

DongA Magazine: Europe and the Family Federation

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The Power of the Underground Movement in the Eastern Bloc in the Cold War...Church Currently Boasts 25,000 Members

Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon first visited Europe in 1965. They visited 16 nations over 40 days, including Lisbon, Portugal and the Vatican. During the tour, 19 new holy ground sites were established. They then visited Europe more than 20 times after that, in which they focused on evangelism. On March 28th, 1969, they held a marriage ceremony for eight couples in Hessen, Germany, the first of many Family Federation mass weddings to be held in Europe. “The Family Federation in Europe saw the most growth in the 1970s. About 60% of our current members joined at that time,” said Family Federation European Regional President Young-Sik An. “As the hippie movement began in Europe and the traditions of purity and the family began to break down, the Family Federation was warmly welcomed for its opposite views.” The Church still opposes same-sex relationships and protects family values, according to President An.

The “50 Years of European Evangelism” Event, held at the Austria Center in Vienna on May 10th, drew an enthusiastic crowd of European members. The Austria Center, which is a landmark stadium similar to the COEX in Korea, was filled with 2,500 members from 35 different nations. The blonde-haired, blue-eyed people of Europe listened courteously to Dr. Hak Ja Han’s keynote address, which she delivered in

Korean, through simultaneous interpretation and subtitles. The members all sang the “Cheon Il Guk National Anthem” in Korean as well, making for a very unusual sight. Many of the members brought along their children as well. The couples who were brought together through the mass wedding ceremonies of Rev. and Dr. Moon have now produced a 2nd generation of members, and even some 3rd generation members as well, according to the Family Federation.

According to the Family Federation, the underground evangelist movement centered in Eastern Europe played a part in the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the heart of Communism. During President Gorbachev’s term in office (1985-1991), the former Soviet Union sent 5,000 university students to the United States over several trips, for seven-day visits in which they could experience the free world. These students received education in the Family Federation Principle (the central teaching of the church). In 1990, Rev. Moon met with Gorbachev and promised to support his open-door reform in return for a favor. The Family Federation also points out that when tanks stood in the Red Square of Moscow when Gorbachev imprisoned extreme conservatives, many of the protestors who stood up against the tanks were “Sun Myung Moon’s Kids.”

At the Professors World Peace Academy International Conference, held at the Continental Hotel in Geneva, Switzerland in 1985, Rev. Moon was said to have predicted the fall of the Soviet Union and Communism. About 2,000 Family Federation youth of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) gathered in front of the Berlin Wall in 1987 to march for the destruction of the wall and peace in the world. The Family Federation claims that it was the largest-scale international gathering to be held since the construction of the Berlin Wall. At the “50 Years of European Evangelism” event, a video was shown of Rev. Moon’s oldest son, the late Hyo Jin Moon, giving a passionate speech in English at a protest in Berlin.

Europe, particularly Germany, has been regarded by the Family Federation as having a particular significance from a business perspective. During his life, Rev. Moon said that “In order to bring about peace, we must do away with the technological gap between affluent and poor nations.” He called for the “standardization of technology,” and said that this would happen first in Germany. In 1981, Rev. Moon visited Germany for six months to observe the machine industry there, after which he took over many German businesses. The technologies used in the machine parts businesses Heyligenstaedt, Honsberg, Bourcer and Wanderer became the foundation for the Tongil Heavy Industries in Changwon.

However, the path that the Family Federation has walked in Europe has not been an easy one. They received opposition not only from Communist powers, but from the Christian Church of Western Europe as well. In the 1990s, Rev. Moon was banned from entering 15 Western European nations for various reasons. Dr. Han is seen as the source of the revival in Europe. Rev. Moon’s ban lasted for about 10 years before being lifted. In 2007, the German Supreme Court ruled that Rev. Moon’s name be lifted off the list of people banned from entry into the country. In Europe, many nations require a person’s religion to be listed on their official papers. Many nations do not yet recognize the Family Federation as a legitimate religion. Austria, after 40 years of evangelism, recognizes the Family Federation as a legitimate religion for the first time this year.