

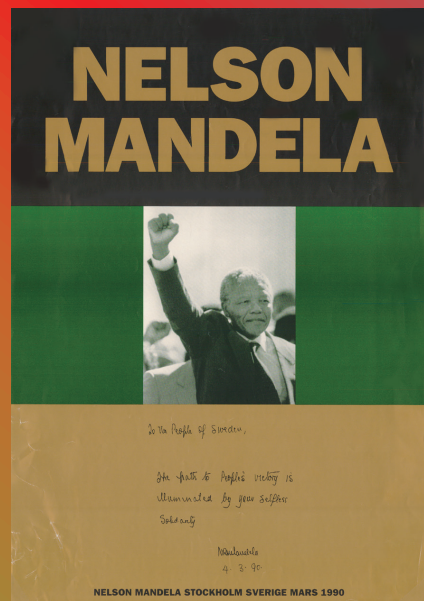
"ON THE ROAD TOWARDS LIBERATION" RELATES A UNIQUE PERIOD IN SWEDISH POLITICS. SOUTHERN AFRICA WAS IN FOCUS FOR STUDENT MOVEMENTS, CHRISTIAN AND POLITICAL YOUTH MOVEMENTS, AFRICA GROUPS, TRADE UNIONS, WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES. ALSO MEDIA PARTICIPATED, INITIALLY VIA COLUMNISTS AND IN THE END IN THE NEWS.

THE AMBITION TO BOTH HONOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PROMOTE A MORE PEACEFUL AND JUST WORLD SOMETIMES APPEARED HAVING TWO FACES IN THE GOVERNMENT POLICY. NOT EVEN WITHIN THE SOLIDARITY GROUPS WAS THE LINE ALWAYS CLEAR.

THE ASSESSMENT OF THE DIFFERENT LIBERATION MOVEMENTS VARIED OVER TIME AS WELL AS THE KIND OF SUPPORT GIVEN. ONLY WHEN THE ISOLATE SOUTH AFRICA COMMITTEE, ISAK, IN THE 1980S ENCOMPASSED ALMOST THE ENTIRE CIVIL SOCIETY, A COMMON STRATEGY DEVELOPED THAT WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO FORCE THE POLITICIANS TO INTRODUCE COMPREHENSIVE SANCTIONS DESPITE NO UN-SUPPORT.

"ON THE ROAD TOWARDS LIBERATION" IS A TRANSLATION OF THE LAST AND SUMMARIZING VOLUME OF A SERIES OF FIVE SEPARATE BOOKS IN THE SERIES "THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE SOLIDARITY WORK WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE BOOKS COVERING THE ISOLATE SOUTH AFRICA COMMITTEE, THE AFRICA GROUPS OF SWEDEN, THE LABOUR MOVEMENT, THE CHURCHES AND PRACTICAL SOLIDARITY (EMMAUS GROUPS AND THE BREAD AND FISHES) ARE SO FAR ONLY AVAILABLE IN SWEDISH. THESE ARE STORIES WRITTEN BY ACTORS THEMSELVES.

THIS SUMMARIZING VOLUME DOES ALSO INCLUDE WHAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, SIDA, WERE DOING AND PICTURES SUCCESSES AND FAILURES AS WELL AS THE DEMANDS ON GLOBAL SOLIDARITY TODAY.



BERNT JONSSON ON THE ROAD TOWARDS LIBERATION



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BERNT JONSSON



LIBERATION

SWEDISH CIVIL SOCIETY
AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE LIBERATION
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



On the Road towards Liberation
Swedish Solidarity with the Struggle
for Freedom in Southern Africa



BERNT JONSSON has worked as a journalist at newspapers, radio, magazines and TV, both locally and at national level, with focus on politics, culture and religion. During the 80-s and 90-s he worked at the Foreign Office and at the Life & Peace institute in Uppsala with international issues, particularly disarmament, peace and reconciliation. Nowadays he is a freelance journalist focusing on the Middle East.

By Bernt Jonsson

On the Road towards Liberation

**Swedish Solidarity with the Struggle
for Freedom in Southern Africa**

Translated by Madi Gray

The book is part of the series Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with Southern Africa.

Produced by Afrikagrupperna together with Olof Palme international center, Practical Solidarity, Christian Council of Sweden with support from Sida via the Nordic Africa Institute.

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Foreword

THIS PUBLICATION is a translation of the sixth and final book in the Swedish series *Folkrörelsernas solidaritetsarbete med södra Afrika* (Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with southern Africa). In a factual and accessible way, the aim is to sketch a comprehensive picture of the grassroots work in Sweden for a free southern Africa and of its relation to official government policies in this arena. At the same time the reader should be aware that the selection and presentation of historical events and developments is never totally objective but always “carries the fingerprints of the interpreter” (Alan Munslow in *Deconstructing History*).

My personal experiences of the student movements of the 1950s and 1960s and from many years within the peace movement, the non-conformist Churches and the Christian Social Democrats (*Broderskapsrörelsen*) form part of my frame of reference. My professional background as a journalist in various roles and as an actor in international affairs – in the Foreign Ministry and the Life & Peace Institute – form other parts. This framework influences my perspective and will unconsciously colour my presentation.

Without being weighed down by footnotes, the presentation draws heavily on Tor Sellström’s extensive study in three volumes called *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Nordic Africa Institute, 1999 and 2002, and on the five books published within the framework of this project during 2006–2007:

Karl-Gunnar Norén: *Under ISAK’s paraply*. Isolera Sydafrikakommittén 1979–1995 (Under the ISAK Umbrella: Isolate South Africa Committee).

Anja Björk: *Den stillsamma vreden*. Praktisk soli-

daritet 1969 – 1994 (Sedate Wrath: Practical Solidarity)

Birgitta Silén: *Uppdrag solidaritet*. Arbetarrörelsen och Södra Afrika 1960 – 1994 (Assignment Solidarity: The Labour Movement and Southern Africa).

Rune Forsbeck: *”Gör ni då inte åtskillnad...?”* Kyrkorna och Södra Afrika 1960–1994 (“Do you not Differentiate ...?” The Churches and Southern Africa).

Mai Palmberg (ed.): *När södra Afrikas frihet var vår*. Afrikagrupperna 1968–1994 (When Southern Africa’s Freedom was Ours: Africa Groups).

These five books are self-portraits, i.e. written from within the movements by people who took part themselves. In contrast, my text is written one step removed, partly from the outside, close to their commitment and yet with an approach from the outskirts; with impressions gained from a three months trip as a journalist in Southern and Eastern Africa in 1971 at the back of my mind, but without any direct experience of the hub of the movements’ work for the liberation of southern Africa from colonialism and apartheid; with the ambition of, as fair as possible, sketching people and groups, their successes and failures during a unique period in Swedish politics; and with a certain longing for a time when international solidarity informed Swedish debate and activities to such a degree that ANC president Oliver Tambo could justifiably describe relations between Sweden and southern Africa as “a natural system ... from people to people”.

Uppsala 30 april 2007/English version March 2019

BERNT JONSSON

“Many activists in the Africa groups spend off their time awake on solidarity work. It became an important part of our lives. The liberation of Southern Africa was also about out liberation from racism and oppression.”

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The documentation project "Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with Southern Africa"

