

MOZAIK

World Student Christian Federation
Europe Region Magazine 2/1992 ②



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articles concerning the current work of
WSCF and the SCMs.

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Contents

News

- 4 WSCF News
- 8 ERC News, Biographies
- 10 National Movement Reports

Contexts

- 12 Refugees and the Future of Europe: Berlin Conference
- 13 Whose Borders Anyway?: CEC Assembly
- 15 Life: Could Do Better?: Nordic Summer Meeting
- 16 Russian Days and Moscow Nights: SYNDESMOS Assembly

Feature

- 19 500 Años... ¿Y Ahora?
- 20 Remembering 1492 - On the Underside of History
- 21 I Come Like a Beggar
- 23 Looking 500 Years Ahead: Portugal Conference Preview
- 25 What Can Quito Tell Us?
- 25 Attacking the Fortress: Kairos Europe

Networks

- 27 Introduction
- 28 Networks Gazette
- 28 Programmatic Working Group
- 30 Latin Project
- 31 Publications Working Group
- 32 Eastern Europe Project

Blah, Blah, Blah

- 3 Editor's Letter: Time to Listen
- 34 The Who, What and Where of WSCF: Abbreviations Guide
- 34 *MOZAIK* Subscriptions
- 35 Address List
- 36 WSCF Gazette

Time to Listen

FOR FIVE centuries European nations have been in the import-export business. They have been importing textiles, foods, minerals, precious metals, which they needed to make them bigger and stronger, and latterly they have been importing people to keep them big and strong. They have been exporting themselves, and their armies, which conquered their way across the rest of the world, carving out dominions, pillaging and looting.

European powers built up strings of colonies around the world, and imposed legal and educational systems, languages, modes of dress. Even the 'world' systems, such as the United Nations, are of Western design.

For all this time Europe has been telling the world what to do and when to do it, who to fight and how, what to buy and where to but it - how to live. Western culture - a European-derived culture - now predominates. Western music, TV, 'food', can be found throughout the world. The 1914-18 European war became the 'First World War'. After so long when history was written in European universities, the culture of Europe has come to be seen, at least by Europeans, as advanced.

It was not always like this. Europeans were uncivilised savages compared to many in the Middle Ages. When the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean in the late 15th Century (using Arab navigation techniques) they were looked on with contempt by the cultivated Hindu princes and Muslim merchants. The Portuguese sailors were ashamed of the gifts their King had given them to present to the local rulers. When, later, the Dutch, English and French came, it

was only larger ships and better weaponry that allowed them to take over so completely.

Across the world aboriginal peoples were invaded, their cultures often wiped out and populations decimated. Lands regarded as *terra nullius* had new ways of life and religions forced upon them. One of the most horrific examples of this is the part played by European states in the history of Latin America, which forms the feature section of this MOZAIK, and on which two WSCF conferences are based. The first was in Quito, Ecuador, in April 1991, and a follow-up event will be held in Porto, Portugal, in February 1993.

Guilt is not a particularly useful emotion. There is no use in endless hand-wringing by Europeans over the guilt of five centuries, or indeed in constant complaint by non-Europeans over the injustices of the same period. Should I feel guilty that I write this in my native language, knowing that it is the one that most others will have to learn, and that this situation can be traced back to less than glorious episodes (of colonisation) in my country's history? No, but the uniqueness of the position, and the obligations it gives to reciprocate, should be recognised. Should I feel guilty as a European of my privileged position in the world, through my standard of living and lifestyle? Yes, if the continuing inequalities that I can attempt to rectify are not recognised, if I do not use power (political, communicational, even as a consumer) that the position gives me to try to make a difference. We do not have to feel guilty for the distant past, but we may have to for the present if it does not

spur us into action.

The real lesson that we in Europe must learn is a simple one. After so long telling the world what to do, making demands and imposing its will, Europe has not been much in the habit of listening to other people. Without an appreciation of other cultures, traditions, spiritualities, religions, we shall continue to have a distorted and therefore dangerous view of the world. Ours is only one perspective. There are many.

When we stop listening to people we stop seeing individuals and regard them only as members of groups, defined and categorised by external appearances and background. It means we lose a sense of reality, and that our opinions are formed by stereotypes. This is especially true in the Churches and organisations like WSCF which have a world-wide membership, and people from many cultures working along side each other. We need to maintain a balance.

It was having a euro-centric view that allowed states to divide up lands and peoples between them. It is a euro-centric view that allows Europe to burn its surplus food, restrict access to its markets and shut its gates. The Kairos Europe process, with which WSCF is connected and SCMs can become further involved, is a move in the direction of appreciating Europe's need to reassess.

It is time to appreciate that Europe is not alone in the world and that all peoples' voices have equal validity, all have an equal right to speak. And since Europe has been dictating to the world for so long, maybe we should shut up for a while.

MICHAEL FEAKES

newsfile

Reading the Signs of the Time

Major WSCF Consultation held at United Nations

THE HISTORIC changes in the world over the past few years led WSCF to organise an important consultation in New York, to promote informed analysis of the global situation. The collapse of many socialist regimes, the proclamation of the 'New World Order' and the Gulf War, were the backdrop for the meeting, held 8-14 April, one of the first discussions of the changes in international Christian circles. 25 participants came from 19 countries, representing each of WSCF's six Regions, and representatives were also present from other Christian organisations, including IYCS, WCC-Youth and YMCA. WSCF-Europe's delegates were Wlodek Misijuk, Eastern Europe Project staff member, and Ingrid Voll (ERC).

The programme of the consultation - organised by WSCF's Inter-Regional Office (IRO) and the Methodist Church of the US - took place in the Church Center for the United Nations, at the UN Plaza. General introductions to the international situation

and UN system, were followed by meetings with representatives from Churches and Church-related Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and discussion of their work. Participants were then briefed on the peace processes in Cambodia and El Salvador, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and developments in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Participants also visited local churches and community groups, to try to understand the link between US domestic and foreign policies. One group, 'Action for Community Empowerment' in Harlem, made a particularly strong impression with a suffering community situated in the same city as the headquarters of the whole UN system. The results of the discussions, and the reflections of Working Groups (on: post-Cold War politics; WSCF guidelines for UN involvement; and theological/ethical issues) were synthesised into a paper, the 'Conclusions of the Consultation'.

What did the consultation achieve?

"Bringing people together from the whole world, to spend time sharing their experiences and views, and acquiring new knowledge seems to me a successful way of working within the movement," said Ingrid Voll. The final paper tried to gather together the strands: "The formula of 'the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other' remains adequate. What we are looking for is not 'the' political guideline for WSCF, not only a place for concrete commitments and social praxis, but also an open agora, a space for open and daring conversations... 'Reading the signs of the time' means for us today to be ready to walk into troubled land." More directly, "The challenge for us, as a Northern region," said Ingrid, "might be how to deal with political, world-wide issues within our context. How can WSCF-Europe work with global perspectives? How can we, for example, meet the challenges from the Kairos Document?"

(*Available from WSCF IRO, Geneva.)

Ex-Co Cancelled

Visa Problems Blamed

THE ANNUAL meeting of WSCF's Executive Committee, due in July, was cancelled just before delegates were due to travel to take part on it. Ex-Co members from each of the Regions were to fly to El Salvador for the meeting, but difficulties with visas meant it was uncertain whether all would have been able to attend. In that context, with one, and possibly two, of the six Regions unrepresented, the IRO opted to postpone the meeting.

The decision to cancel the July meeting was taken even after some WSCF staff, including Europe Region Secretary Paula Saukkonen, had arrived in Central America. At short notice Salvador SCM put together an "excellent" programme of visits for them.

The Ex-Co was due to discuss *inter alia* the Centennial Fund: this is the plan to raise US\$1 million for WSCF by the time of the next General Assembly in Africa, which is in the year of WSCF's Centenary (1995). The meeting has been rescheduled for early next year, and will probably now take place in Venezuela or Ecuador.

EELLP: First Stage Complete

THE FIRST part of the Eastern Europe Language and Leadership Project, involving a series of English-language courses across the East of the Region, reached a successful conclusion in September. Hundreds of members of youth groups in Poland, Romania, Russia and Hungary attended classes taught by members of British SCM throughout the summer. The EELLP, which is coordinated by WSCF staff Becky Brannan in Swansea, will now move into its second stage, involving groups from Eastern Europe travelling to Britain in the summer of 1993, for the development of leadership techniques with British SCM.

The EELLP - organised by WSCF in cooperation with the EYCE and SYNDEMOS - is one of the first such projects of its kind. Its ambitious scale and ecumenical nature - involving students from Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox backgrounds - is attracting much interest from Churches and other organisations. The administ-

ration and organisations of nine youth camps and language courses in different towns across Europe was - notwithstanding the inevitable occasional hiccup - an impressive achievement. Wlodek Misijuk, WSCF Eastern Europe Project staff, who was involved in the coordination of some of the courses, commented, "We are allowed to celebrate... Questions concerning the process of preparation and organisation should come up in the evaluation meeting [in October], but we are still learning. I'm tempted to say that the project works and fulfils its expectations."

The 'teachers' from Britain (many of whom had no formal teaching qualifications) generally found the experience rewarding, both spiritually and culturally. In some cases the teaching was restricted to a few hours a day, but in others English became the 'living' language of the camps - used while washing up, shopping, etc. Further reports, p.32



EELP staff Wlodek Misijuk



Stewards at the CEC Assembly in Prague

CEC: the Velvet Assembly

THE 10TH Assembly of the Conferences of European Churches (CEC) took place in early September, in Prague. Over a thousand people - members of youth groups and delegates from member Churches, guests and visitors, stewards and staff, journalists and TV crews, and even a few Patriarches and Archbishops - gathered for the event, which is held every 6 or 7 years. The theme of the event was chosen in connection with the changes in Europe since the last Assembly, "God Unites: in Christ a New Creation".

There was a strong youth voice, with over 100 delegates, observers and stewards coming from WSCF, EYCE and SYNDEMOS.

Assembly report and reflection, p.13

EGGYS: latest

THE ECUMENICAL Global Gathering of Youth and Students (EGGYS), the 'world youth conference' due to take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in August next year, is continuing its lengthy preparatory stages. The event, of which WSCF is one of six co-organisers, envisions bringing together several hundred people for two weeks of cross-cultural discussion, activity and worship. Financial realities, however, led to the decision at a meeting in Rome (in May) to scale down the numbers of participants by 10%. WSCF now has 63 places, to be distributed among the Regions. Faint rumblings of discontent have been heard from deep within the European SCMs, over matters such as the requirement on them, despite long fund-raising, to pay all the travel and accommodation costs of their delegates.

Big E 93 Takes Off!

PREPARATIONS ARE speeding up for next year's large WSCF gathering of young people from across Europe. The Big E 93 (or Big Event), to be held at Woudschoten, Netherlands, 3-11 August, will bring together 300 members of the SCMs for a festival-conference under the overall theme, "Many Gifts, One Spirit!" There are two committees working on the event: the Thematic Committee, dealing with content, and the Hosting Committee, with practicalities. In addition, a full-time coordinator and fund-raiser, Michiel Dethmers, has now begun in the Amsterdam office.

The Thematic Committee met in April to start work on various parts of the Big E's content, and will meet again in November. There are many aspects to the theme, including ecological concerns, North-South dialogue and developmental justice. It also links in with the WCC Canberra Assembly theme, "Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation!" Initial plans are for each day to have a theme - such as 'Justice', 'Multi-religious Dialogue', etc. - with an 'Umbrella' day at the start and end to

open and round off the general theme. Participants will meet in 'Home-groups' throughout the event, where they will be able to reflect on their

experiences in a smaller group. The three official languages of the Big E 93 will be English, French and Russian.

WSCF-Europe's Working Groups and Networks will play a part, with the Programmatic Working Group and Women's Network currently confirmed to contribute, either with meetings or other input. The last Big E (Birmingham, 1989) gave the Region, and particularly Movements from the East, a big boost, and it the Big E 93, it is hoped, will do the same.



New Staff Join WSCF

THESE ARE busy times in WSCF-Europe's office in Amsterdam. As well as major building renovations, taking half the summer, some old staff have moved out and others have moved on, while new staff have moved in. Anyone ringing the office recently will have noticed a new voice answering the phone. It belongs to Corrie van der Ven, the new Administrative Assistant (AA), who previously worked for the Netherlands Missionary Council, editing a theological journal. Corrie currently works two days a week for WSCF, and will start to work four days a week in January. She had a baptism of fire in the job when she attended (and kept minutes at) the recent ERC meeting, having to cope with the usual barrage of arcane language, obscure projects and folklore that committees produce. The previous AA, Julius Duijts, left in June after two years' sterling service, to join Siemens Nixdorff in Munich.

Since the last MOZAIK (1/1992) Becky Brannan, after 18 months in Amsterdam nurturing the EELLP, has changed location. She is now based at an office in Swansea, Wales, from where she coordinated the language courses over the summer in Eastern Europe and is now preparing the leadership training next year. Negotiations are still 'proceeding' on the appointment of a Student Intern to join the

Amsterdam office, probably coming from Germany.

As part of the lead-up to the Big E 93, in August next year, a full-time coordinator has been appointed. Michiel Dethmers, formerly of the LOS (Dutch SCM), started in early September in the Amsterdam office, and will concentrate mainly on fund-raising for the event. He takes the post under a Government scheme as an alternative to compulsory military service, and it will continue to the end of 1993.

At its recent meeting the ERC received greetings from Julius Duijts in Germany, and in turn they expressed their gratitude to him for his work for the Region. Julius joined the staff of WSCF in 1990, after involvement as a student through the LOS, on the board of which he continued to serve until November last year. As AA he was responsible for running the office in Amsterdam, and he was instrumental in the reorganisation of the Region's finances (with Albrecht Kasper, Treasurer) and communications structures. He was also involved in the planning and preparation of a number of events, not least the ERA in Hirschluch and the Strasbourg Ecology conference last year. He was well-known in the National Movements, and on behalf of the Region MOZAIK sends good wishes to Julius for his job and his forthcoming marriage.

The Voice of Opposition in Serbia

AS THE suffering of innocents goes on in the former Yugoslavia, Serbian students have been organising against the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. The following letter was recently received in WSCF's office in Amsterdam:

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
Belgrade
Fax: (+38) 11 636 158
To: WSCF, Amsterdam

Dear Friends,

The students of Belgrade University are completing eight days of strikes. In the meantime, they were joined by the students from Novisad, Nis and Kragujevac, while in Pristina there was an open fight between those who wanted to join the student demonstrations and those militant nationalists who are supporting President Milosevic. The students of Serbia are protesting not only against Slobodan Milosevic, but also against the politics of war and hatred. They want to get rid of Milosevic, but they also want a constitutional parliament, which will call for free, genuinely democratic elections.

The students of Serbia are on their way to creating a broad movement for peace, against chauvinism and narrow-minded ethnic politics. They are under terrible pressure from militant nationalists and the official media [are] still controlled by Milosevic. They need all the support they can get.

I believe this movement is, for the first time, creating a real alternative to war politics and war logic. If this movement succeeds, it also has a good chance to stimulate similar anti-chauvinist, anti-militarist movements in other republics of the former Yugoslavia and the rest of the post-communist countries.

Please inform your public opinion about the last democratic chance Serbia has! Please, send your support to the students and organise solidarity actions and campaigns!

Sonia Licht
Co-chair, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Belgrade

WSCF's Solidarity Coordinator sent the following message in reply:

WSCF-Europe
Amsterdam
To: Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Belgrade

Dear Friends and Fellow Student!

It is with great joy that we, through your letter, have discovered the existence and struggle of Serbian students and citizens. Your striving for peaceful solutions to the on-going civil war, and democratic, constitutional future governing Serbia and the other former Yugoslav republics constitutes an avenue of hope for you in the midst of the suffering, and for us in fellow European countries.

