

Response of the South African Council of Churches to the WCC Programme to Combat Racism. (1969-1979). A documentation (see note on page 16) .

The Message to the People of South Africa - 1968

Following the Sharpeville incident and the banning of political movements demanding the removal of racial discrimination, racial legislation and security legislation intensified in rigidity. As a result the South African Council of Churches devoted special attention to the increasing racial tensions.

In 1968 the SACC National Conference adopted the "Message to the People of South Africa" which had been worked out by a Theological Commission. The "Message" described the "theory of separation and the preservation of racial identity" underlying the policy of separate development as "a novel gospel" and the policy itself as a "form of resistance to the Holy Spirit".

The "Message" gave rise to extensive discussion in the South African churches and to tensions between the South African government and the SACC and its member churches. This development had an effect on the reception of the WCC Programme to Combat Racism in the South African public.

A summary of the "Message to the People of South Africa" has been published in the booklet "The Message in Perspective" (published by the SACC). This booklet also comprises reactions to the Message from the South African public, from the churches and from government authorities.

A question that was continuously raised in the discussion of the Message, was the following: If the policy of separate development is rejected, what is the alternative, that is acceptable to the churches? This question was taken very seriously by the SACC and by the Christian Institute. In response to this question the SACC and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa embarked on a joint Study Project called "The Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society" (SPROCAS). Several SPROCAS publications are still available. This study and research project investigated the causes and effects of racism in different areas of South African life and at the same time worked out proposals for an alternative to the existing system of separate development.

The Arnoldshain resolution of the WCC Executive Committee, September 2, 1970.

A relatively little account was taken by the South African churches and by the South African public of the events and discussions in ecumenical conferences that led to the Programme to Combat Racism. However, when the list of organisations, that were selected at Arnoldshain for financial support through the Special Fund became known, a wave of indignation and shock made itself felt in ^{the} South African public.

*Attention was concentrated on the Special Fund as if it were the only aspect and item of the Programme to Combat Racism. Little account was taken of the terms on which subsidies were granted from the Special Fund.

At a meeting of the WCC Executive Committee 19 organisations combating racism were selected out of a list of 40 applications for support. Of these 19 organisations, 10 were operative in Africa, of the latter number 9 were operative in Southern Africa. Some of these organisations had resorted to military means of fighting racism in Southern Africa. All the 19 organisations had given the assurance that they would use the money not for military, but for social, sanitary, educative and juridical purposes.

The preliminary response of South African church leaders to the Arnoldshain resolution.
South African church leaders appear to have been taken by surprise by the Arnoldshain resolution. They received the first information about it in the public press of South Africa, before having obtained any official information. The first preliminary remarks of several S.A. church leaders on the Arnoldshain resolution indicated that the communication between the S.A. member churches and the WCC on the Programme to Combat Racism had been inadequate. On the whole the resolution of the WCC Executive Committee was interpreted as a support by the WCC of military action against the Republic of South Africa, undertaken by the liberation movements.

According to the Cape Times of September 4, 1970, Bishop L. Stradling of Johannesburg remarked on the Arnoldshain resolution: "I personally could not justify it - supporting in the name of Christ subversive movements which stand for violence and violent attacks on law and order."

The Archbishop of the CPSA, the Rt. Rev. Selby Taylor, remarked that he had not yet seen the official text of the resolution. He indicated the possibility, that the resolution of the WCC at Arnoldshain, if it had been reported correctly, might lead to the withdrawal of S.A. member churches from the WCC. At the same time he placed the resolution in a context that was very different from the interpretation of Bishop L. Stradling. Archbishop Selby Taylor remarked: "The fact that South Africans may be shocked at the reported action of the World Council of Churches must not blind us to the reason that lies behind this resolution. It is an indication of ^{the} abhorrence with which Christians throughout the world detest the racial inequalities which are inherent in the policy of apartheid."

Several leaders of other churches made similar remarks in public on the Arnoldshain Resolution, placing it either ^{into the} context intimated by the first or into the context intimated by the second statement, referred to above.