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This is when it happened

- 1912** ANC is born.
- 1948** The Nationalist Party takes power in South Africa.
- 1954** Herbert Tingsten publishes *Problemet Sydafrika* (The South African problem).
- 1959** Blacks are divided into eight ethnic groups each with its own "homeland". The Fund for the Victims of Racial Oppression is started.
- 1960** The Sharpeville massacre
ANC and PAC are banned.
SWAPO is formed in Namibia.
Per Wästberg's *Förbjudet område* (Forbidden Territory) and *På svarta listan* (Blacklisted) are published.
LO/TCO/KF call for the first consumer boycott.
- 1961** MPLA and UPA (FNLA) take up arms in Angola and the ANC in South Africa.
Albert Luthuli awarded the Nobel peace prize.
The Swedish South Africa committee is formed.
- 1962** Oliver Tambo addresses a 1st May rally in Gothenburg.
Local South Africa committees are formed.
- 1963** PAIGC takes up arms in Guinea-Bissau.
ZANU breaks away from ZAPU.
ANC's leadership is imprisoned.
Södra Vätterbygdens South Africa Committee publishes precursor to the *Africa Bulletin*.
SUL calls for a new consumer boycott.
- 1964** Frelimo takes up arms in Mozambique.
The Commission for Humanitarian Assistance is set up.
- Eduardo and Janet Mondlane pay their first visit to Sweden.
- 1965** The Smith regime declares Unilateral Independence in Rhodesia.
First parliamentary motions on economic sanctions against South Africa.
Olof Palme supports liberation movements in significant speech in Gävle.
- 1966** ZANU takes up arms in Zimbabwe and SWAPO in Namibia.
- 1967** Frelimo appoints a representative in Sweden.
Southern Africa Information Bulletin is now printed.
- 1968** Davis Cup match against Rhodesia is stopped by demonstrators.
- 1969** Frelimo's president Eduardo Mondlane is assassinated.
The World Council of Churches launches the Programme to Combat Racism.
Conferences in Khartoum and Lusaka analyse liberation movements.
Widespread support for campaign against ASEA's role in Cabora Bassa hydro-electric project.
Parliament's OK to direct humanitarian support to liberation movements.
Trade with Rhodesia embargoed.
Emmaus groups start sending clothes to the liberation movements.
- 1970** First Sida contributions to PAIGC and ZANU.
MPLA appoints a representative to the Nordic countries.
- 1971** International Court decides South Africa's occupation of Namibia is illegal.
SWAPO appoints representatives to Scandinavia, among other places.
- First Sida contribution to SWAPO.
Africa Groups start a collection for MPLA.
- 1972** First Sida contribution to MPLA.
Africa Groups' first study book: *Imperialism och befrielsekamp* (Imperialism and liberation struggle).
SEN publishes *Kampen mot rasismen* (Struggle against racism).
- 1973** PAIGC president Amilcar Cabral assassinated.
UN/OAU Conference on southern Africa and ILO conference against apartheid.
First Sida contributions to ANC and ZAPU.
- 1974** Coup in Portugal against fascism and colonial wars.
Guinea Bissau independent.
Frihet åt förtryckta (Freedom for the oppressed) is the topic of the ecumenical development week.
- 1975** ZANU leader Herbert Chitepo killed by a car bomb.
Mozambique and Angola independent.
LO/TCO delegation pay controversial visit to South Africa.
Africa Groups in Sweden form a national organisation (AGIS).
Church leaders create a debate on South Africa at company AGMs.
- 1976** Massacre during peaceful protest march in Soweto leads to nationwide uprising.
South Africa's troops forced out of Angola temporarily.
ZANU and ZAPU form the Patriotic Front.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|---|---|
| 1977 | Black Consciousness Movement, Christian Institute et al. banned. Steve Biko killed in prison. Beyers Naudé banned. SACTU gets official Swedish support. AGIS publishes <i>Befrielsekampen i Afrika</i> (The Liberation Struggle in Africa). SEN adopts Programme of Action against Apartheid. | | Matabeleland. NIR publishes <i>Sydafrika och Svenskt Näringsliv</i> (South Africa and Swedish Commerce and Industry). UDF awarded newspaper Arbetet's <i>Låt Leva Pris</i> (Let Live Prize). | South Africa's president. Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu and other ANC leaders released. SWAPO wins an absolute majority in UN organised elections. | |
| 1978 | UN's International Year against Apartheid. South African attack kills over 600 in refugee camp in Casinga, Angola. UN's Security Council adopts Resolution 435 on Namibia. Major LO campaign for ANC, SWAPO, ZANU and ZAPU. AGIS- congress re-evaluates its negative view of LO. | 1984 | Nkomati Accord between Mozambique's government and apartheid regime. Black townships in South Africa protest against new tricameral constitution. Desmond Tutu awarded Nobel Peace Prize. Media breakthrough for ISAK. | 1990 | Namibia gains independence. Banning of ANC, PAC, SACP revoked. Nelson Mandela released. Tributes flow to Mandela at solidarity gala at the Globe. |
| 1979 | ISAK formed on 15th January. Sweden bans new investments in South Africa and Namibia. | 1985 | Newly formed COSATU organises South African trade union organisations. Treason trials begin. Secret "talks about talks" begin between the apartheid regime and the ANC. ANC galas in Gothenburg and Stockholm. | 1991 | CODESA negotiations start. ISAK exhibition <i>Den Svarta Förstaden</i> (the Black Townships) tours Sweden. |
| 1980 | Zimbabwe independent. Strategically important companies in South Africa forced to have their own militias. Brödet and Fiskarna (Bread and Fishes) initiate a Sida supported health care project with SWAPO. New consumer boycott started by ISAK. | | Ban on import of agricultural produce from South Africa. Nordic "Operation A Day's Work" collects 26 million kronor for the ANC's refugee schools. | 1992 | Whites support negotiations in referendum. ANC leaves negotiations after Boipathong massacre. Peace accord between Mozambique's government and Renamo. VEETU formed with support from Sida. ISAK starts fundraising for the elections. |
| 1981 | Many homeless because of major South African invasion in Angola. Western powers veto sanctions against South Africa. | 1986 | Mozambique's president Samora Machel killed in plane crash. USA's congress adopts partial economic sanctions against South Africa. Impressive Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid. Controversial campaign for boycott of Shell. | 1993 | Accord on democratic elections to be held in April 1994. Mandela: Revoke economic sanctions! CODESA agreement on provisional non-racial democratic constitution. Mandela and the Klerk share Nobel Peace Prize. EMPSA and PEMSA formed. |
| 1982 | Western powers, Front Line States and SWAPO unite on constitutional principles. | 1987 | Swedish trade embargo with South Africa. | 1994 | Landslide ANC victory in South Africa's first free and fair general elections. Mandela elected president. 66 peace observers sent from Sweden to help limit violence. |
| 1983 | UDF new umbrella organisation for opposition to apartheid. Mugabe regime crushes uprising in | 1988 | UN's Namibia Commissioner Bernt Carlsson killed when plane blown up over Lockerbie in Scotland. | 1995 | ISAK closed down. Network for southern Africa launched. |
| | | 1989 | F.W. de Klerk succeeds P.W. Botha as | | |



Apartheid a crime against humanity. ! May rally 1963.

1. SWEDEN GETS INVOLVED

1. We all come from Africa

When does history begin? And where? With Adam and Eve and the myth of creation in the Middle East or with palaeontologists' famed Lucy in East Africa, or with a yet to be named early hominid in Chad?

The answer – as far as we know – is Africa, somewhere in Africa.

When did humankind leave Africa and conquer the world? Probably in stages, in several waves of migration and each time as an increasingly modern hominid, i.e. biologically more like ourselves. We are all Africans.

It is a historical irony, that re-immigration to our original home in Africa led to, amongst other things, apartheid – policies for separate development and differentiation. In practice the immigrants' descendants oppressed the heirs of the original inhabitants. People with the “wrong” skin colour were cheated of their full humanity. Oppression was systematic. Its primary instrument was bureaucracy, while discriminatory legislation was upheld through direct physical violence.

None of this is particularly new. Apartheid was an offshoot of colonialism, a logical continuation, a consequence of colonialism's basic myth: the myth of white supremacy, the arrogance of regarding oneself as superior and thus having the right to ru-

le and, in practice, to oppress. When the colonial powers could no longer rule from the outside, a domestic ideology was developed to justify and thus preserve white supremacy. This solution was apartheid.

The liberation struggle in the different countries of southern Africa was thus concerned – although the political structures and the political opposition looked different – with one and the same thing: liberation from colonialism and racism. In time these efforts elicited growing international support. This book deals with Swedish participation in this global movement.

2. The scramble for Africa

In all periods strong states have tried to build up large countries and create empires. Unique to the West European empire builders is that they sailed over the oceans. After men like Columbus and Vasco da Gama “discovered” other continents, their appetite grew. Rival superpowers were driven to control territories that were as large as possible. Even if economic motives like access to raw materials and potential markets played a role, political motives were possibly more important. Economically, colonisation was a doubtful business in the long run, but through colonies states could display their grandeur and power. Thus they were able to

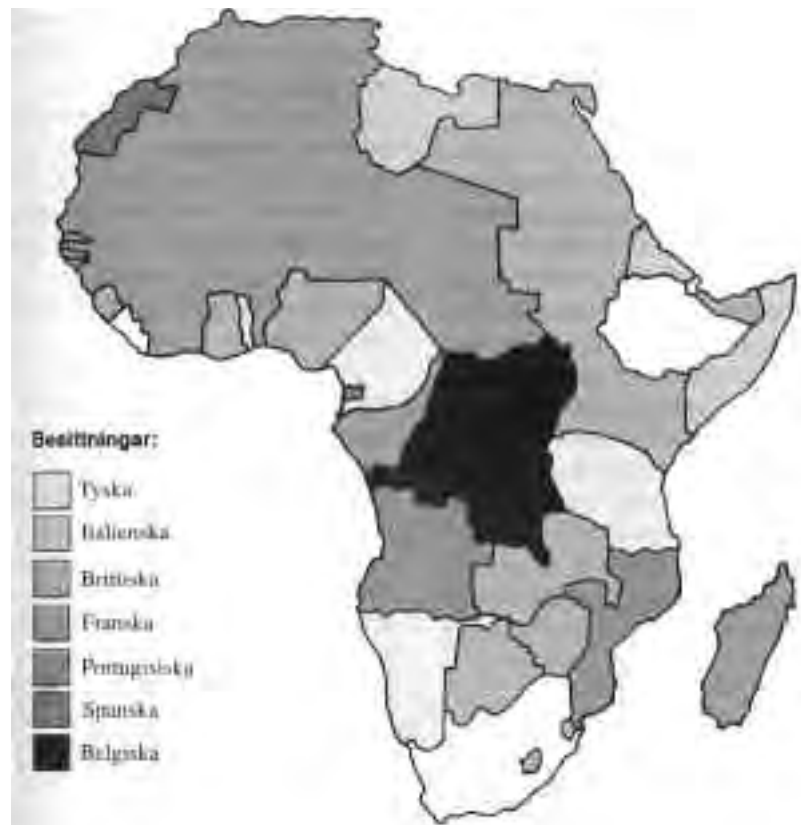
reinforce feelings of nationalism and dampen growing class contradictions. Imperialism could toy with the same sentiments that fascism later did.

When necessary, egotistical motives were gilded with arguments like “Raising the inferior races’ educational level and technical skills”, “Spreading Christian civilisation”, “Stopping the Arab slave trade” etc. Perfectly voluntarily Europeans shouldered “The White Man’s Burden”; interpreted by Kipling in a poem as the difficult role of Europeans as rulers and teachers of foreign races. Even if one or other individual actor may have had noble motives, the underlying racism was an important precondition.

