

'Norwegian anti-apartheid movement - broad umbrella organisation). The World campaign against military collaboration with South Africa was led by Abdul Minty who was a close friend of CEIR. The information, which this organisation provided for CEIR, was highly appreciated. CEIR's project work in South Africa and Namibia led to close co-operation with the two other main "channels" for governmental funds, the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions and the International Relief Fund of Students and Academics.

Popular enthusiasm

In the 1960s and 1970s the apartheid issue attracted the interest of a few "specially interested people", mostly working with international organisations or radicals who took a special interest in liberation movements. In Norway this changed tremendously in the mid-1980s. Visitors from South Africa were surprised to learn that taxi drivers asked about ANC, and that schoolchildren were familiar with Steve Biko and Nelson Mandela. There were two main reasons for this change of attitude; the question of economic sanctions became a hot political issue and the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Desmond Tutu and SACC.

The Nobel Peace Prize ceremony itself was memorable for more than one reason. It was interrupted by a bomb threat. After a while the police reported that no bomb had been found, and everyone could go back inside the University Aula. In the meantime the orchestra had disappeared. What happened next will not be forgotten in a hurry: all the South Africans present, led by Tutu himself, went up to the podium to sing *Nkosi Sikelele Afrika* with raised fists. The audience, among them King Olav V of Norway, all rose in respect for this national anthem. The South Africans were deeply moved to hear that the song was well known to many in the audience. Tutu had brought with him both family members and colleagues in SACC. At gatherings both in Oslo and in other parts of the country their joyful singing and joking combined with testimonies about the terrifying situation in their home country made an enormous impression both on ordinary churchgoers and on those who normally kept their distance to the church.

Welcome to Norway, Mr. Mandela!

From the day Nelson Mandela walked out of prison as a free man, the Norwegians started waiting for him to come to Norway. He attended the 'Conference on Hatred' in September 1990, but it was not until 1992 he appeared in public. On 17 May that year, Norway's Constitution Day, he was welcomed at Oslo Airport by a choir singing freedom songs from South Africa. Church representatives were members of the reception committee co-ordinated by the ANC office in Oslo. Mandela took part in the celebration of 17 May, and watched the parade of tens of thousands of children singing and waving their flags to greet the royal family on the palace balcony. Later the same day Mandela was present at the service in Oslo Cathedral. His sermon was his first official appearance in Norway. The congregation was deeply moved by his words, and the police had problems escorting him out of the church due to the large crowd outside waiting to catch a glimpse of a great freedom fighter.

Mandela was back in Oslo in December 1993. This time he came together with de Klerk to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. This was the third time the prize was awarded to South Africans. And like the two first times, the church played a central role in organising the festivities in Oslo. CEIR hosted an informal reception at the residence of the bishop of Oslo. Mandela and his companions met with prominent church leaders. 'For practical reasons' de Klerk was not invited.

Theology from the South

The commitment of the international ecumenical movement inspired the Church of Norway. Experiences drawn from the partnership with African churches in their turn enriched the liturgy and the Norwegian church's understanding of the Gospel. Documents like *The*

Kairos Document, *The Road to Damascus*, *The Evangelical Witness* and *The Rustenburg Declaration* were translated into Norwegian and widely studied. The poems of Zephania Kameta from Namibia were also translated, together with sermons by Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, Frank Chikane and others. Music, liturgies and hymns from Southern Africa became well known to many Norwegian church members. Prominent Southern African church leaders were invited to summer camps and national events like the 'Norwegian Church Days'. The Norwegian Ecumenical Council for Southern Africa (NEKSA) has most of the credit for bringing African theology to the Norwegian churches. Several church and Youth choirs learned to sing African liberation songs, and these songs are perhaps what most ordinary Christians in Norway noticed.

The theological institutions in Norway have also been involved with Southern African theology. Exchange programmes and study tours have been of great importance in establishing personal relations between Christians in Norway and Southern Africa. When major crises occurred in South Africa, for instance the massacres in Sharpeville in 1960 and in Soweto in 1976, the banning of organisations in 1977 and 1988 and the bombing of the Khotso House, Norwegian church leaders asked Christians to pray for the people of South Africa. These calls came originally from churches within South Africa or from LWF and WCC. Local congregations arranged special solidarity services. Christians in South Africa reported back that this kind of support meant very much to them, and encouraged them to continue with the struggle. Calls for prayers were also made in connection with the elections both in Namibia and in South Africa.

