

# Understanding Racism Today: A Dossier

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*This dossier is a revised and expanded version of Understanding Racism today, produced for the WCC Harare Assembly, 1998*

## INTRODUCTION

“We must not allow the manifestations of racism, which has not changed, to be swept under the carpet. We must be vigilant to the changing faces of racism and deal with it whether or not it is popular to do so. We must demystify all the laws, declarations and charters etc., from fancy words (...) We must confront the government for programmes that will rid our country of racism, otherwise, it will go underground...”<sup>1</sup>

Racism as a concern of the ecumenical movement goes back to the World Missionary Conference, in Edinburgh 1910, where explicit references were made to racism. A special programmatic focus on the issue of racism dates from 1968, thirty-four years ago, when the IVth assembly of the WCC set its face decidedly against the scourge of racism and thus gave impetus to the creation of a Programme to Combat Racism (PCR). From that time on, the WCC played a significant role within the international anti-racism movement, extending solidarity and resources to thousands of Indigenous and racially and ethnically oppressed communities and organizations, and those who work in support of them<sup>2</sup>, in almost every part of the world.

With the end of the Apartheid regime in South Africa, PCR and other anti-racism programmes began to pay more attention to the need for advocacy for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and of racially and ethnically oppressed minorities world-wide. The inter-connections of race, gender and class were already recognised and continued to be in PCR's programme with a focus on women; caste discrimination and the situation of Dalits achieved higher visibility. These have been a major focus of the WCC's racial justice ministry, undertaken in close partnership with member churches and their programmes for racial justice and major focus of an Ecumenical Study on Racism.

The Ecumenical Study on Racism (see analysis in the attached Dossier) has its roots in the 1992 PCR proposal to develop an Ecumenical Statement on Racism for adoption by the WCC Central Committee in 1995. Racism was changing around the world, producing a more complex situation demanding fresh analysis. At its 1995 meeting, the WCC Central Committee noted that “institutional racism and the ideology of racism, in their most pernicious forms, continue unabated in contemporary societies and still affect churches dramatically while ongoing social, political and economic trends are producing new expressions of racism”. The idea of a statement has given way to a more analytical and comprehensive approach to the issues of racism today.

In the follow-up to the 1995 Central Committee, several initiatives were taken as part of the Ecumenical Study: a regional approach was applied to the collation of specific input, and a user-friendly brochure produced to facilitate discussion on the issues and the responses of churches and church-related programmes against racism.

A first draft of the Ecumenical Study document was distributed during the WCC's 1998 Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, entitled “Understanding Racism Today: a Dossier” and later shared with churches and partners for further input.

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1. Oko Mabasa, “Racism in South Africa and its impact on Women”, paper presented at the Women Under Racism workshop as part of the Ecumenical Study Process on Racism, 27-30 November 1997, Geneva, p. 4.

2. For further reading in relation to these challenges, see “Being Church and Overcoming Racism: It's Time for Transformative Justice”, document of the plenary on Racism, WCC Central Committee, August-September 2002.

With the 1999 announcement that a third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) would take place in 2001, the Ecumenical Study on Racism became a means of preparing for and participating in that conference. To that end, the WCC together with the Regional Ecumenical Organizations facilitated four regional consultations – in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, North America, Asia-Pacific and Africa - of churches and partners involved in the struggle against racism and in the WCAR's regional preparatory meetings. An ecumenical delegation attended the WCAR, in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 8 September 2001.

These efforts provided a precious opportunity to gather information about the actions of churches and church-related organizations in response to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; this input and its analysis have fed into the Dossier "Understanding Racism Today" - which is a revised version of that produced for the Harare Assembly.

The Dossier, along with a WCC Central Committee 2002 document *Being Church and Overcoming Racism: It's Time for Transformative Justice* are the two major outcomes of the Ecumenical Study on Racism.

## DOSSIER: UNDERSTANDING RACISM TODAY

To follow the analysis presented in this Dossier, a grasp of the following concepts is vital:

**Racism:** Racism is rooted in the European history of expansion and colonialism and, consequently, in the history of colonized continents. It is a combination of prejudice and power. At its heart is the concept of ‘race’. Prejudices about ‘race’, whether expressed in biological or cultural terms, have long been part of racism. Racism is more than individual beliefs: rather, these are part of coherent sets of ideas legitimizing social practices that reinforce the unequal distribution of power between groups designated in racial and/or ethnic terms. Therefore, racism is also a structure of power. Racism represents contextually determined modes of exclusion, subordination, inferiorization, exploitation and repression.<sup>1</sup> Today, it is widely recognized that ‘races’ are a social construct, and that humanity belongs just to one race: the human race.

**White supremacy:** This refers to the myth that the White ‘race’ is superior to other ‘races’. The myth aims at legitimizing the power and privilege of White people over any other ‘racial’ group. White supremacy and the myth of the superiority of Western culture belong together as part of the same set of ideas.

**Institutional racism:** this differs from individual racism that works at an interactional level, based on personal prejudice. Institutional racism refers to procedures and regulations that may not initially have a racist intent, but that are discriminatory in their impact, reinforcing racial inequality.

‘Institutional racism’ consists of the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amounts to discrimination through unwitting prejudices, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage ethnic minority people.<sup>2</sup>

**Intersection of factors such as race and ethnicity with other determining characteristics:** Race, colour, ethnicity, descent, ethnic and national origin are interconnected with religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, abilities (or disabilities), social origin, etc. An adequate analysis of the complexity of racism today must consider the intersections of all these factors. (It should be noted, however, that in spite of the importance of ethnicity, ethnocentrism, and the oppression of ethnic minorities, ethnic issues are not directly addressed in this Dossier. Further studies, such as the current study on *Ethnic Identity, National Identity and the Unity of the Church* being undertaken by Faith and Order, and Justice, Peace and Creation teams, are needed.)

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The last decade of the Twentieth Century saw a major shift from very visible and clear-cut White racism, as evidenced in apartheid in South Africa, to a racism that, in many places, is disguised or even apparently non-existent. Simultaneously, racial violence broke out in many parts of the world, notably Europe. No country or society today is completely free of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia; thus analysis of and the combat against racism, whether overt or covert, must continue.

At a macro level, racial discrimination can be described as a set of economic, political, social, and ideological relations. At a micro level, racism is reproduced in everyday life on familiar ground where it is taken for granted as a ‘normal’ feature of the dominant culture and hardly ever questioned.

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1. First non-published draft of the Ecumenical Statement on Racism, pp16 and 18.

2. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry”, report of an inquiry by Sir William MacPherson of Cluny, § 46.25, 1999.

Simultaneous and cumulative expressions of everyday racism occur in relations and situations: from neighbourhoods to the labour markets, from parliament to the media, from state bureaucracy to the academia. In other words, racism is not only about particular incidents. As a systemic process, it is profoundly integrated in society. Because it is systemic, racism does not necessarily operate overtly or explicitly. Depending on the historical and political context, it can be blatant and overt or subtle and covert. In many parts of the world, certain forms of racism are maintained by a tightly controlled global infrastructure of economic, ideological and military interests.

Thus, the ecumenical struggle against racism to develop a coordinated strategy to address the political and economic dynamics that support racism in various parts of the world.

In May 1994, a group of WCC-related people met at Bossey to discuss the future of the WCC Special Fund to Combat Racism, and in June of that same year, the Unit III Working Group on Racism, Indigenous Peoples and Ethnicity met in Lusaka, Zambia. Both groups concluded that racism today increasingly manifests a global dimension: it is present not only in many parts of the world, but also in international relationships. Previous WCC statements have described the dynamics by which globalization produces a greater consolidation of capital in the North and ownership of ever more of the world's land and natural resources by an elite few. Both groups concluded that these are new expressions of racism that require special attention today.

Therefore the struggle against racism today must examine the fundamental relationships of power and dominance operating on a world scale. Some people question whether economic, military and other kinds of dominance (such as patriarchy) really do connect with race, ethnicity or caste. But we consider that the greatest concentrations of economic political and military power are mainly found in the White-led and industrialized countries of the North, and that those who suffer most as a result of their activities are the Black peoples of the South or those who reside in the North.

Such unjust economic structures and process are well outlined in the WCC study document "Christian Faith and the World Economy Today" (1992)

"The role of the "mega-economic" alliances of the industrialized nations which are deeply protective of their interests and dictate the terms of trade with the poorer countries; the role of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank which tend to serve the interests of the already wealthier and are often destructive of welfare in the third-world, particularly through "structural adjustment programmes" imposed in such countries as conditions of aid, without regard to their effects on local communities; and appalling debt crisis which has entrapped many third-world countries in hopeless economic servitude to financial institutions in the north."<sup>3</sup>

The designers and beneficiaries of these economic systems are mainly White. Those who suffer by receiving few benefits are mainly people of other colours and ethnic groups. Global racism and the unjust economic structures of the world are integrally related to each other.

The racist dimension of the current economic order is rarely acknowledged. There is considerable resistance to admitting that racism and racial discrimination are barriers to development in poor countries and to equal economic opportunity in rich ones, and that economic globalization has a negative impact that includes racial-ethnic inequities and the exclusion of large sectors from the benefits of the global economy.