Africa was the continent worst affected by colonial imperialism. It lay nearest Europe. In addition, “discoverers” like Livingstone and Stanley, driven by completely different motives, laid the foundation for the military conquest of the interior of the continent. Africa had already been badly weakened by the slave trade, first the Arabic in East Africa and later the European, trans-Atlantic traffic in West Africa. There is considerable disagreement about its extent – from 8 to 25 million people in the former case and from 12 to 40 million in the latter.

In the great scramble for Africa between 1870 and 1914 the whole continent was cut up except Ethiopia and Liberia. The butchers were Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain and Germany. The Berlin Congress in 1884–85 set the rules. Its ban on the slave trade in no way put an end to slavery in, for example, the King Leopold’s Belgian Congo.

The modernisation of weapons in the 1870s and the use of machine guns from the 1880s made conquest a technologically simple affair. If Africans tried armed resistance to the colonisers, they could be brutally shot



Colonial powers 1914.

down before the battle even began. The conquerors violated Africans’ humanity, whereas ivory and rubber had economic value.

Africa remained a “European” continent until after the Second World War. The colonial powers seemed unassailable.

3. The rise and fall of colonialism

Colonialism triumphed but suffered from internal contradictions. Humanitarian arguments for its civilising role could also be used against the system, when it was seen as far too brutal, as in King Leo-

pold's plundering of the Congo. Most missionaries reflected the values of their time and had close relations to the colonial powers. Some – like the black American William Sheppard – nevertheless became awkward spokesmen for the domestic population's opposition to European businessmen and colonial officials.

Two types of domestic churches emerged on African soil: the “Ethiopian” – sister churches to those of the missions, but with African leadership – and

“Zionist” or charismatic churches, often led by a prophet with special religious gifts. The latter was particularly common in southern and central Africa, where social tensions were strongest. By standing for a perspective from below and criticising capitalism and colonialism, they were often seen as posing a threat to the colonial power. Thus they were attacked, sometimes with considerable force. Treatment of the Kimbanguist movement in Congo in the 1920s is an example of this.

After the First World War, the loot – the German possessions in Africa – was shared. France got Togo and Cameroon, Great Britain took over Tanganyika (now Tanzania, after union with Zanzibar in 1964), and South West Africa was ceded to South Africa, at the time a British dominion. Formally the areas were taken over under a mandate from the League of Nations to lead these countries to self-governance, but there was little intention of fulfilling this task. Only after the Second World War did liberation become a reality, in most cases long after the end of the war.

The UN constitution of 1945 was the beginning of the end for the West European colonial powers. Winds of change began sweeping over Africa. The UN denoted 1960 as the Year of Africa and the General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples* (Resolution 1514), which declared the colonial system to be illegal. Among those behind this decision were the USA and the Soviet Union, though for entirely different reasons.

No fewer than 19 African colonies gained their independence in 1960. Apart from Congo-Kinshasa (Belgian) and Nigeria and Somalia (British) all were French. In many cases – though not in all – decolonisation proceeded without bloodshed.



Africa 1980. Year of independence.

While those who were liberated regarded themselves as having gained their freedom through struggle – often peaceful – the old colonial powers saw themselves as having given “the natives” their freedom and in addition the knowledge to carry it off. The new states tended to inherit the colonial borders and populations, where no consideration was taken of ethnic and cultural differences, which paved the way for new conflicts.

The blood-soaked treaties led to the liberation of the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, which occurred in the mid-1970s after a revolution in Portugal. Zimbabwe became internationally acknowledged as independent in 1980. Namibia’s independence was delayed to 1990, and South Africa’s black majority did not receive full citizenship rights until 1994.

4. Sweden as an unsuccessful colonial power

Sweden was in luck! Its period as a colonial power in Africa lasted only 15 years, from 1649 – 1664. In all it had five small colonies on the west coast of Africa with Cabo Corso in today’s Ghana as the centre of the first and last colony. At the time Sweden was certainly a great power in Europe, but the Dutch and English tolerated no competition and thus saved us from playing a dubious role as colonial masters. Instead it was said in the 1930s: “the only light in this failed enterprise was the Negros’ affection for the Swedes, who tried to help them”. (Gerhard Lindblom in *Röster i Radio* (Voices on the radio) 1933.)

This does not, however, mean that Sweden’s interest in Africa disappeared completely. King Gustav III (1771–1792) believed in gold in Senegal,



The Linnaeus disciple Sparrman documented not only South African Zoology.

whence the philanthropist Carl Bernhard Wadström moved to build a utopian society in the spirit of the Swedish mystic and seer, Emanuel Swedenborg, though it came to a similar disappointing end as in the previous century. Great honours were heaped on students of the Swedish scientist Carolus Linnéus who explored South Africa, namely Anders Sparrman and Carl Peter Thunberg. Other Swedes acquired leading positions or made fortunes for themselves in the Cape Colony in the early 1800s.

Nineteenth century Swedish seamen and soldiers could talk about their meetings with Africa. Among the latter, some were grim participants in Leopold’s reign of terror. Thanks for the well-developed fee-

ling in Sweden for Africa should above all go to Swedish missionaries, who were in Eritrea and Abyssinia/Ethiopia since 1865, and in South Africa and Congo since 1876 and 1881 respectively. In many quarters their letters and illustrated lectures created a sense of identification with Africans, who were given names and identities. In the international campaign against King Leopold's tyranny in the Congo a Swedish missionary, F V Sjöblom, played a significant role.

Swedish horror after Italy's bombings in 1935–36 of Abyssinia (and a Swedish Red Cross ambulance) should be seen against this background. The participation of Swedish UN troops in the Congo during the years of decolonisation later reinforced Swedes' feeling of community with Africa. Carl Gustaf von Rosen's airlift of food to relieve the humanitarian disaster during the Biafra conflict in the Nigerian civil war from 1967–70 drew media attention that had a similar effect.

As a country and a people without a colonial past and situated between East and West, Sweden was well-qualified to become involved in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid.

5. Swedish public opinion emerges

At the end of the Second World War, when the UN was young, a new desire to change the world emerged among power holders. The genocide of Jews and others had put racism in the spotlight, and in 1948 a UN commission was given the task of analysing and finding methods to prevent it. Twelve years later its twin, colonialism, was declared illegal.

In South Africa, however, developments went in the opposite direction. The Nationalist Party (NP) won the elections in 1948 on the promise of safeguarding white supremacy. It did not only have the



Gunnar Helander.



Per Wästberg.

support of white Afrikaans speakers, but also of many English-speaking whites. The whites had long held the economic power. With political power the NP could, through far-reaching racist legislation, exclude blacks from more and more of social sectors. They were only permitted to stay in the towns, mines and other "white" areas as migrant workers and a labour force for the whites. In all other cases they were banished to their so-called "homelands", economically unviable areas, where in many cases they had never set foot.

If discrimination had been limited to the economy and the bureaucracy, apartheid might have had a longer lifespan. However, a strategic mistake was made by making the oppression visible, through prohibiting whites and blacks from taking the same bus, sitting on the same park benches, playing sport together, etc. This "petty apartheid" showed how absurd the system was. International public opinion was eventually roused.

In Sweden, publicists, like editor-in-chiefs Ivar Harrie, *Expressen* (1949) and Herbert Tingsten, *Dagens Nyheter* (DN, 1953) continued to influence public opinion. In articles and the book *Problemet Sydafrika* (The South African problem) (1954) the latter also turned his attention to the opposition, i.e. the African National Congress (ANC) and the communist party. Despite his strong anti-communism Tingsten described it as liberal, and despite his well-known anti-clericalism he denoted Swedish missionaries as “the greatest liberal group in South Africa”.

Important for this stance was the fact that Tingssten had met Gunnar Helander, sent by the Church of Sweden Mission (SKM) to South Africa from 1938–56. In 1941 Helander had already sent articles to Swedish newspapers criticising race policies – initially without a response. After a while he was published in Gothenburg’s *Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* (Trade and Shipping News), in novels like *Zulu möter vit man* (Zulu meets white man) (1949) and in innumerable lectures at folk high schools, in churches, at social democratic and liberal party groups, and at universities. The apartheid regime responded to his outspoken criticism with gross slander. As Dean of the cathedral in Västerås – in cooperation with writer Per Wästberg – Helander became one of the most zealous figures in the first major wave of criticism of apartheid.

As a Rotary scholar in Rhodesia in 1959, Per Wästberg was responsible for a series of critical articles in DN and was thus deported, which led him to South Africa and further reinforced his commitment against racism. The articles were expanded the following year into two books: *Förbjudet område* (Forbidden Territory, Zimbabwe) and *På svartalistan* (Blacklisted, South Africa), in which he described Christians and Marxists “as the only ones

who dare to practice what they preach”. Public response was enormous, and in Sweden alone 90 000 and 80 000 copies were sold respectively.

Struggle against apartheid never became an antagonistic right/left issue (with the exception, for a certain period, of the issue of sanctions). Instead it became broadly rooted among the general public in Sweden, because those who pursued these questions were from the beginning religious, liberal, trade union and intellectual actors. With few exceptions this also came to apply to the national liberation movements.

Perhaps the most basic reason can be found in the following, by the writer Anders Ehnmark:

Africa, like America, is close by. The upper classes in Sweden have looked towards the European superpowers, Germany, France or England, but the people have turned towards America, because of the emigrants, and Africa, because of the missionaries. They have always found an Aunt Eleonora in America or a Cousin Agnes who was a missionary in the Congo.

