

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE PRAESIDIUM OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ON SECURITY BRANCH RAID ON DIAKONIA HOUSE ON NOVEMBER 26TH, 1976.

As is well-known by now, the offices of the South African Council of Churches and other organisations in Diakonia House, Braamfontein, were subjected to an extensive raid and search by the Security Police yesterday, November 25. A good number of documents and Books were removed. It should be recorded that to the best of our knowledge everything confiscated by the Security Police was already in public circulation and available to them at any time.

From this point of view, we are untroubled by this raid. Our activities are pursued completely in the open. We are party to no plots and plans. We have consistently stated our belief in non violence although we have made our fundamental opposition to Government Apartheid policies unequivocally clear.

What perturbs us about the raid is that it is symptomatic of a regime which, become desperate because of the failure of its politics, is increasingly equating any opposition to those policies as being legally offensive. We see the raid as part of the current country wide attempt to cripple and paralyse organisations which pursue policies and ideals radically opposite to those of the National Party.

We do advocate a social order fundamentally different from the present Apartheid set up in South Africa and we do so on the grounds of our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Over against Apartheid, which proclaims the immutable separation of peoples, the Gospel, we believe, proclaims the Unity of Mankind.

We have no desire or power to oppose physically the type of action the Police took yesterday, because armed with the power of the Gospel, we have something which regimes from the Roman Caesars to the Russian Communists have struggled in vain to overcome.

STATEMENT ON BANNING OF TRADE UNIONISTS ISSUED BY DIAKONIA, DURBAN, ON NOVEMBER 23, 1976

The Diakonia Council representing seven churches in the greater Durban area wishes to express its grave concern at the recent banning of 13 people connected with the Black Trade Union movement. At the same time we recall that two other Durban Trade Unionists have been in detention, the one since June of this year and the other since December of last year. In addition, one can say that the Black Trade Unions have suffered constant harassment from security police; this has been especially so in the case of African Trade Unionists.

We take this opportunity to emphasize that the right of freely founding trade unions is a basic human right, and that all workers should be able to take part in the activity of these unions without risk of reprisal. We regard it as a criminal injustice in our country that those who have most need of the assistance of trade unions for their protection against oppression by the more powerful, are those who are systematically deprived of the chance of organising such unions and participating in their activities.

In the interests of peaceful and orderly change in South Africa, we believe it is essential that Black Trade Unions be allowed to register, and that the campaign of harassment against them, be swiftly brought to an end.