

Lum/087/0040/12

REPORT ON THE 27th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE W.S.C.F.

30th Jan- 11th Feb in COLOMBO, SRI LANKA.

Accompanying documents:

1. Report on Finance
2. Finance report
3. Report on WSCF Relations
4. List of participants

WSCF STRUCTURE AND SOME ACTIVITIES

The Assembly was held in the Bandarnaike Memorial Conference Hall. The African National Congress guest delegate was invited by the Africa Region of the WSCF. National Student Christian Movements (SCM's) from 72 countries were represented and participated directly in the activities of the Assembly. The General assembly held every four years amongst other matters, establishes WSCF policy and appoints a 14 member Executive Committee consisting of regional representatives and WSCF staff. Presently the WSCF has regional offices in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and North America with the headquarters based in Geneva. The regions are basically intended to be independent in their programmes and approaches though inter-regional discussions and seminars are encouraged and do take place.

Also present in the Assembly as observers were Ecumenical organisations (mostly donor agencies), World student organisations, other fraternal bodies like the WCC etc. (see accompanying list of participants). Representations ranged from the SCM's of countries like Cuba, Romania, the Soviet Union to the SCM's of countries like Chile, FRG and Lebanon diverse as those countries <sup>may be</sup> in their attitudes towards basic questions like human rights and for that matter even on christianity. The opinions themselves within the Assembly were often as diverse. The ANC was the only Liberation movement represented though the Africa region assured me that other liberation movements ~~it~~ had been invited.

Basically the WSCF serves to give direction to the SCM's in terms of "theological action and reflection". It ".....seeks to actively involve students and concerned christian groups in crucial everyday issues and relate the Gospel of Christ and the christian faith to the changes and challenges of life amidst the changing social political and economic realities of our time" Also amongst the activities listed in the WSCF programme are the following:

- \*research and documentation on international social political and economic issues
- \*conferences, seminars and work camps
- \*critical analyses of ....militarisation of politics, the rise of fascism and other forms of oppression
- \*a programme of work with workers, students and peasants

Thus, one is led to believe that apart from the emphasis which is laid on the "Gospel of Christ", the intellectual exercises of the WSCF are not in the least irrelevant. Indeed the wording of the sentences above smack of the radicalism only found in the progressive student world. These beliefs are however quickly dispelled when one takes a glimpse at some of the regional reports presented to the assembly. These beliefs become <sup>even</sup> harder to recapture when one gets acquainted with the intricate contradictions within the WSCF. Nevertheless it becomes difficult to deny the existence within the Federation of a radical core of students (~~obviously responsible for the wording~~) who are committed to the world struggles and the Proletariat Revolution.

WSCF AND CONTRADICTIONS

(a) between WSCF and the Ecumenical bodies

The conservative nature of the Churches which are the main source of income for the WSCF continues to retard the radical flow within the student federation

(b) between the 1st and 3rd worlds

The diversity of programmes demanding more attention and funds in other regions. Other conflicts result e.g. moving headquarters to the 3rd world, Donor agency prefers to negotiate with 1st or 2nd world student leaders



(c) between christianity and peoples struggles  
christianity in most areas associated with western imperialism resulting in non-acceptance in many communities

(d) between SCM's and governments  
reactionary governments repressing movements forcing them to adopt neutral stands. This also forces the assembly not to adopt relevant resolutions

(e) class contradictions  
both manifested within WSCF itself and between SCM's and communities

All these contradictions a result of the diverse nature of the federation and a stubborn determination to cling to the christ doctrine at all cost, permeate every session of the assembly, making it difficult to be4 concerted in some important issues.

#### SUMMARY OF THE ASSEMBLY

The 27th assembly of the WSCF was structured such that three major issues should be dealt with each taking one third of the4 duration of the assembly the issues were;

1. Political analyses of the world realities. Papers from the various regions were read either by resource persons or by leading members of the SCM's. Some of these papers were of a highly analytical nature and did achieve the intended aim of exposing the realities of the different continents. The paper from the Africa region was a product of a whole night discussion by the participants from Africa. Though discussion time at plenary was limited important questions were dealt with. A few papers were of such an intellectual nature that they failed to capture the audience. Still fewer papers totally missed the point.