(*Resan till Kilimanjaro. En essä om Afrika efter befrielsen* Trip to Kilimanjaro. An essay on Africa after liberation)

Struggle against apartheid never became an antagonistic right/left issue (with the exception, for a certain period, of the issue of sanctions). Instead it became broadly rooted among the general public in Sweden, because those who pursued these questions were from the beginning religious, liberal, trade union and intellectual actors.

South Africa's race laws

If I see the colour of your skin, I can tell you which human rights you have – might be a summary of the ideological basis for South African apartheid policies. To be white was to have a winning ticket, to be black meant drawing blank lots. For coloured and several Asian groups small lottery prizes could be won.

As early as the **1910s–20s** laws were promulgated that in principle entailed that the towns and cities became white by night, except for blacks with (often domestic) work. When the NP came to power in **1948** they passed a series of apartheid laws of varied weight and consequences, inter alia the following:

The **1950** National Register, defined a person's racial identity. Residential areas were classified according to race; those who lived in "the wrong" group area were forcibly removed; (Group Areas Act).

In **1952** new pass laws demanded that blacks must always carry their detailed ID-documents/passes with them; there were heavy penalties for forgetting – all to increase control.

In **1953** a special department for "Bantu Education" was started to develop a syllabus "suited to Bantu nature and potential"; the expressed intention was to prevent Africans from gaining the kind of education that might encourage them to apply for posts from which they were precluded under apartheid.

In **1959** blacks were divided into eight ethnic groups, allocated a "homeland".

The **1970** Bantu Homelands Citizens Act in principle deprived all blacks of their South African citizenship and forced on each of them citizenship in a "homeland", irrespective of whether or not they had ever lived there.

Not all Swedes agreed. The majority of the Swedish Alliance Mission and some of the Church of Sweden missionaries in South Africa were conservatives, as were diplomats of the old school. Despite the UN General Assembly's arms embargo, Swedish gas masks were exported to South Africa in 1963. ASEA director Åke Vrethem hailed South Africa as the "foremost outpost of civilisation in Africa" and Captain Lars Saltin on Transatlantic's ship *Sunnaren* betrayed a political refugee. The Moderate Party consistently stood outside joint political actions against apartheid, and the reactionary rightwing paper *Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar* stood out through its defence of the apartheid regime.

6. Forced Removals

After implementing the Group Areas Act, mass forced removals began in the 1950s. They continued up to the 1990s and according to certain observers may have affected over 3,5 million people. Among the victims of these policies were:

- black tenants on farms owned by whites;
- residents of "black spots", areas owned by blacks but surrounded by white farms;
- working class families in townships close to homelands;
- "superfluous" people (i.e. unemployed blacks) in urban areas.

The most notorious of the 1950s forced removals



People thrown out of their houses when the racially mixed township Sophiatown is demolished.



The leader of Frelimo Eduardo Mondlane studied on a Swedish scholarship after the Apartheid government denied him study possibilities in South Africa.

was when 60 000 people were forced from Sophiatown in Johannesburg to the new and later very newsworthy Soweto (South-Western Townships). In the 1970s a similar number were forced to leave District Six in Cape Town.

Up to 1955 Sophiatown was one of the few suburbs where blacks could own land. It was one of the oldest settlements and was in the process of developing into a living multi-ethnic community. Here was the only swimming pool for black children in Johannesburg. Growing numbers of industrial workers came to live, close to the growing industries in the city. Despite a forceful protest campaign by the

ANC and despite international publicity, heavily armed police forced residents out of their homes on the morning of 9th February 1955, loaded their belongings onto lorries and transported it all to an area twenty km outside the city. Sophiatown was bulldozed, and a white suburb called Triomf (triumph) was built in its place.

The pattern was repeated over the whole country. In all, 600 000 coloureds, Indians and Chinese, 40 000 whites, plus at least two million blacks were forcibly removed under the above-mentioned law.



The author Sara Lidman raised public awareness

7. Race laws and Swedish public opinion

The growth of Swedish public opinion against the South African apartheid regime was naturally connected to the increasingly oppressive race laws. The withdrawal of government study grants from black students at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, led for instance to the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) starting a bursary fund for black students in 1950, partly through a campaign to donate blood. It was an answer to an appeal by NUSAS, the National Union of South African Students, and SFS' counterpart in South Africa, which

campaigned for "everyone's right to freedom of expression and equal educational and economic opportunities".

The campaign did not, perhaps, raise a great deal of money, but one of those who had use of it was Eduardo Mondlane – future president of Frelimo. He had lost his bursary, since he was – in a somewhat illogical apartheid phrase – "a foreign native". More important in the long run were possibly the articles that SFS' international secretary Olof G Tandberg wrote after a study trip to South Africa in 1956. In five long reports in *Stockholms Tidningen*

The Apartheid Bible

In 1857 the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa decided that whites and blacks should have separate religious services because of white “weakness”! In the 1930s white theologians began to look for theological arguments to underpin apartheid, and summarised them in a report in 1948. On the whole, the white Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa supported apartheid policies, the largest to such a degree that it was described as “the Nationalist party engrossed in prayer”.

An international ecumenical conference in 1960 in Cottesloe, South Africa, repudiated every form of racial discrimination, which led the above churches to disassociate themselves from The World Council of Churches. In 1982 the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) declared apartheid theology to be a false doctrine. Two Dutch Reformed ministers, Beyers Naudé (white) and Allan Boesak (coloured), were leading and outspoken critics of both the regime and the churches.

The former broke with his church and refrained from following a flourishing career, devoting himself instead to combating apartheid policies in various roles, inter alia as the founder of the Christian Institute and as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. Naudé was under house arrest from 1977–84 and, after the banning of the ANC when its leaders were either in prison or in exile, he became an informal leader of the opposition to apartheid.

The latter was a liberation theologian, Chairman of WARC from 1982–91, one of those to take the initiative to start the United Democratic Front (UDF), a brilliant speaker and later a prominent ANC politician. In 1999 Boesak was sentenced for embezzling aid

funds but was later pardoned and is again in service as a pastor. His political career seems to be on hold.

Both Naudé and Boesak had close contacts with churches in Sweden; Boesak also with the social democrats.

How could South African Christians justify apartheid? Clearly through carefully selected and interpreted biblical texts, so that they together formed a whole – an Apartheid Bible. The most popular text concerned the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9), where people’s attempt to build a tower to reach the heavens was confounded by the sudden appearance of many languages, after which people spread all over the world. This was the Lord’s will, and that is the way it should stay – according to the advocates of apartheid. They also referred to Deuteronomy 32:8, where it says that “the Lord gave land to the people and separated them from one another”.

The description of the first Pentecost says that “every man heard them speak in his own language.” (Acts 2:6). In a traditional Christian interpretation this is usually seen as a new start for a common humanity, where the Tower of Babel and the time of chaotic languages is past. In one of Revelations’ apocalyptic visions (7:9) one can read, that “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands”. Where other Christians regard this as an expression of absolute community, followers of apartheid regarded it as proof of the correctness of separating people from each other.

(Stockholm's Newspaper) he sketched a dark picture:

One left the Union of South Africa with a bitter taste in one's mouth..., shame over one's white skin... In the course of a few years a white police state has been created, which in the name of "Christian Nationalism" conducts a cold-blooded and intentional exploitation of the non-white population groups.

After 1959 no black student was permitted to register at the four earlier racially open English-speaking universities without special permission from the Department of Education. White students who took part in classes at black institutions of higher learning could be sentenced to up to six months in prison. The Minister of Bantu Education became responsible for the black Fort Hare University College, i.e. in practice it meant a downgrading of advanced tertiary studies for blacks. Professors in Stockholm protested in a letter to South Africa's government against this segregation of higher education.

Late in the same year Gunnar Helander and Per Wästberg took the initiative to start a fund for the victims of racial oppression in South Africa. After

active lobbying SFS succeeded in influencing the government, so that in his address to the UN General Assembly in 1959 the social democratic Foreign Minister Östen Undén raised the issue of the non-white students' deteriorating situation. It was the first time Sweden talked about apartheid in the UN.

Among the laws passed by the regime that revealed the absurdity of apartheid policies were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Amendment Act against sexual relations between whites and blacks (1950). That Swedish seamen were sentenced to whipping in 1960-61 for offences against the sex laws did hold apartheid legislation up to ridicule, but it hardly caused a public outcry in Sweden.

When, however, the writer Sara Lidman, together with Peter Nthite, formerly an organisational secretary of the ANC Youth League and already accused of treason, were arrested in Johannesburg for offences against the same laws, there were big black headlines both in South Africa and Sweden. The punishment could be up to ten lashes and seven years in prison. Sara Lidman defended their relationship, but she had to leave the country before the trial, after which charges against Nthite were withdrawn.



Apartheid meant completely different living conditions for black and white.

2.

1960 – 1965

VIOLENCE

ESCALATES

8. The massacre in Sharpeville and its aftermath

In the late 1950s international solidarity acquired an increasingly prominent place among both the unions and the social democrats. In late 1959, for instance, the blue-collar confederation LO started a collection called *LO assists over borders* collecting 7,4 million kronor (today valued at over 75 million) in the first year. The salaried employees central organisation TCO took similar initiatives. In January 1960 LO decided to launch a consumer boycott during April and May. It was supported by the Cooperative Federation (KF), which at the time was responsible for 10-20% of the fruit import from South Africa and regarding oranges 20-30%.

