

ECUMENICAL ASSOCIATION of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe
OKUMENISCHE VEREINIGUNG der Akademien und Tagungszentren in Europa
ASSOCIATION OECUMÉNIQUE des Centres de Recherche et de Rencontre en Europe
Oecumenische Vereniging van Vormingscentra in Europa
Ekumeniska förbundet av konferensinstitut i Europa

VORSTAND

Generalsekretariat

D-7325 Bad Boll
Telefon (07164) 79-1 (Zentrale)
79231 (direkt)
79241

- usar: new paradigm: from the fruit of the tree of
Knowledge you shall not eat

- acentuar + as tarefas do futuro 25.3.1987 An/ke do p o diagnóstico

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends and co-workers at the Peace Forum of the Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe, in Kerk en Wereld, Driebergen, Netherlands from September 3rd to 6th, 1987,

Enclosed please find the draft statement for the Peace Forum of the Ecumenical Association. It has been discussed by the Executive Committee of the Association in January and you are now receiving the second version.

Please read it carefully and let us have your commentaries and remarks. These will be worked into a third draft which will then be submitted to the Committee at its meeting from May 12th to 15th for further consultation. The final draft will be sent to all participants in the Peace Forum in June this year.

There will be an editorial committee for the Peace Forum which will give the final touch to the draft in Driebergen and which will work into the final version any amendments proposed (like for instance by the working groups).

We hope that with these various modalities of consultation and comments we will be able to produce a version acceptable to all participants in the Forum and which will be fruitful for the work of the Ecumenical Association in the years ahead.

In order to assist us in the editorial work with regard to the amendments you may propose we would like to ask you not only for general commentaries but for the precise wording. You may do so in the text itself and return it with the amendments, or else you may write your amendments on a separate sheet of paper indicating the page number of the draft.

Please let us have your response by April 30th, 1987, so that we will be able to submit these amendments to the Committee in May.

With cordial greetings,

Fritz Erich Anhelm
(Dr. Fritz Erich Anhelm)

Bank: Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft, Göppingen/BRD, Konto-Nr. 120 294 7800

encl.



Not for publication

Brought *Draft*

Driebergen, 3 - 6 September 1987

To all our colleagues in the centres and academies, our colleagues in the search for peace and to all brothers and sisters in the European churches.

For many years the arms race has threatened us in Europe and beyond. We have tried through our work to constantly remind everyone of the threat to the survival of humanity which this poses. We were particularly concerned by the placing of middle-range missiles in Europe in 1983.

The Ecumenical Association of Academies and Lay-centres in Europe meeting at that time in Jarvenpaa in Finland passed its declaration entitled 'Risking peace in Europe'. As a consequence there followed a series of regional 'Peace Forums', made up of international representatives. These Forums, together with consultations in Meissen, Berlin and Prague, and many events in our centres, strengthened our view that we should support a form of 'collective security' summed up in the concept of 'Security Partnership'.

In keeping with the World Council of Churches' 'Conciliar Process' entitled 'Peace, Justice and the integrity of creation', we have gathered together representatives of churches, Peace organisations and institutions from 20 European countries, together with guests from Africa, Asia and America in Driebergen, at the invitation of the Association. We have strengthened our commitment to peace and at the Northern Assembly of European Churches, we prepared ourselves for 'Peace in justice'.

We here in Driebergen call for a new effort to find concrete ways in which we can work together to reverse this process of waste and fear. We understand this letter as a call to accelerate this work. It is addressed to all those who wish to contribute to the development of a more just and peaceful view of Europe and the entire ecosystem. More particularly it is directed at ourselves and our churches.

In the industrial states of the North, it is already apparent to us that the deterrence system is a failure. It cannot be justified by anything which we believe or confess. It has become a direct contradiction of everything which we wish to create in the light of the Gospel. In our churches, we still have great difficulty in stating this unequivocally. Nevertheless, the various standpoints have polarised through the events of the recent past. We can no longer accept the belief that peace can be secured through atomic weapons, or that this can be seen as a possible Christian position.