The response of the Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa made use of the uncertainty and shock prevailing among South African Church leaders as a result of the Arnoldshain resolution, for political purposes. The churches of English church tradition that were members of the WCC, had been in the forefront in the condemnation of the policy of separate development and had always received the moral support of the WCC in such condemnation. The time appeared now to be opportune to drive a wedge between them and the WCC and to exert pressure on them so as to make them renounce their membership in the world organisation. The occasion appeared to resemble the situation following the Sharpeville incident and the Cottesloe Consultation in 1960, when under the influence of public agitation, the South African member churches of the WCC of Dutch Reformed tradition withdrew from the organisation.

Two days after the decision had been taken at Arnoldshain, Mr. B.J. Vorster stated in a Press interview: "The decision of the WCC to give grants to communist organisations and terrorists, is to put it mildly, shocking." He furthermore referred to the relationship between the S.A. member churches and the WCC in making the following announcement: "This is of course regarded as a very serious matter and it cannot be tolerated that money contributed and collected in South Africa should be sent out of the country for this purpose."

A fortnight later, on September 15 1970, in a speech before Parliament, the Prime Minister threatened that he would use pressure on the South African member churches of the WCC so as to induce them to withdraw from that body. He said: "If they do not decide to sever their relationship with this body, I would neglect my duty as head of the government, if I would not take action against them." Only when the Prime Minister noticed that his efforts to enforce his will on the churches might not be successful, he indicated that he would back down on this matter.

According to a report in "The Star" of October 2nd, 1970, he said: "I would like to have seen churches withdraw completely in protest. That is their matter, however, and, except for expressing my disappointment, I want to leave it there". The disappointment of the Prime Minister now found an outlet in measures against two Anglican priests who had expressed some understanding for the resolution of the WCC. They were deported from the country.

Official resolutions of South African member churches of the SACC on the Arnoldshain resolution.

The storm in the South African Press and in the South African public concerning

the resolution of the WCC at Arnoldshain on the support to liberation movements erupted at the beginning of September. The months of September and October are the time which South African churches tend to select for the meetings of their national legislative bodies (Synod, Assembly, Conference). The first church to have its General Assembly after the storm had erupted, was the PCSA. This is a church with a constituency which is predominantly white. The response of this church body to the resolution of the WCC Executive Committee at Arnoldshain and to the confrontation between Church and State in South Africa that resulted from it, were to be of considerable influence on the decision of the legislative bodies of the other churches that followed. The resolution of the General Assembly is quoted here with a numbering, taken from the book of the German scholar Wolfhan Weisse on South Africa and the Programme to Combat Racism. It reads as follows:

- 1.) The Assembly views with concern the increased tensions arising from the reported decision of the World Council of Churches to support nationalist movements to the extent of R 143,000 in Southern Africa and elsewhere.
- 2.) The Assembly having, as a member body of the World Council of Churches, examined the facts of the disputed decision, dissents from that decision on the grounds that it is generally no part of the Christian task to align the Church with nationalist forces of any race.
- 3.) The Assembly warns its own members against those misunderstandings and omissions of compassion which would identify this Church with white or black nationalism.
- 4.) The Assembly discontinues its grant of R 500 per annum to the WCC and allocates and additional R 300 to the A A C C and an additional R 200 to the South African Council of Churches.
- 5.) The Assembly, though it dissents from the violence pursued by guerilla organisations and from the World Council of Churches' grant to them, sees that it must dissent at least as much from the violence inherent in the racial policies of the South African Government.
- 6.) The Assembly urges that the leaders of the W C C responsible for the grant be invited to South Africa by the South African Council of Churches to meet with Church leaders here to discuss the motives and the theology behind their decision and so that we can express our point of view to them.

..) The Assembly protests against the Prime Minister's threats against the Christian Churches in South Africa which are members of the W C C and his attempt to coerce them by such threats not only to dissent from the WCC in this particular instance but to break entirely with the W C C for political reasons. It protests against his threat to force the Churches to have no further contact or communication with the WCC. The Assembly reminds the Prime Minister that its only Lord and Master is Jesus Christ, that it may not serve other masters, and that its task is not necessarily to support the politics of the Government in power but to be faithful to the Gospel of the Lord and to seek justice for the afflicted and liberty for those who are oppressed."

