Flyer About Peace Symbol Disturbs Many

By LINDA GREENHOUSE
Special to The New York Times

WHITE PLAINS, Aug. 1—The belief among some adherents of the political right that the peace symbol represents a broken cross or a communist-inspired anti-Christian device has begun to worry both Christians and Jews here who have seen literature expressing that theory.

The controversy over the origin of the peace symbol, the well-known design that resembles the imprint of a four-toed bird, surfaced in Westchester County recently in the letter-to-the-editor columns of the North Castle News, a weekly newspaper published in Armonk.

Karl Landt, a life insurance agent and youth adviser at the Armonk Methodist Church, wrote to the paper to report that an American Legion member had sent him some literature referring to the peace symbol as "the broken cross.

Intentions Unquestioned

Mr. Landt wrote to the paper that he had received the material after a youth service at the church, where a poster showing a peace symbol superimposed on a cross had been displayed.

"While I do not question the good intentions of the Legion, they have plainly been deluded into doing what the enemies of our country want—spreading propaganda which will cause dissension and create disunity among us," Mr. Landt wrote to the newspaper.

The paper then printed a letter from Edwin J. Schultz, commander of the American Legion post here, disclaiming responsibility for the material.

The on-page flyer was reproduced in the paper. It contained the words: "Distribute by the American Legion Post 544, Minerville, Pa.," and it included such statements as, "The Communists have infiltrated every segment of the garment industry and you find the broken cross embroidered on packets and other garments for the casual American to wear."

It also contained a statement from Michael Wurmbrand, identified only as "formerly of Rumania," that the peace symbol "was called 'the witch's foot' in the Middle Ages, and it was a common symbol of the devil, with the cross reversed and broken."

"If the American Legion is distributing this kind of junk, the public should know about it," said Mr. Landt, who added that he was a registered Republican and has never been active in politics. "I want to stamp out anything that throws a bad light on the peace symbol."

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