

Un-Christians crusade vs. Islamic school

by Nancy Spannaus

Loudoun County, Virginia has once more become the center of bitter controversy, and mob passions, in the face of a zoning application by the Islamic Saudi Academy, a private school financed by the Saudi government, to locate in the county. Leading the mobilization against the school is a group of so-called Christians, led by a local Elmer Gantry, Pastor James Ahlemann of the Community Fellowship Church, and buttressed by lying anti-Islamic propaganda put out by Republican Congressman Frank Wolf, and the misnamed Christian Solidarity International (CSI).

The Saudi Academy, a 14-year-old institution with a good reputation, is seeking to expand its premises, and therefore sought a move from Fairfax County to neighboring Loudoun. All seemed to be going smoothly on the move to an industrially zoned site in Ashburn Village, until a few months ago, when anti-Islamic leaflets and graffiti began to appear in this small enclave in Virginia's Washington suburbs. It has gotten uglier since then.

Over the recent two months, a number of public hearings have brought out hundreds of citizens to register their concerns, beliefs, or prejudices about the school project. The County Planning Commission has approved the project, and the County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to vote on the matter March 4. If the Board ignores the mob pressures, as expected, the special exception for zoning will be granted.

Yet, as indicated at the recent hearings, including one held Feb. 17 in the county seat of Leesburg, the group of so-called Christian fundamentalists who are opposing the school, is determined to continue the fight, regardless of approval. Calls are going out for a voter referendum (which state and County authorities have already said is illegal in dealing with zoning or land use issues), and for defeating at the polls all officials who support the school. Pastor Ahlemann has gone further, telling his Sunday parishioners that he intends to continue the fight with civil disobedience, if necessary. He is telling people he is prepared to die to win the fight against the Saudi school, because the Saudis persecute Christians. Supervisors known to be in favor of the project, have reported receiving threats.

In some respects, the Loudoun fight is a microcosm of the political fight going on throughout the United States, in the context of the push for a renewed war against Iraq. The Christian evangelical movement, led by Netanyahu supporters Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, is riling up passions against Islam, and pushing for military action by Israel, or the United States,

against Islamic states. The tracts being put out against Arabs and Islamic worshippers would make Goebbels blush.

Less prominent, but equally deadly, is the work in this direction being done by CSI, which boasts Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) and Virginia Republican Mike Farris on its board, and works closely with Wolf, who is listed on CSI's International Board of Referents. CSI is a British Intelligence front, whose prime mover is Baroness Caroline Cox. Cox, a frequent travelling partner of Wolf, is the point person for disseminating anti-Islamic lies about Sudan, and promoting a split-up of that country, despite Khartoum's intensive efforts for reconciliation between religions.

CSI propaganda has been quietly circulated in Loudoun, including by Ahlemann and his followers, but the institution, and Wolf, have kept a low profile. Until Feb. 17, that is. At the latest public hearing, CSI's Vice-President Robert Sweet came out to attempt to disassociate Wolf from CSI and the campaign against the Saudi school; however, he soon launched into a diatribe against alleged human rights violations of the Saudi Arabian regime against Christians, using formulations identical to the babblings of Ahlemann's speakers, and thus revealing the true origins of the local propaganda.

Sweet had told his audience that he was surprised at how well known CSI had become locally. In so doing, he was acknowledging the effect of efforts of the LaRouche movement to make known the critical role of CSI and Wolf in the local hate campaign. In addition, through the intervention of *EIR News for Loudoun County*, the opponents of the school have been forcefully identified as a "new Ku Klux Klan"; this has given courage to the ISA's supporters, and has helped shape the current political debate.

Building a fascist movement

The degree to which previously rational citizens have been turned into a racist, bigotted mob against foreigners over this issue, has shocked many local citizens, who thought the days of the Ku Klux Klan were over. In the name of defending Christian values, and revenge, many self-professed Christians appear to have gone stark raving mad. There are screams about security threats, because of elementary security precautions being taken, and demands for retaliation and the like.

At the Feb. 17 hearing, the preponderance of the more than 100 witnesses testified in favor of the school. Many pled for tolerance, and expressed a sense of shame at the reputation Loudoun was getting. Perhaps the most moving came from former hostage in Lebanon Joseph Cicippio, who had been held by Islamic terrorists for five years. If anyone should be seeking revenge, it would be me, he said, but I was able to forgive, and I urge you to burn out the hate.

Three LaRouche Democrats testified to the filthy role being played by Wolf and the evangelicals in building up the Klan-type hate campaign, and urged that this be rejected, particularly in the context of the buildup of a prospective disastrous war against Iraq.