On 21st March 1960 thousands of people gathered in Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, in a peaceful singing demonstration to protest and ask the local police to arrest them for breaking the pass laws. The response was bloody. 300 police opened fire. The result: 69 killed and 186 wounded most shot from behind.

The massacre escalated the conflict. On the part of the regime: the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC, a more militant breakaway group, formed in 1959) were banned and sweeping powers were extended to the security forces, who arrested 18 000 people. On the part of the liberation movement: initially extensive strikes

and consumer boycotts, and from 1961 the armed struggle began in the form of sabotage and bombs against power supplies, railways, police stations and government buildings.

Sharpeville roused international public opinion. In Sweden reactions were strong throughout the country. Trade unions organised spontaneous meetings in factories and on building sites. Often formal resolutions were adopted condemning the apartheid regime. In 1960 for the first time, the labour movements' 1st May demonstrations focused on the liberation struggle in Africa. Because of Sharpeville the LO/TCO/KF boycott was extended to last five months.

Private importers and shops did not participate, which led to the demand for political decisions on economic sanctions. Like nearly all Sweden's parliamentary parties the social democratic government was cold-hearted to this demand, which was repeated at regular intervals in the following decades and became increasingly strong even among Social Democrats. Leaders of companies with interests in South Africa described the boycott as "irresponsible". In the South African press "the Swedish people's hostility towards South Africa" was seen to have reached new heights, which made the ANC happy; the attacks on Sweden informed the opposition in South Africa that it had international friends.

The economic effects on South Africa were limited; this later became a weapon – both for and



The massacre in Sharpville March 21 1960 awakened the international opinion.

against – in debates on sanctions. As an expression of solidarity the boycott was a success. Its main instructive value was that it broadened and deepened awareness of the consequences of apartheid policies.

In March 1961 the Swedish South Africa Committee (SSAK) was formed with widespread support in trade union, cultural, liberal and social democratic circles and spearheaded by Gunnar Hellander and Per Wästberg. Only the Moderates did not join. Encouraged by the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) and on the initiative of Swedish soci-

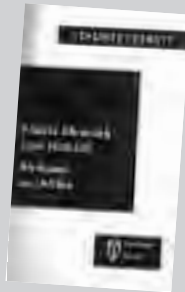
alists and liberals the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (SUL, now LSU) started both a collection and a consumer boycott of South African goods on 1st March 1963. Over 200 local action groups were started all over the country, and pressure from below grew strongly, particularly when individual activists joined in the work.

ICA, Tempo, EPA (private importers) and KF decided to stop importing South African goods, and Systembolaget (state-owned liquor outlets) stopped selling wines from South Africa. Imports fell by 10%, but exports increased by 16%, since Swedish

African writers reach Swedish readers

Not only Swedish writers and journalists paved the way for strong public opinion in favour of the liberation of southern Africa. A number of African writers also found a voice – in several cases, interestingly enough, translated and published by church owned publishers. A probable cause was that many African writers in one or another way belonged to or came from a Christian tradition.

African Nationalism, 1960 was the title of the first book by reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, later president of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). *Africa Narrates*, an anthology of short stories edited by Per Wästberg and dominated by South and West African writers came out in 1961. Anders Ehnmark and Sven Hamrell edited *Africans on Africa*, 1962, a collection of essays by well-known political leaders. Albert Luthuli's 1962, *Let my People Go!* was published in the same year. Amnesty-inspired *The Anatomy of Apartheid*, 1964 was a collection of texts by critical white and black South Africans edited by Marion Friedman. Nelson Mandela's *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, 1965 in-



cluded his famous Rivonia trial speech.

In Rhodesia (1967) Judith Todd (daughter of Garfield Todd, a Protestant missionary from New Zealand and prime minister of Southern Rhodesia from 1953–58) sketched the conflict from a ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) perspective. Alan Paton was a South African writer and leading liberal whose *The Long View*, 1969 was a selection of articles from a journal, *Contact*. Kenneth Kaunda's *Zambia Shall Be Free*, 1963 was followed by *A Humanist in Africa*, 1969, letters to Colin Morris, a missionary who made the previous white regime feel uncomfortable and later became one of Kaunda's counsellors.

Wästberg's anthology was printed in 16 000 copies and though none of the other books reached these figures, the Swedish debate was influenced by them. African leaders became directly and indirectly known to a broad public through these books, which led to an understanding of their message and a willingness to support them.

companies obstructed the boycott. After a while it came to an end, although KF maintained it up to 1969. Other issues – like the Vietnam war and the liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies – took over. Nevertheless, the first wave of South Africa campaigns had an influence on Swedish commitment in other international questions.

9. Nobel Peace Prize winner intercepted in Gothenburg

A Christian Social Democrat, Evert Svensson suggested in 1960 – with support of members of parliament from the Centre and Liberal parties – that ANC president Albert Luthuli should be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The suggestion was well-received, but partly because of the war in the Congo

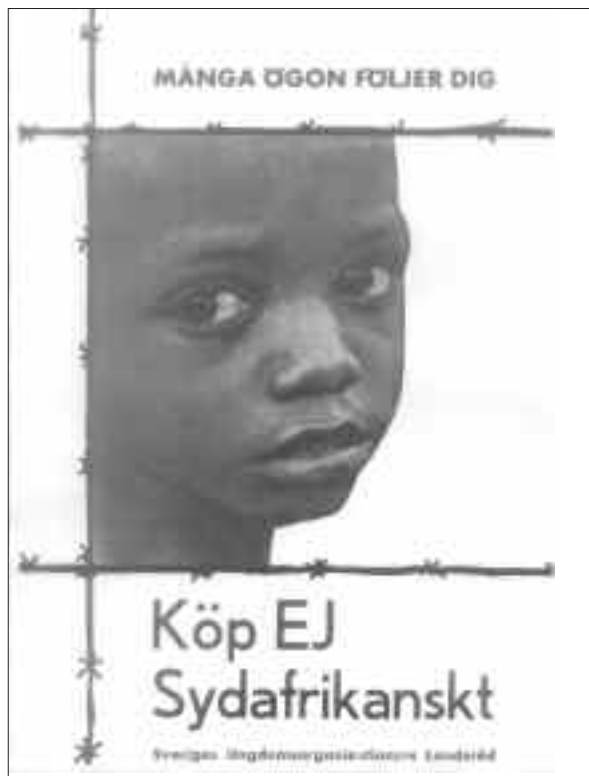


En skog av fanor bildade fond vid uppvaktningen på Torslanda flygplats. På bilden ses fr. Nokukhanya Lutuli, Albert Lutuli, ordf. i GFS Bengt C:son Sandkull, riksdagsman Evert Svensson och ombudsman Ossiian Kristensson.

Albert Lutuli fick en stilfull studenthyllning på Torslanda

Så kallt här är! sade fru Nokukhanya Lutuli när hon tillsammans med sin make fredspristagaren Albert Lutuli vid halv sextiden på torsdagskvällen steg ned för trappan från SAS-planet Atle Viking på Torslanda flygplats. Hon ångrade strax sina ord. Ett varmare andligt välkomnande än det paret fick i Göte-borg hade de inte mötts av på någon av de platser de passerat under sin färd till Nobelfesten i Oslo.

"Worthy of a Zulu Chief" wrote Göteborgs Posten about the tributes to Luthuli.



"Many eyes follow you. Don't buy South African" Poster from the Swedish Youth Council.

the prize was handed out the following year, at the same time as the 1961 peace prize to the late Dag Hammarskjöld. Both SUL and the Christian Social Democrats invited Luthuli to come to Sweden in connection with the prize giving in the Norwegian capital, Oslo. The apartheid regime refused. Evert Svensson said:

Luthuli was confined to the village of Groutville and had to apply for special permission to leave South Africa and then only for the purpose of visiting Oslo. He was not permitted to stop anywhere else, not even in other parts of

Norway. We in the Christian Social Democratic movement asked the Foreign Minister, Östen Undén, to help us so he wrote a letter to Pretoria but it did not help. We knew that Luthuli's plane would touch down at Torslanda – at that time planes from Copenhagen to Oslo always landed in Gothenburg.

Then I had an idea. I asked the airport manager for permission to greet Luthuli on the tarmac. He agreed and we immediately started working with the social democratic students in Gothenburg to organise a meeting. We rigged up a rostrum and found an orchestra. Luthuli himself did not know that he would be met in Gothenburg until shortly before he landed.

When the plane landed 500 people stood on the tarmac. They were from the Christian Social Democrats, the Social Democratic students and 20 trade unions. Luthuli was both surprised and moved, and the event attracted considerable media attention. "A real live Christian Zulu Chief", the press wrote.

10. The first decade of the Thirty Years War

In Swedish history the period between 1618 and 1648 is often referred to as the "Thirty Years War", which ended with the Peace of Westphalia. Mainly for older Swedes perhaps, the name is associated with an illustrious time. Sweden was a great European power, and Swedish King Gustavus II Adolphus saved Protestantism despite losing his life in the mist at the battlefield of Lützen. Others, however, do not regard the period as being one of high ideals, but as full of misery, violent outrage and the further impoverishment of the already poor, both in Sweden and on the continent.