The debate on economic sanctions

The first signs of a church debate in Norway on trade with the apartheid regime appeared in the 1970s, but it was not until the early 1980s the question of economic sanctions was on the political agenda in Norway. The import of South Africa goods, especially manganese, which was crucial for the large Norwegian production of aluminium, and the transport of oil on Norwegian ships were both difficult since they affected Norwegian companies and a considerable number of jobs both in Norway and on Norwegian ships. In 1979/80 approximately 18% of all oil to South Africa was transported on Norwegian tankers.

CEIR supported the efforts of the Norwegian Council for Southern Africa to make Parliament outlaw all trade between Norway and the racist regime. CEIR forwarded calls for sanctions from the churches in the region and from the international ecumenical community. However, it was not the Church but the Norwegian Council for Southern Africa who was the major pressure group for economic sanctions in Norway in the political debate in the 1980s. In March 1987 the Parliament at last agreed on a law on economic sanctions. It outlawed all economic co-operation between Norwegian companies and South Africa, and all transport of oil to South Africa on Norwegian ships. The law had, however, some significant loopholes. In 1988 Norwegian Council for Southern Africa launches a campaign against Shell, which the Church supported only half-heartedly. The reason was that the Church wanted to speak on sanctions in principle, and did not wish to target a specific oil-company.

There were other tensions between the Church and the popular 'solidarity movement'. In 1988 Norway and South Africa had agreed that the Norwegian General Consulate in Cape Town should be allowed to continue if South Africa were allowed to establish an office in Oslo. The Church agreed to this because Consul Bjarne Lindstrøm in Cape Town played a key role in organising CEIR's financial support to South African opposition groups. Because of this breach in the diplomatic isolation of the apartheid regime, the church was heavily criticized by members of the Norwegian Council for Southern Africa. Some also expressed dislike of the close connection between the Church and the Norwegian government. But after

1994, when the cooperation between the Church and the Consulate in Cape Town became publicly known, it was easier to understand why the Church had accepted the South African Office in Oslo.

What happened after 1994? Norwegian Church Aid

1994 has been followed by a decade in which South African issues have been toned down. The reason for this was partly that the financial support the Church got from The Foreign Ministry for South African NGOs ended with apartheid. Some of the projects were transferred to Norwegian Church Aid, who works on long term development and democracy building. Even though civil society organisations are well established in South Africa, we are told that they need international solidarity and funding to be able to continue its work.

Norwegian Church Aid's overall development goals are to support and strengthen civil society organisations, church related and secular, to be credible and relevant actors in the South African society that through advocacy, service delivery and capacity building address issues of community empowerment, good governance, reconciliation and HIV/AIDS. Norwegian Church Aid works through partners and aims at strengthening their capacity and enhancing their competence to be able to implement projects and programmes that focus on marginalized, primarily rural populations whose basic needs and human rights are not met. Special consideration is given to the situation of women and children and indigenous peoples. Emphasis is given to organisations that link their experiences on the ground with advocacy and lobbying on various levels and that do this in alliances with other organisations.

Some closing remarks: Challenges for the future

Church leaders from Norway took part in the recent funeral of Beyers Naude, and this moving event was a strong reminder of the very special relationship we have developed over a long time between churches in Norway and our brothers and sisters in South Africa. We are hoping - and also planning - to revitalize our relationship with the South African Churches. These days, for instance, work is going on to strengthen the cooperation between The Lutheran Church of South Africa and the Church of Norway. We have a 150-year long history of cooperation - and the time has not come to end it, on the contrary we are committed to develop it further.

The Conference is also valuable in helping us to reflect on the role we played during the struggle against Apartheid. We need to remember and record our own history. You South Africans taught us what it meant to be a true witness of Christ in a time of oppression and suffering. You showed us a Church serving the oppressed and bringing hope and reconciliation. We - representing the rich minority in our divided world - need to be constantly reminded and also challenged as to which side we are on in the ongoing global struggle for justice and peace.

Litterature:

Trond Bakkevig: *The Church of Norway and the Struggle against Apartheid*, Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, 1996

Berit Hagen Agøy: *The Freedom Struggle in Southern Africa - the role of the Norwegian Churches 1948 - 1994*, in Tore Linne Eriksen (ed.) *Norway and the National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000

Berit Hagen Agøy
Bergvegen 9
3800 Bø i Telemark, Norway
Berit.h.agoy@hit.no Phone + 47 35 95 40 17

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