



## CONSULTATION OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PEACE (IWCRP) HELD IN LUSAKA – ZAMBIA.

ON the 16th --18th September 1987 an international consultation was held in Lusaka, Zambia by the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) at which the African National Congress was invited.

The WCRP is an established

world religious body which seeks to foster inter religious cooperation within the religions of the world. As an organisation it follows with interest conflict situations in the world with an aim to finding solutions to those

conflicts. This was not a first encounter with the WCRP for us. WCRP as an organisation which has NGO status and represented at the United Nations, We have shared platforms in anti-apartheid forums on many occasions. We attend-



*Comrade Ruth Mompoti and Bishop Desmond Tutu*



ed the fourth general assembly of WCRP in Nairobi, Kenya in 1984.

The consultation was a follow up on a decision taken at the fourth WCRP general assembly held in Nairobi to send a delegation to South Africa to assess the political crisis in our country. This was not to be as the regime refused most of the members of the delegation visas.

The WCRP was determined to be informed about the situation in South Africa and decided to hold the consultation in Lusaka, Zambia. The WCRP-SA delegation led by the Archbishop D. Tutu included Anglican Bishops and religious leaders from Muslim and Hindu religions. The WCRP international chapter was led by its Secretary-General, John Taylor and other WCRP leaders from India, USA and Australia.

The ANC delegation was led by Cde. Ruth Mompati and consisted of other four members of the NEC and other comrades. The consultation was significant for the one reason that it took place at a time when Botha was threatening all South Africans opposed to apartheid not to have any contacts with the ANC. It was also important as the regime has imposed a blanket ban on news of the atrocities it is perpetrating against our people, and the people of southern Africa. The participants in the consultation were able to get first hand informa-

tion from people involved in the struggle some of whom have been victims of its repression.

The movement over the years has worked closely with the church leadership. It was the first time to be exposed to youth from the Hindu community which is waging struggles to involve more of the leadership from his community in the National liberation struggle. The consultation was held in a cordial and warm atmosphere which enabled delegates to reach common understanding on a number of issues. At the end of the consultation a communique was issued which stated inter alia:

"Religions are becoming a real vital force in South Africa and people of religions have an increasingly important role to play in the struggle for liberation.

Inter-faith cooperation is essential in South Africa in order to focus on the fact of religious pluralism in South African society to provide a platform for the continuous condemnation of apartheid and to attend to inter-faith tensions as a potentially divisive factor which the apartheid regime seek to exploit. . .

Apartheid cannot be changed or reformed and should be abolished and destroyed. The present regime refuses to meet the just aspirations of the people of South Africa and remains the obstacle on the road to a relatively peaceful

solution. It resorts to increasing repression within the country, to increasing aggression and acts of destabilisation against sovereign states in southern Africa and therefore blocks the possibility of a negotiated solution at this stage.

The Pretoria regime meanwhile has become more brutal and inhuman in the present war against its people. The meeting recognised the centrality of the ANC to any solution of the south African conflict. All participants shared a common commitment to the establishment of a non-racial democratic society in South Africa based on one person one vote.

To this end the participants urge the international community to take prompt and strong measures aimed at isolating the Pretoria regime."

The consultation also discussed the forth coming Commonwealth Summit and directed the above communique to the leaders who will be gathered in Vancouver, Canada, to impose mandatory comprehensive economic sanctions against the Pretoria regime.

The WCRP is making preparations for its fifth General Assembly to be held in Australia in 1988. The issue of Southern Africa will be high on its agenda and the ANC will participate and contribute to the deliberations of this important occasion.

#### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

authority cannot be challenged on such issues. He has travelled widely and continues to do so. The esteem with which he is regarded in Africa can be judged by the fact that the movement he leads, the ANC,

is regarded as the authentic and representative voice of the Black masses of South Africa. He knows personally almost all African leaders on the continent — except Banda — who have a great respect for

his opinions. His speeches have been published and translated into many languages.

This is OR, the man of the people leader of the oppressed masses in South Africa and maker of history.