Irrespective of one's values, the concept is misleading on one point: There was not *one* war, but many. Nevertheless they were closely related. One can describe the armed struggles in southern Africa that began in 1961 in a similar way. Even here the "Thirty Years War" has been launched as a collective concept (John S Saul: Recolonization and Resistance: Southern Africa in the 1990s). It was also not one war but many, yet they were closely related, in the first hand in two blocs or – using a musical term – in two clusters:

On the one hand the white minority regimes in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, on the other the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique.

The last-named country was regarded as strategically important by both sides and a reason for the regimes in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Portugal to coordinate their intelligence services. The liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies cooperated closely with one another and with those fighting the white regimes.

This Thirty Years War was preceded by the violence of the colonial powers and the white minority regimes. In South Africa and the Central African Federation (Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe) black demonstrators were shot to death. In Guinea Bissau the Portuguese police killed 50 striking dockworkers in Pijiguiti in August 1959. In Windhoek in Namibia, South African police in December 1959 shot and killed 13 people who opposed forced removals. In Angola a series of assaults culminated in a massacre in Catete (June 1960), where over 30 demonstrators were killed and 200 wounded by Portuguese troops. That month the Portuguese mowed down 500 unarmed demonstrators in Mueda in northern Mozambique.

What is a liberation movement?

A national liberation movement is defined as

- a) a political organisation which
- b) strives to attain independence and form a government for
- c) a colonised people or otherwise oppressed people and which
- d) is recognised by the United Nations and/or the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as representing that people.

Tor Sellström: Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa

THE ROAD TO SWEDISH COMMITMENT

The liberation wars in southern Africa began in Angola in February–March 1961, when the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), attacked the prison in Luanda armed with clubs and knives in a vain attempt to free their imprisoned leaders. At the same time, the UPA (Union of the Populations of Angola), later called FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola), inspired a popular uprising in the northern provinces. In revenge, the Portuguese massacred several hundred Africans in Luanda's slums. The uprising coincided with the hijack by a Portuguese captain, Henrique Galvão, of the cruise ship Santa Maria, in protest against colonial violence and Portugal's fascist regime.

International media saw a connection here. Many journalists thus gathered in Luanda, among them Sven Aurén from *Svenska Dagbladet* (conservative daily). He was critical of this "revolt of the unci-

vilised against the civilised”. The alternative to Portuguese rule was “chaos” and opportunities for international communism. Thus it was “Portugal’s duty to remain strong in Angola, both for the sake of the black population and for the Western world”.

Similar sentiments were echoed in the Moderates’ theoretical journal *Svensk Tidskrift* (Swedish Journal), where all was peace and joy in Angola. The editor, Professor Erik Anners, a member of parliament from 1963, said it was “amazing” that the greater part of the Swedish press was “prepared to believe in anti-colonial propaganda run by the Soviet bloc”. His views were criticised even within the conservative press, and public opinion did not back Portugal.

In July–September 1961 *Expressen* ran a collection called *Angolahjälpen* (Assist Angola) to support Angolan refugees in Congo. It was a response to an appeal by CONCP (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies), an organ for the cooperation of MPLA, Frelimo and PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde). 4,5 tons of medicines were collected – mostly penicillin – and reached the refugees through MPLA.

On 16th December 1961 – the day after Albert Luthuli returned from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo – a number of bombs exploded at power stations and government buildings in South Africa.



Umkhonto we Sizwe. The armed wing of ANC.

Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK, Spear of the Nation), the ANC’s newly formed armed wing, claimed these actions. At the same time the ANC explained in a manifesto spread over all

South Africa, that its non-violent line had been regarded as an expression of weakness and as a green light for the regime’s use of violence; thus one must now adopt new methods. Round that time a group of young liberals launched a secret sabotage group, later called the ARM (Armed Resistance Movement). Subsequently the liberal party was also banned.

The change in the methods of opposition did not have a great impact on Swedish public opinion, as it was already very critical of the apartheid regime. The Peace Prize to Luthuli placed the ANC in everyone’s consciousness as the movement of hope in South Africa.

In Guinea Bissau there were only 2 000 Europeans, which was probably one explanation for the PAIGC’S rapid military successes after starting its armed struggle in January 1963. Another reason may have been that the PAIGC had a well-laid strategy, based on the political mobilisation of farmers in southern Guinea Bissau combined with civil disobedience and sabotage. They were also systematic in the administration of the liberated areas. PAIGC became “an ideal kind of organisation for us”, an official



Amilcar Cabral made several high profile visits to Sweden. Poster from a public meeting in Uppsala 1968.

at Sida said later.

Swedish contacts with PAIGC were broad, intense and positive, and came to include both the government and its critics, like the extra-parliamentary left. This was, to a large degree, because its president, Amílcar Cabral, had a great measure of diplomatic talent, but he was murdered in January 1973. A number of journalists, writers and politicians visited the liberated areas in Guinea Bissau, and these contacts eventually led to an important breakthrough on the principle of direct humanitarian support to liberation movements.

In September 1964 Frelimo started its armed struggle in northern Mozambique and a year later was able to establish “semi-liberated areas” there. As with PAIGC, they could set up their own administration with schools, clinics and trade. At the same time – and more so after the meeting of the International Socialists held in Stockholm in 1966 – they tried to improve their contacts with the Swedish Social Democrats, without having to jettison their good contacts with the Liberal Party. The interest was mutual.

During 1968–70, there was a deep crisis in Frelimo as it had to deal with an internal revolt with racist overtones. Its president Eduardo Mondlane was murdered in February 1969, while Portugal escalated its military activity, and held half the population in the most northerly provinces behind barbed wire. The internal crisis was first overcome with the election of Samora Machel as president and Marcelino dos Santos as vice-president in May 1970.

If official Sweden hesitated to support Frelimo during the difficult years, university students and school pupils did not waver in their support. Janet Mondlane was Eduardo Mondlane’s widow and principal of the Mozambique Institute, Frelimo’s

school in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Inspired by her, SECO (Swedish Pupils’ Central Organisation) collected over 2 million kronor in 1969 (about 15 million today) for the Institute through Operation a Day’s Work (*Operation Dagsverke*). At the same time many Swedes got to know Frelimo.

The Central African Federation was dissolved in 1963. In 1962 the editors-in-chief of all the major newspapers in Stockholm (except for conservative *Svenska Dagbladet*) together with other leading liberals and social democrats backed Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia and his party UNIP (United National Independence Party), to the irritation of Swedish business interests. On his visit to Sweden in 1963 he was given a warm reception and strong support prior to negotiations with Great Britain. In 1964 Malawi and Zambia gained their independence.

An important effect of the media campaign was that the Centre and Liberal Parties later began to support liberation movements in southern Africa. Rhodesia’s white minority regime banned both ZANU and ZAPU in 1964. By chance, ZANU’s former general secretary Robert Mugabe was adopted as a political prisoner by Amnesty Group No. 34, led by journalist, Eva Moberg.

In November 1965 Rhodesia declared Unilateral Independence (UDI). It was not accepted internationally. In November the Security Council recommended that member countries introduce a complete prohibition on trade, which Sweden immediately implemented. Further, Great Britain was exhorted to act to achieve majority rule, which the Labour government did not do. Sweden vainly tried to get the Security Council to introduce mandatory sanctions. As a front line state, Zambia was forced to pay the price for the Western powers’ passivity.

Together with 2 000 political prisoners, the lea-



Woman Frelimo soldier under training.

ders of the liberation movements in Zimbabwe were kept in prison, generally for about ten years. They and their families received support from Sida through the Church of Sweden (Lutheran), The World Council of Churches and – on the ground – from Christian Care.

Representatives of ZAPU maintain that they be-

gan the armed struggle in 1965. It is, however, more common to regard the Battle of Sinoia on the 28th April 1966 between ZANU and the regime's security forces as the start of the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. At the same time representatives for both ZAPU and the more militant ZANU came to Sweden, in part to address May 1st rallies and take part

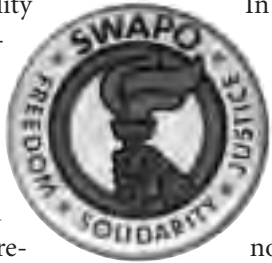
in the Socialist International's meeting in Stockholm. The latter led them and other liberation movements to a harsh confrontation with British Labour, which, in turn, contributed to the beginning of a more independent attitude by Swedish social democracy. Inga Thorsson, president of the Social Democratic Women's League, had in 1962 already condemned British and French party members as "supporters of a conservative order".

After years of fruitless appeals for UN action, the first armed clashes occurred between SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) and South African security forces in Ovamboland, northern Namibia in August 1966. Two months later the UN General Assembly decided to revoke the mandate from South Africa and formally – though without practical effect – make Namibia the direct responsibility of the UN. In 1969 the Security Council declared that South Africa's continued presence in Namibia was illegal. This was confirmed in 1971 by the International Court of Justice in the Hague, but the superpowers refused to take any action. Instead the regime in Pretoria could focus on combating SWAPO militarily,

seeking to create internal support in Namibia for an internationally acceptable solution, and, through diplomacy, play for time and block negotiations. They succeeded with this strategy up to 1988, when South Africa suffered a major military defeat in Angola.

Years earlier, strong ties had developed between Namibia and Sweden, partly through the Lutheran World Federation and the Swedish Church (80–90% of Namibians are Christian, mostly Lutheran), and partly through Namibian bursary students in Sweden who, alongside their studies, were politically very active. *Aftonbladet* and *Arbetet* (social democratic papers) had already in 1966 run a campaign to collect money for the liberation struggle in Namibia. In line with the Security Council's resolution in August 1969 for all states to "increase their moral and material assistance to the people of Namibia in their struggle against foreign occupation", Sweden gave economic assistance for legal defence at political trials and to the families of prisoners.

