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Summary of the lecture given by Esau du Plessis
on Thursday 11th February 1988 at Dordrecht, for
Workshop 12 'Apartheid there, racism here', on the
occasion of the Conference on Racism for Secondary
Schools.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The notion of Apartheid enjoys international reputation because of
the Apartheid system as practised by the minority regime in
South-Africa since 1948.

South-Africa under Apartheid distinguishes itself from other
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countries today because the system constitutes a legalized form
of racism.

Racism in South-Africa was raised to the status of national law.

There is little misunderstanding on this score.

Consequently, the policy of Apartheid is internationally condemned
as a crime against humanity, and rightly so.

We can express our great appreciation of the fact.

What we appreciate less is the fact that only few people in Europe
are aware of the European roots of Apartheid.

Many people are fixated on the phenomenon of Apartheid in South-
Africa without realizing that its roots really lie here in Europe.

Unfortunately, as a result, Apartheid is often viewed as a
distinct, separate phenomenon, to be associated only with white
South-Africans.

The fact is that, historically, European racism is much older than
Nothing could be further from the truth.

South-African Apartheid or Hitlerian Nazism.

The white South-Africans, like the Americans and Australians etc..
are simply Europeans living overseas, who introduced their
culture of racism to other continents.

Thus the Red Indians were almost completely eliminated by
European settlers in America. the Aborigines in Australia by
Europeans settling down there only 200 years ago, and so on.

In the southern states of the U.S.A. racism was also minutely
laid down in laws until the 1960s. just as happened in Kenya
under the British colonial regime and in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe),
not to mention the SBQHSE of the Dutch in Indonesia during
colonial times.

Prof. W.FJRH wrote for instance in his book 'Colonial
Racism in Indonesia - the Post we have not come to terms with':

" Whoever supposes that Dutch people in the past were not
tainted by racist sentiments and prejudices. has obviously never

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OR:

(Racism)

considered what conduct our countrymen displayed in a colonial
environment." ,

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Traditionally, the racial relations in South-Africa are
determined by white supremacy and privileges (-taveueitsem-4.

Its foundations were laid on the prejudices developed in Europe
to justify slavery and the slave trade.

In this respect. Ben van Kaam calls the Christian theology 'one of the
vildest inventions of the Christian western world'.

Contrary to biblical notions. the slaves converted to Christianity
had to be kept in slavery. somehow.

The bias concerning the ignorant. dependent black man found its
counterpart in the bias of white superiority.

These prejudices were also to provide the moral justification
for colonial occupation of tropical territories later on.

Racism is not an essentially foreign element in European culture.
but should rather be regarded as an inherent feature of that

culture.

That is why Cedric Mason claims that 'The Apartheid regime is being nourished through the system's roots in Western civilisation.' Seen in that light it is not surprising that the racial arrogance of South-African whites should have joined arms with the racial arrogance of German Nazism.

That this implied more than just a natural alliance of anti-British sentiments has been convincingly shown by a great many people.

It is equally obvious that South-African racism did not stem from German Nazism, for both are rooted in the same mentality, while historically, South-African racism actually preceded German Nazism.

It is true, however, that the views among white South-Africans concerning the Afrikaners were given fresh nourishment by German Nazism.

Now that almost everybody in the Western world has relegated fascism and Nazism to 'the scrap heap of history', the South-African government greatly fears that comparisons may be drawn between Apartheid and Hitler's racial policies.

Since Europe (in spite of political decolonisation) and the U.S.A. (in spite of desegregation) are still not free of racial

(arrogance, some Western circles can still sympathize to some extent with the refusal of South-African whites to allow universal suffrage to the majority of African people - without recognizing and rejecting such sympathies at once for what they are . ex-

pressions of racism (cf.Minister Van den Broek).

For the same reason the West klx-in: stubbornly cling to the illusion that South-African political leaders are willing and able to bring about 'drastic reforms'.

For the same reason we can still find the delusion among people in the west that 'black and white people will one day be reconciled'. Surely, the issue is not whether two hostile races could or could not be reconciled : Racism is something irreconcilable and IL irremediable - it can only be eradicated. there is no other coice. We should be deeply conscious of how fully racism is rooted in Western civilization: and how much Nazism and Apartheid are its comparable fruits.

Besides. we should be aware of the fact that Apartheid and racism are not just remote phenomena, so that we have a moral obligation to fight them, here nldxxhaxl as well as there.

Racism here and Agattheid there, beside the North-South global contrast.

When I arrived in England in 1959, it struck me at once that almost every University had a chair in racial relations.

Here in Holland it was only last year that the Free University of Amsterdam appointed an Englishman to teach racial relations.

