrungen - Einsichten*. (1986).

Gerd Stricker, Hrsg. *Religion in der UdSSR. Unbekannte Vielfalt in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (1989).

Peter Fabian. *Im Glauben Stark. Katholiken in Osteuropa* (1989).

Hans Sievers. *Stundenbuch einer Revolution. Die Leipziger Kirchen im Oktober 1988* (1990).

Pavel Uhorskai. *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen. Erinnerungen eines Bischofs an die Stalinzeit in der Slowakei* (1994).

Wilhelm Kahle. *Evangelische Freikirchen und freie Gemeinden im Russischen Reich, in der Sowjetunion und den Nachfolgestaaten*. (1995).

Jan Twardowski. *Wenn du betest, atmet Gott in Dir. Religioese Lyrik aus Polen*. Übersetzt von Rudolf Bohren jr. (1996).

Swatopluk Karasek. *Der durchnässte Pfarrer*. Üebersetzt von Rudolf Bohren jr. (2000).

The Director of G2W Institute, Erich Bryner, and the research scholar Gerd Stricker also published articles in other periodicals with East European orientation, which have appeared in Switzerland, Germany, England and Russia. Erich Bryner's book on Orthodox church history is being published by the Evangelischen Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig. Titles by Gerd Stricker on Russian church history appeared in Gerd Mohn, Guetersloh; Martin-Luther-Verlag, Erlangen; and Propylaen, Moscow) as well as on the history of the Germans in Russia (in the series *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas* in Siedler Verlag, Berlin). Rudolf Bohrne jr. is translating religious lyric poetry from West Slavic languages into German.

Prospects

In spite of this extensive field of work, and in spite of the widespread acceptance that the institute throughout its 25 year history never experienced before, its future remains uncertain. Since the main supporters of the institute are the established churches, the institute is affected by the financial crisis of the churches, that has now also reached Switzerland. Contributions from the regional churches has dropped to 35 percent of the annual budget (earlier they covered over 60 percent of the budget). Further reductions have already been announced. Private supporters can sustain the institute for a time, but this is no promising and stable financial base. Like many other scholarly institutions in Germany the religious institute G2W in Zurich is now also dependent to an increasing extent on private sponsorship.

Translated from the German by Walter Sawatsky.