Recent preliminary negotiations mean that a real reduction in the number of atomic weapons in Europe would now appear to be within reach. At the same time we recognize that this process faces continuing psychological resistance and the opposition of many material interests. The animosities of decades, the refusal to face the dangers involved in weapons, calculations within the power game and deeply-rooted prejudices all hinder the learning process of trust-building.

In this situation, one word would seem most appropriate; the word repentance. This word must include an understanding which does not attempt to cover over the call of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

This interconnection has become a central problem in all our churches in recent years.



One example was the declaration 'The Holy See and disarmament' of the 12th December 1976, which stated; 'The clear contradiction between the wasteful overproduction of armaments and the sum of all the unmet needs of life in other areas is an attack on those who are its victim. It is an attack which becomes a crime; even if the arms are not used, the very fact of their costs kills the poor, who are condemned to starvation through them.'

We also remember the WCC's Vancouver 1983 declaration which saw in rearmament, the continual growth of the military state and the increasing dependence of the Industrial states on military production, a major burden on the international system and a special danger to peace and justice. "We believe that the time has come for the churches to declare clearly and unambiguously that the production, installation and use of nuclear weapons represents a crime against humanity."

The Russian Orthodox statement on 'War and Peace in the Nuclear Age' of February 1986 is also an important document, which described the 'politics of intimidation' as a burden, because it is this which represents the driving force of the arms race with all its consequences - "nonsensical and anti-human waste of natural and material resources, together with human and intellectual resources... Such policies demand ever-greater sacrifices and lead directly to the plunder of all of the resources of the developing countries."

Following these insights, we feel ourselves obliged to do everything in our power to bring ~~as~~ ~~THE~~ alternative to the world. For us this is encompassed by the ecumenical vision, learning and understanding anew how to carry out our own task in responsibility for the whole living earth.

In contrast to the dominating and violent aspects of European history, we now want to reflect, on the basis of our faith, and in the sense of the European tradition of seeking enlightenment, in order to develop a new way of life which frees us from the fantasy of human omnipotence to become faithful stewards of creation.

The Old Testament measures obedience to God, called shalom, by our care for the natural foundations of life and by our attempts to create just social conditions. With the keeping of these laws and commandments comes the promise 'that you will dwell in safety in the land' (Lev. 25)

In the New Testament, the 'Pax Romana', the expression of human power is set against the peace of God. This peace is shown by love, which is for the neighbour and the enemy. Love is the central condition for the fulfilment of the law. The opposite of a culture of violence is the practical development of a culture of love.

We are well aware that we are very far away from realising this vision in our everyday lives. Our involvement in structures of power and dependence is often so complex that it is only with great difficulty that we can see it. Repression and resignation, fear of being disadvantaged and failure to understand lead us to rely on apparent sources of security. We will only be able to cut loose of this through learning together, recognising our differing political, economic and cultural backgrounds and our different traditions of faith.

We also know that taking these problems seriously in different parts of the world will lead to different sets of priorities. We are not responsible for the present condition of the earth to an equal degree, nor are we equally affected.

However, we also know that the risks attached to military and civilian technologies, the destruction of nature and the waste of resources destroy life and threaten the basis of everyone's existence. It is these which tie us to the efforts of the concilliar process of peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

Our suggestions for the development of a unified position start from the assumption that the danger of continuing rearmament is the greatest hinderance to real negotiations in Europe. There can be no real progress until there is a change in this area.

We therefore understand 'Security Partnership' as a concept which leads to a peaceful order in Europe. The concept does not ignore the existing systemic conflicts and ideological differences. It nevertheless rejects conflicts built on these differences which are whipped up on the basis of aggressive verbal conflicts. Existence on both sides is made possible by peaceful coexistence. Security partnership requires a mode of behaviour through which a potential opponent can become a partner for the security of both. It assumes the peaceful intention of the other.

1. Collective security nevertheless requires some instrument by which each party can verify that its partner will not attack and have this guaranteed by international law. As a result, we vehemently reject any further attempts to avoid the obligations of international law. Such actions merely undermine trust in the reliability of international agreements and further hinder trust-building measures.

