

**Stewart W. Herman: Memorandum of Conversation with Professor Iwand at Lünen on September 11, 1945**

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Professor Iwand has acquired a special name for himself among German churchmen for his courageous leadership of one of the forbidden seminaries of the Confessional Church<sup>1</sup>. Previously he was professor at the University of Königsberg, but he was ousted from East Prussia and continued to move with his students westward to Berlin and finally to Dortmund. Finally, he was arrested and detained for several months, during which his seminary students were dispersed. Recently, he has been acting as minister in Dortmund, where he is attempting to rebuild a congregation. Iwand is unusually energetic and imaginative in his work. For instance, although there is not a single church left in Dortmund, he is reopening a church in a large room which was formerly a communal kitchen.

Iwand stated that the German Communists possess unity of policy but have no following. The average German in the Ruhr area tends toward social democracy with a definitely Christian slant, and to the reorganization of trade unions. A branch of the Christian-Democratic Union was founded in Dortmund last Sunday, but appears to be largely under the control of the Catholics.

According to Iwand, the great problem is to Christian-ize the workers. However, he feels that Christian-Democratic Union is an awkward name and that even the workers who are inclined to return to the Church dislike to have the name "Christian" used by a political party as a title. The word "democratic" has a much greater appeal. Many Christians, however, have acquired strong positions among the workers, particularly among the Religious Socialists.

As to the British administration, the general opinion seems to be that it is conscientious but frequently unduly rough. Political prisoners<sup>2</sup> are completely cut off without mail or pastoral connection. This has a bad effect on the families. It is agreed that the really guilty ones should be expatriated if possible, but no one feels comfortable about arrests and detention without charges having been made.

One-third of the school teachers in the Ruhr were never in the Nazi party, but they are decidedly Leftist. Most school teachers formerly placed all their faith in "humanity", but they appear to have come to the conclusion that there is no adequate faith short of Christianity.

The Catholic school teachers were mostly Nazis, but they have now been sent out to solicit for support of Confessional schools, at the insistence of the Archbishop of Cologne [*Frings*] and with the support of Bishop von Galen. Iwand does not believe that the Protestant Church should insist on having Confessional schools, at least until the Protestant teachers are ready to be bound to a definite religious creed. He does not believe that the teachers whose interest in Christianity has been reawakened will take kindly to any attempt to force them into doctrinal commitments. He believes that religious instruction must, however, remain under the supervision of the Church. Iwand made some interesting comments on the development of religious sentiment during the war. In 1942 Dortmund was canvassed to learn the desire of parents

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<sup>1</sup> Nach dem Entzug der *venia legendi* übernahm Iwand 1935 die Leitung des Predigerseminars der ostpreussischen Bekenntnissynode in Blöstau, das er nach seiner Ausweisung aus Ostpreußen 1937 zuerst in Paradies hei Jordan, dann in Dortmund bis zur endgültigen Auflösung im Herbst 1938 weiterführte.

<sup>2</sup> Gemeint sind die im Zuge des „automatischen Arrests“ verhafteten und in Internierungslagern festgehaltenen Funktionsträger des Staats- und Parteiapparates des „Dritten Reiches“.

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regarding religious instruction for children, with the result that 80 per cent of the parents requested it, including many who themselves had resigned from the Church. In the suburban areas 100 per cent of the parents requested religious instruction. Decisions were reached despite the express opposition of the Nazi party and the general reaction of the people seemed to be, "Now the Church is doing something for us".

Iwand took the initiative in arranging services for forced laborers brought from Holland. The Gestapo had forbidden the Dutch to hold their own services. Finally, the surveillance was so complete that it was necessary for devout Christians to come to private homes singly by night in order that they might join in worship. Groups of sixteen or more gathered in this fashion.

In the fall of 1944 Pastor Steil of Wanne-Eickel<sup>3</sup> gave a series of lectures on Christian themes until the meetings were interrupted by his arrest. He was finally killed and his death is directly associated with the tremendous interest aroused among workers. The Church in Herne was constantly crowded.

Iwand alternated with Steil and gave a series of lectures on the book of Revelation to which more and more people flowed. Copies of these lectures were sent secretly to German soldiers at the front.

Iwand was present at the Treysa Conference and preached on the final morning, delivering a sermon<sup>4</sup> which was unquestionable the most inspirational message of the entire period. He has provided me with a copy of this sermon, which I hope to have translated into English.

Quelle: Clemens Vollnhals (Hrsg.), *Die Evangelische Kirche nach dem Zusammenbruch. Berichte ausländischer Beobachter aus dem Jahre 1945*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988, S. 141f.

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<sup>3</sup> Gemeint ist offensichtlich Ludwig Steil, Pfarrer in Holsterhausen/Westfalen. Er wurde am 11. September 1944 in Dortmund verhaftet und starb am 17. Januar 1945 im Konzentrationslager Dachau.

<sup>4</sup> Druck: F. SÖHLMANN, Treysa 1945, S. 36 ff.

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