In 1972 *Aftonbladet* published an open letter from Bishop Leonard Auala and Reverend Peter Gowaseb of Namibia to Prime Minister Vorster, in which they, with some sarcasm, asserted that South Africa "has failed to become informed on Human Rights ... in respect of the non-white population".





The old Portuguese pirate has his foothold in the colonies. Cover from Southern Africa Information Bulletin 1974. Published by the Africa Groups of Sweden.

3.
1965–1970
FOCUS ON
PORTUGAL'S
COLONIES

11. Late 1960s – public opinion fragmented

In the early 1960s in Sweden the media, politicians and organisations generally rallied round demands for radical political changes in southern Africa. SSAK, (Swedish South Africa Committee) was formed in 1961 and had considerable political support. SUL's fund raising for South Africa and its consumer boycott, beginning in March 1963, had a great impact. Pressure on the government and parliament increased to get them to decide on economic sanctions, which they consistently refused on the grounds that it was a task for the UN Security Council.

In the mid-1960s the campaign began to wane, even though certain gains could be noted: Swedish rock artist Little Gerhard cancelled his appearance in South Africa, many counties and municipalities decided not to buy South African goods (Wrong, said the Swedish Supreme Administrative Court in 1969; they may not pursue foreign policies), and South Africa banned the troubadour Cornelis Vreeswijk for having donated his fees to SSAK. The organisations backing the SSAK and SUL campaign returned to their day-to-day work. Only the activists remained. In 1966 for example a folder of work by artists and writers was produced including *inter alia* Gert Aspelin, Jörgen Fogelquist and Lage

Lindell as well as Peter Weiss and Sara Lidman. 200 folders were sold for 300 kronor each to support the campaign. It was used to print the previously cyclo-styled *Southern Africa Information Bulletin* (Södra Afrika Informationsbulletin). Among its regular contributors was the journalist Rolf Gustafsson, later foreign correspondent for TV2 and *Svenska Dagbladet* (conservative).

Nevertheless, the pattern was clear: in 1963, 225 editorials on South Africa were published in the 13 largest newspapers, in 1966 they were nearly halved to 119, while by 1969 they had fallen to 21! Outside the media, fewer than before were involved in shaping public opinion. Two events broke this pattern, namely stopping Rhodesian tennis players in the Davies Cup match in Båstad in 1968, and the campaign that forced Sweden's ASEA to withdraw from the building of the Cabora Bassa Dam in Mozambique in 1968-69. These spectacular actions created great media interest, reflected in both news and public opinion.

Two processes complicated the solidarity work – the liberation movements' armed struggle and the Vietnam movement. It was not a result of a strong pacifist current in Sweden. There was none: on the contrary, in many places there was a romantic view of guerrilla struggle. Those who raised the Buddhists' non-violent opposition in Vietnam tended to be thought of as disloyal, as not showing enough



solidarity with the Vietnamese people and FNL (NLF, National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam).

Several groups sympathised with the liberation movements' goals, but had difficulty in backing their change of strategy. The government, with 85% of parliamentarians behind it, supported majority rule in all these countries but preferred peaceful solutions. It was politically inconceivable that Swedish arms could be donated or sold to liberation movements. To a varying degree – in public at least – the liberation movements were critical of this, since they thus came to be militarily dependent on the Eastern bloc.

When did African countries gain their independence?

Malawi	6.7 1964
Zambia	24.10 1964
Botswana	30.9 1966
Lesotho	4.10 1966
Mauritius	12.3 1968
Swaziland	6.9 1968
Guinea Bissau	10.9 1974
Moçambique	25.6 1975
Cape Verde	5.7 1975
São Tomé and Príncipe	12.7 1975
Angola	11.11 1975
Namibia	21.3 1990
South Africa	10.5 1994*

* Nelson Mandela sworn in as president; the day chosen to symbolise the "new" South Africa. Formally South Africa stopped being a British colony 31.5 1910



The flags from the three liberation movements that both the government and the Africa Groups supported. From a poster exhibition by the Stockholm Africa Group in 1974.

In February 1966 SSAK declared its support of the armed struggle, but many activists in the anti-apartheid movement had already left or were on their way to FNL-groups. Organisations in Sweden

coordinated their criticism of the USA's war in Vietnam through the Swedish Vietnam Committee, but the Vietnam movement was dominated by the DFFG (The United FNL-Groups) and their thousands of activists. The movement had Maoist leaders and anti-imperialism as the mode of interpretation. According to its "focal point theory" the struggle ought to focus on the weakest point of the enemy – USA's imperialism – and that was seen to be Indochina. One was regarded as a sell-out if one con-



Hillevi Nilsson from the Stockholm Africa Group interviewing President Agostinho Neto in Dar es Salaam in connection with her second trip to the by MPLA liberated territory in Angola.

tinued to work with southern Africa.

For others, opposition to Portugal's colonial empire was central. The visits to Sweden of PAIGC's president Amílcar Cabral and Frelimo's president Eduardo Mondlane contributed to this, as they made a good impression on both activists and the Swedish establishment. The movements' representatives in Sweden also played an important role in this context: Onésimo Silveira, PAIGC, and Lourenço Mutacá, Frelimo.

In 1970, MPLA's president Agostinho Neto and its vice-president Daniel Chipenda visited Sweden. Their meeting with, amongst others, the Social Democrats' international secretary Pierre Schori contributed to MPLA being allowed to open an office in Stockholm, which it shared with the Stockholm Africa Group. In the same year the first Portuguese deserters arrived. They were given political asylum and participated actively in imparting information on fascist Portugal. An important factor underlying support to the three above-mentioned liberation movements was that many Swedish leaders of public opinion visited liberated areas during the years around 1970 and could give eye-witness accounts of the movements' work.

The DN journalist Anders Johansson went into northern Mozambique with Frelimo; the Africa Groups' Rolf Gustavsson and Bertil Malmström, writer Göran Palm, photographers Knut Andreasen and Jean Hermansson, social democratic politicians Birgitta Dahl and Gunnar Hofring as well as political scientist Lars Rudebeck all visited Guinea Bissau with PAIGC, while journalists Elisabeth Hedborg and Hillevi Nilsson went in to eastern Angola with MPLA. In addition, the liberal party's Olle Wästberg visited Angola together with FNLA.

At roughly the same time as the Africa Groups

were formed, similar solidarity organisations were started in other Western European countries and in North America. By and large they regarded welfare in the West as being largely built on colonial plunder, that the liberation struggles in southern Africa were, in the final analysis, directed at the USA's world hegemony, and that one should only support anti-imperialist liberation movements.

In Angola this meant the MPLA, but not FNLA nor UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). In Mozambique, Frelimo met the criteria, but not Coremo (Mozambique Revolutionary Committee). In South Africa it meant the ANC, but not PAC. It was significant that the US had friendly relations with the PAC, which, unlike the ANC, depicted whites as the enemy rather than racism, but which repudiated ANC links to communism.

Dick Urban Vestbro, for years a driving force in the Swedish Africa Groups, says:

During my stay in Tanzania in 1968-69, before the Africa Groups were formed, I had made contact with a number of people in the solidarity movement. Among them I met Prexy Nesbitt with roots in Christian and radical black groups in USA (later employed by the World Council of Churches' international campaign against racism); the Canadian political scientist John Saul, who later started the Toronto-based solidarity group TCLSAC; the Italian political scientist Giovanni Arrighi, who had contact with left groups in Italy; Peter Meyns, who came to participate in the West German solidarity movement; as well as Mikko Lohikoski and Börje Mattsson, who worked with Finnish peace activists and the World Peace Council.

During my time in Tanzania I had regular con-

"At roughly the same time as the Africa Groups were formed, similar solidarity organisations were started in other Western European countries and in North America. By and large they regarded welfare in the West as being largely built on colonial plunder."

tact with the liberation movements Frelimo, MPLA, ANC, SWAPO and ZAPU, all of which had offices in Dar es Salaam. I also established contact with the radical student movement at the University of Dar es Salaam.

The Angola Comité in the Netherlands invited the new solidarity groups to the first joint conference over Easter 1970 in Driebergen. Seven from Sweden attended, including Dick Urban Vestbro. An international network thus became feasible, and they took the decision to exchange material. The Dutch were publishing the fortnightly *Facts and Reports*, a bulletin of press clippings, an invaluable source of information on developments in southern Africa. The second conference was held in Valkenburg, Holland over Easter 1971, and Mai Palmberg led the Africa Groups' delegation. Unlike many other solidarity groups, the Angola Comité had good contacts with churches and other established organisations. Dick Urban Vestbro:

I regarded this with a certain scepticism, but at the same time was forced to realise that they succeeded in affecting public opinion in Holland while we remained within the student left.

Prior to the UN's Conference on the Human Envi-



The press cutting bulletin Facts and Reports from the Nederland was an important source of information. It was partly funded from Sweden via Sida.

ronment held in Stockholm in June 1972 the Africa Groups were one of the organisers of the Alternative Environment Conference. One of its main topics was environmental degradation due to the USA's war in Vietnam. In line with this topic, Stockholm's Africa Group compiled a publication on the use of napalm and herbicides in Angola and Mozambique. By using the UN's definition of genocide one wanted to show that similar things were happening in Portugal's colonies.