2. In addition to peace, collective security also includes economic, environmental and cultural relations as well as the question of human rights. The process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) essentially contains all the elements of a peaceful European order. Our question is, however, what sort of priority have European States actually given to this process? It no longer helps to see this merely as one level of approach among others. It has to become a central plank of efforts to achieve peace. The ratification of the agreements in individual parliaments could provide underline the real weight of the obligations undertaken.

3. Neutral and non-aligned states have often taken a constructive and forward-looking role of mediation between the blocks. Their proposals for demilitarised zones, trust-building measures and the reduction of troop strengths should be consistently supported in the negotiations in order that they bear fruit.

As a basis for the more narrowly defined area of 'security' we suggest;

- We want to see efforts to create a widespread public discussion of concepts which would make feasible the abolition of atomic weapons by the year 2000. We view the present discussions on medium-range missiles as a part of this process. They must lead to a real reduction in the arsenals of weapons.

- In our meetings and events, we support a worldwide declaration against the first use of atomic weapons. It is clear to us that the use of atomic weapons is a crime and strategic concepts which are still based on this must no longer be acceptable.

- We support all protests against any militarisation of space. This can only lead to waste, international insecurity and increases the level of



danger.

- We wish to make public our support for a prohibition on the development, manufacture, stockpiling and use of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and condemn any morality which would seek to justify the development of such weapons systems.

- We view an international test ban for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as an important sign of change. The example of the Soviet Union in the area of atomic weapons is a real opportunity. Those who do not accept this offer are threatened with loss of their credibility.

- We welcome every attempt to reduce conventional weapons in Europe and the reorientation towards defensive systems. To assert that nuclear disarmament automatically leads to conventional rearmament is unfounded.

- We want to contribute to the reduction of the international arms trade. The fact that funds for development are used to buy weapons and support the military in the face of poverty and starvation is a scandal which nothing can justify.

The structure of international relations today is determined by modes of thought and action which have become widespread over the last centuries through the domination of one culture by another using force and violence. Every new suggestion which seeks to avoid recognition of this fact in order to maintain our own privileges has already destroyed the possibility of a real change. Nevertheless, the connection between high arms spending and underdevelopment is totally repressed on the level of practical politics today. The dominance of the East-West conflict has stopped the Northern states coming to terms with their colonial past. Even where disarmament proposals come to the negotiating table there is no mention of the problems of the world economic system and vice versa. When it is the case however that highly-indebted developing countries actually subsidise the arms policies of the North, we can no longer keep silence - Peace and Justice are indivisible.

- As a result disarmament between East and West must be tied to a reduction of debts and a more equitable distribution of the burden between the North and the South.

- We wish to renew and strengthen the proposal for an international development fund financed through reductions in military spending and military aid.

- This fund should be used to redistribute the burdens of developing countries' debt, support independent regional economic units and self-help projects.

- We believe that measures aimed at recultivation and reafforestation are particularly urgent.

- In addition, the development of independent information systems in and between the countries of the third world should be encouraged.

The fund should be administered by the affected countries themselves.

The world-wide North-South conflict is reflected in Europe as well.

Tendencies toward centralisation and uniformity in capitalist societies



(e.g. in Agriculture, through management and high-tech strategies) result in overproduction on the one hand and the loss of jobs and poverty on the other. Simultaneously they strengthen regional disadvantages.

The serious efforts being made in the socialist states to democratise and improve civilian production are made more difficult by the pressure of the arms race.

- We therefore call upon European States to use the CSCE process to support and fund programmes of self-administered regional development on an all-European level. This should strengthen decentralised responsibility and recognise each region's special features.

- Within the framework of the CSCE process, we should examine how existing regional groupings (EEC, Comecon) can support an all-European redistribution. In doing this, regional control should be encouraged far more than central functions.

A special concern for us is the recognition of Human Rights. This requires a recognition of individual bourgeois freedoms, but goes beyond this. Streams of tourist on the one hand and migration from disadvantaged regions to centres of economic prosperity on the other are an expression of crass social differences.

- We therefore demand freedom of movement - this must however include the economically weak, without discriminating against them.

- We see measures designed to deter migrants and refugees as a running away from responsibility. Such measures encourage anti-foreign sentiment and racism.