While colonization and slavery demonstrated the heinous nature of an earlier period of economic globalization driven by self-interest and equally devoid of compassion, today it discriminates especially against former colonies and countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific that today are controlled by European powers, against Indigenous Peoples in Latin America, and against native and Aboriginal and Indigenous Peoples in predominately White industrialized nations.

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3. WCC, "Christian Faith and the World Economy Today, Geneva : WCC Publication.

The WCC-CCA round table on “Race and Oppression in Asia: Hope for our Peoples” (1996) affirmed that Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minority communities, agricultural sectors, and migrant labour are the sectors which bear the heaviest brunt of globalization and free market economic policies. In many Asian countries, the prevalent development models are depriving Indigenous Peoples and rural sectors of their land and resources. There is intense exploitation of labour, especially of women and migrants labour, while the perpetuation of the dominant cultures, usually promoted as the “national cultures” exclude and destroy other cultures. The division between the rich and the poor, between those who control resources and those who do not, between the dominant and dominated groups, has sharpened. The participants of the round table therefore concluded that globalization in its present form is an expression of racism.<sup>4</sup>

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4. WCC - CCA Round table “Race and Oppression in Asia: Hope for our Peoples”, Final Statement, Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 1996, p. 1-2.

## RACISM AND SEXISM: IMPACT ON WOMEN

Women and children of colour often suffer first and most severely from racism, sexism, caste and class discrimination. Societies and social systems dominated by patriarchal attitudes often practice racism and racial discrimination, exacerbating the oppression of women. Racism, sexism and class discrimination frequently form a triangle in which many women of colour are trapped in their daily lives. The poor are the most vulnerable to the impact of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. With the feminization of poverty, it is women again who are the most severely affected and rendered vulnerable to other violations of human rights through sex tourism and trafficking, discriminatory population control policies and sterilization, inequitable access to education and discrimination in employment which relegates them to the most poorly paid and demeaning jobs.

For instance, racism and sexism are manifested in sex tourism, in the trafficking of women (including that of mail-order brides) and population control policies. International tourism has increased remarkably over the years; a growing number of White Western men (especially Germans, Scandinavians, Americans and Australians) travel to tourist resorts and sex zones in Thailand, the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka and other Asian countries. Analysing the situation in Asia, Yayori Matsui of Japan contends that sex tourism is the inter-play of gender, class, "race" and ethnic background. "It cannot be denied that those sex tourists from Western countries have a certain stereotyped image of Asian women as sexual objects with Oriental charm and as very cheap commodities to use as much as they like."<sup>1</sup> The growing scale of international sex trafficking of Asian, African-descent Latin American and Caribbean women and children to Europe has the same root cause: they are considered both as sex objects and cheap commodities to be easily bought and sold. Sex tours and sex trafficking are both a serious violation of the human rights of women and children, and manifestations of racism.

Female migration as mail-order brides is another case. Many Filipino, Thai and other Southeast and South Asian women marry Western men through international marriage agencies. Quite often, these women suffer violence by their husbands and in-laws, and racial or ethnic discrimination often underlies these incidents. Japanese data indicates that in 1996, 1 in 30 marriages fell into this category. No matter how determined they were to overcome the hardships, mail-order brides suffer from not knowing the language, from their isolation, from a gap between expectations and what transpires, from their unfamiliarity with the local customs and child-rearing practices, and from the society's deep-rooted attitudes to women. These stresses lead to serious personal problems and often to divorce.<sup>2</sup>

Analysing the situation of Black women in Europe, Mukami McCrum affirms that the prevailing attitudes and assumptions about Black women's sexuality prompts mail-order bride magazines to advertise them as sex objects. This undermines their self-esteem and encourages the abuse of Black women to such an extent that rape of Black women is not viewed as seriously as that of White women. McCrum points out that:

"(...)the Single European Act of 1992 banded all Black people together with criminals, terrorists, drug traffickers, and all of them are suspected of being illegal. Women coming to Europe on their own or living here as single parents are seen as economic migrants who work at the low and sinister end of the labour market such as prostitution. They are often condemned and despised by the system and by some Black people who see them as low status women with poor morals and who are a danger to society".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Yayori Matsui, "Racism as I experience in Asia", paper presented as an Asian input to the Ecumenical Study Process on Racism, Tokyo, Japan, May 1998.

2. Soo Hae Oh, "Japan's Discriminated Minority – Koreans in Japan", paper presented at the Women Under Racism workshop as part of the Ecumenical Study Process on Racism, 27-30 November 1997, Geneva, pp. 5-6.

3. Mukami McCrum, "Visible Women's Campaign Launch – Immigration and Asylum Issues for Black Women", paper presented at the Women Under Racism workshop, op. cit, p. 2.

In post-apartheid South Africa, racism and its continue to weigh most heavily on women and children. The task of de-institutionalizing racism in that country is enormous, and relates to all aspects of life. But among the many challenges, the reality of rural women and children is of particular importance. While all Black women have been discriminated against, those in the rural areas have suffered most. The rural areas are populated by female-headed households because husbands, brothers and sons leave these areas as soon as they are old enough to search for jobs in urban areas. These areas are arid, with no facilities or infrastructure and normally far from towns or cities. The women and children in these areas are by far the poorest.

“One study by the Human Research Science Council showed that African rural women’s share of the poverty burden is 63.9% as compared to their White counterparts who have a share of 1.8%. In urban areas, African women have a share of 50.8% as compared to 3.1% which is the share of the White urban women. The same study shows that African children in rural areas have 75.4% of the total share of poverty for all African children, whose share of the poverty of children in the country is 955. The total poverty share of White children in rural and urban areas is 0.3%.”<sup>4</sup>

The experience of racism as lived by women of African-descent in Brazil, Indigenous women in Peru, Costa Rica and other parts of Latin America, is played out in the area of reproductive rights. Population-related policies, whether explicit or not, target birth control for poor and African-descent and Indigenous populations. Sterilization has been touted as a safe contraceptive method without side effects, and women have been induced to undergo surgical sterilization without other contraceptive options being made available. The effects of mass sterilization of African-descent women in Brazil can already be felt in the significant decrease of the Black population in this decade.

Brazilian women of African-descent denounce:

“The racist and patriarchal position (...) which considers population growth as responsible for poverty, hunger and environmental imbalance was exposed by the evidence of maintaining sub-human life conditions in our country, despite the drop in the fertility rate in the last decade. Therefore we state that poverty should be attributed mainly to a bad income distribution and to the absence of an agrarian reform, which penalizes mainly the Brazilian population of African origin.”<sup>5</sup>

In the words of Luz Campos, an Indigenous woman from Peru living in Costa Rica, “Wherever practices transform Indigenous women into guinea pigs for different experiments to be tested and for implementation of elimination strategies, there is no doubt racism exists.”<sup>6</sup>

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4. Oko Mabasa, op. cit., p. 2

5. “Itapecerica da Serra Statement of the Brazilian Black Women”, São Paulo, Brazil, 22 August 1993, p. 1.

6. Luz Campos, “Racismo y su impacto sobre las Mujeres Indígenas”, paper presented at the Women Under Racism workshop, op. cit, p. 1.

## RACISM AND CASTEISM: IMPACT ON DALITS AND TRIBALS

The links between racism and casteism can already be found in ancient India. Caste is a hierarchical system that puts people into rigid social categories. These categories are not based on physical features but on the religious ideology of brahminical Hinduism (*Hindutva*) which holds that people are born with certain qualities (*varnas*) and that, therefore, some are born superior and others inferior. One's social status is determined by birth, and one can never change it. Caste is thus a culture that ensures powers and privileges to the dominant through the subjugation and exploitation of the lower castes.<sup>1</sup>

Caste defines the social division of labour, lending status to one kind of work and withholding it from other kinds of work. It determines sexual interconnections through marriage. It structures groups in hierarchical relations, thus labelling some castes as high and others as low. Finally, the concepts of pollution and purity provide prescriptions and prohibitions about social interaction.

James Massey of Dalit Solidarity Peoples (DSP), debates the links between racism and casteism in the following words:

“Thus we see that the most important factors in the development of caste were the racial struggle between the fair-skinned Aryans and the darker skin non-Aryans, the division of the labour leading to the formation of occupational classes; and the tribal differences, especially among the non-Aryans, which survived the spread of a common Aryan culture.”<sup>2</sup>

Massey affirms that the seeds of the caste system were sown through the racial struggle, and that it was thereafter fully rooted in the Indian social system. In the process, many religious myths and legal systems were created to support the caste system; it was even legitimated during the British period by an act of Parliament. Theological justification for this discrimination was given by affirming that dark-skinned non-Aryans do not find any place in the body of the Creator God.<sup>3</sup>

The highest caste are the Brahmins...The next caste are the Kshatriya... After them follow the Vaisya... After the Sudra, who were created from the feet... After Sudra follow the people called Antyaja (low caste people) who render various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste... The four castes do not live together with them... They are occupied with dirty work... In fact they are considered like illegitimate children;...”<sup>4</sup>

This means that Dalits and other Indigenous peoples (the Tribals or Adivasis) have no place of their own as human beings.

