

INHOUD

REDAKSIONEELONS KLA AAN ...	1
EDITORIAL: WE ACCUSE ...	1
THE STAND OF THE C.I. EXECUTIVE	4
TOWARDS EQUALITY IN EDUCATION	5
STRYD RONDOM SYDNEY	9
"GIVE YOUR HEART TO JESUS AND THE WORLD WILL COME RIGHT"?	11
CHURCH BRINGS CHANGE?	15
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:	13
"GOVERNMENTAL VIOLENCE" OR "GOVERNMENTAL RETALIATION"?	
CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM AND APARTHEID	
COMMON WORSHIP	
A TASK FOR WOMEN	
A CONFESSING CHURCH IN S.A.?	16
THEOLOGY AND SENSITIVITY TRAINING	18
GEWEEG EN ...?/WEIGHED AND ...?	21
(WILGESPRUIT AND THE TWO INVESTIGATIONS)	

Capitalism, Socialism and Apartheid

Dear Sir,

In your February 1973 issue there appeared a letter signed J. Zimmer. The author claims, inter alia, that "our much-praised system of free enterprise, alias capitalism, has inhumanity and injustice built into it and is a part of the apartheid problem", and proceeds to advocate socialism (sic!) as the ideal solution.

J. Zimmer's gross misrepresentation of the capitalist ideology is most unfair and unenlightened. Moreover, the author demonstrates a regrettable lack of historical knowledge; with regard to the history of the capitalist and socialist ideologies as well as with regard to the peculiar history of the South African society.

From my own experience (I am a political scientist who have lived in South Africa doing research work on the particular issue in question), I must strongly reject the distorted image of reality perceived and propounded by J. Zimmer.

The cardinal element of capitalism is the concept of Man as a free being, with unalienable and individual rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. It should be needless to say that this concept is incompatible with the collectivist ideology of apartheid, which holds that man should not be treated on basis of individual merits, but according to his origin or the colour of his skin. This collectivist (and authoritarian) approach is what characterizes both apartheid and socialism (as well as the related ideologies of communism, fascism and nazism). Therefore, one should hardly be surprised when reading the statements by General Hertzog, D.F. Malan and B.J. Vorster, which *Geoff Budlender* quotes in his commendable article "Civil Rights and the University" (printed in *Pro Veritate*, April 1973, pp. 20-22).

For a well-documented and thoroughly enlightened analysis of the real nature of apartheid as diametrically opposed to capitalism (but closely related to socialism), I will wholeheartedly recommend J. Zimmer (and others interested in this subject) to read Professor W.H. Hutt's book *The Economics of the Colour Bar* (London, 1964).

Gunnar Skagestad



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