We are constantly aware of the risks of regressing into nationalistic and anti-democratic lines of thought and action, when confronted with disintegration of the previous structures of the region. Furthermore, it seems that former power structures and individuals are trying to remain privileged in conflict with the true wishes of the people. It is of paramount importance that this development is met with articulate and prospective counter-actions.

We support your struggle, and believe that you will find elements for further community-building within the people of Serbia. We are also happy to learn that people from the Orthodox Church have joined the struggle. The ecumenical dialogue and the inter-faith dialogue can be important means of reconciliation. The European House will be a house of many tongues, religions and ethnic origins, and the dialogue must be confirmed and strengthened. And we must bear in mind that, across all diversity, first and foremost we are fellow human beings.

We will advise our European network of your situation, and your need for support and publicity, as we fully share your commitment. Please keep us informed as much as your resources allow.

I greet you all on behalf of WSCF-Europe

Frank Meier Sørensen,
Solidarity Coordinator, European Regional Committee

The Belgrade Branch of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly may be contacted directly on fax no: (+38) 11 638 158.

New General Secretary for British SCM

BRITISH SCM has a new General Secretary from this October. Helen Lidgett, previously with the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland as Executive Secretary for Education in Mission, takes over from the Rev Tim McClure, who is leaving after 10 years in the post. The appointment of Mrs Lidgett is significant for the Movement, since she is the first woman and the first lay person to become General Secretary in the Movement's 103 year history.

Mrs Lidgett, 48, studied at University College London, and subsequently had many years' experience of ecumenical work in the Churches. Her training in management will stand her in good stead for the immediate future in SCM, which is currently conducting a year-long review of its structures and work patterns. "SCM has recently re-established itself," said Mrs Lidgett, "as a lively and intelligent Christian presence on the British student scene. The time is now right to impress upon the Churches that a strong SCM is vital to their future, ecumenically, spiritually and intellectually."

Tim McClure, the out-going General Secretary, is a familiar name and face to many in WSCF. He joined British SCM in 1982, and under his stewardship, the Movement grew to a membership of 80 or so groups, with a regular programme of 12-15 conferences and events each year, and 10 other staff. A 'Surprise Farewell Party' was held at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, in early September, where many of Mr McClure's friends and colleagues gathered to mark the end of a decade in the service of SCM, and to wish him well in the future. He moves to lead the Ecumenical Social and Industrial Mission team in Bristol.

Homes from Home

. Preview of Ethnic Minorities Conference, Budapest

THE CONSEQUENCES of tensions and bitterness between members of different ethnic groups are currently being demonstrated savagely on large and small scales throughout South-East Europe (see letter, above). In North and West Europe too, more localised incidents of antagonism are increasing. Given this background, and the need to continue to analyse the issues raised by people from ethnic minorities living in Europe, WSCF-Europe will run a conference with this theme in Budapest, 23-30 October.

Involving about 40 participants from SCMs across Europe, mainly members of

ethnic minorities in their own countries, the conference will reflect on what makes an ethnic identity, and the aspects of assimilation and integration of a group into a society. It will also look at the roots of rejection, both of a majority group, and of a minority group to assimilate. It will relate the discussion to one of WSCF's main recent themes: the emergence of a multi-cultural society in the new Europe.

The preparatory committee - consisting of Andras Vetö (Hungarian SCM), Bernard Treves Brown (British SCM), Paula Saukonen (Regional Secretary), Yannis Zervos (EXON, Greece), and Tamás Fabiny and

Zsoltán Zsirmal, both pastors in the Hungarian Lutheran Church - met in late March in Budapest to visit locations (including a Lutheran seminary) and make other arrangements. Three main speakers at the event, will respectively give accounts of the situation of the Kurds, the Gypsies, and Muslims in Western Europe. Participants will share their own stories and experiences, and join one of four Working Groups producing a final report to the conference on specific issues. The film *Time of the Gypsies*, will also be shown.

(A report of the conference will appear in the next edition of *MOZAIK*.)

Lead, Kindly Light

Leadership Consultation for SCMs held in Chotebor

THE ANNUAL Consultation for the SCMs' Staff and Board members took place this year in early May in Chotebor, near Prague, and was attended by about 20 people from the SCMs. Participants came from half the Region's National Movements, with the usual heavy bias towards the North-Western SCMs, although travel subsidies had been offered to participants from Southern and Eastern Europe. The event was generally deemed fruitful, with the cross-cultural interchanges especially illuminating.

The general theme for the meeting was leadership training, which was developed by looking at particular topics each day and exchanging information and experience on them. Participants - who were from their SCMs' staff or boards, the ERC and Regional offices - were able to reflect on differing styles of leadership.

After each SCM had been introduced, and an account of its leadership programmes given, participants looked at the

issues of Commitment and Spirituality, and Professor Hajdzanek of Prague gave an address: he had been an activist in SCM in the 60s before it was closed down. There were many 'untraditional' methods used to explore the issues, rather than the more common ('heavy') lectures and talk, including simulation games, music and dancing, and, indeed, baking. Other issues addressed were Pastoral Care and Support - which proved a sensitive subject given the variety of cultural backgrounds - Strategy, and Relations to the Churches.

The staff and board consultations have come to be regarded as very productive occasions since their inception in 1990. As well as providing the opportunity for those running SCMs and WSCF to get to know each other personally, and facilitate closer contact and cooperation between their Movements, they allow the sharing of experience, expertise and advice on particular concerns that face them all. In the last couple of years WSCF-Europe has done a

lot of work on tightening up and improving its structures and resources, especially regarding finances and communications. Important parts of this process were the previous two Consultations in Woudschoten (NL), 1990, and Bièvres (F), 1991. This year's theme is part of WSCF's increasing involvement in leadership training, especially in the East of the Region. Preparations are already underway for next year's event, in May 1993, which has the theme of 'Ecumenism' and will be held in Wales.

Half-way through the Consultation the participants left Chotebor for a day-trip to Prague, full of boating and sight-seeing. A meeting had previously been arranged with the peacenik, playwright and president Vaclav Havel, but he cancelled at the last moment, preferring to meet a State visitor. Mr Havel, who resigned as president a few weeks later, was thus unfortunately unable to share the benefits of WSCF wisdom on leadership training.

SYNDESMOS Goes East

Historic Assembly took place in Holy Russia

THE WORLD Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, SYNDESMOS, held its XIV Assembly recently, in Russia, amid the rapid reopening of churches and monasteries with the ending of state suppression of the Russian Church. The 250 participants came from as far away as Korea, Ghana and America, for the meeting of the Fellowship, which is the only international Orthodox body, and one of WSCF's main partner organisations. The Assembly elected a new Executive Committee and set new priorities for the coming three years. The new theme will be, "Let your Light Shine before All People."

The Assembly, 1-8 June, was held on a boat sailing the Volga river. Participants visited local churches and monasteries along the way, some of which had just started to have services again after 70 years of communism. They also met local people, and some 'missionary' events were arranged to explain about the Assembly, the Fellowship and the tenets of Orthodoxy.

The Assembly agreed an ambitious budget and admitted many new groups. Officers were also chosen: the new President of SYNDESMOS is Fr. Heikki Hutunnen (SF), and the new full-time Secretary-General, based at the Secretariat in Paris, Alexander Belopopsky (GB). The commitment of SYNDESMOS to ecumenism and ecumenical activity was confirmed

at the Assembly, and for the first time, an Executive Committee member, Christos Christakis (G), was given special responsibility for ecumenical relations. SYNDESMOS has in the past few years had joint consultations with WSCF, met the EYCE,

participants in plenary session. Many informal discussions took place on ecumenism, and one of the Assembly Working Groups also considered SYNDESMOS's involvement in ecumenical work, resulting in a recommendation for further activity.

Włodzis Marjok



SYNDESMOS members distribute Church leaflets in Kostroma

and attended inter-secretariat meetings. And many of its members are taking part in the EELLF.

A number of WSCF people attended the Assembly, including the Chairperson, Marshal Fernando (Sri Lanka), who greeted the

The recent ERC meeting (Tinos, August 1992) also discussed WSCF-SYNDESMOS relations, and considered means of closer cooperation. The first development may be a joint consultation on ecumenism. Assembly report, p.16

ERC: Meeting, Talking, Swimming

THE EUROPEAN Regional Committee as currently constituted has now had two (or maybe three) meetings since the ERA in Hirschluch last year. What role does it have? It is intended to implement - as far as possible - recommendations concerning programmes, conferences and Working Groups, and generally to keep an eye on how the Region is getting along. The ERC is the employer of the Regional staff, and to some degree it is responsible for what the Region does. It is also an important link between the National Movement and the Regional levels of WSCF-Europe.

At each meeting the ERC receives reports from each of the Working Groups, Networks and Projects that run in WSCF and discusses their goals and working methods, and it is also supposed to receive reports from WSCF staff. It sets a budget

for the forthcoming six months, and makes long term plans about events.

Amsterdam, December 1991

Our first meeting took place one afternoon directly after the ERA, when we were all still slightly shell-shocked by the experience of being elected to the Committee. It was for the purpose of getting to know each other a little, and handing out a few immediate tasks. One of the privileges/onerous burdens of being on the ERC is that occasionally you are asked to attend inter-secretariat meetings, assemblies and conferences of other organisations, and so on, to 'represent' WSCF. Some members went to events just a few weeks after Hirschluch, when we were all still trying to understand what exactly this organisation we had just joined was. At these events they had to explain the same thing,

in public.

Four months after the ERA, we congregated in Amsterdam at the WSCF office. At that time, we had a slightly better idea of what WSCF was. But we were trying to decide what exactly we, personally, were doing on the committee. Who were we, anyway? Did we deserve to be there?

Why did everyone else seem to nod knowingly at the mention of names I had never heard of? What was the EECSS, or the ECB? What were the Hardanger Months? Who was Visser van 't Hooft, and where was he when I needed some helpful advice? Shouldn't there have been some sort of exam before you joined the ERC, just to test that you were knowledgeable enough to be there?

But the real test was more of a physical one. There was a large mountain to climb before the meeting, and it was made up of paper. Or, to be precise, reports. Several rain-forests seem to have been sacrificed for the good of WSCF reports, and all of them had to be chewed over before, or if not, during, the meeting. There was indigestion all round. I realise how important these reports are, and how necessary it is to be able to read up about something before having to discuss it, but it is still with some trepidation that I pull up my chair and get out my red pen.

Another physical requirement - in addition to a strong stomach - is stamina. To start with we began working to a fairly strict programme, with regular breaks and a finishing time that approached common sense. Towards the end though we were working silly hours, since we had to fit so much in. At half past eleven at night, when you have been working since half past nine that morning, you can think of one or two things that you would rather be doing than talking about the WSCF budget. In fact at that time you do not even want to talk about WSCF in any way, shape or form.

We had a rotating chairperson at the meetings (no jokes about spinning Susanas, please): each of us took a turn at chairing the sessions. The main business of the meeting consisted of setting up certain parts of WSCF's work. So we chose the members of Working Groups and Networks, from the people who had applied to join them, which entailed long debates about candidates' various qualifications, and the need to maintain balances: regional, confessional, gender.

The same process was undergone to find people for Preparatory Committees for conferences and the Big E 93. It was difficult to be objective: perhaps, since we came from different backgrounds and confessions (Lutheran, Anglican, Greek Orthodox, Methodist) we would, despite

Calming the Storm

IT IS no easy task to bring stability to the organised frenzy that reigns over the offices of the average hard-working international ecumenical organisation. But Corrie van der Ven took up the challenge in August, when she began as WSCF-Europe's new Administrative Assistant. Corrie - who, like her predecessor Julius Duijts, is Dutch - will be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the Amsterdam office and co-ordinating many of the Region's activities. She is taking over the role of "stable factor" in the office; she told *MOZAIK* shortly after starting the appointment. "My first official working day ended up on a terrace in Athens, with the Regional Secretary, the ERC Vice-chairperson and a bottle of retsina," she said. "This was a nice start for a stable factor."

Corrie studied Cultural Anthropology, and then went on to work for a Christian anti-apartheid movement which was the

mouth-piece for the churches in South Africa. "I got impressed by the South African churches whose radical thinking and acting are combined with a strong faith," she said. "And besides that, they laugh and dance far more than the average Dutch



WSCF's new AA:
Corrie van der Ven

Reformed Christian..." Later she moved on to the Netherlands Missionary Council, editing its mission review quarterly magazine, from which she comes to WSCF.

The manifold delights of international youth activity have been made apparent to her only fairly recently.

"As a student I was a member of an ecumenical student movement which was not connected with any international ecumenical movement, which I am now beginning to realise is a bit of a shame," she said. It was enjoyable though: "I spent a lot of time in discussion with radical Roman Catholics, pious Pentecostals, calculating Calvinists, and normal Protestants." (She counts herself among the latter.) The first taste of WSCF's inter-denominationalism came with the ERC in August. "After the meeting in Greece," she said, "I realised that ecumenism is a bit wider. I learned about the Orthodox Church, for example."

Corrie has recently moved out of Amsterdam to live in a small village just outside the capital called Warmond. This meant leaving "one of the most beautiful cities in the world". "It is," she said, "one of the consequences of being married to a pastor..."

ourselves, find some sort of balance. How could we not?

Other important work centred on the programme for the next six months. In general this was a preparatory, or introductory, meeting. We were feeling our way, and making plans.

Tinos, August 1992

Six months later, things had changed. The ERC had achieved something. Working Groups were working, Networks were networking and magazines were being read.

We met on a small island in the Aegean Sea. (Where else?) Tinos is the 'most religious' place in Greece, with many thousands of people making pilgrimage to the Church, often in penance or gratitude. A few days before we arrived was the Feast of the Assumption, and when our host, Andreas Agryopoulos, was showing us around the Church there were still some pilgrims there.

Such a lot seemed to have happened since the last meeting, we seemed to have come so far, that in general the ERC bounced with confidence. People felt far more confident of their position, having done something to 'justify' themselves in it. We had all represented WSCF at meetings, or organised events and conferences. It cannot be over-stated how much it helps to foster a feeling of responsibility and being involved at the top level, to go to a conference and represent the ERC or WSCF.

This time it did not matter that Visser van 't Hooft was not present. (In fact, it transpired that he had died shortly before the first meeting.) This time, no-one even mentioned the EECLPBDTPQR. All that counted was what we had been doing in WSCF and what we were planning to do.

That, and the occasional trip to the beach. We stayed together and talked together, ate together and drank together, and swam together. The feeling that developed was that of a group of friends with a common purpose, all mutually supportive. It is hard to break up a group of friends, and the moments when we have to depart for separate parts of Europe are getting harder. Eventually we will find it too difficult and will buy a house where we can all live forever.

The issues we discussed concerned WSCF's relations with other organisations, plans for the Big E, the tighter budget, regional differences in meeting styles, as well as the usual reports.

We had a new Administrative Assistant taking the minutes, a new Solidarity Coordinator taking the floor and the Vice-chairperson at his first meeting of this session (who sang operatic arias in the shower).

Grace and Power, eh?

MICHAEL FEAKES

Publications Coordinator, ERC



Our Man in Denmark

MOZAIK asked WSCF-Europe's new(ish) Solidarity Coordinator to come over and say Hi

"I HAVE been asked to talk about myself for a few lines, so I am forced to neglect my inherent modesty and let the superlatives flow in a gentle stream. I am male, still in my mid-twenties, 185 cm., I have a pulse rate at rest of 65 and am a party-smoker. (Which means I smoke quite a bit). At the moment, I am studying psychology at the University of Aarhus, but I have been around a bit in academic fields (This gives me a rather privileged position when playing *Trivial Pursuit*).