The prevalence of the practice of untouchability even today in the Indian villages, despite several laws restricting it, makes casteism extremely dehumanising. The Dalits live outside the village, are not allowed entry into temples, are served food and beverages in separate cups at teashops, and even have separate burial grounds. There are prevailing assumptions that they are not capable of learning, not worthy enough to think and decide, but are made only for hard physical labour and for the service of others. Even if many of them do not do any polluting jobs any longer, their polluted identity remains. They are told that they are not only inferior but despicable and untouchable.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Deenabandhu Manchala, in *Echoes*, number 17, Interview: “On the subject of casteism”, p. 16.

2. N.K. Dutta, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, quoted in James Massey, “Racism and Casteism”, New Delhi, India, 1998, paper presented as input to the Ecumenical Study on Racism, p. 2.

3. James Massey, *ibid.* p. 2.

4. Dr. Edward C. Sachau, “Alberuni’s India”, New Delhi, 1989, Vol. I, pp. 100-103.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

All these features have negative implications for all Dalits and aggravate the oppression of women, preventing gender equality and justice.

“What is the specific identity and role of a Dalit woman in India today? She is the slave of slaves or “down-trodden among the down-trodden, born into a condition of servitude and bondage. She is shackled by a vast structure of laws, customs, duties – the Hindu caste system. Her only task was to “obey and serve without envy” said the ancient Hindu law giver, Manu, the Brahmanical world inflicts on her the idea of her own inferiority and the inevitability of her position. Therefore, she is the “natural” victim of the brutality of upper caste landlords, employers, moneylenders, local bureaucracy, including the police in her daily life or even during the course of struggles.”<sup>6</sup>

The ideologies of religion and scriptures as interpreted through the ages, the values and structures created by them, and their legitimization by the dominant power, are all crucial factors in patriarchy and stratification. A marked feature of Hindu society is its legal sanction for social stratification in which women and the lower castes are subjected to humiliating conditions of existence, not only determining their status, but extending to their sexuality and reproductive function. Sexual control over Dalit women by men of the dominant castes is evident in the systematic rape of Dalit women and in the perpetuation of forced prostitution in the name of religion through the *Devadasi* system (Hindu temple prostitution).

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant growth of awareness and solidarity among the marginalized sectors of Indian society. The rural and urban poor – who are mostly the Dalits, tribals, backward castes, women, agricultural labourers – are getting organized and are threatening to shake the unjust foundations on which Indian society stands.

At the international level, the process leading to the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and conference itself were marked by a significant presence of Dalits and by the dynamism of the Dalit movement. Beyond India, discrimination based on descent (which includes caste-based discrimination) is a reality in many other Asian and African countries (Japan, Nepal, Senegal, Nigeria, Niger are some examples). The growing awareness and advocacy has impacted the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination; in its most recent session (August 2002), it had a detailed discussion on Discrimination on the Ground of Descent, and agreed that casteism was a legitimate concern to be included under the concept of racial discrimination.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Ruth Manorama, “Racism and Gender Oppression from Dalit Women’s Point of View”, paper presented on the Women Under Racism workshop as input to the Ecumenical Study, p. 3.

7. Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination states: *In this Convention, the term “racial discrimination” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.*

## RACISM AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

It is well-known that Indigenous Peoples, no matter where they live or what their political or social culture and beliefs, in Aotearoa-New Zealand, Bolivia, West Papua, Canada, Norway, India, Botswana or Greenland, view the land as the basis of their survival. “We are deeply conscious of our relationship with our Mother Earth, and the sacredness of our lands and territories. We affirm that our identity, culture, languages, philosophy of life and our spirituality are linked to a balanced relationship with all creation.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet the lives and spiritualities of Indigenous Peoples are faced with continuing and emerging threats:

“(…)by mining, the lack of wildlife conservation, logging, hydro-electric dams, militarization, forced displacement for the benefit of tourism and other projects. Equally threatened by these developments are their languages and traditional way of life. The boundaries drawn up in the colonial process of creating modern forms of states has fragmented and interfered with the way of life of Indigenous Peoples. Even sacred sites have not been exempted from desecration. These threats are caused and reinforced by models of development imposed by the rich industrialized nations that seeks to exploit natural resources without regard for present or future generations.”<sup>2</sup>

The forced alienation of Indigenous Peoples from their ancestral lands has profound economic consequences and often constitutes a violation of religious liberty for those whose spirituality is profoundly linked to the land.

Indigenous participation in politics and decision-making processes reveals a situation which is far from egalitarian. In countries where Indigenous Peoples constitute the majority of the population (60 % and more in some countries), few leaders are drawn from Indigenous communities. The decision-making power is still in the hands of an elite few.

The poverty of Indigenous Peoples is an expression of day-to-day racism. It can not be denied that Indigenous Peoples have been oppressed and dispossessed and that their rights to sovereignty and self-determination have been violated from colonial times to the present day. That is one of the factors that has given strength to insurgency in many parts of Latin America – of which Chiapas is the most recent example. The increased activity of the guerrilla movement, and the anti-guerrilla strategies of governments like that in Guatemala from 1978 to 1982 devastated many Indigenous regions, destroying human lives as well as the fauna and the flora. In the Quiche area of Guatemala, it will be impossible ever to re-build three hundred Indigenous villages destroyed in the conflict.<sup>3</sup>

Indigenous Peoples have also been dispossessed and exploited in relation to intellectual property. Increased use of patenting is passing Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge of the Earth’s biodiversity – plants, animals, minerals and the interaction of all in creation – as well as their literature, designs, art and medicine - developed and passed on from one generation to the next - into the hands of multinational corporations and governments as private property. These process is gaining ground against recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ collective rights to their own intellectual property.

In Europe, development in recent years has been positive for some Indigenous Peoples, particularly for Inuits in Greenland and Sámi in Norway, Sweden and Finland. They have achieved various levels of self-determination. For instance, the Sámi Parliament is the official Indigenous voice to the nation’s

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1. “The Karasjok Declaration”, final statement of Indigenous Peoples gathering, Sápmi (Saamiland), Karasjok, Norway, 18-22 February, 1998. p. 1.

2. Ibid. p. 1.

3. “Racismo y Otras Formas de Discriminación en las Postrimerias del Siglo XX”, paper presented as a Latin American input into the Ecumenical Study, p. 5.

state legislative, budgetary and executive authorities.<sup>4</sup> Historically, however, all the Indigenous groups in Europe have in common the fact that they have been denied complete control of their own development in regard to language, culture, natural resources and way of life.

There is also discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in Asia. For example, the Ainu people in Japan, together with the Indigenous people of Okinawa, have been a target of the historic aggression of Japanese nationalism. The Ainu have been deprived of rights to their own culture, land and lifestyle as hunters and fishers in the forests, rivers and ocean as those areas were reserved to Japanese business and industry. They continue to be dislocated by the construction of Nibutani Dam. Some religious denominations have also profited by taking Ainu land for their own use.

The relationship between Indigenous Peoples and churches remains difficult in many respects. Often, the churches' views and understanding of Indigenous theological thinking and cosmic vision is locked in prejudice and value judgements based on ethnocentric pride or sense of superiority. However it is true to say that some churches have welcomed Indigenous theology with respect, opening the space for exchange and dialogue.

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4. Lars Johnsen, "Indigenous Peoples in Northern Europe", paper presented on the seminar on Racism in Europe organized by the Conference of European Churches, Graz, Austria, June 1997, as European input to Ecumenical Study, p. 1.

## **ANTISEMITISM, DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ARABS AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION<sup>1</sup>**

It is necessary to acknowledge and to confront the visible development of antisemitism<sup>2</sup> and discrimination against Muslims and persons of Arab descent in various parts of the world today. This escalation obstructs the possibility of people who belong to those communities to live their lives as Jews and Muslims according to their cultural and religious tradition. There is an emergence of stereotyping, hostile acts and violence against these communities. In several cases their situation is aggravated by the fact that they have a specific racial or ethnic origin.

The official governments' report of the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance recognized this by acknowledging "with deep concern the increase in antisemitism and Islamophobia" and the emergence of racial and violent movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas against Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities.<sup>3</sup>

Although the word "antisemitism" is of nineteenth-century coinage, it is an old and always present form of discrimination in which ethnic origin and religion interconnect. Discrimination based on the theory of racial superiority was used to justify the civil and religious persecution of Jews.

With the rise and domination of Christianity throughout the Western world, discrimination against Jews on religious grounds became universal, and systematic and social anti-Judaism made its appearance. Jews were segregated in ghettos, required to wear identifying marks or garments and were economically crippled by the imposition of restrictions on their business activities. Forced baptism, public burning of the Talmud and other Jewish books, together with many massacres, especially during the Crusades, remain an indelible part of the history of the Jews in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

The reality of antisemitism is not peculiar to Europe, however. Today small groups of neo-Nazis and White supremacists in different parts of the world have been primarily responsible for antisemitic propaganda. In several countries throughout the world, synagogues have been attacked or burnt. Jewish community buildings and clubs have been subject of antisemitic graffiti and pictures of swastikas. Desecrations of Jewish cemeteries have occurred in many countries and Jews have met with physical violence, some of which has been fatal.