The resolution of the CPSA shows that the efforts of the Prime Minister to enforce his will on the South African member churches of the WCC had been counter-productive. Though the leadership of these churches had reservations against the WCC resolution of Arnoldshain, they were not prepared to renounce their membership in the WCC. The resolution has to be interpreted in the context of the circumstances under which it was taken. During the Assembly the Prime Minister invited four prominent church leaders of the CPSA to a dinner. This dinner took place on the day prior to the decision of the Assembly on the WCC resolution of Arnoldshain. On the evening of the following day a motion was put to the Assembly that the CPSA should terminate its membership of the WCC. The motion was rejected with 75 against 10 votes. Though no official report is available on the talks that took place at the dinner, the fact that the Prime Minister invited 4 prominent CPSA church leaders during the time of the Assembly, must be interpreted as an attempt on his part to influence the decisions of the Assembly.

In our context it is not possible to give a detailed account of the resolutions of the legislative bodies of the other South African member churches of the WCC, the PCR and on the resolution of Arnoldshain in particular. In general these resolutions comprise the same main elements as the resolution of the CPSA, namely:

1. expression of reservations against the WCC resolution.

2. admission that this resolution is to be interpreted as a result of the failure of the efforts to effect fundamental change in the Republic of South Africa with a view to justice in human relationships.

3. affirmation of the will of the church organisation to maintain its membership in the WCC.

decision concerning the payment of the membership fees to the WCC.

general the formulation of the initial and of the later resolutions on the WCC and to be influenced by the composition of the church constituency. The larger the white constituency in a church body the stronger is the expression of reservations against the PCR and especially against the decision to support liberation movements that resort to military action in their fight against racism. The stronger the black constituency, the more outspoken is the statement on the challenge which the PCR presents to the respective South African Church to remove racial discrimination in its own ranks and to contribute towards fundamental change in South African society. In spite of the admission that the resolution of the WCC is a challenge and a stimulus for self-examination, churches with a strong white constituency tend to regard the resolution of the WCC at the same time as an obstacle to reformist steps towards reconciliation and justice in South African society.

the whole it appears that few black church leaders or other prominent church members have expressed their views openly on the PCR. Where this has happened, the remarks tend to be favourable to the WCC Programme to Combat Racism.

The response of the South African Council of Churches.

Initial statements of the SACC.

the news on the resolution of the WCC Executive Committee at Arnoldshain caused ^{consternation} in South African churches, the SACC at a special meeting worked out a carefully worded statement on September 4, 1970. According to the Rand Daily Mail of September 5, 1970 it declared that the SACC, if the Press reports on the WCC ^{were} correct, "dissociates itself from the stand point, but this does not necessarily imply withdrawal ^{of} association of the world body." The SACC furthermore stated that it rejects violence as a solution to the racial problems in Southern Africa.

In order to discuss the Arnoldshain resolution and its implication for South African churches the SACC invited its member bodies to send representatives to a meeting that was scheduled for September 10, 1970. The statement released by this meeting is a significant document and ^{is} attached as appendix 1

The Programme to Combat Racism initiated by the World Council of Churches received extensive consideration at the next SACC National Conference. Archbishop Selby Taylor, the President of the SACC, in his opening address interpreted the WCC resolution of 1970 as a challenge to South African churches calling for action on their part with a view to overcoming racial injustices in South African society. "Our task" he said, "is to show in the most conclusive terms, not only in words, but by our actions, that our churches condemn racial prejudice. " Though retaining the reservations against financial support granted by the WCC to liberation movements that use military means in their struggle for justice, the leaders of the SACC in the course of time to an increasing degree emphasised the resolution of the WCC as a challenge to the South African churches for decisive actions. On August 4-5, 1971, the General Secretary of the SACC declared at a meeting in Durban: "If the only positive result of the World Council of Churches decision has been to make us acutely aware of the discriminatory society in which we live and to challenge the church as to where it stands, it has achieved a great deal. "