Apart from the mere technicalities, I have been involved in ecumenical student work at local and national level for some years. Having my first ecumenical experiences from the Student Congregation of Aarhus, which Council I have been chairing for some years, my starting point is the worship and in broader sense the church. Years ago, I probably wouldn't have been allowed to admit this without being accused of fierce conservatism. But today, this relation provides me with the experience of the minority - which is probably one of the most central Christian and human positions of existence. There is no doubt to my mind that over the next few decades the Churches of Europe will need to be led in this way of humiliation and marginalization, in order to know its task, its identity: for whom it was sent in the first place.

My international experiences include some Nordic events and projects. But to a Northerner, the North isn't that international. It's really just a couple of blocks away where they speak a little weird. My first real WSCF task was as Danish delegate to the Paris General Assembly 1990. And from there, things have been developing towards greater involvement. To quote Feakes (1992): The rest, as they say, is not

particularly interesting.

My present position on the European Regional Committee is as Solidarity Coordinator, and I will end up by making some short remarks on this work. First of all, I regard every member of our world-wide fellowship to be a "cell of solidarity" within the global body of the Movement and of the Church. That is, solidarity with the weaker is and should be a component of all our fields of work. This, however, implies, that solidarity is not "done" by appointing a coordinator working in isolation - rather this appointment should be integrated into the on-going projects of the European Region. One of my main tasks, in concrete terms, will thus be to support the Latin Project in preparing the Portugal Conference on the "500 years". Another line of development, which may prove to be prosperous, is the KAIROS-Europe. In this regard, I have just met Ulrich Duchrow. I can't help being impressed by activists who still, in 1992, dare to be charismatic, when everybody else out there calls for defeatism.

Another task, which the ERC has put on my tiny desk, is to initiate a process of listening to the other Regions of WSCF. That is, to open ourselves as Europeans to the signs and signals of the rest of the world, rather than to 'outspeak' them, as we have been doing down through history. Perhaps at a later stage, the MOZAIK reader will have the opportunity herself to engage in this process.

As goes for the rest of the ERC members, the Big E is on the top of the agenda for 1993. One of my responsibilities will be to remind us all of the larger project Europe is placed within, even when we gather as Europeans. We are all invited to God's Feast. That's what solidarity is all about."

'E' is for Everything

Meet the new WSCF staff member with responsibility for the Big E 93

"My name is Michiel Dethmers. For the last 7 years I have studied Computer Science in Enschede in the Netherlands, and during my studies I was involved in the local SCM for about 5 years. I started as an editor for the local newspaper, and, since in Enschede anyone who is a little bit active is asked to do more, I was also a member of the local student council very soon after this. Some years later I was a member of the local board and at the same time delegate to the national council of the SCM. The following year I was Chairperson in Enschede, but still involved in the national council.

I became enthusiastic about the whole ecumenical movement especially after I had gone to some international conferences via WSCF. Sometimes it is hard to keep up the struggle for justice you feel committed to, but feeling a bond to others in the world who are also struggling for the same goals gives the inspiration to go on. Therefore I joined the group of Dutch students who had started to organise the Big E 93 as a hosting committee, after the ERA had decided it should take place. The Big E will give a lot of students the opportunity to have these very same experiences, and to share them with others.

After finishing my studies I still had to do national service (in the Netherlands we have a compulsory army). I'm very glad that I've now got the job as a 'civil servant' at the WSCF office, because this way I can stay involved in organising the Big E.

Anyone goes to Amsterdam will fall in love with it. So I am trying very hard to find a room in Amsterdam, but this is extremely difficult. In the meantime I live in the same house as the AA, Corrie, in Warmond, so as she says we have a sort of Living Together Apart relationship. The atmosphere in the office is very pleasant, so I think we will manage living together as much as this."

Netherlands

Landelijk Overleg Studentengemeenten
National Council of Student Chaplaincies
SCM of the Netherlands

AMSTERDAM-LOS started the year 1992/93 with many new and great plans. We have never had a lack of brilliant ideas and at the moment we even seem to find the people to work on them.

At the national LOS Council meeting in September we decided to start a Working Group on education. Students seem to be trained for a profession nowadays, and not to be responsible thinking human beings. In some student chaplaincies students and chaplains have started to raise questions about this, and now we will try to work on it at a national level. For this project we will cooperate with the Dutch student unions.

The second larger project is the Ascension Day Conference. Last Spring the theme of this conference was "God or Gold", about 500 years' discovery of the Americas. The conference was attended by 60 people, some of them foreign students living in the Netherlands. We feel that the conference was a great success. The theme for the next conference will be inter-religious dialogue: surely not an easy subject, but challenging!

The third activity we are organising is a day about psalms for the choirs of local chaplaincies, in October. During this day we will sing psalms from the classical traditions (Schütz), the Jewish tradition and modern versions.

Last but not least, in March we are organising a Women's Day. Local chaplaincies used to have active women's

groups, but many of them have stopped their activities or are looking for new issues. With this Women's Day we are trying to reactivate them.

And of course, we are very busy preparing the Big E 93.

But then organising activities is not the only thing we do. Our main goal is to support and help students who are active on a local level, and to be a council for them. In this field we organise a course for local Board members and for publicity groups, and have regular meetings with a representatives of all local student chaplaincies. We serve more and more these days as a link between national church organisations and agencies and local chaplaincies.

At the September meeting we also elected a new Board. Marian Stuiver left it because she won't be in the Netherlands this year. René de Vries, our former Chairperson and Treasurer, also left the Board after a very long career in Dutch SCM. When he left he was praised for building the Movement, but he modestly said we should not over-estimate his role. We found a new Treasurer, Erica Euvig. The other members, Marian Hanrath, Marten Venema (in Brazil at the moment) and Michiel Dethmers (who has just started to work for WSCF) are still in place. At the moment, the whole board is involved in the preparation for the Big E 93.

JAN JAAP VAN OOSTERZEE

Great Britain

SCM of Great Britain

BIRMINGHAM-So, what's British SCM up to these days, then? Well, it's a time of change for us: there has been a big change of staff, with many moving on from SCM and new people taking over, and we are conducting a review of our whole structure and way of working, to find a way or responding to changes in Higher Education (and our income).

For as long as anyone can remember (and then some) the General Secretary of SCM has been Tim McClure, who is sometimes said to have led the Movement out of the Wilderness, and under whom it has grown in size and purpose to what it is today. He has now left the post, and his successor, Helen Lidgett, is the first layperson and first woman to be appointed to the job for 103 years (!). Helen's is one of five new appointments to the SCM staff

that were made over the summer. The new Secretary for Northern England is Nat Taplin, who takes up residence in the Manchester office; the new Co-Secretary for Southern England, in the London office, is Anna Crouch; and the new Publications and Resources Secretary, and editor of our rather good magazine *Movement*, is Michael Feakes, based in the Birmingham office. The new Scottish SCM Secretary is Shaji Thomas, who joins the staff directly from Indian SCM, and whose appointment is therefore a new and exciting departure for us.

So, those are all the new staff. We have also appointed a new WSCF Coordinator (a Contact Person for WSCF business in Britain) - the Secretary for Welsh SCM, Wayne Crocker. His job is to ensure that WSCF is well publicised in Britain, and

coordinate our dealings with the Federation.

The long-term changes in Higher Education taking place around Europe - nowhere less so than here - are causing us to look at our role, and even our 'mission to students', to see whether they should be updated. Courses - already short here - are being reduced in length, numbers are increasing (bringing students from wider age-ranges and backgrounds) and funding is being reduced. What does all this mean for SCM? We have set up a Working Party that will be considering the question. Over the year it will be taking various consultations, and will report with recommendations next March.

In April we held one of the most successful 'Congresses' for years, with 100 or so people discussing 'Science, Ethics and the Christian Faith' at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. It is not a subject on which people generally have an automatic 'position', and this probably led to many finding it both a refreshing change for SCM, and a real opportunity to learn. Most people came expecting more than endless arguments about Creation, and although it was easy to start with the idea that 'Christianity' and 'Science' describe the same world in different (not opposing) ways, for some one of the most worthwhile parts of the event was the inter-change between science-based students and arts students.

For a time Stephen Hawking's *Brief History of Time* was the trendiest book to have on the coffee-table (then on the top-shelf, then in the attic), and although it is unlikely that Richard Dawkins' *The Blind Watch-maker* and *The Selfish Gene* will follow it into the public consciousness, there does appear to be a definite perception that science is no longer just for people wearing white coats. Dawkins is better known in Britain for regularly questioning, in public, the existence of God, and so is obviously something of a mentor for some in SCM. His (other) theories came up for discussion at Congress, along with various voguish scientific concerns, such as quantum mechanics, medical ethics and 'alternative medicine'. Many seminars on these topics were conducted by students themselves, which contributed to the general "can-do" atmosphere. As well as being a Magical Mystery Tour of Science-World, the matter of the nefarious purposes to which scientific knowledge can be put was also touched upon. No-one actually said, "Anyone studying nuclear physics, leave the room immediately!", but the distinction between knowledge and practice, or research and use, was not easily appreciated by some.

Next year's Congress, 'Human Rites', will deal with modern interpretations of rites of passage, and will be held in Wales in April. Various conferences have been planned for this coming term. Scottish SCM will have three Third World-speak-

ers, giving 'Stories from the South'; Northern England looks at notions of priesthood; Welsh SCM's theme is 'Columbus 500'; and Central and Southern England will have a joint conference dealing with the morality of the media.

Although Britain has returned once again to sit glumly on the substitutes' bench of the European Community, here in SCM we are being outward-looking and positive,

and our involvement in the work of WSCF-Europe is increasing. For instance, the next Staff and Board Consultation is to be held here. It does sometimes seem as if we are swimming against the tide: as everyone knows, Britain is not 'part of Europe'. It used to be, but that was before the last Ice Age.

MICHAEL FEAKES

Sweden

Kristna Studentrörelsen i Sverige
KRISS
SCM of Sweden

UPPSALA-This Spring the Swedish SCM had a very international touch, with visitors from both South Africa and Israel/Palestine. It was valuable to us to be able to meet students from these countries. The two Palestinian women were students from the University of Bir-Seit, on the West Bank, and from the University of Haifa. For a week visited our local groups in Stockholm, Göteborg and Uppsala. They told us about the situation of being Christian Palestinians and how both women and Palestinians are counteracted at the University of Haifa.

We also arranged a weekend conference on 'theology in Palestine'. Reverend Naem Ateek from the Anglican Church in Jerusalem was one of the guests and he told us about Palestinian liberation theology. Other lectures presented the eschatology of the Christian pietism and its view on Israel as a state.

For almost a month two students from FEDSAC were our guests. Two of the South African Student Christian Movements, ACS (African Confederation of Students) and SUCA (Student Union for Christian Action) are now united in an umbrella organization called FEDSAC. Dawnat and Vernon covered a major part of Sweden and had a hard time working with information service in various SCM groups, student unions, schools and churches. Before our South African friends left behind the snow in Sweden the first plans were made for further exchanges. In August KRIS, together with many other Christian organisations, was one of the organisers of a JPIC meeting in Lund in the South of Sweden. During four days maybe 1000 people took part in workshops, seminars and services.

JOHAN WIKSTRÖM

Denmark

Kirketjenesten i Danmark
SCM of Denmark

ÅRHUS-Danish SCM has in general too little emphasis on activities at national level. Various local groups work rather isolated from each other. This doesn't mean that they do not develop their themes and concerns in dynamic ways; it's just not that coordinated. Thematically, groups have been working on solidarity, Europe and the Third World, ecology & development. However, a few events force us together. Every Winter we have our Roskilde-meeting (which is by the way held in Roskilde), and last time we had contributions from the Swedish theologian Per Frostin, who was simply fascinating. Unfortunately, he died of cancer this Summer, but the work he initiated - including a Nordic Institute of Contextual Theology - lingers on. Danske Kirkedage - Danish Church Day - held this Summer, is another major event, in which Kirketjenesten participate. Also this Summer, Den-

mark hosted the Nordic Summer Meeting (see report elsewhere), so we have been quite busy. (Our Movement has, along with other European Movements, adopted the dogma: If one person can do the work, who needs cooperation?)

In personal terms the Danish Movement is privileged to have the friendship of Anna Maria Aagaard, at present one of eight president of WCC and Peter Lodberg, member of WCC Executive Committee - friendships, which allow us with international inspiration from time to time. In organizational terms, we work closely with a range of ecumenical bodies, including the Danish Ecumenical Council, local ecumenical centres, Danish EYCE etc. Still to be explored are possibilities of cooperating with popular secular movements - which will become increasingly important.

FRANK MEIER SØRENSEN

THE ASYLUM policy of the various European governments stands at the centre of the current public debate going on in this continent. In the now united Germany, it seems to be hottest issue of the moment. Slogans like "Foreigners out!" versus "No expulsion of refugees!" decorate almost every street in the main German cities and are indicative of the controversy surrounding the issue. Thus there was every reason for the central organisation of the (East) German ESG to devote its annual international autumn conference to "The Europe of the Future in the Century of the Refugees".

Some 25 participants representing seven different countries had come to Berlin to learn about and discuss the following sub-topics: the reasons for people to leave

A joint WSCF/ESG Conference last December had the theme: "The Europe of the Future in the Century of Refugees". Jos Kofijberg looks at the issues surrounding the question

and has thus caused many people to leave their native region. What is needed is a system of prevention, rather than cure, such as the new UN 'early warning system'. They aim to detect as soon as possible if and where the conditions arise that will cause people to flee. It appears to

many Europeans. There is a psychological mechanism which means that people do not put the reason - and thus the solution - for this uncertainty with themselves, but with others, with foreigners. The government should use this insight and try to reduce the existential uncertainty of the

Refugees and the Future of Europe

their country, the legal constraints regarding immigration in Europe, the tension between segregation and assimilation, and the way we approach foreigners ourselves.

Causes of the refugee problem

As the first guest speaker, Mr. Robin Schneider of the Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research gave a very informative introduction on the refugee issue. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who, as a result of a well-founded fear of persecution because of his race, religion, nationality, his membership of a certain social group, or his political opinion, finds himself outside the country of which he possesses the nationality. As a social anthropologist, however, Mr Schneider adopted a less restrictive view towards the term 'refugee'. In addition to human rights violations, the main reasons for people to take to flight have been bad economic prospects, environmental degradation, and wars.

Since 1945, most wars have taken place in the so-called Third World. It is also there that the largest numbers of refugees can be found. According to Mr Schneider, the most fundamental cause of these wars is the present system of nation-states. This system has forced the indigenous people of Asia and Africa to live together within artificially created boundaries. They have been subjected to the authority of a state which is usually dominated by a particular ethnic or religious group. The non-recognition of this dominance by other groups has already given rise to many a bloody war,

be a very welcome document as it is based on prevention; legal instruments such as the refugee convention are concerned with people that have already fled.

European hospitality?

What about Europe? How hospitable are we vis-à-vis refugees? Since World War II, Europe has developed from an emigration towards an immigration continent. But are we really 'overflowed' by 'enormous numbers' of refugees, as the extreme and also the not-so-extreme Right want us to believe? In 1990, the FRG hosted some 150,000 refugees; by contrast, a Third World country like Pakistan had more than 3 million refugees within its borders! Though I do not intend to deny the recent growth in the number of people seeking asylum in the EC, these figures indicate that the situation in Europe is not as dramatic as many newspapers and politicians pretend. Yet, why are Europeans so unwilling to admit more foreigners into their countries?

In her lecture, psychologist Mrs. Ute Osterkamp of the Free University in Berlin strongly rejected the idea that hostility towards foreigners is a natural, innate characteristic of German/European people. She reproached the main political parties for fostering this idea. By restraining admission and locking refugees up in asylum centres, politicians are rewarding the violent anti-refugee activities of the neo-nazis. According to Mrs. Osterkamp, however, the real cause of the hostility is the existential uncertainty confronting

citizens. If hostility against foreigners is to be eliminated, it will be more fruitful to create jobs than to create tightly closed asylum centres, Mrs. Osterkamp explained.