The Jewish community has historically been a frequent target. Many explanations of the phenomenon of antisemitism have been advanced. "One theory suggests that antisemitism is nurtured in periods of social and economic instability and crisis. Frustrations engendered during such periods are deflected on to scapegoats."<sup>5</sup> The escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the way some people perceived it or chose to depict it had an aggravating effect on the resurgence of antisemitism, especially in some European countries.

The scapegoat explanation applies also to the understanding of the contemporary development of violence against foreigners in different parts of the world, relating also to the situation of foreigners of

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1. Although these issues have been treated together here, each has its unique history, distinct religious dimension and contextual determining factors.

2. The term is used to include speech and behaviour that is derogatory to people of Jewish origin

3. World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Declaration, Durban, South Africa, 31 August - 8 September 2001, § 61.

4. Dr. Hans UCKO, paper on the subject of antisemitism, Geneva, 2002, p. 1

5. Ibidem, p. 1.

Jewish or Muslim religious affiliation. (Specific references on foreigners as scapegoats are made in the section, which addresses migration and immigration in this Dossier.)

The phenomenon of discrimination against Muslims is not new. The derogatory image of Muslims and Islam began as early as the Crusades – the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries – when Christians – clergy, lay people and armies – marched to Palestine in order to free Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Islamic influence and authority.<sup>6</sup>

The United Nations Human Rights Commission's Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, in his various reports points to the different forms of discrimination on the basis of religion.<sup>7</sup> These include discrimination and xenophobia directed at North African or Arab nationals or persons of Arab or North African descent in western Europe and the United States; Turkish nationals or those of Turkish origin in Germany and Austria; discrimination against Palestinians in Israel; discrimination and intolerance affecting the Muslim community, and particularly Muslims of Indian and Pakistani origin in the United Kingdom.

Referring to the United States, the Special Rapporteur says that: “manifestations of racism and xenophobia against Arabs are increasingly accompanied by a form of ‘Islamophobia’. It is therefore difficult to separate acts of racial discrimination from acts of religious intolerance, as each may reinforce or encourage the other”.<sup>8</sup>

The September 11<sup>th</sup> destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, in New York, and the attacks in the Pentagon in Washington D.C., have engendered prejudices and led to the stereotyping of all persons of Arab descent or of the Muslim faith. The United States "war against terrorism," in conjunction with stereotyping in mass media coverage, has been yet another element aggravating the situation in many parts of the world. Quite often the mass media have led viewers (listeners, readers) to believe that all such persons were real or potential terrorists.

The WCC was from its foundation deeply conscious of the roles played by some Christians and churches in fomenting antisemitism during the period of the Holocaust. From the time of its first Assembly in 1948 it has consistently condemned antisemitism and other forms of discrimination or intolerance based on race, religion or national origin. Similarly, it has condemned discrimination against Muslims and persons of Arab origin living in predominantly Christian nations.<sup>9</sup>

The Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser, WCC General Secretary, on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2001, wrote,

It is our hope that Christians around the world will join with peoples of other faiths in seeking to create a world free of the poverty and forms of discrimination that are at the root of violence. As I put it at the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders in New York last August, dialogue within and between religions must lead not only to tolerance but to deep respect for the other in his or her authentic relationship with the Holy.

The message of greeting from the WCC to the worldwide Muslim community at the beginning of Ramadan in 2001 affirmed that “as Christians we reject the tendency, not uncommon in many Western

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6. Dr. Tom J. Rees, The Story of the First Crusade, <http://www.brighton73.freerve.co.uk/firstcrusade>

7. See Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, reports <http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf>

8. Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, UN document E/CN.4/1998/79, § 36.

9. Points of clarification of WCC policy in response to questions about proposed ecumenical actions in the context of the current Palestinian - Israeli conflict, in WCC Report on its participation in the UN World Conference Against Racism, Geneva, February, 2002, p. 46.

countries, to perceive Muslims as a threat and portray Islam in negative terms while projecting a positive self-image. The message continues to say that “many today call for an intensification of the dialogue of religions and cultures. However, such dialogue cannot bear fruits unless it is built on trust, on an unequivocal respect for the identity and integrity of others, an openness to understand them on their own terms and a willingness to question one’s self-understanding, history and present reality”.<sup>10</sup>

It certainly important to recognize that religion, spirituality and belief play a central role in the lives of millions of women and men, and in the way they live and treat other persons. Religion, spirituality and belief may and can contribute to the promotion of the inherent dignity and worth of the human person and to the eradication of racism and racial discrimination and xenophobia.

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10. Message of the WCC to the world-wide Muslim community at the beginning of Ramadan in 2001, p.3

## RACISM, EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION/IMMIGRATION

One of the dynamics shaping today's globalized economy is the new international division and elimination of labour brought on by new technologies, competition, and the search for cheap labour. In economic terms, the bottom line is that, for the global community, fewer and fewer workers are needed to produce more and more goods and services for larger and larger profits.

Racism has played a central role in these changes, particularly in its interrelation with immigration concerns. Empirical studies carried out by the International Labour Office demonstrate the prevalence of racial discrimination against immigrants with respect to employment and training opportunities. In European countries, including France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, immigrants face difficulties in job mobility and promotion. The racial dynamic also manifests itself on a global scale, as well as within nations where different racial groups exist.

While all the economic transformations affecting the South cannot be reduced to race, it is notable that those suffering most because of global economic changes, live in the South. Although people in the North are also affected by de-industrialization and other effects of globalization, even there the marginalization of African-descent, Black and ethnic minority people is disproportionate.

The economic activities of Japanese corporations as they search for lower labour costs in other South East Asian countries has resulted in many Japanese workers losing their jobs. It has been particularly damaging for resident Koreans employed in medium, small and very small businesses and sub-contracting factories. Foreign workers in Japan are increasingly required on "kiken/kitsui/kitanai" jobs, what means "dangerous/drudging/dirty" jobs. That is also a reality for many other countries in the world.

Wealthier countries use many practices to manage and control population movements, including classifying people according to their perceived eligibility to enter, or remain in, a particular territory. Governments are devising more sophisticated ways of preventing would-be migrants and asylum-seekers from reaching their territories. Such government policies are designed especially to keep people of colour out of these countries and to control their population growth.

Politicians often use foreigners as a scapegoat for domestic political and economic problems. The issues of immigration and asylum have been very much present in several election campaigns in Europe. In Austria, during the campaign for the Vienna municipal elections in March 2001, Jorg Haider's Nationalist-Populist party (FPÖ) made exaggerated xenophobic and demagogic political promises to attract votes. The French extreme right held on to most of its mayoralties in the municipal elections also held in March 2001. In the United Kingdom, racist outbursts were a feature of the campaign leading up to the June 2001 general election. The subjects of asylum and immigration played a prominent role, with candidates displaying their racism and xenophobia as each tried to appear more hard-line than the other. Official reports have denounced, "the political use of racist propaganda and xenophobia"<sup>1</sup>, the role of the media in spreading a negative image of immigrants and asylum seekers and the "repercussions of immigration and asylum policies"<sup>2</sup> on the climate of opinion towards refugees and minority groups.

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1. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI): second report on Austria, adopted 16 June 2000 (<http://www.ecri.coe.int/fr/08/01/40/CBC2/20Autriche.pdf>).

2. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI): second report on the United Kingdom, adopted 16 June 2000. (<http://www.ecri.coe.int/fr/08/01/40/CBC2/20RoyaumeUni.pdf>)

There are increasing incidents of hostility and violence towards foreigners, whether legal migrants, undocumented workers, refugees, or asylum-seekers. Undocumented migrants, particularly migrant women, are especially vulnerable. Feminization of migration has become an undeniable reality in the last 15 years. The rapidly increasing number of Asian women working abroad as domestic workers, factory workers or entertainers is an example. They are often victims of sexual violence or even killed by their employers. They often have no recourse for redress against the violence to which they are subjected.

Forcible repatriation of refugees to so-called “safe third countries” is now standard practice, together with deportation of the so-called “illegal” immigrants. These forms of state control are seen by many as a legitimate response to the de-stabilizing effects of large-scale migration, yet they are discriminatory on race grounds because four out of five refugees and asylum applicants come from, and are obliged to remain in, third world countries.

International migration has reached an unprecedented scale, as millions of people are forced to leave their home countries to migrate overseas for their survival. Maurice Glélé-Ahanhanzo, UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, states that:

Immigration, which is growing, provoking discriminatory measures and xenophobic reactions, is a worldwide phenomenon. In Africa, America, Asia, Europe and the Pacific, discriminatory barriers are being thrown up against men and women who, looking for a better life, set out in hopes of finding a place in what is said to be the “global village” but turns out to have neighbourhoods closed off to some by legislation alluding directly or indirectly to racial identity, national or ethnic origin or preference for nationals.<sup>3</sup>

Many countries have become fortresses to keep out those they perceive as unwanted and unneeded, and racist attacks, police brutality and human rights violations have become common.