2. Workshops or Commissions laying emphasis on reevaluation and future planning in the following fields:

- (a) Workshop on politics
- (b) Workshop on Education
- (c) Workshop on Finance and Planning

(reports of these commissions accompany this report)

Discussion of these reports were marked with verbal confrontations between regions and ~~though~~ thoroughly exposed the contradictions which exist inter-regionally and intra-regionally. More comments about these conflicts ~~somewhere~~ somewhere in this report. As an example the part of the report from politics entitled "Solidarity with oppressed peoples" was not adopted by the assembly because "it is frankly Marxist" and therefore it would predudice the cases of those SCM's under repressive regimes.

3. Business and Administration. This included committees which sat outside the assembly, the ~~ir~~ reports were however dealt with at plenary.

the committees were:

- (a) Nominations Committee
- (b) Relations " "
- (c) Credentials " "
- (d) Procedural " "

This section of the assembly took more time than any of the above sections. The reasons for this ~~was~~ ~~the~~ were multiple the main one being overenthusiasim on who was qualified into going into the present executive posts. The ~~prevel~~ prevelages that accompany these posts being the main reason more than anything else. The end of those boring hours finally saw the election of the executive as follows:

President	Yebio Bereket	(Eritrea in exile)
Vice-Pres	Anderson Betsy	(Canada)
Gen-Sec	Campi Emedio	(Geneva)
Treasurer	Prabhakar M.E.	(India)

The other members of the executive Council are elected by the various regions. From Africa these are:

Quashie Komlavi	(Togo)
Ajayi Nicol	(Sierra Leone)

The staff is appointed by the executive council and for Africa :



Gen Sec  
Assoc Sec

Peter Kodjo  
Micheline

(Ghana)

Oporia-Ekwaro (Malagasy)

A report on WSCF Relations accompanies this report and covers all international groups and organisations in contact with the federation both at a higher or lower level. The relations with liberation movements and other situational organisations are made at a regional level. A report on the finance of the WSCF is included with this report, the regional breakdown of the finances is presumably made at regional meetings. Resolutions adopted by the assembly mostly express solidarity with the peoples struggles throughout the world.

The resolution on South Africa over and above commits the WSCF to material support to the ANC. A compiled booklet of the resolutions has been promised to all participants as soon as possible.

#### ON THE WSCF EXHIBITION

An exhibition and presentation of publications and documentaries was held on Feb 2nd and Feb 3rd. These were meant to portray and publicise activities of the various organisation participants. ANC publications which had been promised were advertised in advance. It therefore came as a heavy blow when the material did not arrive - a phone call to London revealed that nothing had been posted ever! A golden opportunity was therefore lost.

#### AFRICA REGIONAL MEETINGS

The Africa region meetings which took place outside the assembly were mostly business meetings, however they did provide opportunity for exchange of views on relations within the Africa region. All participants expressed keen interests in promoting close relations with liberation movements. At the regional level exchange of informative material, invitations to conferences and seminars material solidarity were all pledged. At SCM level the same relations were encouraged with Sierra Leone and Kenya desiring ANC representation in their seminars in the near future. This of course pending confirmation.

#### OTHER SRI LANKA EXPERIENCES

The high political awareness of the people of Sri Lanka and their unquenchable interest in world political situations made it possible for the local SCM to hold symposia and informal meetings where various world experiences were shared. I led discussion in two such occasions, one informal gettogether on Feb 6th and a symposium at the YMCA hall on FEB 10th. Both occasions were a success

#### SOME DIFFICULTIES



## SOME DIFFICULTIES

The main difficulties encountered were financial, most of the ventures by the participants being expensive e.g. Tours & Cultural evenings. Also the problem of getting in touch with our office in New Delhi was not unexpensive. This culminated in the 2 days spent in Bombay trying to get through to that office to no avail. This all necessitated a loan of \$90<sup>U.S.</sup> being requested from the Africa region of the WSCF.

## CONCLUSION

~~Though~~ In spite of the difficulties noted above the Sri Lanka experience will remain forever in my mind as one of the most educational endeavours of my life. ~~travelling~~

Ralph Redbe Mijima