Exchanging thoughts and experiences

In addition to lectures and discussions, the conference also included a thematic tour through Berlin. We visited the Technical University, where volunteers provided refuge to a group of fifty foreigners who had been mistreated by neo-nazis in the town of Hoyerswerda. In Kreuzberg, a Berlin district where one third of the population has a Turkish background, a visit was paid to a multi-cultural café for refugees. We also attended a solidarity party in a centre run by Turkish immigrants. There we had a chance to make contact with refugees themselves. This experience was not only very instructive, everybody really enjoyed it as well!

The 'refugee problem' appears to be quite encompassing and complex; three days of conferring are far too short to obtain a thorough insight. And yet, in addition to the luxury of having spent several days together in a remarkably good atmosphere, the conference has at least provided us with a greater awareness of the importance of the issue and the questions raised; for it is on the answers to these questions that the face of the Europe of the 21st Century will largely depend.

JOS KOFIJBERG
LOS
SCM of the Netherlands

Whose Borders Anyway?

Ruth Harvey reflects on her experiences as at the recent Assembly of the Council of European Churches in Prague

THE OLD Town Square in Prague is well known for buskers, a statue of Jan Huss, and magnificent architecture. On the evening of September 2nd this year, to mark the beginning of the 10th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), there were buskers of a different sort. A choir of 300 Czech and Slovak musicians assembled on the steps of the statue to sing folk songs from their respective countries. As the crowds assembled for the Opening Worship, cards were handed out to each participant by younger members of the Assembly. These cards contained on them a quotation from Genesis outlining the Babel story, and a message of hope for Europe. During the worship, each participant was to add their own message of hope, then exchange cards with neighbours whom they had not yet met. Many ended up with a card which had three different languages on it, none of which they understood. Yet the point of the act was to underline our common faith and hope rather than our uncommon languages. A living example of the theme of the Assembly "God Unites: In Christ a New Creation".

The Opening Worship acted as a symbol for the new Europe of blurred borders, where territory and nationhood is continually being realigned. In the Old Town Square of Prague not only were there no tanks; there was no cordon distinguishing worshippers from onlookers. No sign which said worship begins here, observers please stand back. And so the neighing of the horses from the tourist chariots provided a radical interjection; the jazz band playing vociferously in the background was part of the praise; the puzzled tourists received running commentaries from stewards; old ladies from Prague rubbed shoulders with the Patriarchs; and anyone who got bored could slouch off to a cafe.

Here was where the secular met the sacred, and no mistake.

The Assembly

So what was going on in Prague this September? Every 6 or 7 years, the Conference of European Churches (CEC), which is a body of all the main Reformed, Protestant and Orthodox churches in Europe (there is close cooperation with the Catholic church, but no joint membership yet), meets to review its work over the period since the last Assembly, and to set goals and policies for the work of the churches and of the secretariat (13 staff based in Geneva) over the period until the next Assembly.

In Prague this year, where the Assembly

find no unity, trust or love, God has made a startling offer of unity in the sacrifice of His son. The role model and challenge come in the same package. We are to overcome our differences, struggle to find what binds us together, and let go of the past in order to receive the new union in Christ. The Assembly was a manifestation of that struggle. "God Unites: In Christ a New Creation".

And so there were working groups, hearings, plenaries, discussion groups, worship and meals together, ceilidhs (the Scots organised three of them!), and coffee bars, trips to the town centre, trips to outlying congregations, visits from political and ecclesial noteries (the Archbishop of



The CEC Assembly Hall

took place for the first time in a former eastern bloc country, 300 delegates, and up to 700 members of the Press, visitors, observers, staff, delegated representatives and local church members, along with 80 stewards and 20 members of a youth monitoring group met. It was quite an event.

The theme had been chosen in view of the changes in Europe. Where humans can

Canterbury flew in and out again), and, eventually, piles of papers including some quite radical statements on racism, xenophobia, interfaith dialogue and poverty.

Youth and Steward Programme

My role as coopted staff working with the youth delegates and stewards meant that I did not have the opportunity to engage in the detail of the big debate. I did witness though the growing together of a group of

Youth Greetings to the CEC 10th Assembly

Greetings to you on behalf of the youth at this Assembly. We greet you as a community of young people who have been living, working and worshipping together for 10 days. We greet you from all parts of Europe and beyond. From Iceland in the north to Malta in the south; from Ireland in the west to Turkey in the east; and from Kenya, Nigeria, Australia and the United States of America. We greet you as members of the main Christian denominations: Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant. We greet you as members of the World Student Christian Federation, the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe, SYNDESMOS, the youth and student organisations which have been working with the CEC over the last 2 years to plan the youth and steward operation of this Assembly.

Young people have been at the heart of many of the dramatic events which have swept through Europe in the last three years.

Young people continue to find themselves on the frontline of war, poverty, unemployment, recession, drug addiction and prostitution.

It is part of our vision that before you leave here you will commit yourselves to four things:

1. to the promotion of youth participation in all gatherings of your churches;
2. to the continued integration of the gifts of youth and age within your churches, including the empowerment of youth and the implementation of youth training schemes;
3. to awareness raising of the issues and concerns of young people in Europe today: for example youth in conflict situations, unemployment, AIDS, drug addiction, loneliness, prostitution, poverty;
4. to meeting and talking with at least three young people at this Assembly.

It is often said that youth are the future of the church. We would like to correct this partial truth and claim that youth are the present of the Church. We look forward to working together with you to make this a living reality in our churches today.

young European Christians from as far apart as Iceland, Ireland, Turkey and Malta; and the sharing of insights and visions from beyond the many divisions and borders that disunite Europe.

For three days before the Assembly began, 80 stewards and 10 youth delegates met to prepare for the Assembly. At a gathering such as this it is almost impossible to find any young people who have previous experience to go on: the young folk with us in Prague would have had an average age of 14 at the last Assembly. So we went through a process of getting to know each other and of introducing ourselves to the procedure of the Assembly as

well as to the issues and debates that were on the agenda.

The Youth and Steward Orientation Programme (YSOP) had been jointly coordinated by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE), WSCF Europe, SYNDESMOS (the Orthodox Youth Fellowship) and CEC. The two year process leading up to the YSOP had been a venture in building trust and cooperation between the organisations as well as using talents and experiences to provide the best possible training for youth and stewards at the Assembly.

The timetable for the YSOP included community building exercises: and so we created a map of Europe on the floor with each person standing where their country was. A woman from Transylvania was locked between the Romanians and the Hungarians. The Estonians proudly showed off their new currency as they took their place across the sea from Finland. The Czechs and Slovaks built a tentative line between their two states. The Turk expressed his anguish at being a Greek in a country divided by Islam and Christianity. Three Kenyans and one Nigerian studying in Prague took their place to the south of the Maltese. More blurred borders appeared as we realised that boundaries do not constitute identity; that national pride and religious allegiance can often clash. The plight of Bosnians, Serbs, Croats and Muslims was in our minds and our prayers.

One young woman from Moscow, expressing her hopes for the Assembly, said that she had come with no experiences to share, she only wanted to receive from western experience. In a Europe which promotes the capitalist, monetarist cause as the only viable option this view is not hard to understand. Yet so difficult to accept when we begin to explore the riches of her culture, her tradition, her history, her experience. What value do we place these days on eastern philosophy and history? Joint WSCF/EYCE projects such as the Language and Leadership Training Project must tackle this fallacy that western styles of leadership are the only way forward.

As with any such event, it was the relationships and the discussions in the small bistros, at the ceilidhs, during the trips to the city that will create the lasting memories.

What the youth programme aimed to do

was to highlight the issues that are of concern to young people. We did this by giving a five minute greeting to the Assembly (see panel). We did this by planning a Youth Hearing which used drama, song and breathing exercises to share with delegates the issues of concern to us. We did this by supporting an EYCE initiative to have a Monitoring Group of 20 young people who sat in plenaries and discussions, then ran a self-funded coffee bar to share views and opinions with



Ruth Harvey at the Assembly

delegates.

Blurring Borders?

I mentioned that blurred borders was a second theme at the Assembly. At the beginning of the Assembly it was clear which stewards had come from within which youth or student network. By the end the EYCE/WSCF/SYNDESMOS labels had diminished and a deeper unity had been established. At the beginning we had been 100 young people awaiting the arrival of the "grownups". By the end we had made friends across age boundaries. During an EYCE executive meeting which took place while we were in Prague there was a discussion about the inclusion of a map of Europe in the next EYCE handbook. It became clear that no map, except for one showing only the boundary of Europe itself, would be adequate to describe the everevolving situation. There will be no map in the next handbook. At the moment there are too many unknown factors in Europe's borders.

Continued on p.33

This year it was Denmark's turn to host the Nordic Summer Meeting, with the theme, "The Good Life". It was the usual mix of art, beer and eco-philosophy, reports Frank Meier Sørensen



Life: Could Do Better?

FROM THE 1st to the 8th of August, 1992, Denmark hosted the notorious Nordic Summer Meeting, with participants from Norway, Sweden, Suomi-Finland and Denmark. Furthermore, we were honoured by the presence of a Greek guest, Stelios, who was quite a gain for us first and foremost by his warm, social way of being, but also for the international perspective, we have been trying to bring the meeting into.

Thematically speaking, we covered a range of issues. One of our own WSCF members, student of theology Ellen Aagaard Rasmussen, gave us a very dedicated input on Spirituality. An input, which provided the theological and philosophical frame for the conference as a whole. It is of great importance that our interest in questions like ecology, economy and peace origins in an articulated reflection on the basis - a basis which in this case is the Christian faith.

We also met a Norwegian so-called eco-philosopher, Sigmund Kvaløey Sæteringen, who provided a glimpse of a different approach to these questions. The input had a basis in Far-Eastern religious and philosophical thinking, but was applied in a rural Norwegian context. It had a controversial form as well as substance which started an intense debate on the conflict between western industrial

way of life and the true needs of humanity.

Later we met the former Chairperson and MP of the Danish Communist Party, Ole Sohn, now a socialist. He also formulated a critique of the Western European way of life, with its emphasis on growth and consumption. However, his views today were more flexible and less categorical than a few years ago. It was interesting to meet a person who himself had been changed and challenged by the course of history, especially the late 80's.

As the last input, Christian Kelm-Hansen, former MP for the Danish Social Democrats, and ex-President of the Danish Governmental Aid Programme, shared with us his 50 years of involvement in international developmental work. His major point was the observation that the rationale for development and aid is shifting now from a humanistic/Christian basis to a security-political basis. And the various possibilities and pitfalls this might create.

Apart from the strictly academic inputs, Anne Marit Waadé from our own Movement provided the participants with the chance to work creatively on the theme, an option which was very popular. The absolute climax occurred on the last night, when a dadaistic (even this is debatable!) and very impressive multi-art installation

was launched.

The social component is of course essential to the general success, but provided with sufficient food, beer and Danish summer, this worked out rather automatically. And perhaps even a number of more permanent *duadic links* were grounded at this occasion. Some links, however, might do with some further elaborations at next year's stand in for the Summer Meeting: BIG E 93 in the Netherlands.

In sum, I would not hesitate to say that the conference in no way disappointed expectations. As mentioned above, the Greek participation especially made us aware of the dangers of falling into a Nordic isolationism, an isolationism towards Europe, but also towards a more global consciousness. Hopefully, future Nordic Summer Meetings will develop towards even more openness and hospitality across not only Nordic borderlines. And hopefully, future Summer Meetings will pay even more attention to the question found on the international, ecumenical agenda. An agenda containing sufferings and hopes, both of which sometimes tend to be under-estimated in our good, Nordic life...

FRANK MEIER SØRENSEN
Kirkentjenesten i Danmark

SYNDESMOS held its XIV Assembly in Russia, the land of new freedoms for both traditional and modern Churches. In a time of growth for the organisation (with membership doubling in recent years), there are many challenges ahead.

Michael Feakes was there

Russian Days and Moscow Nights

FOR A few days in early June there was a large cruise ship chugging up the River Volga, north of Moscow, into the heart of Russia. On board were young Orthodox from around the world, gathered for the triennial Assembly of SYNDESMOS, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth. The

those 'total immersion' experiences, where for a time you see, hear and think of nothing but the new, exciting and completely different people and environment around you. The week seemed like a month, and I came back with the feeling that several more of the many kingdoms of

pants came from far and wide: they were mainly from Russia and Greece - the centres of Orthodoxy - and other parts of East Europe, and there were descendents of Russian and Greek immigrants from the United States, France and Britain; there were numerous delegates from the Orthodox communities of the Middle East, and some from India; and there were also converts from places not traditionally Orthodox, eg. West Africa, Korea, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

One important difference from WSCF events is the obvious involvement of clergy: there were five bishops, and at least 30 other priests. This is not a surprise, given the looser definition of 'youth' in SYNDESMOS, and that the organisation sees itself (as does any Orthodox group) as part of 'the Church', in its broader sense. Orthodox in general are less overtly critical of institutions in the Church than Protestants, although it was a new thing for me, with a background in Protestant-biased Movements, to see the influence the clergy had.

The Assembly was divided into stages: the official opening and introductory speeches, the Assembly business (reports and elections), and the reports of Committees. The official opening took place in Moscow itself with the Divine Liturgy conducted by the Russian Patriarch, His Holiness Alexis II. Back on the boat key-note speeches were given by His Eminence Kyrril, Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, and His Grace Moussa, Coptic Bishop of Youth, on the theme of the last triennium for SYNDESMOS, 'For the Life of the World'.

Reports were received from outgoing officers on the last three years' work. The



The Russian Church: On the March

innovative choice of conference venue allowed participants to visit several important towns along the river, and see their newly-opened Churches. Just a few months before, this sort of meeting would have been impossible in Russia, and the historic nature of the occasion was felt by all who there.

I was there to represent WSCF, and also attending were Susanna Argyri, Chairperson of the ERC, and another WSCF face, Marshal Fernando, the Chairperson of the whole Federation. For me it was one of

the world had been shown to me (if you get my meaning). I discovered, as a Protestant, more of what it means to be Orthodox, and some others there found out more about ecumenism. It was a dazzling, spell-binding and horizon-broadening experience. In fact, it was several experiences.

The Assembly Experience

There were 250 people at the Assembly, which is the SYNDESMOS equivalent of WSCF's General Assembly, and elects officers, decides overall themes, etc. Partici-

"Flew in from Miami Beach..."

It started badly. Before I left England, I went to the Russian consulate in London to apply for a visa. There was a long queue of hot, tired people snaking down the road, and I asked the man at the end if it was the queue for visas. He was an American businessman, with the insouciance of someone who made the trip all the time, and he confirmed that it was the right one. "But it's not moving..." I said. He smiled: "Welcome to Russia!"

Actually this clichéd view of Russia was not borne out by reality. The only real hanging around on the trip was a three hour stop on arrival at Moscow Airport, while we waited for a bus to take us to the river port where the boat was docked. The boat stayed in Moscow overnight, and the next morning set off up the Volga. We returned to the capital at the end of the week, and had a short time to look around. I found myself walking round Moscow in the company of a priest from Korea, in full Orthodox clergy dress. (Ah, the ecumenical life!) We navigated the metro, gazed in wonder at the splendour of many of the buildings, looked grimly at the drab, grey uniformity of much of the rest. We paraded through Red Square, saluted the Kremlin and laughed with delight at the glorious folly of St Basil's Cathedral. And I got a chance to go into Lenin's tomb, to see the great man looking waxy and white. (Get more sun, Vlad.)