Migration in different regions of the world also affects young people in general and Indigenous young people in particular. They leave their place and sometimes their country of origin in search of employment, and face the dilemma of adapting to a different culture and value system. In extreme cases, this has meant loss of their own cultural identity.

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3. Mr. Maurice Glélé-Ahanhanzo, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Report on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, UN document A/49/677, Geneva, November 1994, p.22.

## ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM<sup>1</sup>

Environmental racism can be defined as:

Racial discrimination in environmental policy making and the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of people of colour communities for toxic and hazardous waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of colour from the leadership of the environmental movement.<sup>2</sup>

Others have added to that definition by saying environmental racism refers to “any government, institutional, or industry action, or failure to act, that has a negative environmental impact which disproportionately harms – *whether intentionally or unintentionally* – individuals, groups, or communities based on race or colour.”<sup>3</sup>

There is a direct relationship between the increasing globalization of the economy and environmental degradation of habitats of many of the world’s peoples. In many places where African-descendants, minority, poor or Indigenous peoples live, oil, timber and minerals are extracted in such a way as to devastate eco-systems and destroy their culture and livelihood.<sup>4</sup> Waste from both high- and low-tech industries, much of it toxic, has polluted groundwater, soil and the atmosphere. Indigenous sacred places have been invaded by extensive mining operations and made into radioactive waste sites. As a consequence, the residents of these communities suffer shorter life spans; higher maternal, infant and adult mortality, poor health, poverty, diminished economic opportunities and substandard housing. Their quality of life overall is degraded.

The globalization of the chemical industry is increasing the levels of persistent organic pollutants, such as dioxin, in the environment. Further, the mobility of corporations has made it possible for them to seek the greatest profit, the least government and environmental regulations, and the best tax incentives, anywhere in the world.

“Racism and globalization come together in the environment, with the phenomenon referred to as ‘global environmental racism’ – a manifestation of a policy which has found domestic expression in countries like the United States, but which also has a global dimension.”<sup>5</sup> Environmental racism, although not new, is a recent example of the historical double standard regarding what is acceptable in certain communities, villages or cities and not in others. One example of this double standard is the environmentally devastating methods of extraction of natural resources, utilized by multinational corporations in developing countries. This has been the case with the Ogoni and other peoples of the

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1. This section is based on papers written by Dr. Deborah Robinson: “Environmental Racism” presented at the Consultation on “Understanding Racism Today”, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1999 and “Environmental Racism: Old Wine in New Bottle”, Echoes magazine, number 17, July 2000.

2. Benjamin Chavis, The Historical Significance and Challenges of the First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit, in Proceedings of the First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit (Washington, DC : United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, 1991).

3. Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund oral intervention at the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

4. World Council of Churches, Ecumenical Study on Racism, World Council of Churches; Geneva, 1994.

5. Oloka-Onyango, “Working Paper on Globalization and Racism”, submitted to the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/8).

Niger Delta in Nigeria, the U'wa people of Northeast Columbia, the Amungme of West Papua, Indonesia, the indigenous people of Burma, and numerous others.

There is a well documented pattern in the USA of African Americans and other communities of colour, along with economically depressed communities, being disproportionately abused by the creation of toxic waste sites. In March 1998, a dozen leaders of the historic African American and “mainline” denominations, under the auspices of the Black Church Environmental Justice Programme, visited two Louisiana communities:

“Convent, where a multi-racial residents group is seeking to block the Shintech Corporation from building a \$700 million polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plant in their already heavily polluted community; Oakville, where a 150-year-old community is fighting to close and clean a private toxic dump established 10 years ago, literally in their back yards;”<sup>6</sup>

Wealthier nations are also increasingly exporting their wastes to countries in the South. “Between 1989 and 1994, it is estimated that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries exported 2,611,677 metric tons of hazardous wastes to non-OECD countries.”<sup>7</sup> The illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous substances and wastes constitute a serious threat to the life and health of individuals, particularly in developing countries, that do not have the technologies to process them. Although the Basel Convention prohibits the trans-shipment of many forms of toxic waste, “products such as pesticides and other chemicals banned or severely restricted by the United States, Western Europe and Japan because of their acute toxicity, environmental persistence or carcinogenic qualities are still regularly sent to the Third World.”<sup>8</sup> The UN Special Rapporteur on the Illicit Dumping of Toxic Wastes has been asked to examine racially motivated discrimination practices in relation to the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes.<sup>9</sup>

Industrialists argue against this concept of environmental racism, claiming that the reasons for putting their waste in minority areas (or in countries in the South) are economic, not racial. They deny it is intentional, arguing that the impact upon African-descendants, Black, Indigenous and ethnic minority peoples is accidental. But the pattern is common enough to indicate systemic racism.

### **Why is this happening?**

**Environmental racism** – First, a double standard exists as to what practices are acceptable in certain communities, villages or cities and not in others. Second, people of colour around the world pay a disproportionately greater price for economic development, resources extraction and industrialism in terms of their health, quality of life and livelihood. Although corporate greed and the lack of corporate accountability explains a tremendous amount of what is described above, racism in the form of environmental racism, plays a significant role that must not be overlooked.

**Transnational power and the mobility of global corporations** – Financial institutions and trade agreements have facilitated the movement of capital and goods across borders. Corporations have become more powerful than nation states and are not accountable to anyone except their shareholders.

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6. News release of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, “African American Church Leaders Pledge Their Support to the Struggle Against Environmental Racism”, New Orleans : 1998. p. 1.

7. Greenpeace, The Database of Known Hazardous Waste Exports from OECD to Non-OECD Countries, 1989-March 1994, Washington, DC: Greenpeace, 1994.

8. Joshua Karliner, The Corporate Planet: Ecology and Politics in the Age of Globalization, San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997, p.152.

9. United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 56th Session, resolution on the Illicit Dumping of Toxic Wastes (E7CN.472000/L.97).

Their mobility has made it possible for them to seek the greatest profit, the least government regulations, and the best tax incentives, anywhere in the world. Workers are exposed to economic and environmental blackmail; they either accept low-paying, often non-unionised jobs with environmental health risks, or the jobs will move to another country.

**Profit before people** – Some have argued that resource wars will be the impetus for the major conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>10</sup> Traditional land rights and sacred cultural sites are under-valued when it interferes with gaining access to resources and therefore profit. The impact that extraction and processing industries have on human health and quality of life doesn't matter. People are increasingly unwanted and unneeded for increased profit; they are becoming disposable.

**Lower environmental standards abroad** – More stringent environmental regulations in the United States have contributed to the downsizing of operations here and the expansion of activities abroad. Large oil companies are under-investing in and selling off their US refineries, while focusing their investment efforts on new overseas drilling opportunities where their return on capital is higher.

**Lack of power** – Minority groups in Nigeria, small rural African American communities in Louisiana, Indigenous Peoples around the world share a lack of political power, information and vital global strategies to take on powerful multinational corporations and/or repressive state or national governments/regimes.

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10. Barbara Rose Johnson (ed.) *Who Pays the Price? The Sociocultural Context of the Environmental Crisis*, Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994.

## RACIAL VIOLENCE<sup>1</sup>

The use of violence as a method of control and domination of those who are deemed to be inferior and powerless is practised in many cultures, societies and countries of the world. At the domestic level, it is used against women, children and other vulnerable members of the family. At the national and international level, poor people, asylum seekers, refugees, Black and minority ethnic, migrant and Indigenous Peoples are occasionally subjected to, or threatened with, violence by the state and the institutions that uphold and perpetuate violence in the name of peace, order and national security. Any form of violence is harmful to the victim and has wider implications for society as a whole.

Racial violence differs from other forms of violence in that the root causes lie in the assumption of superiority and dislike of other people who are deemed to be inferior because of their identity, ethnic origin, nationality, national origins or descent; and because of their appearance and physical characteristics such as colour, language and dress. These are natural and normal attributes, and any attack on them is an attack of the very core of one's essence as a human being and as a member of the human race. Racial violence manifests itself in many ways. In its mildest form, it can be pushing, spitting, name-calling, teasing, or practical jokes. In more serious cases it involves physical assault, arson, stabbing, rape, murder, attempted murder, massacres and genocide.

There is no continent which is free of racial violence. Racial violence has been the trademark of racism throughout history. In the Americas and Caribbean, the Colombian legacy of dispossession, massacres, violence and near annihilation of the native peoples, and the brutal slave trade have left lasting effects on marginalized communities in that region. The slave trade, imperialism and colonialism, and more recently apartheid, were systematic and legalized forms of racism that used brutal force and violence against Africans, Asians and Indigenous Peoples, including Dalits, Gypsies and travelling people. Violence against these people excluded them from social, political, cultural, economic and educational benefits because of their colour, caste, descent. In India, the so called "pollution line" still divides Dalits from other castes in spite the abolition of the practice of untouchability fifty years ago. Today, beatings, rape and murder of Dalits still happen.