In contrast, we understand cultural pluralism as an opportunity for learning about understanding between peoples. We therefore wish that our centres remain open to inter-cultural learning experiences, out of which mutual understanding can grow.

The problem of the destruction of nature is in no way less urgent than that of the nuclear threat. The international instruments to combat acute and long term problems in this area are even less developed than in any other problem area.

At stake is the future inhabitability of the earth. As a result, we must now recognise the protection of our natural sources of life and the conversion of our industrial system to a form more appropriate to our environment as a challenge to us all.

- There is a pressing need for an international environmental law to supplement international law and Human Rights agreements. The first attempts by the UN in this area cannot be allowed to collapse because of sectional industrial or national interests.

- Sea, air and ground pollution, anti-desertification and anti-erosion measures, attempts to combat climatic changes, the destruction of the atmosphere and the waste of finite resources all require international agreement.

- Equally, international agreement is necessary over the destruction and storage of toxic and nuclear waste and the replacement of high-risk technologies by decentralised, environment conscious and energy saving technology.



- New dependency in agriculture on biological and genetic manipulation as well as chemical fertiliser and pest sprays have now reached every corner of the globe with no apparent considerations of the consequences.

- We thus appeal to the European states to accelerate the transfer of low-risk energy-saving technology through the CSCE process. This includes the distribution of products for everyday use which take account of the environment.

Responsibility for peace in the nuclear age, for the well-being of creation and for the lives of the starving must stop us from so over-ideologising the antagonism between East and West that it prevents us from taking essential and sensible action together. This recognition must become the new 'Leitmotiv' for international co-operation.

At many of our meetings, we have noticed that awareness of all of these problems is constantly growing among us. As a result, our hopes for a future for everybody in Europe remain real. We are united by our vision of a Europe which after years of violence and conquest, can become an example of peoples living together in peace, of a just distribution of opportunities and goods and of care for creation. We know that it will be a long hard path to realise this vision politically.

Accordingly, we see our work in the next years as a contribution to the worldwide concilliar process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. This contribution must begin with our own European responsibilities.

Wherever we are involved, - in church or secular organisations, peace groups or research institutes, in Centres or Academies - we wish to find ways of working together which encourage this process. We therefore hope for the co-operation of all those who can agree with the positions stated in this document or who are prepared to accept them as a basis for discussion.

Our activities should be expressed

- in support and development of ecumenical networks on a local, regional and international level. Particularly on the local level there are many opportunities to widen the lay ecumenical movement.
- in 'visiting communities' between groups and centres, which encourage mutual understanding across borders of nation and culture through meeting and mutual experience.
- in study groups and meetings, which deepen the many-sided aspects of the processes in which our churches find themselves. We want to make sure by this that precisely those groups which are threatened with marginalisation in the public debate are given opportunities to make themselves heard.
- in our support of local and regional concilliar meetings called to work through the inevitable and necessary conflicts and agreements.
- in collective decisions to take concrete action, by which our solidarity can take on a unifying profile.

We therefore ask our colleagues in our centres to organise preparatory meetings for the Conference of European Churches to be held at the beginning of 1989. We ask that you take up the concepts outlined in this document and discuss them with those responsible in politics, society and the



churches and with groups, organisations and others interested. We would like to exchange our experiences of these discussions at our next annual assembly in Budapest in September 1988.

We also ask the networks and regional peace forums of the Association to study our position and suggestions and to work on them further. We see in the form of self-organisation of these networks and forums, a model of learning about peace which itself crosses borders. The Peace Forums in particular should extend beyond the Association itself and become instruments for the development of the concilliar process.

* We know that such letters as these leave many questions open and some not even raised. We have concentrated this letter on the matters important to us. We hope, however, that many who read it will feel called to react. Please let us know about these reactions.

Let us ask ourselves together, what we in Europe must change in order that dependency becomes partnership, dominance becomes dialogue, determination from outside becomes taking our own responsibility and selfishness becomes sharing. By this, we can open up dimensions of peace which make it possible for us to overcome the power of destruction, oppression and poverty.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