Free enterprise has arrived in Moscow in a big way. All along certain streets there were people with market stalls selling touristy things: chess sets, Gorbys memorabilia, wooden ornaments of every shape and size, and endless variations of Matryoshka dolls - the traditional Babushkas, but also celebrities and politi-

cians, from Lenin to Yeltsin, with some including Reagan and Bush, and even John Major (who he?). I went into a few 'Russian' shops too: not empty, by any means, just very expensive for most Muscovites. We visitors were uncomfortably rich: for years the rouble was artificially sustained, at an rate of about R1.5=US\$1, but now things are freer and the rate is more like R100 to the dollar.

Outside Moscow we visited other, smaller towns

boat whenever we put in somewhere, who generally wanted to sell us something - even their icons, some of the participants were upset to discover. They were usually teenage boys, who were quite friendly and chatty in their good-humoured sales patter. Sometimes someone would hand out to them the Church literature that had been brought for missionary purposes, and occasionally they would try to sell the books back to other participants. The World



Some were more interested in icons than others

along the river, mainly to visit historic churches and monasteries. Our chances of touring the places themselves were limited, and it was a frustration felt by many at the Assembly that the programme was so full there just was not time to look around the towns, or come into informal contact with local people. We were taken from ship to Church and back again by bus, and because everyone was so interested in seeing more of Russia, we were all pointing and staring out of the windows like visitors to a Wildlife Park; time for a gentle meander would have been very useful. The only people we got to meet were those attracted to the

Bank would doubtless be proud of such enterprise.

As the ship cruised along we would see old churches on the river bank, hundreds and hundreds of them, sometimes near villages, sometimes standing alone. It brought home how much a part of the Russian national character the Church is, or at least, was, since most churches have been closed and neglected for 70 years. We went north up the Volga where it grows to two or three kilometres wide in places and links up with the lakes of the northern steppes, with pine forests spreading out to the horizon in all directions. This was the heart of Holy Russia.

President, Michel Nseir, in a challenging address, stressed the importance of unity, dialogue with other faiths, and the Church facing up to the modern, and post-modern world. The Secretary-General, Anu Talvi-vaaara, talked of the increased activity in the Fellowship, and the continued problems of funding. She called on the priests and bishops present to use their influence to help SYNDESMOS financially.

Towards the end of the Assembly a new Executive Committee was chosen, for the next triennium. The election process occurs in a slightly different way than in WSCF, instructive of a difference in the ethos of the two organisations. Throughout the week a group met to choose the new Committee, and then presented it, complete, to the Assembly, with one person selected for each post. The new Committee was duly approved, and there was none of the nail-biting election of individuals, as in WSCF. The Committee was selected to reflect the geographical balance of SYNDESMOS (although not the gender balance - only one woman was selected). I was heartened to see, however, that despite the goal of unity in the selection of Committee members, there was still some old-fashioned politicking, and huddled conversations in dark corners. It is good to see the old Church traditions being continued today.

The Assembly divided into six groups which met several times throughout the Assembly to discuss particular issues relating to SYNDESMOS. I went to the one on Ecumenism (of course), which attracted a sizeable, mostly sceptical, group. For some Orthodox, 'ecumenism' is a dirty word, just as it is for some Catholics and Protestants. It is often demonised, and a great mythology has built up around it. Most people at the Assembly assumed I was Orthodox - until I confessed, when they wondered why I had come. When I explained that I was an agent provocateur from WSCF, trying to convert people to ecumenism, they reacted sometimes with surprise, often with bewilderment, occasionally with coolness.

There were observers there from other non-Orthodox bodies, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC)-Youth Desk and the Lutheran World Federation, and sometimes I felt a real 'bond of unity in adversity' with them. It was quite common for a participant not to have considered what ecumenism is, and I had many conversations on what WSCF is and does, about my own Church and the situation in my own country, and so on. I also learned a great deal, as I shall explain below. It is true to say that the less experienced a participant was, and (generally) the younger he or she was, the less he or she liked the idea of involvement with other Churches and other youth groups. (There was some consternation when it was revealed in the Secretary-General's report that two thirds of SYNDESMOS's income



SYNDESMOS Assembly in plenary session

comes from ecumenical sources.) Some participants seemed unaware of SYNDESMOS's present involvement in ecumenical activity, and of its constitutional commitment to further links with other Christians. Members of SYNDESMOS who have been involved for a long time and especially its officers and committee members (one of whom found Orthodoxy through WSCF!) were far more favourably inclined. Some had connections with the WCC, or had taken part in WSCF events or consultations. There is nothing startling in this - it is quite a common pattern - but it was refreshing to talk to people (who were in positions of influence and who made the decisions) who recognised that we probably have more in common than divides us, after the head-banging-against-the-wall frustration of talking to others who did not recognise anyone other than Orthodox as Christian in any real sense. I put this down to the positive and beneficial effects of involvement in ecumenical activity.

Each discussion group presented a final report and recommendation to the Assembly, and questions were taken and amendments suggested. They were then voted on and taken by the new Committee as a guide for their work over the next three years. The Ecumenical group that I had been in suggested in their report (presented, strangely, by the Chairperson of the ERC of WSCF) that SYNDESMOS continue its increasing ecumenical involvement: it has had joint consultations with WSCF, met with EYCE, it attended the recent inter-secretariat meeting, and is involved with the EELLP. The report recommended wider publicity of its ecumenical activity through *SYNDESMOS News*, and circulation of previous papers on ecumenism, and another consultation. Some spoke from the floor in opposition to this, saying ecumenism should not be a priority; others were in favour, citing local examples of cooperation on common problems between people of different faiths. Another recommendation was to have an Executive Com-

mittee member with a special responsibility for ecumenical relations, and one was later chosen: Christos Christakis, from Greece.

The SYNDESMOS Experience

The Fellowship takes its name from the Greek for 'bond of unity' (syn-des-mos), and is one the main means of young Orthodox around the world being in contact with each other: it is the only international Orthodox organisation. It is made up of local youth groups within Churches and theological colleges, and has been in existence since 1953, although it has started to expand rapidly only in the last few years. One of the important issues for SYNDESMOS at the Assembly and for the future, was how far it can grow given its present structure and finances: it took on



Music and laughter, Russian-style

27 at this Assembly alone, making a total of 74, with no real change in how it is run. There was a strong feeling at the Assembly that the growth was very healthy, and should be encouraged, and there was a determination to find new sources of income, particularly from the richer countries. A full-time Secretary-General was

appointed, and an ambitious budget and programme agreed. SYNDESMOS is moving up a gear.

An important part of the Assembly was missionary work. It has recently been legalised in Russia - which is one reason why the Assembly was held there - and the Church is trying, after 70 years of official atheism, to 'reclaim' its lost sheep. At each of the towns we stopped at, a meeting had been arranged with local people. There were speeches of introduction from local priests and bishops, and then Alexander Belopopsky (the soon-to-be-elected Secretary-General) would give a talk, as a Russian-speaker, saying that we had all come from far away, as members of the same Church as their ancestors had belonged to, and that, Yes, young people could be believers too. After the whetting of appetites, the feeding: the distribution of Church texts, Christian literature, and icons, all of which are in short supply in Russia.

These events were no doubt a good Christian witness, but some of the participants I talked to had ambivalent feelings about them. Perhaps in the West we are now unused to seeing missionary work in the raw, or there are too many bad associations with anything approaching demagoguery. It seemed to me that some of the clergy in particular had almost a crusading fervour. In one town, Yaroslavl, we met some students and lecturers from the university: one priest from the Assembly was angry with the former for not believing and the latter for not having a large enough theology faculty.

SYNDESMOS could only ever exist as part of the Church. This means that WSCF, and similar organisations which have less direct Church connections, are immediately unusual, and, perhaps, things to be wary of, for Orthodox. SYNDESMOS is in some ways the avant garde of Orthodoxy, but still within the framework of its place within the Church. It is misleading to compare WSCF with SYNDESMOS, although easy to do so sometimes, given that there are similarities. Whereas it is hard to imagine WSCF staging a similar missionary event to those of the Assembly, for SYNDESMOS it is a part of being in the Church. When I mentioned to someone that there was little discussion of socio-political ('secular') issues, my own agenda was laid bare for me by caricature: "What, so you think there should be working groups on Green issues, and feminism, and relationships?" It was hard to imagine SYNDESMOS tackling these issues in the near future. And in that context it seemed right: we are all concerned most about what confronts us immediately, and for SYNDESMOS it is the growth of the Church, the march of the prosyletisers and the Uniates. If WSCF does not recognise that, it will never fully represent its Orthodox members.

Continued on p.33

500 Años... ¿Y Ahora?

The theme of this edition of *MOZAIK* focuses on the anniversary of the landing of Europeans in the Americas, and its symbolic coincidence with the year in which 12 European nations try to turn bind themselves closer together: 500 years after Europeans started to expand across the world, conquering and exploiting other lands and peoples, the walls of a 'fortress' are being constructed around part of Europe, meaning those same lands and peoples are being shut out.

THERE IS little to celebrate. It is a dark and bloody anniversary. After centuries of plunder there should be no need to point out the debt owed, the wrongs that were done, the sins that were committed.

That Spain and other European countries were able to grow richer and more powerful through the silver and gold of Latin America, and that in that same continent now live some of the world's poorest people, is an historic injustice. The destruction wreaked upon the indigenous cultures and civilisations, the virtual slaughter of millions of people, and the aggressive religious proselytising, were all on a scale still difficult to comprehend.

"Almost 500 years ago, the 'white man' reached American lands. Upon their arrival they found highly developed civilisations, numerous populations, organised communities, economies that guaranteed the satisfaction of their needs and highly structured religions.

This event of universal dimensions would eventually become - with the development of colonisations - the greatest tragedy in the history of humanity, which continues until today.

The indigenous nations were brutally massacred; entire peoples disappeared forever from the face of the earth, victims of the diseases brought by whites, victims of slavery, forced labour and confrontations with the colonisers. The indigenous population was tragically decimated.

The political structures were changed for the implantation of the colonial states. Likewise, the close relationship the indigenous peoples had with the Mother Earth as a source of life was violently attacked. Their lands were invaded. They were forced to modify their system of crops. They were forced to flee. They began to be foreigners in their own land.

The indigenous peoples additionally suffered the assault of a market economy.

centred on individual profit, which destroyed their harmonious relation with nature and work.

The Colony imposed a new culture, a new history, a new language, a new religion.

All these forces that disintegrated the indigenous people did not disappear with the emancipation of the Latin America people, but rather have been repeated under different disguises until today.

The colonisation that took place in the past became a neo-colonisation, with even more refined and purified methods of exploitation.

All this leads to the fact that, at the doors of the 21st Century, the indigenous peoples have before them a future burdened with challenges."

(WSCF-Europe-Latin America/Caribbean Encounter Study Document, 1991)

It is time to recognise the past, and plan for the future: '500 years - and what now?'

Remembering 1492

The love of God and Gold took Columbus to the Americas, and his legacy remains today. Bede Smith tells a continuing story of violence, slavery and oppression

On the Underside of History

THE HISTORY of the Americas, which we are celebrating with the Quincentennial Celebration of 1992, has a hidden side. Millions of indigenous peoples of both continents of the Americas died of violence, disease, or starvation as a result of colonisation. To replace the losses, slaves were also brought from Africa. If the story of Columbus is to be retold, it must be done from this more complete perspective 'from the underside'.

Beginnings

The adventurers went out with a blessing to extend the gospel to the New World. Columbus himself was led, or driven, by a combined obsession to exploit the riches and Christianise the new world. Pope Alexander VI, who divided the continent of Latin America by a vertical line that awarded the western part of Spain and the eastern part to Portugal, issued a decree: "The Catholic faith and Christian religion, especially in our times, shall be exalted, broadened and spread in every part of the world, salvation shall be sought for all souls, barbarian nations shall be subdued and led back to the faith."

The Spanish crown was extended throughout the land. Adventurers hoped to attain the recognition and reward of the crown for the risks they were taking. Their search for gold left a river of blood and the bodies of native Americans. The three Gs - God, Gold and Glory - formed such a unified vision that they became a unity. The result was cruel destruction and oppression of the people on whose soil they trod. When Bartolome de las Casas rose to defend the Indian before the Spanish Court, he estimated that 50 million Indians had perished in Latin America within 50 years of Columbus' landing. Scholars now reckon that 90% of the indigenous population of the Americas was wiped out in a century and a half.

In North America, the native population

who did not die from imported diseases was driven west before the advancing wave, and new lands were carved out where their tracks were still fresh. While Indians died of starvation, Buffalo Bill Cody prided himself on having killed 4280 buffalos in 18 months. Finally, when no more room was left, the native American virtually disappeared from the scene. In Latin America, the Spanish either subjugated or destroyed the indigenous populations and cultures. In North America the labour of Indians was not needed, and so they were pushed off. In Latin America, their sweat and blood was useful for gouging the land of its riches. Temples

the profits taken increased. One wave of exploitation was followed by another: after minerals came the exploitation of agricultural products, copper, sugar, bananas, meat and wood. Even fertiliser for the fields of Europe was supplied by the nitrogen-rich guano of sea birds of the coast of Peru and Chile. The colour of gold turned from yellow to black, as petroleum joined the list of exported wealth. After the movements of national independence in the early 1800s, the colonial powers of Spain and Portugal were replaced by the new imperial powers of England and Holland and the rising power of the United States. The US, along with multina-



—Pregunta si nos vamos a quedar mucho tiempo...

'He wants to know if we're going to stay long...'

were stripped of their gold and razed so that Christian churches could be built on the foundations. Slave labour systems made Indians burrow under the mountains of Bolivia until they collapsed. After the stores of silver and gold had been creamed from the earth, other mineral wealth like copper and tin, manganese and aluminium was taken. As native population decreased,

tionals, is the latest wave.

The growing slave trade

When native American labour proved weak and susceptible to disease, reinforcements came from Africa. Slave trade began with the 'discovery'. Columbus brought 500 Indians back to Spain on his second voyage and proposed an exchange for cattle. But the real traffic came from Africa.

By 1619 a million slaves had been brought to Spanish and Portuguese colonies in South America. The exchange system worked efficiently; slaves from Africa to the West Indies, Eastern Brazil, and southern United States; cheap labour for the labour-intensive sugar cane fields of Cuba and the cotton fields of Alabama. Unload the African, reload with rum and cotton. The industrial revolution made England the

almost 15 million black people are estimated to have died en route or soon after landing. Between a half and a third of the African captives died en route. One in four Africans was enslaved. People stripped of all connections with their roots. Deliberately separated from each other and subjugated to hard labour.

Continuing oppression

Nor is the oppression over. In Guatemala in the early 1980s, over 400 villages were wiped out and thousands of Indians forced into 'model villages' by Rios Montt, a born-again Christian. People were separated from others they knew and forced to speak Spanish and attend American fundamentalists-run churches.

Oppressions are both economic and military. Foreign debts are incurred by stewards of the established orders that serve the economic interests of foreign investors. The unrest created by

poverty is crushed by military powers with weapons purchased from abroad, which further expands the debt. The poor pay for the weapons that crush them. Eduardo Galeano, author of *Open Veins of Latin America*, says "The vicious circle is perfect; foreign debt and foreign investment oblige us to multiply exports that they themselves devour. The task can't be accomplished with gentlemanly manners. To fulfil their function as hostages of foreign prosperity, Latin American workers must be held prisoner, either inside or outside the bars

of the jails." We are inclined to abhor the violence, disappearances and death squads we hear about from countries like El Salvador and Guatemala. But the economic structures that are maintained in this manner are less visible. From 1982-1990, US\$200 billion more left the Americas through interest payments then came in from new loans and investments. The foreign debt grew from US\$288 billion to US\$423 billion during the same period. It is the poor who ultimately pay the debts incurred by the powerful élite through austerity programmes.