The history of the struggles against slavery, colonialism and imperialism reveals atrocities and massacres of people who in most cases were poorly armed and who just wanted their freedom. The vicious methods used to destroy the resistance against the Portuguese in Brazil, the Mau Mau struggle in Kenya, the rape of Dalit women in India and the massacre of the Indigenous Peoples in the Caribbean and the Americas are just a few examples. South Africa was a strong example of legalized racism. Years of state violence against Africans, Indians and "coloureds" in South Africa kept apartheid alive, and it has left a legacy of psychological and racial violence. Systematic forms of colonialism included massacre, rape and dispossession of peoples, with long-lasting effects of poverty, disease, exclusion and violence which are visible today.

While physical violence is easier to recognize, other forms of violence are equally damaging. There is a growing body of evidence that persistent low-level harassment affects the health and wellbeing of people subjected to it. It leaves physical and psychological scars that are passed on from person to person in the community and remembered by generations to come. Living in fear because one belongs to a race or a group of people subjected to violence and constant harassment is a major cause of mental

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1. This section is based on excerpts of the analysis on Racial Violence written by Ms. Mukami McCrum and published in Echoes, JPC Team magazine, number 17, July 2000. For further reading see "Churches in Europe: Initiatives to Overcome Racism, Xenophobia and Racial Violence" researched Dossiers 1 and 2, on Austria and Germany and on the United Kingdom and France.

ill health and low self esteem. Those who are racially harassed often adopt an identity with the negative images and labels they are given. Resistance sometimes leads to further more dangerous harassment and discrimination. The notion of being a human being “created in the image of God” is meaningless when the image one sees reflected in the “mirror called society” is that of an inferior, rejected and abused woman, man or child.

The state response to racial violence indicates the way society, the institutions and the political systems behave towards those who are perceived to be different. In many countries, people have been murdered because of their ethnic origin, nationality or their colour. The rising tide of violence in internal conflicts in many regions, for instance, demonstrates that extreme manifestations of national identity and of ethnocentrism are forms of related intolerance that have similar impact upon peoples of the same or similar racial heritage in many societies. The relationship between internal conflict and colonial heritage cannot be overlooked.

The genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo are recent reminders of the evil that can be generated by political systems and hatred. In the United Kingdom, for instance, over a hundred Black people have been murdered over the last ten years. The most well-known case is that of Stephen Lawrence, stabbed to death on 22 April 1993 as he waited for a bus in London. The attack was unprovoked and the only reason for his murder was that he was Black. His death was tragic, but the failure of the justice system to catch and prosecute those responsible added to the grief and injury felt by his family, the Black community and anti-racism activists everywhere. The enquiry which ensued, following his parent’s persistent campaign in pursuit of truth and justice, revealed entrenched institutional racism within the police force that had led to inexcusable errors in the caring for Stephen as he lay dying – something the police finally had to admit to! Stephen’s life was meaningless not only to his killers but to the system in the country he called home.

The state responds to those who resist racism with ever-increasing sophistication in the form of legal measures and/or military force. The increase of extremist political parties who distribute materials which incite racial hatred, and the fact that government condemnation of racism in most cases amounts to meaningless platitudes, has meant that perpetrators of racial violence feel empowered and encouraged to continue their racist practices. States support racial violence by legal documents, rules and procedures that portray certain groups of people as inferior, criminals or scoundrels.

Across Europe, and no doubt in other parts of the world, anti-racism campaigners and organizations have documented and monitored a large increase in racial incidents and violence. In recent years, there has been an unprecedented increase in the numbers of internally displaced people, refugees and migrant workers. At the same time, powerful countries have introduced stringent controls to keep those displaced people out. There is an undeniable body of evidence on the role of the state in perpetuating racism and racial violence.

## RACISM AS A SIN REVISITED

The ecumenical movement, the WCC and its member churches have produced many unambiguous statements condemning racism. Over the past few years, churches have issued many apologies and confessions of racism committed against Indigenous Peoples, African-descendants and Ethnic minorities. These, as well as their statements, are most often based on the belief that human beings are created in the image of God (Gen. 1.26), that all human beings are created equal, and that racism is a sin.

Racism is a sin because it separates us from God and from our fellow human beings, making us blind to the reality of people's suffering. This opens the door to perpetuating racist attitudes, practices and institutional racism. Racism is a sin because it leads to silence and omission. Racism is a sin because it is a blatant denial of the Christian Faith and incompatible with the Gospel. Racism is a sin for its flagrant violation of human rights.

It is sinful not only because, in assuming that human beings are not equal before God, it is contrary to the biblical teachings, particularly that of Galatians 3. 28, or because it denies basic justice and human dignity. Racism is primarily a sin because it destroys the very source of humanity - the image of God in humankind. Racism desecrates God's likeness in every person. Thus, it repudiates the Creator God; it repudiates the Creation and its goodness. We are truly human only when the divine flame of God's Image shines within us to dissipate evil, as individuals, churches and societies. The struggle against racism is an affirmation of the truth and of life in its fullness.

The call of the WCC's VIII<sup>th</sup> assembly – “Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope” – is an ever-present reminder to all of us to (re)turn to our true humanity, to turn away from the sin of racism and repent. We are confronted once more with the need to experience *metanoia*, to change direction (see page 5) through a heartfelt process in which we become ready to be transformed. That recognition tells us that the mission of the churches can not go on as usual. We must acknowledge that the actions of individuals, churches, and societies must be transformed by the power of God. The eradication of racism is a task that we accomplish in the understanding that God-self is applying restitution, through us, to God's Creation of all things and peoples.

In fact, the creation of the universe and humanity by God is characterized by diversities. Creation is not a monolithic reality; diversity is a salient feature of it. In the story of creation told in the book of Genesis, diversity is a dominant reality. However, along with the emphasis on diversity, the book of Genesis also speaks of coherence, harmony, interaction and unity as inherent qualities of creation. These two aspects show that in the context of God's creation, diversity is a source of enrichment that acquires its true meaning and value through unity. In fact, the creation of the universe and humanity is in its essence a concrete manifestation of unity in diversity and diversity in unity. Diversity is a gift of God that must be preserved for the integrity and sustainability of creation. This basic affirmation of Christian theology is common in all living faiths<sup>1</sup>.

We are called at this time to overcome our perceptions about “them” and “us”, whether in relation to different peoples or to human beings and creation, allowing us to live out our multi-“racial” and multi-ethnic societies as a reality of our everyday life as well as in our church communities. The radical conversion that our ecumenical commitment calls us to is to understand that we are one, as peoples and as one creation. When we understand and act accordingly, our transformation moves forward and our commitment to life as a whole is enhanced. All human beings – regardless of religion, national

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1. Statement of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW for the United Nations Durban World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, p. 1.

origin, colour, creed, or gender – are living icons of God, innately worthy of such respect and dignity. Whenever human beings fail to treat others and creation with this respect, they insult God, the Creator.

The Church is a community of disciples which should constantly regroup and reconstitute itself around issues of suffering. Often, the churches fail to centre on the suffering, dispossessed and degraded people in society. The churches are constantly yielding to the temptation to forget those who are forgotten and to not heed the voice of those claiming racial justice. To varying degrees, the histories of our churches bear witness to their constant drifting away from the poor and powerless towards the rich and mighty.<sup>2</sup>

We have confessed that racism is a sin, not only as individual Christians, but also as churches at large. To affirm that racism is a sin has radical implications to the churches: a radical commitment to overcome it.

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2. Racism in Theology and Theology Against Racism, Report of a Consultation organized by the Commission on Faith and Order and the Programme to Combat Racism, WCC, Geneva, 1975, pp.13-14.

## TOWARDS A THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF CREDIBILITY<sup>1</sup>

To articulate a theology of struggle against global racism today is a challenge to the churches, the WCC and the ecumenical movement as a whole. The theology must find a perspective that can motivate a new orientation, generate a new impetus. It must seek a new interpretation of what God is saying to churches attempting to live out the affirmation that racism is contrary to the word and will of God. It must enable the churches to examine both of their own internal institutional structures and practices, and their witness in the world at large; it must use the hermeneutical key of suspicion to see clearly beyond disguised and covert forms of racism.

Biblical and theological foundations will be no more than abstract affirmations if they are not embodied, integrated, in the life of individual Christians, church institutions and mission. For biblical affirmations to provide a concrete basis for the struggle against racism, what is needed are *credible* men and women, institutions and actions for ecclesial and societal transformation.

*Credible persons* are men and women who can be counted upon in the process of transformation, whose lives are a witness to the Gospel and the ideas they defend. Such spiritually credible persons are the theological pillars for a (re)turn to true humanity. Thus, the call to turn to God is also a call to turn deliberately away from the sin of racism.

