

STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE - A DUTY OF EVERY CHRISTIAN

Comrade Chairperson, Mr Salim Ahmed Salim,

Comrade the CCM Chairman, Dr. Julius Nyerere,

Comrade President Tambo, and Comrade President Sam Nujoma, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As a member of the Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee I have pleasure in bringing you cordial greetings on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation delegation to this ANC Conference on "The World United Against Apartheid For A Democratic South Africa". I am speaking not only on behalf of the Lutheran member churches spread throughout the globe, but I also specifically bring the voices of African member churches particularly those from the Frontline States.

As Chairperson of the Christian Council of Tanzania, I, accordingly bring greetings from the Christians of Tanzania who, together with all the people of this country, wish to guarantee the Liberation Movement, moral support for the struggle to dismantle apartheid. We, the people of Tanzania, shall not really feel free before the majority of people of South Africa attain their rightful freedom.

On the basis of the Biblical command, we wish to affirm that the church in its essence has a continuous task of liberating in the widest sense. The church through its praxis has to actively involve herself in empowering individuals and communities to become free. The church in its allegiance to God has to reflect the cultural and political values of the environment in which she finds herself. She has a calling

Statement presented by Bishop Dr. Sebastian Kolowa on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation Delegation At the ANC Arusha Conference on the world united against apartheid for a democratic South Africa, 1 1 - 4 December, 1987.

both as a prophet and disciple which transcends its immediate context which offers hope and vision to an unjust world.

The churches recognise the centrality of the Liberation Movement in the struggle for freedom and justice.

Specifically the major root causes of conflict in Southern Africa are racism and apartheid which disposes the people of their land and deny them political and economic rights, social justice, human dignity and community. Churches need to broaden and deepen their action programmes. Apartheid is, indeed, the worst form of race tyranny the world has ever known since the days of nazism. As such the evil of apartheid cannot be reformed. The struggle for justice has its mandate clearly given in the Scriptures.

Apartheid is used as a tool for social and economic exploitation of the majority of the people of South Africa and Namibia. The Western Powers including their Christian constituencies benefit from that exploitation.

The lasting solution to the political and economic crisis facing the South African regime can only be resolved through the involvement of the Liberation Movement, includ-

ing the churches and all democratic forces. The churches must take sides with those struggling for their legitimate freedom.

We regret that the South African government has forced our people to embrace the armed struggle to defend themselves and win their freedom. "Where there is no peaceful evolution, violent revolution becomes inevitable."

At its Sixth Assembly in 1977 in Dar es Salaam, the Lutheran World Federation stated that:

"Under normal circumstances Christians may have different opinions on political questions; but political and economic systems may become so perverted and oppressive that it is consistent with the confession to reject them and work for changes . . . The situation in Southern Africa constitutes a status confession is . . . which means that churches would publicly and unequivocally reject the apartheid system."

We thank the governments and the people of the frontline states for their spiritual, moral and material support to the South Africans in exile and in the Liberation Movement.

It is evident that development in Southern Africa is hampered by the conflict, war and destabilisation caused by the South African regime on neighbouring states. South Africa does all this with the support and understanding of the Western World. The West has political and economic interests in South Africa and the region and would like to protect these interests by denying the people of South Africa and Namibia freedom



Dr. Sibusiso Bhengu, Executive Secretary for Research and Social Action of the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, with ANC Chaplain Rev. F.F Gqiba at the » Peoples of the World Against Apartheid for a Democratic South Africa » Conference - Arusha, Tanzania. 1- 4 December 1987.

and independence.

Resources in the region are redirected away from development to the war machinery in order to protect the political gains that independent Africa has won. The struggle for liberation is an integral part of the development process in Southern Africa.

We therefore recommend that the churches, particularly those in the Southern Africa region, be part of the solution. The churches should understand that a commitment for liberation is a commitment for development.

In addition to the material support which churches have given to the liberation struggle our determination is that this support must include spiritual, moral and political support to the Liberation Movement. The churches need to develop structures of consultation with the ANC and SWAPO.

We further commit ourselves as churches in the Frontline States to establish a Research and Planning Mechanism (Committee) to develop a programme of action as a

counter-strategy to the destabilisation actions by the South African government.

We also urge the church and the international community to take a clear stand and use the correct terms such as "freedom fighters" instead of the term "terrorists" used by the South African government, and "prisoners of war" instead of "criminals"

In conclusion may I highlight two points, namely the urgent need for comprehensive economic sanctions to be imposed on the government of South Africa as a peaceful way of dismantling apartheid. Churches have passed several resolutions recommending economic sanction to be used to weaken and to isolate the government of South Africa. The economic sanctions should include the boycott of cultural, academic and professional institutions which legitimise the apartheid regime.

Finally, as churches our stand is that whilst we support a negotiated settlement to the problem of South Africa and Namibia we are opposed to

"cheap peace." We as churches have to guard against attempts for people to reconcile with evil.

Negotiations have to be preceded by justice which would become evident if all political prisoners were to be unconditionally released, the state of emergency would have to be lifted, the army and the police withdrawn from the townships.

Similarly, all repressive legislation and all laws empowering the regime to limit freedom of assembly and the activities of the liberation movement would have to be repealed. There also would be need that the negotiations would take place within a given time-frame.

If the South African government agreed to these steps this would indicate their acceptance of a negotiated and peaceful settlement. If the struggle for justice should continue we pledge our continued support of such a struggle!

Thank you!