Call to repentance

The year 1992 must be a year of repentance. The hopeful sign of repentance is that sin acknowledged can be forgiven and conversion begin. If we can look at history, it is possible to change the future. If we cannot, then we become embedded in it. History acts much like the neurosis of an individual. While unconscious it operates inevitably to limit the freedom of the person. Once confronted consciously, it makes possible choices that were previously unavailable to the sufferer.

Unfortunately religion, our own Christian faith, has contributed to the oppression we have retold. Our histories of both sin and grace must be remembered for repentance and conversion to make possible a greater faithfulness to the God whose name is Love.

Fr. Bede Smith is Chairperson of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, London.

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"Slave labour systems made Indians burrow under the mountains of Bolivia until they collapsed."

textile capital of the world. The cotton came from the South of the US, the slaves who harvested it came from Africa. English ships carried slaves from Africa to the 'new world' and returned to England with their hulls full of cotton harvested by the slaves in order to supply the industrial mills of England. With the invention of the cotton gin in 1793, the British textile mills suddenly expanded their capacity to process cotton. By the time Europe finally gave up supplying slaves to the new world, after nearly 400 years of slave trade,

I Come Like a Beggar

Navotas, The Philippines
April 1988

I sat down on a wooden bench salvaged from a rubbish dump, shaded from the sun under a veranda of discarded wood, outside a skilfully knocked-together shanty shack of corrugated iron, wood and plastic. Fernando, his wife and their older children welcomed me to their home with broad hands and much shaking of hands.

The younger children scrambled out of the shack's only door, past a tacked-up poster of Jesus bearing his sacred heart. They played on a rescued metal-framed sunbed with a green plastic frog, now forgotten by its original playmate. Fernando's daughter, a girl of 13, squatted over a plastic tub, washing the family's clothes. She smiled at this western visitor as I removed my straw hat which was rapidly shrinking, not built

Ian Harvey-Pittaway recounts experiences of marginalisation on both sides of the world, and is left wondering about definitions of poverty

to cope with this intense tropical sun.

I was here in Navotas, on the outskirts of Manila, as part of a church delegation from England, a solidarity and fact-finding visit 12 months after the so-called "People Power" so-called "revolution". It was soon



Life on Smokey Mountain, Manila

clear to serious observers that it was the international tentacles of the USA and a powerful faction of the Philippines military which had ousted President Ferdinand Marcos in favour of the easily manipulated Corazon Aquino. "People Power" may have inspired the Tiananmen Square demonstrations two years on, but the reason tanks did not crush the demonstrators in the Philippines as they had in China was because the decision was already made: Marcos had to go. The people

who had *real* power still held it. It was described to me as a Pepsi/Coke situation: the name had changed but it still tasted the same. It tasted the same for Fernando and millions like him under Aquino, as it will doubtless taste the same under President Fidel Ramos...

The place was so filthy, so obscene. The inhabitants of Navotas were previously the urban homeless poor of Manila. Tricked here by false promises of housing, water and electricity, or threatened here by thugs

on the orders of Imelda Marcos, the then-President's wife. She wanted the capital city "cleaned up" and made "beautiful" for her international business clients and tourists.

There was no running water in Navotas. Police from nearby Manila would bring large plastic containers of their tap water for the shack-dwellers - at a price. But like everywhere else in the Two Thirds world, even when clean water is not available, the evangelistic mission of multinational corporations to spread their gospel of Pepsi, Coke and 7 Up to the natives reaches out to the ends of the earth. You could even find them advertised among the wreckage of a town.

The shanty town overlooks Smokey Mountain, Manila's city rubbish dump, home to thousands of scavengers who pick their living off its huge, steaming, rotting mound. These people, like the rubbish, have been thrown away as expendable items. Here they are forced to live in conditions unfit for human habitation, a playground for tropical rats made worse by the clouds of toxic methane gas which Smokey Mountain exudes as the trash decomposes in the heat of the sun. The air is so thick up there that one has to chew it rather than breathe it. So I almost did a double-take when I observed peoples' clothes washed spotless on the cleanest of bodies, with carefully-groomed hair. Deprived of the most meagre wealth, the appearance of these discarded people speaks of a quietly dignified grace and defiance...

Having exchanged greetings and sat down, Fernando brought out a large bottle of Coke, which we drank from small, not quite clean glasses. He invited me to try some of his home-brewed Filipino tuba (carrot) wine, which I drank with some misgiving, having noticed the rusty oversized bottle top sitting precariously on top of the storage jar. We sat and talked - he in broken English, me in my Wolverhampton accent - about family, politics, and the life and trials of the village organisation which Fernando heads.

After a while he asked, "Will you eat with us?". I hesitated. I was immediately aware that I already had diarrhoea. "Do you eat rice?" he said. It was clear that the invitation was not to a rice-based meal, but to a meal of *rice*. Their diet was coarse rice, three times a day, seven days a week. If they were lucky, once or twice a week they may be able to afford some dried fish. Some days their rice could only stretch to two meals a day.

I was saved the trouble of finding a reply, since my short unplanned meeting with Fernando was curtailed by a guide aware of our demanding schedule. We moved on.

That meeting with Fernando was to stay close to me for a long time, resurfacing at unexpected times, in unforeseen ways. I did not realise it at the time, but in that

moment I forfeited probably the richest banquet I had ever been offered.

Manchester, England

April 1989

Lynda was asleep in her chair in the main lounge of the 'old people's home', as she usually was when I arrived. Sitting myself down beside her, I touched her arm gently. Her eyes, full of sleep, recognised me through a slowly dissipating haze. A stroke, four months earlier, had left this previously spritely and alert 80 year old cruelly restricted in speech and movement and unable to look after herself in her own home.

Lynda had existed in the semi-twilight world typical of the aged. Much of her time was spent alone. Those of her relatives who were still alive had moved away. Visits were rare. Her meagre income afforded little in the way of luxuries beyond day to day necessities. She was more or less forgotten by a world which carried on its busy life regardless...

Lynda had apparently decided that she had enough of our lack of privacy in the main lounge, where any conversation is public to anyone who has ears to hear. She said we should go to her bedroom. As she struggled slowly up the stairs, me gripping the stair rail one step behind in case she fell or got into difficulties, I wondered if visitors were supposed to go to residents' bedrooms without staff knowledge (as it has the potential for abuse). In that same instant of wondering I realised how out of place such a thought was. What control did Lynda now have over her own life, cast out of her own home and institutionalised as she now was, if she or I had to have permission to go anywhere in the building, if her movements were to be restricted by order as well as by her physical state? Her sense of autonomy, of being an individually respected *person*, was in such a frail state here.

When we reached her room I was glad to see that she had made it homely, with a dressing table and a couple of drawers adorned by old black and white photographs of her family, the most important of her few possessions. I was moved by the way Lynda communicated and confided in me, sharing her frustrations, her continuing difficulty in forming the words she wanted to say, and the inability of the staff here to be patient with her, to be attentive and listen to what she was trying to say when her words defied formation. Behind her words I sensed her enforced disengagement from the world she once inhabited: a thousand visitors a day in an institution can never make a 'home' into home.

Lynda reached for a bag from one of her drawers and took out her old King James Bible, which had ageing personal artefacts between its pages: a newspaper clipping announcing the death of a relative, some letters, prayers and a Gideon leaflet advis-

ing particular Bible readings for particular problems. From somewhere in the leaves of the New Testament she handed me a small crocheted cross. "Would you like it?" she asked. For a minute I was speechless. She told me it was given to her by Lila. (Who Lila was I could not say, but her voice was sweet with memories.) I was reticent about receiving it, not knowing what it may hold for her. I did not want to offend her generosity, to reject her gracious gift. I accepted with, "Are you sure it is alright?" The answer was obvious.

Jesus called his disciples to him, and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those [rich people] who are contributing to the treasury. For all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living" (Mark 12:41-44)

A simple cross. It may seem like nothing, but I still have that cross, and would never part with it. I felt deeply that Lynda had given me a part of herself. Sitting next to her, crocheted cross in hand, I thought once more of Fernando. On the evening of our meeting 12 months before, writing my travel diary and reflecting on the day's events, I was ashamed of my private self-centred response to Fernando's generous (and in the Philippines, typical) hospi-

talities. Here was a man in the depths of poverty and yet prepared to share all he had with me, even the very food from his family's hungry mouths. And, on the spur of the moment, my primary concern was the effect of enforced poor hygiene on my bowels.

Lynda and Fernando were separated by two worlds and yet they had much in common. Lynda was one more example of an "old person", already on the far fringe of a youth-obsessed and anti-communitarian culture, who had been pushed even farther out by a stroke. No wonder that so many older folk who have little in material terms say that they are happy because they have their health. Lynda and Fernando were both in their own ways pushed to the fringes, dismissed, largely ignored by a world obsessed with capital, profit and status - no matter what the price in other people's lives. It seemed that Fernando had in some symbolic way offered me his banquet again. This time I shared.

In broad but insidiously real and everyday terms I am the beneficiary of a world system that exploits the likes of Fernando for (our) profit and a culture which dismissed the likes of Lynda as useless and "past it". I want their equality, a world where the last shall be first. I have not the slightest wish to trivialise poverty, or romanticise the poor. God knows that we

need a fairer distribution of this earth's resources, something which can never take place so long as our sharing remains economically incestuous. Talk of International Monetary Fund loans to the poor of the Two-Thirds World, or a Social Security loan to the old poor in Britain, is a sick joke. The same system which offers such 'assistance' is stacked against them: that is why they are poor.

Yet in spite of all this, it has been my continual experience that it is "the poor" who are inviting the "fortunate" like me (and probably you) to something extraordinary. Fernando, Lynda, and many more like them, though brutally treated, slandered and ignored, are inviting us to join a great rich feast, a banquet of sharing and self-giving which the rich understand. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle..."

When I am invited into their homes, and they share their hospitality, their lives with me, it always seems that it is I who am the beggar in need.

*By the hungry I will feed you
By the poor I'll make you rich
By the broken I will mend you
Tell me which is which?
(Sydney Carter, I Come Like a Beggar)*

IAN HARVEY-PITTAWAY
British SCM

Looking 500 Years Ahead

Frank Meier Sørensen previews WSCF-Europe's Portugal Conference, February 1993

THE IDEA of Latin America/Europe exchanging experiences has been developing at organizational level since our World Executive Committee Meeting (Harare, 1988), through the World General Assembly (Paris, 1990) and right up to last European Regional Assembly (Hirschluch, 1991). In concrete regard to the above-mentioned theme, WSCF has already launched one successful conference, which was a cooperative effort of the WSCF-Latin

America-Caribbean and WSCF-Europe. This event took place in Quito, Ecuador in April 1991, with participation and contributions from many countries, especially LA and European. The perspective was the colonial past, and the different oppressive structures prevalent through the 500 years. But also the hopes and perspective for future democratic, independent development within the region, and the relations of the region to other parts of

the world. The debt crisis is of course central to this question. The conditions of the indigenous communities where also experienced. The conference and the follow-up work gave rise to an enhanced global consciousness, as well as a strengthened regional identity among the participating persons and their national and regional SCM s.

As 1992/93 is important, both because of the implementation of the Single European

Act and the 500 years of colonization of Latin America, WSCF-Europe decided to continue the process of reflections and actions on this area. It was decided to try to set up a conference in Portugal, as this region of Europe has a significant historical role, as well as particular present problems of relevance. The event will, as with Quito, have inter-regional participation, but the theme will be approached from a more European angle. That is: What role can Europe play in the common effort of creating a sustainable future for Latin America and Europe? The level of analysis will be political/ economical, and we expect valuable academic contributions from Italy, Portugal and Latin America, preferably at university level. We expect, furthermore, thematic contributions from the participating students, especially Latin Europeans and Latin Americans. Being an ecumenical organization, we will also investigate the role of the Church, as well as the individual in regard to the theme, including the question of inter-faith dialogue.

We hope to provide the participants with valuable knowledge of the two continents - Latin America and Europe - to reveal how the history of these is inter-twined, and to draw lines for future policies. We will investigate intra Latin America initiatives for self-government (e.g. Merco Sur) compared to similar European efforts. Furthermore, it is our aim to reflect upon the role of Europe in future world trade and concrete developmental issues. It is our objective to create amongst the participants a consciousness of being part of history, as well as part of making history.

Our man on the spot has been in contact

with Donatella Rostagno and Renato del Priore, members of the Preparatory Committee:

Frank Regarding this upcoming conference on the 'Latin-America 1992' issue: The Latin Project is involved in the preparations, and it will take off in Portugal in February '93?

Donatella: It will be interesting to have this conference. During 1992, there has been so much celebration of the colonization, at least in Italy, so for the members of FGEI [Federazione Giovanile Evangelica Italiana] it will be a new and different approach. Frank How will these questions be dealt with?

Donatella: First of all, we will focus on Latin America as well as Europe. Especially in this conference we will investigate economical and political issues, into which we hope to be able to go deeply. Our focus will be present and future. We know that



Europeans went there, and the Quito conference explored this among other things, but now we must proceed.

Renato: These Columbian feasts are ways of confirming the Western, capitalist way of thinking.

Donatella: In Italy, we are trying to explore different ways of economical development in LA.

Frank How will the conference work?

Donatella: It will last about one week. Some inputs will be academically prepared, and with reference to the present situation in Latin America. However, the future perspective will also have high priority. We will have various discussion groups on these inputs, as we feel that the active involvement of the participants is critical to the success of the conference. As a new idea, we will set up a "historical court", where Europe will be accused of an unjust past, but also be given the possibility to defend itself. Two afternoons, we will have creative workshops on the day theme.

It has not yet been decided exactly where to go from these two events - Quito '91 and Portugal '93. However, it is already settled that there will be a big gathering of youth and students in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Summer '93 (EGGYS). Among others, WSCF is involved in this event, which in many ways will be a natural continuation of the process. We also hope that the participants themselves will come up with prospective and original ideas for the future work, especially regarding our international relations of various kinds.

FRANK MEIER SØRENSEN
Solidarity Coordinator, ERC



What can Quito Tell Us?

Some impressions from a conference

AS EUROPEAN participants at the Quito event, April 1991, many of us felt we played the role of observers to a classical Latin American drama. A drama which developed on the scene of critical marxist-inspired thought, mingled with ethnic components (for the sake of legitimacy). The tradition being classical in the sense of confirming the spirit, in which the main actors played. There were many heroes, even more bandits. But the play did not really manage to give a new and different interpretation of the theme.

The intention behind the Quito conference was to treat the theme of 500 years of history with a view towards the future.

Of course it was a back-breaking exercise to embrace so much history, and the problem, besides the different languages, was to limit the theme so that we could have a constructive dialogue. A dialogue that could have added more to our knowledge. Coping with such a broad theme just had to be like entering a labyrinth.

As Luis Borges puts it when thinking about Latin America: "I imagined a labyrinth of labyrinths, one sinuous spreading labyrinth that would encompass the past and the future and in some way involve the stars."

One important thing however was reached: we reflected on the theme. Being an

early initiative in the stream of happenings around the commemoration of 1992, the conference prepared the ground for carefully monitoring what is going on in our respective countries and in the world in general. And perhaps the stay in Ecuador gave us glimpses of a reality richer in expression; showing a culture of human dignity difficult to grasp in the usual terms of under-development, misery and grief. Leaving us with wonder, perhaps making us question our own societies. Space is left for the stars...

HILDEP. SALVESEN
Solidarity Coordinator, ERC (1989-91)

Attacking the Fortress

The Kairos Europe meeting in June saw hundreds of people from many different organisations and countries come together in Strasbourg, where Europe's laws are made. Their aim? 'No to Fortress Europe!'

Ingrid Voll explains WSCF's involvement

800 PEOPLE from both the East and West of Europe, people from outside Europe visiting the event and foreign people living in Europe, attended the Kairos Event in

Strasbourg this summer. People of all ages, backgrounds and experiences tried to share some of their thoughts and perspectives within the main theme:

"No to a Fortress Europe. Yes to a Europe for justice."