*Credible churches and institutions* are communal and racially inclusive structures, spaces where people meet, set themselves objectives and determine the means of acting together in the light of their common calling. It is to the extent that the beliefs have an organized rather than an occasional or accidental space that they can have an impact on the global orientation of life in society, on the world order. The Christian community cannot be convincing unless it takes steps to eliminate the practices of racism from itself.

*Credible action.* Sometimes churches have become instruments of denunciation, believing that once something was denounced their duty was accomplished. Many statements against racism have been made by ecumenical gatherings, and hundreds more have been made by many different churches. Yet in spite of all these statements and the substantial agreement among churches they represent, racism remains as deeply entrenched as ever. There are times when churches must recognize they are dealing with the seeds of racism that may have been planted two or three generations previously.

The concrete foundation of the Christian faith within the ecumenical movement today needs the energy that will come from this chain of credibility – credible actions, implemented by credible persons within credible institutions. In other words, the foundations of the struggle against global racism will not only have a biblical-theological basis, but also people, churches and institutions that can be relied upon.

The question today is whether such foundations actually exist; whether this is not one of the major challenges of this time for the credibility of Christians and churches. Stating that the eradication of racism is part and parcel of turning to God is to understand that the Christian formation of men and women, and the conversion of churches to that message, are the prerequisite for success in the struggle. It has to do with the ability of Christians and churches to propose, both locally and at the

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1. This section is based on a presentation made by Rev. Ka Mana Kangudie, in one of the consultation of the Ecumenical Study on Racism organized by JPC's programme to Combat Racism, Cartigny, April 1996.

world level, alternatives for life in community and for creative fellowship which can inhibit the culture of violence and death that have produced the current trends of racism.

## THE ISSUES AT STAKE FOR THE FUTURE

The pages of this Dossier highlighted a variety of situations of racism and of issues that interconnect with it. These certainly need further attention by churches in their present and future work for racial justice. But there are many other realities that are not presented here. Racism and education, racism and the mass media, racism and militarism, and ethnicity and ethnocentrism are a few examples. The journey continues!

These realities are before the churches for action for today and in the future. Also facing them are the call to advance the racial-ethnic justice cause through concrete solidarity and advocacy; the call for a deeper commitment to face their *own* racism, not only elsewhere; the call for church communities to live fully the diversity of their peoples and cultures, as a clear reflection of God's Creation and Image in humankind; the call to overcome their own divisions on racial-ethnic lines, re-establishing right relationships with women and men, Indigenous Peoples, Africans and peoples of African-descent, Dalits, and ethnic minorities.

The struggle for racial justice today and in the future requires deliberate, consistent and constant action, within the churches and society, to transform structures of power and exclusion. These pages, together with the challenges outlined in the document *Being Church and Overcoming Racism: It's Time for Transformative Justice*, suggest an extensive agenda for racial-ethnic justice for the churches and the world today.

The journey continues!

## APPENDIX

### The World Council of Churches and Racism: Historical Overview

The WCC's response to racism can be analyzed in three phases: (1) pre-1968; (2) 1968-1980; and (3) 1991 to the present. Each phase was a significant learning process, which gave greater clarity to the WCC's understanding of racism, its root causes, its subsequent effects, and its relationship to global trends.

#### **Phase I: The Ecumenical Movement and the "Race Problem": 1925 - 1968**

Before 1968, the ecumenical vocabulary did not include the word racism. Instead, the ecumenical movement spoke of the "race problem" and the impact of racial discrimination, prejudice, and segregation. As a result, early concern focused primarily on the personal or relational aspects of racism and did not identify the social structures that perpetuate racism.

Ecumenical concern for racism was initiated by J.H. Oldham, who published *Christianity and the Race Problem* in 1924. Oldham went further than his contemporaries in claiming: "The cause of racial bitterness is found in the feeling of superiority on the one hand, and inferiority on the other, which are apt to be engendered by the existing political and economic predominance of Western peoples. The white man's claim to superiority is sometimes blatantly proclaimed and more often quietly taken for granted".<sup>1</sup>

Oldham maintained that racism is a moral problem of such magnitude that Christians are called' to fight against it. His subsequent work with the International Missionary Council, the Life and Work movement, as well as his contributions in drafting the constitution of the WCC were extremely influential in sharpening the ecumenical focus on racism.

An important shift occurred at the 1948 inaugural Assembly of the World Council which declared racial discrimination to be a "flagrant violation of human rights".<sup>2</sup> The thematic framework of the Amsterdam Assembly placed racial discrimination and segregation in the realm of "Man's Disorder" thus declaring it contrary to "God's Design". The Amsterdam Assembly emphasized both the social and ecclesial responsibility of member churches and claimed:

"(The Church) must call society away from prejudice based upon race or colour and from the practice of discrimination and segregation as denials of justice and human dignity, but it cannot say a convincing word to society unless it takes steps to eliminate these practices from the Christian community, because they contradict all that it believes about God's love for all His children".<sup>3</sup>

The 1954 Evanston Assembly condemned institutional discrimination and urged member churches to denounce segregation and discrimination and to work for their abolition. An important consequence of turning the Council's attention toward the social ramifications of segregation was identifying the right to vote and the right to participate in government as essential means for securing racial justice. This was re-articulated at the 1960 Cottesloe Consultation of WCC member churches in South Africa. Though Cottesloe achieved no common pronouncement regarding apartheid, it did declare that "no

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1. J.H. Oldham, "Christianity and the Race Problem". London: SCM Press, 1924, p. 41.

2. "Man's Disorder and God's Design". The Amsterdam Assembly Series. 5 vols. London: SCM Press, 1949, p. 221.

3. Ibid. p. 195.

one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any church on the grounds of his colour or race”.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly thereafter, at its 1961 New Delhi Assembly, the WCC established a Secretariat for Racial and Ethnic Relations, and declared that “where oppression, discrimination and segregation exist the churches should identify themselves with the oppressed race in its struggle to achieve justice”.<sup>5</sup> The WCC solidarity with oppressed people struggling for racial justice was thus firmly established.

In 1966 the World Conference on Church and Society affirmed the need to change personal attitudes and promote reconciliation. Furthermore, it noted that “*nothing less than structural change can create a pattern of justice in which the dignity and freedom of all will be secured. (...) The struggle for radical change in structures will inevitably bring suffering and will demand costly and bitter engagement. For Christians to stand aloof from this struggle is to be disobedient to the call of God in history*”.<sup>6</sup>

## **Phase II: The WCC and the Programme to Combat Racism: 1968 - 1979**

The focus on the structural dimensions of racial discrimination and the need for radical and costly involvement on behalf of the Church set the tone for a second more pointed phase of action. Racism was acknowledged as a powerful ideology maintained by economic and political structures which function at all levels of society.

The significance of the Uppsala Assembly cannot be overstated. It was the watershed event that defined racism as an ideology, singled out white racism as the primary proponent of discrimination, and declared the need for a “crash programme to guide the Council and its member churches in the urgent matter of racism”. The Assembly claimed that racism is linked with economic and political exploitation, employs fallacious generalizations and distortions to sustain its existence, creates a vicious cycle of counter-racism and thereby perpetuates itself from generation to generation. The Uppsala Assembly declared racism to be a blatant denial of the Christian faith and adopted the following definitions of racism and white racism:

“By racism we mean ethnocentric pride in one’s own racial group and preference for the distinctive characteristics of that group; belief that these characteristics are fundamentally biological in nature and are thus transmitted to succeeding generations; strong negative feelings towards other groups who do not share these characteristics coupled with the thrust to discriminate against and exclude the out group from full participation in the life of the community” (...)”By white racism we mean the unconscious belief in the inherent superiority of person of Euro-ancestry (...) which entitles all white people to a position of dominance and privilege, coupled with the belief in the innate inferiority of all darker peoples, especially those of African ancestry, which justifies their subordination and exploitation”.<sup>7</sup>

Following Uppsala, the WCC sponsored a major consultation on racism in Notting Hill, London. According to that consultation, the church must be an institution of action that helps to create a new balance of power and that, “all else failing”, the church should “support resistance movements, including revolutions, which are aimed at the elimination of political or economic tyranny which makes racism possible”.<sup>8</sup>

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4. The Cottesloe Declaration. The Consultation Report is contained in “Mission in South Africa”. Geneva : WCC, 1961, p. 30.

5. The New Delhi Report. “The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches 1961”. London: SCM Press, 1962, p.

6. “World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva 12-26 July, 1966. Christians in the Technical and Social Revolution of our Time”. Geneva: WCC, 1967, pp. 204-205.

7. “The Uppsala Report 1968”. Ed. By Norman Goodall. Geneva : WCC, 1968, pp. 241 -242.

8. World Council of Churches consultation on Racism, Notting Hill, London, 19-24 May 1969. A part of the Report is contained in Breaking Down the Walls, Ed. By Ans J. Van der Bent, Geneva: WCC, 1986, pp. 36-37.

The results of this consultation played an important role at the WCC Central Committee meeting in Canterbury a few months later. That meeting took up Uppsala's call for an urgent programme on racism and paired it with Notting Hill's assessment of the relationship between racism and power. As a result, the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) was launched with the understanding that "racism is not an unalterable feature of human life" and that it is not confined to certain countries or continents but is a "world problem".