Efforts on the part of the SACC to organise a consultation with representatives of the WCC

At its General Assembly in September 1970 the PCSA had suggested that the SACC invites the leaders of the WCC responsible for the grant to liberation movements, to meet with leaders of South African churches in order to discuss the motive and the theology behind the decision.

his Executive Committee of the SACC of December 2-3, 1970, followed the recommendations of the PCSA and decided to organise a consultation between representatives of the WCC and representatives of the South African member Churches. From an interview with the Prime Minister the General Secretary of the SACC, Mr. John Rees gained the impression that the South African government would raise no objections against such a consultation on South African soil. The consultation was scheduled for July 26-30, 1971. Unexpected difficulties, however, arose, when the Prime Minister demanded that the term "Consultation" used for the Conference, should be replaced by the term "Confrontation" and that the theme be changed to read as follows: "The grants made by the World Council of Churches to terrorists in Southern Africa and the reactions of the South African member Churches in terms of their respective resolutions against this abhorrent decision". The demands of the Prime Minister were unacceptable to the SACC as well as to the WCC. Mr. Vorster eventually limited his permission that visa be granted to a WCC delegation to the effect that the latter was not to be allowed to move outside the International Hotel at Jan Smuts Airport. He furthermore pointed out that a small delegation of the WCC would be adequate for the purpose of the conference.

As a result of the interference of the Prime Minister, the consultation did not take place.

The Programme of Justice and Reconciliation.

Leading representatives of the SACC repeatedly had interpreted the WCC resolution of 1970 as a challenge to the South African churches to become active in the area of social justice in South African society. Their statements received consideration from the SACC member churches and stimulated thought on what could or should be done. A variety of programmes were started in the different churches and committees on social justice were set up. In this context a request of the Methodist Church of South Africa was considered by a consultation of church leaders on the setting up of an ecumenical Committee on Justice and Reconciliation. This Committee was to have primarily the task of stimulating and coordinating efforts of the SACC member churches in the area of Justice and Reconciliation.

The decision of the Executive Committee of the SACC to establish a Committee of Justice and Reconciliation and a Division of Justice and Reconciliation initially on a three year basis, has to be considered as a response to the WCC resolution of 1970 at Arnoldshain. The introductory paragraph of the document sent out to the SACC member churches on this matter reads as follows: "

"One of the creative responses to the controversial World Council of Churches decision of 1970 in terms of their Programme to Combat Racism was a commitment by the South African member Churches of the World Council of Churches to intensify their witness to justice and reconciliation in the Church and society".

The document comprises a comprehensive theological statement on Justice and Reconciliation (Appendix I!)

The SACC resolution on Conscientious Objection.

The decision of the SACC to implement a programme of Justice and Reconciliation appears to have been motivated by the desire to find an alternative method of contributing towards justice in South Africa, to the course of action taken by liberation movements outside the country which had embarked on a military strategy against the Republic of South Africa. Gradually a deeper understanding developed in the SACC member churches for the concern of these liberation movements which in the terminology of South African propaganda are to be regarded as terrorists movements. This new understanding resulted in a resolution by the SACC National Conference of 1974 on Conscientious Objection. The text of the resolution is attached as (Appendix III)

For the interpretation of the resolution it is necessary to gain some insight into the circumstances under which it was taken. In 1974 a congress of the All Africa Conference of Churches at Lusaka was attended by several participants of the South African Council of Churches. On this occasion representatives of the South African Council of Churches encountered representatives of the liberation movement. Having returned to South Africa, the General Secretary of the SACC reported to the National Conference on this encounter. The representatives of the liberation movements had made a deep impression on him and on other participants from South Africa. In these movements, there were many convinced Christians. A Methodist preachers' association had been formed in one area to serve the Methodist freedom fighters. Practising Christians in liberation movements were not aware of a contradiction between the violent methods they used in the fight against South Africa and their Christian faith. They had taken their decision to join the liberation movements in the full awareness of being Christians and of being responsible to God for their actions.