The participants were divided into five commissions, where the following five

issues were shared and discussed during the first two days, and where we were supposed to come up with some main demands to the European Parliament (EP), to be shared through round-tables and hearings with the politicians in the EP, and in a big demonstration in Strasbourg on one of the last days, with about 1200 people.

The five issues/commissions were as follows;

Food, shelter, work, move and stay, story/cultural identity.

The ERA (Hirschluch, 1991) made a recommendation that WSCF should become more involved in the Kairos Europe process during 1992. I was asked, from the ERC, to contact the central coordination team within the Kairos Europe process.

This contact was made during January 1992. Theo Kneifel, the central coordinator responded positively to the involvement of WSCF, and recommended me to join a preparatory committee working out the programme and workshop themes on youth issues and cultural contributions within each commission and in the plenaries.

One workshop theme was "Access to education in Europe, and its implications for access to work and power."

Erling Bottcher from Denmark, who has done research and written a book on this theme took the workshop. It was held in the commission on "work", and about 30 people participated. I think we managed to have some fruitful discussions, in spite of at least 5 different languages, different ages, cultural backgrounds and ways of behaviour in a discussion.

The "ideology" behind this Kairos Event, was, as I understood it, that the people experiencing injustice in some way or another in Europe were the people to share their experiences and thoughts with each other, and to raise their voices in demand of a better and more just Europe.

No content, except the 5 main issues were defined beforehand, everything was meant to come from the group discussions within the commissions on the first two days, from the "grass-roots". What happened there was meant to be the most important.

However, the methodology and the instructions for how the discussions should be monitored were strictly defined from the "top-level" in the Kairos network. The group leaders had to monitor the process very hard through the stages of sharing experiences, analyzing and making demands, in a very short time.

As a point of criticism, I will say that there was a gap between the "ideology" of grass-roots power, and what actually happened. The steering system within the Kairos Process seemed to have put too little emphasis on the fact that such processes needs time; if not they will be influenced by the top anyway, as I saw it

happen here.

The good thing was that people found that they had a place to share their experiences: for example, refugees, the unemployed, the poor, etc., and a lot of informal contacts were made through the days in the commissions.

From my point of view these two days were the most fruitful and dynamic days,

A lot of people from different cultures, noise, music, dancing and colourful banners, made a big impression both on the participants and the audience along the streets. This was a picture of the mosaic today's Europe can be seen as, and it was for what we were shouting out our demands.

The Kairos Event in Strasbourg is over,



Above and below: Protestors at the Kairos Europe event demonstrating their views to the people of Strasbourg and the politicians of Europe

in spite of my criticism of methodology and "hidden" influence from the top level.

Much hope and many expectations developed of the meetings with the politicians in the EP, and one day was given to this. A lot of politicians did not arrive at the meetings, and we did not achieve any discussions of real political value. And who could expect that after two busy days of discussions concerning such wide and

contacts between people have been made, some strength to continue the struggle towards a Europe for justice has hopefully been achieved.

So what? An important question, for all the participants, for the top level within Kairos Europe, for WSCF.

WSCF-Europe should come with some inputs to this discussion; what is our view on the coming Kairos Europe network?



important themes?

As I see it, this was the least fruitful day.

What was better was the day for demonstrations and public meetings in the centre of Strasbourg.

And how do we consider our role in this network?

INGRID VOLL
Ex-Co Member, ERC

networks

WSCF-Europe's Working Groups, Networks and Projects are the focus for particular areas of WSCF's work and allow SCM members to follow up special interests with others from around the Region

Working Groups/Networks

Each Working Group and Network has a Coordinator who represents it on the ERC, and often instigates its activities. Many National Movements have Contact Persons for each Working Group and Network, who participate in their work and through whom SCM members can be kept informed. All SCM members are welcome to become involved in the work and activities of the Working Groups and Networks.

Projects

There are two Projects currently running in WSCF-Europe, that provide links and solidarity between members of National Movements in parts of the Region where SCMs face particular challenges. The Projects - working in the South and East of the Region - aim to build up the

Movements in these areas, and organise meetings and events.

Getting Involved

For further information on a Working Group/Network/Project, or to become involved, contact the following:

Coordinator/WSCF: see Address List

National Contact Person: through National Office/WSCF contact

If your National Movement does not have a Contact Person for a particular Working Group or Network, and you would like further information on how to become the Contact Person, please contact WSCF

Programmatic Working Group

The PWG took over the work of the old Theological Working Group (TWG) at the ERA last year, and will focus its work on two events: the Big E 93 and the next ERA. The PWG recently sent out a discussion paper to the SCMs, aimed at inspiring debate on questions of student Christian identity. Responses will be collected, a second paper produced. After further responses have been collected, and a final paper will be produced for the Big E and ERA. The PWG has Contact Persons in many of the National Movements.

Coordinator: Anders Wesslund (S)
Sub-Coordinators: Ruth Harvey (GB), Dimitris Moschos (G), Piotr Chomik (PL)

Women's Network

The Women's Network aims to provide the means for women in the SCMs to be in contact with each other at a Regional level, and to coordinate WSCF's involvement with women's events and activities in Europe, in particular with the EYCE and Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women. It has a number of Contact Persons in the SCMs and produces a regular newsletter, which is distributed to women around the

Region. The Network has established women's meetings at every WSCF-Europe conference, and will hold a number of events at the Big E 93.

Coordinator: Christiane Kemmler (FRG)

Publications Working Group

The PubsWG arose out of the ERA at Hirschbach with the primary purpose of working towards the production of MOZAIK. It meets occasionally to discuss the nature and content of forthcoming editions, and solicits contributions from around the Region. Long-term plans concern establishing a network of people throughout the Region concerned with publications in the SCMs. There are Contact Persons in 9 of the SCMs.

Coordinators: Michael Feakes (GB)
Members: Karin Källsmyr (S), Alain Lortal (F), Dominik Zehnder (CH)

Solidarity Working Group

The Solidarity Working Group coordinates WSCF-Europe's support for and involvement with projects and events regarding North-South global relations, and in particular economic, developmental, ecological and peace issues. It is currently involved in

the follow-up to the 1991 Quito conference, 20-27 February 1993 in Portugal.

Coordinator: Frank Meier Sørensen (DK)

Eastern Europe Project

The Project was set up in late 1989 to work with the Movements in the East of the Region, and a Support Group with representatives from all the Eastern European countries meets to assess progress and exchange support. The Eastern Europe Language and Leadership and Leadership Project (EELLP), organised in cooperation with the EYCE and SYNDESMOS, is an extension of the work.

Eastern Europe Project staff: Wlodek Mis-
ijuk (PL)
EELLP staff: Becky Brannan (GB)

Latin Project

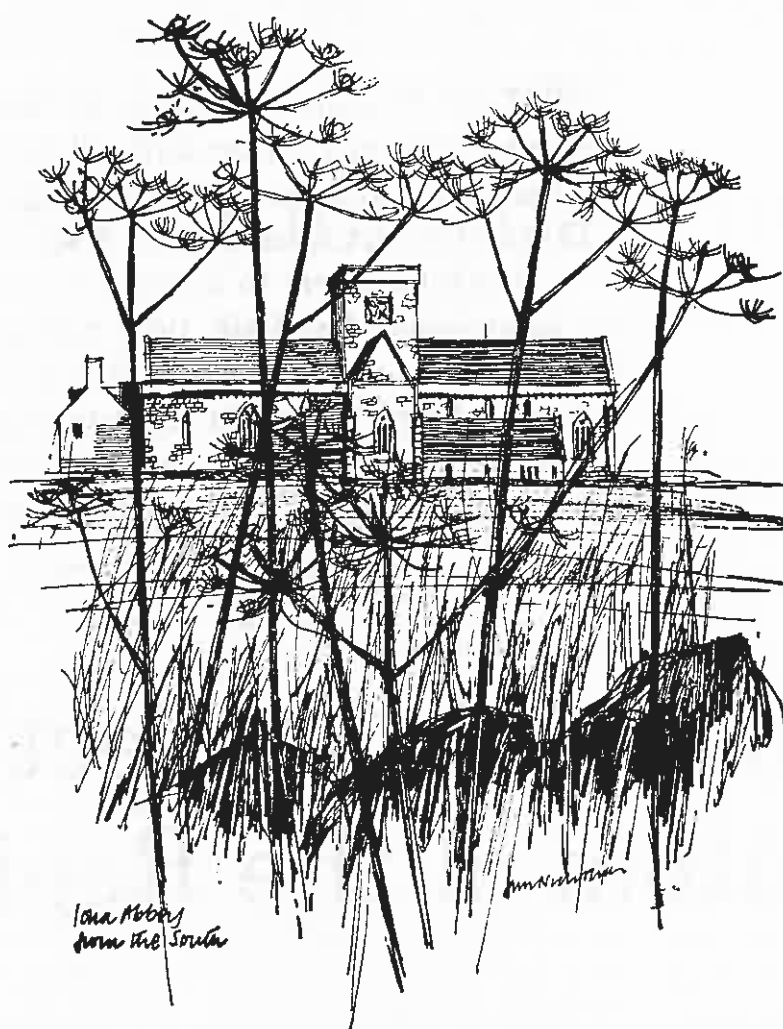
The Latin Project has for long worked with Movements in the South of the Region. It supports groups which are often in minority Churches in their own countries, and aims to foster cooperation between them and encourage their greater participation in WSCF.

Coordinator: José Manuel Cerqueira (P)

Diary of Recent and Forthcoming Working Group, Network and Project events

Big E: Everyone! Programmatic Working Group and Women's Network input and activities

MOZAIK 2/1992



"BELONG HERE", "SUPPORT THE BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY". My school had and still has one of the largest proportions of Asian children to non-Asian in Glasgow, most of them now being second or third generation immigrants from Pakistan who were encouraged to come to Scotland in the 30s and 40s to run the transport system. The Pakistanis are only Scotland's 20th century manifestation of new Scottish blood. The Picts and Norse of the early centuries were followed by Irish, Italian, Polish, Russian and other settlers in later centuries. There is no such thing as pure Scottish. The only difference with those from the Indian sub-continent arriving in Scotland today is that they cannot melt into the background. Their skin is a different colour.

We hear of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia and we are justifiably horrified. We witness racial intolerance and ingrained bigotry around the corner and we turn a blind eye. Yes, the scale of action is different. Sniper fire has not hit the street corners of Glasgow, yet. But we only have to look thirty miles across the water to Belfast to see what life can become. Religious intolerance and ingrained bigotry there, fuelled by a sense of the "pure faith", has led to fear and suspicion between protestants and catholics. Somewhere, deep in the recesses of our collective unconscious we have a notion of the pure race. A race set apart and cleansed, purified of all taints of otherness.

We must be clear that this notion is fallacious. It has no grounding in reality.

Yet where does it come from? From a fear of annihilation? From a desperation to become powerful? From a fear of the unknown? Certainly it is a notion which is fuelled by ignorance. And it is an intrinsically evil notion which must be replaced by the intrinsically good yet often elusive notion of love.

A second, related issue which concerns me today is that of inter-faith dialogue. The intricate and increasingly complex multi-racial mixes in our European cities mean that it can no longer be assumed that Europe is a white, Christian land. Of course this is not news. Geographical boundaries are daily being reset. Each world religion has its place of origin. But as Christianity was never confined to the Middle East, so Hinduism is no longer confined to India; Buddhism no longer confined to China; Islam no longer confined to Asia.

Yet it seems to be a strange paradox that as Europe grows as a multi-faith continent, the Christian churches are still struggling with fear and suspicion within their own ranks. How can we preach the message of unity to the whole inhabited earth when among ourselves there is such clear disunity in doctrine, in practice, in understanding? How can we preach a message of

unity when our churches still refuse to share the Lord's supper? We share the inheritance of schism and reform, yet we share a more profound and lasting unity in our common mission to proclaim the message of the Gospels.

Ecumenism must go farther than unity between denominations of one faith. For if ecumenism means "the whole

inhabited earth" then we are, more than at any time before, called to engage in the debate and establish trust between the world religions.

As I think back to the Hallowing service on Iona I am reminded of the commitments that I made. Iona is a beautiful island, a place where commitments are easily inspired, where the glistening white beaches reach out to a deep blue sea; where the setting sun casts a pink glow over the granite hills; and where long silent walks can be matched with howling storms and intensive conversation.

Yet Iona must be a turning point for me, a pivot on which to wheel around and be propelled back into the throb of community living. For it is in the communities of our streets, villages, towns and cities that we can find the complexities and the concerns; the beauties and the passions of people. For the commitments that I made on Iona to have meaning, I must live them out in the streets and suburbs of my city, Glasgow. And I must have faith that I will meet Christ, The Scottish Christ of whatever colour, walking those streets with me.

RUTH HARVEY

Member, Programmatic Working Group

MOZAIK has, along with an increasing number of readers, been in a rather difficult position regarding the Latin Project of WSCF-Europe. Is it a project? Do they in fact speak Latin? If so, couldn't they do it a bit louder? In order to improve our patchy knowledge, MOZAIK now releases certain so far unpublished materials: the record of a conversation between Frank Sørensen and two prominent figures in this area: Renato del Priore and, indeed, Donatella Rostagno - both Italian

The Latin Project - Phantom of the Region?

Frank: Welcome to Renato & Donatella! Now, what is this Latin Project all about?

Renato: LP started 6 to 7 years ago, and through this period many of the Latin Movements experienced problems. In Italy, for instance, there was a huge shift of generations around 1988, and a lot of new people need to be integrated. Similar problems occurred in France, and Spain has hardly had a real Movement in the period. After the Hirschluch Regional Assembly 1991 we start all over again.

Frank: How about your structure?

Renato: The Latin countries have Protestant minorities, and as such a range of similarities exist. In a wider historical sense, we experience cultural, social and political familiarity. The Mediterranean area, to which we all belong, is in a sense between the North and the South. Also therefore, we all have immigration concerns from former colonies and Third World areas in general.

Frank: And where to go now?

Renato: In this first meeting in Porto [in April 1992], we decided to build a network of information between our different Movements, to spread knowledge of the Latin Project. The feeling at this moment is that we are the Latin Project! We think it is possible to start a common work if more

people feel like part of the whole thing. The rationale behind networking this way is to ensure, that the LP-contact responsible in each Federation knows exactly what's going on in other Latin countries. To every national meeting we will invite two persons from every other Latin Movement. In the next French Assembly, two persons from Federazione Giovanile Evangelica Italiana will be invited. In Portugal, for instance, there are a lot of potential WSCF persons, but the knowledge is low. After building this network, it is possible to define and develop some common issues, eg. in conferences. In the next year, we will try to discover, how many people are interested. Then we will have a better picture of our common goals and struggles. After this introductory period, we hope that the Latin Project will be more than the 5 or 10 of us. To make conferences etc., we need a larger base of student involvement.

Frank: Alright, but what about finance and staffing?

Renato: Our movements are small. That's why Italy wasn't present at the Strasboug conference on education. It is always hard to find new issues, so we will link the Latin

Project to the national meetings. In Portugal, we focused on Portugal, in France we will focus on France. In concrete communication terms, we are producing a newsletter for distribution in the Latin area. However, for the time being, a Secretary might not be necessary.

Frank: But Movement building?

Renato: Yes, the problem of creating a Movement in Spain. According to our strategy, we will invite our Spanish contacts to national meetings, and to the Portugal conference. Regarding the conference in general, the Latin Project is working on it, according to a Hirschluch decision.

Donatella: I think we could perhaps use a Secretary after this introductory period. If we succeed to make the whole thing known, s/he would be an important resource. Even if people change, such a person would represent a static point of reference, so that the idea would survive, in spite of changing human resources.

Frank: Thank you both of you, and keep up the good spirits!

(And so they do!)