The majority of PCR's work between 1971 and 1960 focussed on the apartheid struggle in Southern Africa, particularly in relation to investments, the arms embargo and sanctions against South Africa. Although grants from the WCC Special Fund to Combat Racism were made to organizations struggling against racism in many parts of the world, the clear priority for grants and the focus of PCR's work was on Southern Africa.

In 1975, the Commission on Faith and Order and PCR jointly sponsored a consultation entitled "Racism in Theology and Theology of Racism" which attempted to respond to a 1974 Central Committee request for further theological reflection on problems connected with the struggle against racism. It was the first of several consultations on the relationship between theology/spirituality and racism (Stony Point, 1986; Harare, 1988; Corrymeela, 1989; Driebergen, 1989).

The Nairobi Assembly in 1975 unconditionally condemned racism as a sin, affirmed that the Church is too often infected with racism, and that racism is structurally enforced by international trade patterns and military interests. Furthermore, the Council deepened its understanding of institutional racism and the interdependence of oppression with the following analysis:

"Institutionalized racism, in its many structural forms, resists most challenges with careful concessions calculated to preserve its power. Racist structures reinforce each other internationally. Self-serving policies of transnational corporations operate across boundaries with impunity; weapons or mercenaries are supplied internationally to the local elite; the world-wide communications networks are manipulated to reinforce racist attitudes and actions. It is precisely because of this world-wide web of racist penetration that the churches must seek out policies and programmes at the ecumenical and international levels. Such programmes can expose the international systems which support racism and provide an effective counter-response to them".<sup>9</sup>

### **Phase III: Listening to and learning from the Racially Oppressed: 1980 - 2000**

The Nairobi directive to expand the work of PCR provided the impetus for the third phase in the WCC's struggle against racism. Four years after Nairobi in 1979, Dr Philip Potter, then General Secretary of the WCC, challenged the Council to concretize Nairobi's directive and initiate a series of regional consultations in order to set the agenda for combating racism in the 1980s. As a result, ten such consultations were held, culminating in a World Consultation on Racism at Noordwijkerhou, Netherlands in August 1980, which took the theme "The Churches Responding to Racism in the 1980's".

Subsequent actions of the Central Committee emphasized: 1) the all-pervasive and diverse nature of racism, 2) the infection of the churches themselves with racism, and 3) the interlocking of racism and political and economic domination. PCR's mandate was widened to deal with issues of casteism and minority rights in various parts of the world.

Highlights of the Council's efforts to combat racism in the 1980s included the development of the programmes on Indigenous Peoples and Women Under Racism. Throughout this period also, the WCC was a leader in the international pressure on the South African government to abolish apartheid and to cease its destabilizing activities in Southern Africa.

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9. "Breaking Barriers. Nairobi 1975. The Official Report". Ed. By David M. Paton. London: SPCK, 1976, p. 109.

An important contribution in the struggle to combat racism was made at the 1990 World Convocation on Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul. This was significant because it articulated the sentiments of grassroots Christians from around the world. Although it had been an issue in the planning stages, racism was not chosen as one of the themes around which Seoul participants would enter into a covenant of solidarity and mutual commitment. However, during the Convocation itself, some participants successfully argued that racism should be added to the covenantal liturgy. As a result, the participants formed a covenant with one another in which they pledged to eradicate racism and discrimination on national and international levels for all people. They called for the “dismantling of the economic, political and social patterns of behaviour that perpetuate, and allow individuals to consciously and unconsciously perpetuate the sin of racism”.<sup>10</sup>

The voices of Seoul continued to echo strongly at the 1991 Canberra Assembly, which responded to racism with an increased sense of urgency. The Section II Report of the Assembly, which took up the challenge of working for racial justice, reads like a sober tour around the world citing numerous violations of racial justice affecting our societies. In many ways Canberra’s concern for racism was present everywhere, and yet there was no continuing systematic analysis of its root causes.

An important breakthrough regarding Indigenous Peoples was the Assembly recommendation that an Indigenous person be brought on staff with the WCC in order to represent the concerns of Indigenous Peoples and advise the Council. Responding to the quincentenary anniversary of Columbus’ arrival in the Americas, the Assembly noted that “Spirit of truth calls us to know and to tell the truth about our histories and to repent of racism in the past as well as in the present”.<sup>11</sup>

Subsequently, a decisive step towards action in the Council’s work with Indigenous Peoples was made. In the statement from the Assembly entitled “Move Beyond Words”, it was declared that “we realize that wounds that had their beginnings five hundred years ago, with invasion, conquest, colonization and missionary zeal will take time to heal.”<sup>12</sup> As a part of this healing process, through the Indigenous People’s Programme, the Council continued to vigorously support advocacy for Indigenous Peoples’ self-determination, human and land rights. This programme involves ensuring respect for Indigenous Peoples’ cultural heritage, and that their struggles and contributions are fully valued in the church and in wider society.

The priorities of the PCR have thus begun to expand to the concerns that arose in the late 1980s. In addition to advocating for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, PCR also defended the rights of the racially and ethnically oppressed minorities world-wide, including the Dalits, giving greater visibility to the phenomenon of caste-based discrimination, and also the recognized interconnections of race, gender and class, with a focus on women.

As a result of this expansion, the Women Under Racism Programme set up a network to raise the concerns of women of colour – *Sisters* –, to support them in their struggles and strengthen links between them, while generating solidarity. The *Sisters* network supports women of colour’s deepest aspirations for community, solidarity and justice.

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10. “World Convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Seoul, 5-12 March, 1990”. Final Document printed in “Between the Flood and the Rainbow”. Ed. By D. Preman Niles, Geneva: WCC, 1992, p. 189.

11. “Signs of the Spirit. Official Report of the VII General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Canberra, Australia, 7-20 February, 1991”. Ed. By Michael Kinnamon. Geneva: WCC, 1991, p. 246.

12. “Move Beyond Words: Statement on Indigenous Peoples and Land Rights” PCR Information No. 29, Assembly 1991: Reports and Statements Relating to PCR from the WCC VII Assembly, Canberra 1991. Geneva: WCC, 1991, p. 12.

In keeping with the mandate to identify with oppressed communities, the PCR commission decided to strengthen ties with the Dalits of India. The Dalit Solidarity Peoples is a movement in which the WCC has become a long-term partner. It has facilitated alliances between Dalits of all faiths, realizing that in order to achieve the just treatments of their communities, all Dalits have to be engaged. To this date, the movement has spread to over twenty states in India, indicating that the global community has begun to understand that Dalits' issues are as serious a violation of human rights as was Apartheid of South Africa, and should therefore be formidably confronted.

#### **Phase IV: Being Church, Overcoming Racism and Transformative Justice: 2000 -**

The struggle for racial justice has expanded to encompass, among others, the economic, migration and environmental dimensions of racism. However, it was the 2001 United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, which gave dramatic focus to the issues widely seen as fundamental in the struggle against racism. These include reparation and compensation for past deeds, such as slavery, slave trade and land dispossession. Several articles in the conference Declaration express strong condemnation for past and present deeds such as the slave trade, slavery and colonialism. Articles 99 and 100 express "profound regret for the massive human suffering and the tragic plight of millions of men, women and children caused by slavery, the slave trade, the transatlantic slave trade, apartheid, colonialism and genocide". A call is made to the "States concerned to honour the memory of the victims of past tragedies and that they must be condemned and their recurrence prevented"<sup>13</sup>. Further, note is taken that some states have taken the initiative to apologize and have<sup>14</sup> paid reparation, where appropriate, for grave and massive violations committed.

For churches, these issues also present a challenge. In an effort to interpret the implications of that challenge, a discussion paper entitled *Being Church and Overcoming Racism: It's time for Transformative Justice* was prepared and was object of plenary presentation and discussion at the Central Committee in 2002. Transformative Justice deals with the past in the present. Its goal is to overcome racism and to achieve healing, reconciliation and the re-establishment ("to put things right") of people's relationships, with a particular focus on *justice* to racially and ethnically oppressed peoples. Churches are asked to heed the call to continue their concrete solidarity with the racially oppressed, and face their **own** racism. It implies that churches must deal with the truth of the life and death wrongs that they themselves perpetrated in the past, against racially and ethnically oppressed peoples, as well as their acts of environmental racism. It is a call to search and reveal the realities of racism of the past and present, as expressed in assimilation policies, superiority myths, disrespect to the diversity of cultures and identities and disrespect to creation. Those are the issues at stake in the Transformative Justice debate..

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WCC has spent more than a decade widening the scope of its concern for the varying shades of racism. PCR's method of operation has been radical, in that it has always sought to get to the roots of institutional and structural inequalities. To seek partnerships for effective action remains a fundamental part of PCR method, through inviting representatives of oppressed peoples and communities to develop common strategies and present their voices in international fora. Once again, the churches are drawn into alliances with civil society. This process has been essential in identifying and documenting the experiences of racially oppressed peoples throughout the world.

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13. Declaration of the UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001, p. 17.