Opinion polls in Holland over the past twenty years have shown that the Dutch believe that other people (Americans, Englishmen, South-Africans) are racist . "Holland a racist country ? What rubbish! ' is a remark that may often be heard.

Holland, in other words, is a long way behind in recognizing. studying and fighting racism.

Being racist is like being a patient wig: a disease he does not want to admit , betaeresultiggjwhicqjg: does not consult his doctor.

Nearly all the Dutch political parties confine themselves to a treatment of symptoms instead of laying bare the underlying roots of rlcui racism and tacklvgt hem structurallyi Cf.thebook 'Election Programmes 1986 of all golitical Earties' (State Publishers, The Hague 1986) .8 QIQdOLJ 6!. Wk)

In my opinion they are all inadequate with regard to the question of racism. A party like the P.S.P. (Pacifist Socialist Party) has never given a thought to the resemblances and the Feletioae ths between Apartheid there and racism here.

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Naturally, individualgyjill consider such questions, but such individuals can also be found in parties like the CDA leX(Christian Democrats) and the VVD (Conservatives).

Here are two examples of Such treatment of symptoms :

1. the attitude of political parties towards the racist and despicable'Centrum Partij' led by Jan Maat in 1982.

He was ostracized by all parties in the House of Commons ; but that party was merely a symptom of an ancient tradition of racism in our society. What they were actually saying to Jan Moat was : 'Keep things decently out of sight. like we do. and nothing is going to happen.'

2. the well-known campaign for changing street-names, when so-called 'left' parties wanted to rename streets called after South-African Boer Generals from around the turn of the century, whereas their Dutch contemporaries were equally racist. (cf. the article '!2x_ BOA ogeoses street-name camgaings'iby Mark Planken, Amandla, January 1988, p.23).

The two examples just given illustrate clearly, I think, that Dutch political parties mainly restrict themselves to fighting symptoms and are hardly prepared to draw parallels from Apartheid to the situation in Holland.

They are against racism and Apartheid in another. remote place. Campaigns being-heggyoften choose others for their target, too, though all of us belong to the present. unsound racist society and generally back it up, too.

The commotion created by the chapter on the Dutch so-called 'police campaigns' in Indonesia, oaodusevibva in Dr.L.de Jong's recent book. is another instance revealing the same attitude.

Dutch racism should be covered up and its history ought to remain a

closed book. That may be the reason why left-wing politicians in Holland are so eager to reach for the weapon of censorship. As a result, racism will go underground and bgyfgss visible. Instead of fighting racism openly and publicly, the 'Centrwn Partij' should be banned, they say. This approach tells us more, in fact. about the unsound mentality of the organisations and parties in questionzthan it does about the overt racist parties, no matter how detestable they may be I A consequence of the racist attitude of the Centrum Partij has been. as a matter of fact, that the debate on racism in Holland

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has come into the open for all to hear and see (cf. the growing number of anti-racist committees, books and ulglxill periodicals in the eighties). And that is the only right place to fight racism! AntilllllRliili attitude tending to cover up essential and fundamental discussions on an issue like this hardly deserves the name of 'democratic'.

If one wishes to understand the phenomenon of racism one ought to go far back into history. The concept of "race", as we know it today, was developed over the past 200 to 300 years.

The ancient Greek philosophers, like Aristotle, already sowed the seeds of racism in their acceptance of slavery as a natural and self-evident social fact.

Moreover they laid the foundations of western thought : Europe is the centre of the world - a Eurogeocentric thinking (philosophy) which has commanded the mind of western man down to the present day. It is a philosophy, too, which looks upon the European as an omnipotent human being.

His culture and technology enable him to control and have a tight rein on everything.

A system of values developed in which the environment, the animal and other people have a subordinate place, essentially an inferior one.

The harmony between man and nature was disturbed, because man it rules supreme.

An illuminating approach to come to grips with racism consists of a conceptual mtdel having three avenues of exploration :

1. an ideological approach. This will prove useful in understanding racism, as it is determined mainly in economic terms. European expansionism and imperialism (slavery, colonialism and current neo-colonialism) will be better understood in this light.
2. an attitudinal approach. focusing on prejudice as a dominant element. The most important features of prejudice appear to be emotionalism and rigidity. (It is emotionally charged and functions rJgidly.) The rigidity of I prejudices is apparent when biased people are faced with somebody whotries to demonstrate that a certain view is wrong or untenable.

In a case like that biased people will not change their views; on the contrary, they will readily distort the new facts to

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confirm their bias.

Theattitudinal approach has proVed useful in understanding such phenomena as anti-semitism, icult behaviouF and irrational behaviour.

3. the approach from a social relations point of view. based on the notion of 'discrimination' is fairly well known in Holland. Taking discrimination as the only starting point, however, is an inadequate approach.