LATIN PROJECT

The EELLP this summer saw teaching camps set up across the East of the Region. It was by turns a useful, inspiring and mesmerising experience for those involved. Mihály Kovács relates how progress was made in English at his camp, and Caroline Stern, one of the teachers, talks of her own progress, in a different direction

Training for the Future

IN JUNE 1992 12 young people were selected by WSCF and British SCM to participate in the Eastern Europe Language and Leadership Project (EELLP). They travelled to various locations in Eastern Europe throughout the summer for courses involving English language teaching with members of local youth and church groups. One of the 12, Caroline Stern, a theology student at Birmingham University, who spent 3 weeks in Hungary and 3 weeks in Poland, writes about her experiences below.

The project was established by WSCF in conjunction with the EYCE and SYNDOS-MOS, to encourage and facilitate the involvement of Eastern European young people in ecumenical and international activities and assist in overcoming the initial barriers of language. One of those

THE FIRST international English language camp of the Reformed Youth in Hungary took place over two weeks in July in a garden of the Buda hills. In this camp, which was a real camp with tents, 30 participants represented five countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The purpose of the event was of course not only to improve young people's knowledge of English, but also to celebrate our Christian unity, because Orthodox brothers and sisters visited us as well.

English was taught by two students from Britain, the English classes were held in the mornings. I think the awakening service with a guitar and some singing will remain a remarkable experience for all of us. After breakfast this was followed by the morning Bible study, from which we tried to receive

YOU SOUND just like a Protestant! Orthodoxy is not an interpretation. It's a way of life. It's truth!"

I gulped! My approach as a theologian presumed that one could only hold one's own interpretation of anything, and here was another young person articulating the Orthodox way in a manner I would never have dared! (For fear of limiting God perhaps?) As for Truth:

"Isn't this rather an arrogant claim?", I retorted. After all, what is truth?

Entering the small onion churches (as I identified them) always lifted me beyond myself: the hundreds of flickering candles

who participated in the courses, Mihály Kovács, a member of a Hungarian Reformed Church group, talks below about the Budapest camp.

It was envisaged that the visits would offer various ecumenical opportunities and the British SCM members were encouraged to promote and participate in such activities while on placement. Caroline was able to join the youth pilgrimage to Grabarka in August.

The second part of the project is anticipated to take place in March 1993. About 20 young people from Eastern Europe will visit England and undergo an intensive four weeks of leadership training which can be integrated into their home

power for the tasks in front of us everyday. The afternoons' programme was compiled, so that it would be less strict than the mornings', but still give opportunity to use English. Because of our international guests, we went sight-seeing several times: we were in the cinema, in a Bath, on an excursion, and we even managed to get to some concerts.

We did not always have luck with the weather - rain sometimes disturbed the life of the camp - but in these situations we could see how God gives victory in difficulties, and the feeling of belonging together just became stronger within the camp. That was one of the biggest gifts of these two weeks: that in spite of the hard conditions of camping there was such an atmosphere fulfilled with love, for which we can only

mesmerised; the pungent smell of incense (and sweat!) pervaded; the strong, deep slavonic chants echoed, the wall paintings and icons fascinated, enlarging the near to bursting walls and drawing one into an experience of worshipping with the whole host of heaven. A feast for the senses interwoven with a paradox of uneasiness but compulsive longing to uncover this way of life, this "Truth", for myself.

Such a tangible confrontation with transcendence challenged my foolishness. I was trying to grasp at God through academic quizzing, and as I was closing my hands around answers, I still found that

situation. Local student groups in Great Britain will host the participants who will be active in practical involvement with local and national networks. It is envisaged that British student Christian networks and industrial groups will be observed by the groups, and they may participate in the British SCM annual Congress.

The project seeks to promote international awareness and interaction, and to facilitate cultural exchange. It aims to overcome denominational and political barriers while recognising diversity of situation. It works to the mutual benefit of young people in all countries involved, in the expanding and sharing of resources.

The project relies on voluntary donations.

give thanks. Apart from Bible studies, one evening we went to the worship of a local parish youth group at and on the Sunday we listened to the Word at a Reformed service.

When the two weeks were almost over, more and more people began to ask if there is going to be a similar camp next year; so we started thinking already, what could be better? On our last evening together we received the Lord's Supper at a camp-fire, and said farewell to each other. Finally, I would like to quote one of our friends at the camp: "It was fantastic that besides my English, my faith got richer too. This was a real testimony."

MIHÁLY KOVÁCS
Hungarian Youth Movement

I could not retain the unutterable wonder that faced me in those churches... and still the mystery lived deep within me. I was to understand that theology in Orthodoxy was not an issue to be thrown around and argued. I was to discover it as faith becoming realised, through the disciplined response of a community committed to reflecting the constant renewal of faith in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There was no breaking down of the whole into academic and spiritual sub-sections. In fact contemplation of the God-head was barely talked about for fear of containing the uncontainable infinite that, once perceived to be

conquered, undermined the richness of the experience of faith. Orthodoxy, I had to agree, was not just an interpretation. It was an intricate network of synthesising elements - liturgical, symbolic and biblical, rooted in the history of a faithful community.

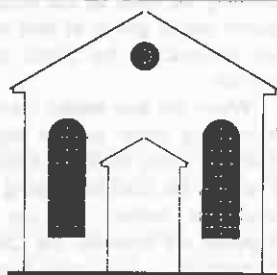
But what of a 'way of life'? Perhaps I was mostly bemused by the use of icons. Faces stared from all corners of Orthodox homes, seemingly revered and certainly kissed in a church context. Having overcome my horror at the unhygienic element of multi-kissed glass, I fought the preconceived conclusion of what appeared to be idolatry. I was assured, "An icon is a window to heaven." Yet that was also a proposal I feared: In reality, standing face to face with Jesus, I questioned deeply whether or not I could actually kiss Him. Watching the trail of young and old weave their way through the crowds to the icons of Jesus in churches, I became awash with my own insufficient love of God, as Jesus. I needed to embrace Jesus very badly and to

discover a fuller salvation in my life. It had been too easy to brush aside what remained unresolved and maintain a safe control on what was vulnerable. Perhaps also a kiss revealed the most intimate form of relationship - an outward sign of commitment and honour, of trust and sacrifice - the acknowledgement and acceptance in this case, of a God concerned to be involved at every level of my being. Afraid but desperately hungry, my whole desire was to engage with the doration of this people, trusting their tradition and faith, and to enter a way of life that allowed the Holy Spirit to touch every cell of body, mind and spirit. Heaven on Earth. Once humbled, it was too easy to step forward, cross myself and touch Heaven through the icon.

So I had wrangled with the Father, met Jesus in the Eucharist and been filled with the Grace of the Holy Spirit. I had discovered love, through Trinity. Moreover, I had perceived more Truth on the way.

Perhaps mistakenly I had regarded Truth as an ideal to be reached but in all, truth had shown itself to be a rule, a rhythm by which we strive to live - the blessing of unity and diversity woven into our lives, the Grace by which we are created and through which we perceive the world. The richness of Orthodoxy lay in its ability to reflect this, to set itself apart from individual gain, from the potentially distinctive analysis that can undermine faith, and to engage in being true to its inheritance and present calling. Orthodoxy has paved a way I have never known as a Protestant and product of Capitalist Society. How I marvel still at the unfulfilled potential and yet possibilities for the Church in the west, and how blessed I am that my vision for the Church in Britain lies in a faith inspired by Orthodoxy.

CAROLINE STERN
British SCM



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CEC

Continued from p.14

Of course many borders are not blurred. Many walls and divisions are entrenched so deeply that they will take generations to dissolve. What of the Catholics and Protestants in Ireland? The Muslims and Christians in Turkey? The male and female roles in many parts of Europe which are becoming

more polarised? The tensions between collaborators and dissenters throughout eastern Europe? The barriers excluding immigrants to the EC? It is no easy task to tear down walls.

It is my hope, however, that the mutual trust and understanding which has developed between EYCE, WSCF Europe, SYNDESMOS and CEC will continue, through the experience of the CEC Assembly, to be a beacon of unity, searching for the common

ground which will one day answer the prayer of Jesus that "all may be one".

RUTH HARVEY

The writer is a student of Theology at New College, Edinburgh. She is a member of the EYCE Executive, and the PWG of WSCF-Europe

SYNDESMOS

Continued from p.18

The Orthodox Experience

I was surprised at how strongly I felt the bond of unity. It was almost tangible. Maybe it was the truly global nature of the event, or that we all felt we were making history, travelling as missionaries further and further into this century's 'dark continent'. The Russian Church finally became free of state interference only last August (1991), and there was a truly joyous sense of liberation in the air. The Russian All-Church Orthodox Youth Movement was formed as recently as 1988 - the millennial anniversary of Holy Russia - and its members were obviously very pleased to be hosting the Assembly. But I am sure also that there is a very real bond between Orthodox of a different nature to that amongst Christians at other events I have attended.

For non-Orthodox to try to understand Orthodoxy it is necessary to appreciate just how much 'the Church' is part of everyone's existence, and of everyday life. It is not an institution or building, but all the people of Orthodoxy, the body of Christ. My carefully nurtured Protestant cynicism, and willingness to question and reinvent structures and systems, was rudely confronted by people of an age, education and background similar to my own, who submit to the authority and teachings of the Church and its clergy, and who follow liturgies and ceremonies that have remained virtually unaltered for more than 1500 years. Here also were people prepared to argue, intelligently and reasonably, for the absolute 'rightness' of their own faith compared to mine.

I was beginning to understand why WSCF can seem so new and unusual to Orthodox, and what an un-Orthodox feel it might have with people running round abandoning the Church, junking the bits of the Bible they do not like, and making up their own prayers and liturgies as they go. The Assembly had services everyday, varying from short morning prayers to full

four-hour eucharists. Some of these were on the boat, but others, more majestic, were in the churches we visited. I tried to follow them with an English-language book, but got lost too many times, and eventually just settled back to take it all in. One service in particular, a Liturgy in the monastery at Kostroma, stands out in my memory as particularly magical, with a setting of high church walls, and delicate, pale frescoes and a back-drop of a golden iconostasis. The five bishops wore red and gold embroidered robes, and enormous crowns, and the priests black and white robes, with the Church full of local people as well as Assembly participants. To one side was the choir, like a chorus at the opera, singing mesmerising harmonies, and complementing the gentle swirling melodies sung by the congregation. Here we were, hundreds of us, mostly thousands of miles from home, in a ceremony of ages, when cultural and linguistic differences melt away, and we can glimpse the reality and the beauty of the body of Christ.

Negative reactions to ecumenism seem to fall into three categories. (1) Mine is the true faith, now and forever, so why should I have any dealings with 'other faiths'? It is impossible for the teachings of the Church to be altered, so why be involved with people who may see that as a (far off) goal? (2) Other Churches allow things that contravene the teachings of my Church (women priests, etc.). (3) Even if ecumenism is a good thing, now is not the time for it, because there are so many other important things to do first just in my Church. I met these reactions in varying degrees, both at the Ecumenism discussion group, and in the Assembly generally. Of these the third is currently the strongest felt. We were made acutely aware of this in Russia.

The big issue at the moment for all Orthodox is proselytism. The new freedoms in Russia have allowed other Churches access to lands and peoples historically in the Russian Church - they come from the West, and are well financed with the capacity to expand like armies

across territory the Church believes is its own. Some Protestant and Catholic Churches have set up missions, treating Russia as a spiritual desert. Newer evangelical Churches are also expanding there, and these groups are generally termed 'Protestant'; all Protestant Churches are thus condemned with them. Ecumenism can easily be taken to mean consorting with such Churches and so hostility develops. It is for us in organisations like WSCF to show that the Protestant Churches some of our members belong to are just as opposed to (and at risk from) the newer Churches as the Orthodox. And also that the proselytising Churches are certainly not interested in ecumenism. Through WSCF and similar ecumenical bodies, people from many different confessions can work together in condemning proselytisers and promoting the respect of other traditions.

Conclusion

In this week of International Orthodoxy, I learned and experienced a great deal, and there really can be no substitute for being there. The presence of WSCF at single-confession events is important not just as a 'witness' for the Federation, but for what is brought back and imparted. I hope now that I will be able to appreciate far more an Orthodox perspective in WSCF's work.

The memories of the trip will last a long time. In the evenings, Assembly participants would gather in one of the bars on the boat, where the two resident bands, in old Russian dress, would regale us until morning with traditional Russian songs. At times it was easy to feel that we were glimpsing part of the Russian character. It is true that many Russian people sometimes look unsmiling and hard-faced, but at the close of the day, when hard times are forgotten, the vodka is flowing and someone is on the balalaika, everyone comes alive in singing and dancing. And when Mother Russia taps her foot, you have to join in.

MICHAELFEAKES
British SCM

The Who, What and Where of WSCF

Getting lost in acronyms? Drowning in abbreviations? Having problems sorting out the Euro- this, that and the other? Read on!

Amsterdam - Location of WSCF-Europe office
Big E - WSCF-Europe youth and student festival, Birmingham, August 1989
Big E 93 - WSCF-Europe youth and student festival, to be held in Woudschoten, August 1993
Bialystok - Location of EEP office (Poland)
Birmingham - Location of Big E
CEC - Conference of European Churches
EECCS - European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society
EELLP - WSCF Eastern Europe Language and Leadership Project, coordinated from Swansea
EEP - WSCF Eastern Europe Project, based in Bialystok
EFECW - Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women
ERA - European Regional Assembly of WSCF-Europe: large conference/business meeting every two years, deciding future plans, electing ERC, etc.
ERC - European Regional Committee of WSCF-Europe, made up of 11 representatives from National Movements, each with different functions: executive body of WSCF-Europe, meeting about twice a year

EGGYS - Ecumenical Global Gathering of Youth and Students, Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 1993
ExCo - Executive Committee of WSCF, made up of 2 representatives from each Region, meeting once a year
EYC - European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, where many WSCF-Europe conferences are held
EYCE - Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe
Geneva - Location of IRO
Hirschluch - Location of ERA, August 1991
IMCS - International Movement of Catholic Students
IRO - Inter-Regional Office of WSCF, Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, where the WSCF's work is coordinated
IYCS - International Young Catholic Students
SCM - Student Christian Movement
Strasbourg - Location of EYC
SYNDESMOS - World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth
Swansea - Location of EELLP office (Wales)
WCC - World Council of Churches
WSCF - World Student Christian Federation
WSCF-Europe - Europe Region of WSCF
Woudschoten - Location of Big E 93 (Netherlands)
YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA - Young Women's Christian Association

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WSCF Gazette

Diary of WSCF, National Movement and other events

1992

October

3-4	Ilieni, Romania	Opening of International Christian Youth Center
9-12	Belfast	EYCE Interim Women's Working Group
19-25	Finland	ESCC Preparatory Committee
23-30	Budapest	WSCF Conference: "Ethnic Minorities in Europe"

November

13-17	Amsterdam	Blg E 93 Thematic Committee meeting
14-15	Brussels	ECB Executive Committee

1993

January

*	Latin America	WSCF Executive Committee meeting
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February

20-27	Porto	WSCF Conference: "Europe-Latin America: 500 Years Ahead"
*	*	CEC Central Committee

May

1-9	Hungary	WSCF/EYCE/EFECW meeting: "Women and Finances"
*	Wales	WSCF Staff and Board Members Consultation: "Ecumenism"

June

*	Finland	European Student Chaplain's Conference
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July

10-26	Sao Paolo, Brazil	EGGYS: "Where there are no Visions, People shall Perish"
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August

3-11	Woudschoten, Netherlands	Blg E 93: "Many Gifts, One Spirit!"
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November

*	Moscow (to be confirmed)	WSCF Executive Committee meeting
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December

*	*	WSCF European Regional Assembly
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For further information on any of the above events, contact your National Movement, or the WSCF office in Amsterdam