At the conference there was an open discussion on the changes which the freedom fighters expected if a violent conflict with South Africa and in South African society is to be avoided. They expected influx control, job reservation and migratory labour to be abolished. They also mentioned other expectations.

The report on the All Africa Conference of Churches made a deep impression on the participants of the SACC National Conference of 1974. Among these participants there were several whose sons had left the country and joined the liberation movements. The conference under these circumstances had good reason to consider carefully how the SACC could respond to the expectations of the liberation movements. Several participants were of the opinion that the churches in South Africa have no possibility of effecting the changes, which the representatives of the liberation movements had demanded. They therefore proposed that the churches should envisage changes in matters in which they have a realistic possibility of action. One of these possibilities was the encouragement of conscientious objection in the churches. South African Christians could be encouraged to consider refusal to do military service in view of the injustice and violence inherent in the structures of South African society.

The resolution of the SACC on conscientious objection has thus to be understood as a response to the expectations of the liberation movements. It is not in the first instance concerned about justice to be done by the government to conscientious objectors, but rather encourages South Africans to consider whether they should in view of the injustice institutionalised in South African society, choose the path of conscientious objection. In this respect the resolution differs essentially from previous efforts of the SACC and other organisations with regard to the recognition of conscientious objection by the authorities. The resolution is meant to make the members of the SACC aware of the confrontation between South African churches and the state. It is meant to enhance the credibility of their concern for justice in the eyes of the liberation movements.

The theological arguments in the resolution of the SACC have to be understood against the background of the encounter with the liberation movements. They are drawn from ~~the~~ two different theological traditions in the evaluation of war by Christians. The concept of the holy war, which is one of the two traditions, assumes that Christians are obliged to participate in war at any cost and at any price, if the war is being waged on behalf of the cause of God. The concept of the holy war was the theological justification for the crusades in the Middle Ages. The same concept is used today openly or implicitly by the South African authorities or by churchmen supporting the South African political system, to justify the loss of human lives, the enormous military expenses, and the involvement of South Africa in war^{ac} and beyond its borders. South Africa is considered to have a divine commission to defend the Christian values in the South of the continent against the onslaught of Communism.

The second theological tradition pertains to the so-called just war theory. This theory prevailed at the time of the Reformation. It assumes that war is evil. War may be inevitable in some cases, but ethical rules are necessary as guidelines in which cases war may be justifiable. One of its presuppositions is the distinction between offen and defensive war. Only the latter is considered to be justifiable. Another rule pertains to the aim of the war. It may not aim at the destruction of the opponent. A further consideration concerns the expected effect of the war. The effect of the war must be better than the evil it produce.

The resolution intimates that a Christian thinking in terms of the holy war theory or of the just war theory is bound by these presuppositions to consider whether he can with a good conscience participate in a war which defends the present structures of South African society.

The Foreign Investment Issue

Already at the Plenary Assembly of the WCC at Uppsala in 1968 attention was drawn to the connection between economic power, especially in the form of investments, and racism. The Assembly recommended ^{the} constructive use of economic power with a view to removing racial discrimination. In this way the Uppsala Conference paved the way for the consideration of the foreign investment issue in the context of the Programme to Combat Racism.

Overseas partner churches urged the SACC to outline its stand and its policy with regard to the foreign investment issue. In response to these inquiries a study report on the foreign investment issue was published by the South African Council of Churches. This report is available in the form of a booklet. The report was submitted to the National Conference of 1978 which took a resolution on the foreign investment issue. The resolution of the National Conference is attached as appendix IV.

In considering the study report as well as the resolution of the SACC National Conference of 1978, account has to be taken of the fact that no open discussions is possible of this problem as a result of the existing security legislation. The participation of black people in the discussion of this issue has been very limited.

In October 1979 the General Secretary of the SACC, Bishop Tutu, replied in the course of a television interview on Danish television to a question on the purchase of South African coal by Denmark. The remarks of Bishop Tutu had far-reaching repercussions and resulted in a demand by a South African Cabinet Minister that the General Secretary should apologise. The latter was not prepared to do so.

