

*I-AFD*

# Flier about the Pope

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Pope John Paul II is coming to Germany. While Catholics get down on their knees, this visit to us is an occasion to raise protest against the organisation.

There is no other organisation which caused the death of so many innocent people. Its history is accompanied by zillions of dead bodies who were put to death for this religion and in the name of its god.

Behind the message of “love thy friends and thy enemies” there is a machine driven by bloodlust and a hunger for power which destroys each and every one who gets in its way to power. And even if the church “stepped on the brakes” lately, this does not mean it has realized its mistakes — this is due to society being more enlightened nowadays and the clergy having lost some of its power.

But still many people go to church each Sunday, pay their taxes to the church [In Germany, this tax is paid to the state which passes it on to the main Christian churches; c.], and still nowadays, hypocritical Catholic morals are haunting the parliament, the legal system, and the textbooks in schools.

It is not longer to be tolerated that the pope — on the very verge of 21<sup>st</sup> century — calls for crusades. It is no longer to be tolerated that the pope declares contraceptives illegal.

## Church, War, and the Capital

The realm of church grew and became wealthier and wealthier after the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the Catholic church supported the Roman emperors in their wars and, as a consequence, received certain privileges. The church laid its hands on riches hoarded in conquered temples as well as on the belongings of “heretics”. Monks and priests from noble and wealthy families brought even more riches to the church. Already in 5<sup>th</sup> century, the church was the biggest owner of real estate in the Roman empire.

The church gave up the social theology of its early days, instead adopting the feudal system and slavery. The church collected tax payments with the same brutality as the state.

Today, the clergy concentrates its financial activities on billions coming in as tax payments, on real estate and in the stock market. The Vatican puts his money into all kinds of enterprises: French oil companies, gas and power plants in Argentina, tin mines in Bolivia, Brazilian rubber companies and the Vatican also does not shy from setting foot into the stock exchange.

The Vatican has put a tremendous lot of its gold into Fort Knox in USA and has an important influence on the steel industry. The Jesuit order owns a significant part of General Motors shares, of American Telephone etc. The largest private bank (Bank of America) is owned by the Jesuits who hold 51% of its shares.

In Italy, the Vatican holds shares of power plants, telephone companies, and railways. Several Italian banks are more or less run by the church which also owns a significant part of the shares of Italy's biggest airline and also Italian car company Fiat. Already in 1958, the church owned **DM 50 billion** in shares.

While billions of people, among them Catholics, live in misery and even starve to death, a constant flow of money makes the Vatican richer and richer – and only heaven knows where this money ends up at . . .

## **Tax payments to the church?**

There's still a lot of people who believe that these tax payments will be used for good works and on needy persons. Fact is, however, that the Catholic church spends only 9% of the tax payments received on social purpose. So what are they doing with the huge rest?

A naive church-going person would answer, the church will finance their many kindergartens, Caritas, hospitals, institutions for the handicapped, and old people's homes on this money. Alas, all these institutions are run on state money while the church pays only a very small amount of their financial budgets. While for example the state pays 80% of the budgets of church owned kindergartens in Germany, the church pays a mere 20%. This is also true for Caritas and other institutions. All in all, almost 90% of the budgets get paid by the state while the church gets the praise as the generous benefactor.

Even those of us who believe they will not finance any priest's monthly income because they are no longer member of a church are definitely wrong: the state gives an annual **DM 1 billion** to the churches to finance religious instruction at schools, to pay for the university courses of priests, to keep church buildings in good repair, for military priests, to pay the monthly wages of priests, bishops, etc. Even non-church members will contribute to finance the mainstream Christian churches by paying their income tax (and other taxes) to the state. Under the cloak of charity and aided by our naivety, the churches guard their monopoly and make a huge profit.

## **Baptizing children is against religious freedom**

Despite human rights being for every person, small children will be forced to a religious act. Even worse, they are made object of an act performed by others. According to Catholic laws, a person once baptized can never retreat from this and will stay a member of church as long as s/he lives.

We therefore demand to enforce the right to religious freedom which will mean a ban on baptizing babies and all religious or anti-religious brainwashing!

## **Abolish religious instruction at schools**

According to the German constitution, state and church are separated. Despite of this, article 7.3 of our constitution names religious instruction as a compulsory subject at schools — the only school subject mentioned in our constitution! It is not to be tolerated that the church is given the privilege to spread its hypocritical ideology in schools. And even worse: religious symbols like the cross will be put up in classrooms in which also non-Christian children are educated, and there are schools which make their pupils go to church and organize compulsory religious service for their pupils. This is an example of arrogance and a lack of tolerance which is typical for the churches.

In addition, religious instructors at state schools are not paid by the churches but the state covers 80- 90% of these expenses. Just in West Berlin, tax payers finance religious instructions in state schools with about DM 47 million — and while 1/3 of West Berlins inhabitants are no members of a church, every tax payer contributes to this amount.

Down with article 7.3 of the constitution, abolish religious instruction in schools — no organisation may have the right to influence people in a one-sided way.

## **Last words**

Although the church's history was written with blood, although the church always shackled up with the ones in power (no matter how cruel they were), although the church only was able to grow powerful and rich by murder, manslaughter, fraud, and forging (the bible is no exception here), it still enjoys a good reputation and tremendous privileges. Even today, a lot of people go to church, and still today, the church has an influence on our private life.

The alliance between church and states does not come as a surprise — they're excellent partners. The state will provide money and protection, clerics educate people to bow and submit and appease people with the promise of the pie in the sky. The more faithful, religious, and obedient a population is, the easier it may be governed and expropriated.

It is in our hands to put a stop to all this. No person will fulfill their lives by mindlessly repeating instructions about the existence of god, on the authority of the bible or the infallibility of popes or on life after death.

Your leaving the church will be a cornerstone to a human community without religious prejudice and without everybody's minds made up by the church.

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