The three avenues mentioned above supplement one another and should all be explored in order to arrive at a full and sound understanding of the complexity of the problem.

Professor D.van Arkel, teaching Social History It in the kliiln State University of Leiden (RUL), who spent some 30 odd years of his life on thnxxlxlaxnh inquiries into anti-semitism and racism has designed a model making use of three notions which play an important part : stigmatization, increasing social distance (romounting to discrimination) and the terrorization of the eerson discriminated against.

(For a clear explanation of this model, seefvide 'Onderscheid en minderheid, sociaal-historische ogstellen over discriminatie en vooroordeel', edited by Herman Diederiks and Chris Quispel, Verloren, Hilversum, 1987).

The chief purpose of education should be changing people's mentality. People in Europe are so absorbed in nnkixgxnxnxtix lldxnlxnxningxnnxnkilii the pursuit of profit and material goals that man, animal and nature have been subordinated to this pursuit. They merely serve Western people as tools for gaining profit. If not, they are discarded as useless and worthless.

South-Africa. too, can never truly be cleared of Apartheid without a/change of mentality. (/ fundamental)

If there is not going to be a change of attitude overhere, thebaltz. wuaxe vnemona e, after the abolition of Apartheid, the WEstern world

will treat South-Africa as it has treated the other liberated countries in the so-called 'Third World' (e.g. Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua etc.). European wars have been waged in 'Third World countries' ever since 1945, and since then over 100 wars have been waged in those countries in which western interests were at

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a stake. A peace movement in Europe, devoting itself onfly to the cause e (erY on .W lin:
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The existing. unjust established order will only be reinforced _ I 29w culture sho::: b?

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and a movement like this is lacking global , acism l5 so su y in erwoven wi our cu ure 0
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perception.

continually expressing it in our daily intercourse with

other people (e.g. racist language) ,

There is little time left. The situation is critical and alarming,

We should get rid of the habit of always talking about and

but contains a challenge as well. T 7

instead of which

without those who are discriminated against:

We should set our sights on a clear goal. There is no time for

we ought to talk with them and engage in joint activities.

M3 molt de law,

To me, the complacency of Western man is incomprehensible.

' I ' Winding up I shbuld like to present the following seven

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'educotion and anti-racism),

'Nederlands Centrum

and Dutch racism I would say : Apartheid is legalised racism

propositions to you, concerning

as formulated by Moharrmed Rabbmse, Head of the

Buitenlonders' (Dutch Centre for Foreigners) .

whereas the Dutch variety is authorised racism.

1. Education is not a neutral factor. School can be a breeding-
ground of racism as well as o battleground against it.

s skill; it is a professional job which

Finally I would like to make the following recommendations for
fighting racism in your schools :

2. Fighting racism require

requires materials, methodology and strategy. It should be

1. Check if your school has a Pupils' Code (school regulations)

given a great deal of thought and cannot be carried out

which enables you to deal with racist behaviour among pupils.

If not, such a Code should be drawn up without delay; ; without goal-oriented support.

3. Education itself, as a source of racism, needs to be weeded out

2. Appoint a confidential agent (or Ombudsman) at your school

thoroughly.

4. The struggle against racism should at al

nd deprived position of ethnic groups.

to WhOm pupils may turn for help or advice concerning questions

1 times imply a struggle

of racism (on the part of teachers, school management.

against the disadvantaged a

board of governors or fellow pupils);

5. When tracking down institutional racism in schools it is

3. Make literature on racism available to anyone - including the i

i important to pay attention to what schools and teachers

management; F

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4. It is advlsoble to lttnni training courses regularly - either ?tha Amdtumdmw fail to s
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by the teachers themselves or by others. ukEk-- 6. Fighting racism takes the form. on the
one hand, of fightingagimb

the other

assimilation and the suppression of identity and,on

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One should attain a level at which one can recognize even

hand, of fighting for the preservation of one's own language and culture.

7. Fighting racism on the workforce deserves high priority.

professional staff recruited from ethnic

applies to teachers, school management, board and pupils).

The

This presupposes that we are aware of the existence of racism

size and influence of

ps should be greatly increased. Fighting racism is not

it is most definitely

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subtle forms of racism in oneself and in other people(Which I

as a feature inherent in Dutch culture; I

minority group

5. Instinctive and emotional racism should be taken into

only an urgent and broadly-based struggle.

consideration : it is advisable to let the victims of racism

speak for themselves. People lacking this experience of having

a joint struggle as well. . . . i, N

racism imposed upon them anew. bviodsiiuahnblev\$QAAQVLnny\$shine' '

fm\$rd % qunga. .I thank you -for your- attention. '

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