The incident was discussed extensively by the Executive Committee of the South African Council of Churches which gave its General Secretary its full moral support. The statement of the Executive Committee on this matter reveals the differences in opinion that exists in the constituency of the SACC member churches on the use of economic pressure as a means to bring about meaningful change in the Republic of South Africa.

The statement of the Executive Committee is attached as appendix V.

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The "Just Rebellion" and violence issue.

The response of the South African authorities to the demonstrations in Soweto and in other parts of the country during the year 1976, the death of the Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko in 1977 and the banning of a considerable number of organisations working for peaceful change in Southern Africa, on October 19th 1977, the continuous banning and detention of numerous people for political reasons and the continuation of massive relocation programmes for black people, drew attention to the violence that is inherent in the South African political social and economic system. After the banning of political organisations on October 19th 1977 the WCC Commission sent a study paper on the South African situation under the title "South Africa's Hope"-to its member churches. It raised the question whether under the prevailing circumstances the churches which in former times had accepted the "Just war" theory, could not now accept the concept of a "Just rebellion". Member churches of the WCC were asked to respond to the study paper. The study paper of the WCC Study Commission had far-reaching repercussions in many member churches of the world organisation. In the context of the South African Council of Churches a background paper was worked out for the discussion of the WCC Study paper. This background paper was submitted to several small groups for discussion. The SACC background paper suggested that in view of the South African situation the concept of "for justifiable resistance" might be more appropriate than the concept of "Just rebellion" which easily could be understood as an encouragement of violent action. The background paper contained a number of questions to persons who plead in the South African situation for the principle of non-violence, and also a number of questions for self-examination to persons who opt for violent measures in their efforts to achieve change. The background paper of the SACC has not been submitted for official approval by the Executive Committee since its aim was mainly to facilitate discussion of the WCC Study paper. The background paper is attached as appendix VI.

Obligatory resistance

The awareness of the extent of human suffering resulting from the policy of separate development, especially in view of the considerable number of political detentions and in view of the relocation of black people in isolated areas, gave rise to the question in the SACC Division of Justice and Reconciliation whether the concept of "justifiable resistance" is really adequate and relevant. At the National Conference of the SACC in July 1979 the concept of "obligatory resistance" was proposed as an alternative in a report submitted to the delegates of churches. The initial passage of a section in the report under the heading "strategies of resistance" reads as follows: "In view of the great suffering resulting from the policy of separate development, the question has arisen whether the South African churches are not under an obligation to withdraw, as far as that is possible from cooperation with the state. " Very similar ideas were expressed in a lecture by Dr. Allen Boesak, a well-known theologian of the N.G. Kerk in Afrika. His lecture is attached as appendix VII.

The Executive Committee eventually took a resolution on withdrawal from cooperation with the state in areas where the latter clearly acts against the will of God. This resolution reads as follows:

"Recognising the great suffering resulting from the policy of separate development and confessing that this suffering has been greatly increased by the Churches' failure to act in the past, this Conference believes that the South African churches are under an obligation to withdraw as far as that is possible from cooperation with the state in all those areas in the ordering of our society where the law violates the justice of God.

We call upon all Christian people to examine their lives and to seek to identify the ways in which each one reinforces the policy and props up the system.

We commend the work of the Division of Justice and Reconciliation and request them to continue this work by examining the strategies of resistance. "

With a view to the implementation of the above resolution the Division of Justice and Reconciliation has worked out preliminary proposals for the Executive Committee of the SACC under the heading "Positive non-cooperation". This paper has not as yet been discussed by the Executive Committee. It is attached as appendix VIII.

The resolution of the South African Council of Churches on withdrawal from cooperation with the state where the law violates the justice and God and of strategies of resistance, has to be interpreted in three different contexts:

As a response to the intensification of repressive measures and policies in the Republic of South Africa.

As an indirect response to the process of reflection stimulated by the WCC Study Paper "South Africa's Hope"

As a deepening of the insight and the experiences underlying the resolution on conscientious objection of 1974.

