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FOREWORD

The contributions in this volume reflect a new stage of developments in South Africa. From 12 June 1986 a State of Emergency has been in force. Pressure on the political opposition has increased. At the same time a new phase has been in the offing in the contacts between churches and liberation movements since 1987. The ecumenical conference on the theme

'The Search of the Churches for Justice and Peace in southern Africa' (May 1987) and the meeting between fifty Afrikaans speaking whites and important representatives of the African National Congress (ANC) in Dakar in July 1987 have shown that, under these conditions, the question of a future order in southern Africa calls for closer co-operation between the opposition within the country and that in exile.

/ in Lusaka

Naturally, the intra-church relations do not remain unaffected by this. For the churches who - like the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) - have been associated on different levels with the churches of South Africa for a long time, this new development could have a triggering effect. Within the EKD there have been, up to now, only sporadic and hesitant contacts with the different South African liberation movements. The first contact with the President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, took place in November 1980 within the framework of the 'Studien- und Dialoggruppe Südliches Afrika'. At the 'Evangelischer Kirchentag' in Düsseldorf (1985) and Frankfurt (1987) representatives of liberation movements spoke on South Africa during podium discussions. Apart from that, two talks between representatives of the ANC and the Council of the EKD have hitherto taken place, in which both sides agreed that the contact should be intensified and continued. Preparing for the next round of talks, members of the different bodies of the EKD thought it desirable to compile opinions about the Freedom Charter of 1955 under different aspects.

This was the apparent motive for the realization of the 'Arbeitsgruppe Südafrika' in the Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (FEST) in Heidelberg. The group (a list of members can be found in the appendix) constituted itself in June 1986 after a longer preliminary phase with the aim of submitting a judicial, political and theological assessment of the Freedom Charter and, over and above this, of examining in a wider framework the problems relating to constitutional and international law in South Africa. Wolfram Kistner, Deputy Secretary General of the South African Council

of Churches (SACC), was present at a second meeting of the study group in September 1986 and suggested that the said problems should be focussed on the problems of political legitimacy and illegitimacy. The impulses coming from within the EKD and the SACC as well as additional questions arising from the circle of the study group, determined the further course of the work of which the results are hereby presented.

The 'Arbeitsgruppe Südafrika' was formed as an independent group whose members co-operated out of personal interest without being accountable to certain institutions. The authors are responsible for the individual contributions. The total publication was discussed in detail by the study group and accepted in its present form. The organisational framework is FEST which, however, accepts no direct responsibility for the content work of the group('s work).

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Christine Lienemann

INTRODUCTION

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