With regard to the third aspect one has to be aware that the SACC resolution on Conscientious Objection of 1974 places the burden of considering the practical consequences of one's living and being involved in a fundamentally unjust society, primarily on the young person who is called up for military service and who in many cases lacks the experience for such a difficult moral decision. The resolution of the SACC National Conference of the year 1979 on withdrawal from cooperation with the state places the responsibility for a closely related decision affecting not only military service, but all areas of one's involvement in public life, on all Christians.

Fundamental change?

The resolution of the SACC National Conference on strategies of resistance was taken at a time when the government of the Republic of South Africa had already announced that it would introduce far-reaching changes in its racial policies. Influential politicians were anxious to create the impression in overseas countries that racism is dead in the Republic of South Africa. One cannot deny that some of the changes that have been implemented or that are envisaged, have far-reaching effects for a limited group of black people, who live in urban areas in the Republic of South Africa on a relatively permanent basis. At the same time, however, hundreds of thousands of black people are in the process of being moved under tremendous human suffering from their homes and of being relocated in areas where they have very little opportunities of earning a livelihood. The power structures of the Republic of South Africa remain unchanged, even if a number of black people are better off than before. Detention without trial continues and affects especially young people who are not prepared to be satisfied by concessions that leave the situation of the majority of black people unchanged. Security legislation and security measures are being tightened and the reliance on military

protection at a tremendous cost to the country is intensifying. There are many changes, but there is no change.

In their efforts to give a new image to its racial policy, the authorities are at present resorting more and more to an ideological justification that differs from the previous moral legitimisation. Representatives of the government frequently use in their speeches and statements concepts that have their roots in liberal thought.

In view of the conflict between the different ideologies in the South African and in a global context, the South African Council of Churches has entrusted a Study Commission on Faith and Ideologies with the task to investigate the different ideologies and their social and economic contexts that are at force in South Africa. A selection of draft study papers on ideologies that are closely associated with racism, is included in the dossier made up by the SACC for the consultation on the PCR. These studies papers will be prepared at a later date for publication. It is hoped that the work of the Study Commission may be a contribution towards helping Christians to relate their faith to the different ideologies and to find a solution for a new political, social and economic order, in which more justice and freedom, and reconciliation will prevail.

Conclusion.

In the decade since its implementation, the WCC Programme to Combat Racism certainly has helped to make many people aware of the evils of racism. The South African Council of Churches and its member churches have responded in various ways to this programme. They have not succeeded in removing oppressive racial structures in South African society. The worldwide efforts to combat racism, however have had the effect, that the South African authorities are changing their strategy so as to make racism not as easily discernable to outsiders as it was before.

At the end of the 1970ies racism in South Africa has changed its face. In many areas it has become more flexible on issues of colour in social relationships. On the other hand it is highly uncompromising in its resistance against any efforts to change the existing power relationships. At the beginning of the 1980es it has become necessary to redefine racism as ^{it} exists today in South Africa and to make it recognisable to South African and to overseas Christians. It has also become necessary to develop strategies to Combat Racism in its new form.

In view of the task that the South African Council of Churches and its member bodies have to face at the beginning of a new decade in which racism is

still a formidable force in South Africa, I refer to a passage in an article by the German theologian Wolfgang Huber on Militarism: "We have been called upon to "presuppose a world that is as it is". But his world compels us to protest. This protest occurs in the name of a hope against hope, in the name of a will to live, derived from the promise of life. Christians must remind each other that they live from a hope transcending the possibilities of historical realization, which thus encourages intervention for their fellow men and women despite all setbacks and reversals. The reason for Christians not to waver in the fight against self-destructive and world-destructive powers resides not in the security of success, but in Jesus' promise of a kingdom of justice, of peace and of happiness (Rom 14:17)."

NOTE:

For the quotations in this paper and for the survey from 1971-1974 extensive use has been made of the book of Wolfram Weisse on South Africa and the Programme to Combat Racism (W. Weisse: Südafrika und das Antirassismusprogramm. Kirchen im Spannungsfeld einer Rassengesellschaft. Herbert Lang/Bern Peter Lang Frankfurt/M, 1975)

JOHANNESBURG.

8th February, 1980