Most of those who participated in these joint solidarity conferences belonged to the new left and were critical of the Soviet system. There were, however, some who were more kindly disposed to the Soviet Union, like the French Committee against Racism and Colonialism, a Belgian South Africa

Committee and Finnish activists in contact with the World Peace Council's office in Helsinki. Even in the new left it was tempting not to be too critical of the Soviet system, since the liberation movements received crucial support from the Eastern bloc. When China broke with the Soviet Union, pro-Chinese groups in the West wanted the solidarity movement to support movements in Africa favoured by China. They were few and weak, and these demands did not seriously threaten the unity of the solidarity movements.

12. No tennis in Båstad

1968 was the year of youth revolt: Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, Tokyo, Cape Town, yes, even Stockholm, which felt it was a part through a pseudo-re-

volutionary occupation of the student union. The Prague spring blossomed; there was hope for the future and new political energy.

In January Sweden was drawn to play tennis against Rhodesia in the Davis Cup. In March the Smith regime executed three freedom fighters, despite international protests. In Sweden the government strongly condemned this. In parliament, Liberal Party leader Sven Wedén maintained that to play the game against Rhodesia would conflict with “the

views of a very broad Swedish public”. The Social Democratic government did not plan to prevent the match, though Sweden had broken with the regime in Salisbury. They maintained that it was up to those close to the sponsor Enskilda Banken – the Swedish Tennis Association and its spokesman, Mats Hasselqvist – to take a stand.

In different ways ZAPU and ZANU declared their resolute opposition to the match. The South Africa Committee in Lund took the initiative to



Big variation in the views by different newspapers. "Eggs, oil on the court in Båstad." "Oil bombs stopped the match." "Top secret new venue." "The police did the right thing." "The Battle of Båstad." "Demonstrating nun ashamed of her generation." "The Battle of Båstad." "We saw police beat young girls."

start “a temporary anti-fascist, anti-imperialist united front of individuals”, who saw it as their task to stop the match. In southern Sweden they mobilised, did reconnaissance in Båstad, planned the tactics, and kept contact with the mass media and with other demonstrators like the youth leagues of the Liberal, Centre and Social Democratic youth (FPU, CUF and SSU). Although the profile was lower in Uppsala and Stockholm, mobilisation was similar. On 3rd May 1968 everything was in place, the police and the 500 – 1 000 demonstrators, mainly students. The demonstrations were successful. The match was stopped, before it had even begun.

Reactions were strong. “Double fault in Båstad” wrote Liberal Party politician Hadar Cars in *Dagens Nyheter*. Almost without exception excited journa-

lists and politicians accused activists of introducing violence into the political arena. This hardly corresponded with what actually happened. When several of the political youth organisations later expressed their support for the demonstrators, public opinion began to swing

towards a greater understanding of the “heated commitment” of the youth.

Prime Minister Tage Erlander said that if the Swedish Tennis Association had simply asked the government for advice, they would have been advised against playing the match. Instead he invited the youth organisations to a discussion on 14th May. Six ministers with Erlander in the lead had a five-hour session with representatives of 59 youth orga-

nisations from the whole political spectrum and from other sectors. Zimbabwe was hardly mentioned in the debate, as it instead focused on the right to demonstrate, the rules of the game in a democratic society, and the Vietnam War.

Both FPU and SSU gave economic support to ZAPU after Båstad, while the government increased its humanitarian support to Zimbabwe.

13. Drama at the water gate

Why was media reporting from Båstad so exaggerated and misleading? One reason was their never-ending need for dramatic, saleable news. To some extent it was also due to a simple misunderstanding. The main troop of journalists had first gathered at the southern gate. All was calm there, but when they got to the northern one, they arrived in the midst of chaotic events. Bertil Malmström, a leading activist from Uppsala, explains:

Shouting the slogans, “Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe” and “Stop the match! Stop the match!” we arrived at the narrow street leading to the northern entrance of the tennis stadium. There no one seemed to know what to do. A few people shook the gates that slid upwards and outwards. At first only three or four police stood in front of us, but then several rushed forward to close the opening. Turmoil arose when those of us in the front did not back away and police began to hit us with their batons. I could not just remain faceless in the crowd. I managed to get the people at the back to sit down, forced myself further forward and soon virtually all were sitting down in front of the police. But the police wanted to close the gate, while some were sitting in the way and they came at us with a new baton attack.

“Six ministers with Erlander in the lead had a five-hour session with representatives of 59 youth organisations from the whole political spectrum and from other sectors.”



The police tries to close the gate. Bertil Malmström to the right.

I came face to face with a policeman. We each pulled at either side of the gate while a woman was being squashed as she was lying on the ground in front of him. There was only a decimetre or so between our faces when I bel-
lowed: “Let go! Stop! You’re hurting her!” I can still feel the anger inside me when I yelled. The woman was freed without serious injury. Only at this point did photographers and journalists arrive. They saw a violent confrontation at the opening of the gate and interpreted it as though we were trying to attack, “storm in”.

That would have been an idiotic tactic. We only wanted to block the entrance.

Suddenly there was water! Never before had water been used against demonstrators in Sweden. Riot police in Berlin or Paris used water cannons. Here the fire brigade in Båstad sprayed us to drive us away. The pressure drove back those of us who were sitting at the front and the right side of the gate was closed again. Suddenly the stream of water stopped. Klas Hellborg from Lund was part of a group of activists who had gone in early with tickets and sat

on the stands. He sprang down and cut off the fire hose. Yet the water returned and soon the police even began to use teargas. This was another novelty in controlling Swedish demonstrations. The teargas spread further with the stream of water and the whole of our drenched crowd gave way. Their eyes burning, most ran away but after a while we gathered in a compact group again in front of the gate that was now completely closed.

Although the gate was now locked, the fire brigade continued to shower us for another fifteen minutes. Those with placards used them as shields, others angrily tore down the barbed wire and net fence to the right of the entrance and upturned a ticket box... in the tumult and struggle we had been welded into a dynamic collective. This expressed itself in slogans:

“Do you smell the stink from the Enskilda Bank?”, “Hasselqvist is racist” (they rhymed so well and there was some basis for the charge in the clumsy statements he made). “Warm yourselves, comrades” someone began to chant and soon all 300 of us were hopping up and down. We sang “The Red Flag” and the Vietnamese liberation song “Liberate the South” and we cried, with laughter and self-irony: “Nothing can stop the people’s tidal wave!”

At the other gate a peaceful and dry sit-in blockaded the entrance. At a legal distance the political youth leagues watched from a hill. Nothing dramatic. Bertil Malmström:

From the loudspeakers in the stadium we heard the message that the match was cancelled. We were sceptical ... On the other hand, I realised that it was essential not to allow any of

the power we had just created to slip away from us. I waited a while, then I hopped up onto the stone wall and yelled: “Comrades we have won! We have won here and now!” It might have seemed as though I had new and my own information, but I didn’t. I took a chance.

We broke the blockade and, orderly, more or less four to each row, wet and shivering, we filed back to the place where we’d met, where comrades from the “dry” gate applauded us. Afterwards many newspapers tried to portray this as a “sad retreat”, but in his book *Fallet Båstad* (The Båstad Case) Bo Lindholm wrote that there was a fantastic atmosphere:

“They were jubilantly happy, laughing and singing youths (a few were middle-aged), who returned from the tennis stadium. That is what one sees in all the pictures, that was what we ourselves saw when we went to Båstad.”

The entire action had taken no more than two hours.

14. Cabora Bassa – political dynamite

Did Båstad have an impact? As a youthful revolt it was soon overshadowed in the media by the occupation of the student union house in Stockholm at the end of May 1968. A week after Båstad, activists faced a new tactical question: Rolf Gustavsson in *Southern Africa Information Bulletin* and Anders Johansson in *DN* raised the alarm about plans to build a hydro-electric power dam at Cabora Bassa in Mozambique.

The idea was to produce enough electricity to supply nearly all of southern Africa. A huge dam – the fifth largest in world – and a power station would be built on the Zambezi river by ZAMCO

(Zambezi Development Scheme Consortium). It would supply South Africa's mining and manufacturing industries with electricity through 1 420 km long lines. Sweden's ASEA (now ABB) joined ZAMCO, which consisted of companies from 15 countries with South Africa's Anglo-American at the helm. ASEA's share of the order was only 10 per cent but still was one of the largest orders ever placed. ASEA was a world leader in its area and thus an attractive partner.

Frelimo was very negative towards the project; both Portugal and the white minority regimes would gain economically. At this time half of Portugal's budget went to the military. Membership of EFTA (European Free Trade Association) led to greater foreign, even Swedish, investments, and the tourist industry was growing. Pierre Schori (s) had in the social democratic journal *Tiden* (1967) written that "last year 12 500 Swedish tourists contributed to financing the war". A stronger Portuguese economy would protract the war. Eduardo Mondlane had cultivated close contact with the social democrats. That did not prevent him from criticising the Swedish government for its refusal to subject Portugal to economic sanctions. He had personal relations with DN's editor-in-chief, Olof Lagercrantz, and had contact with liberals like David Wirmark. In an interview published in *Liberal Debate* (Liberal Debate) in 1966, Mondlane pointed out:

You are too neutral in Sweden at present ... If Sweden's words about solidarity with us are to be taken seriously, it is logical that we can expect Sweden to put pressure on Portugal.

Expulsion from EFTA and economic boycott were Mondlane's demands, and they were supported by liberals like Per Ahlmark and by VPK (Left Party



Cabora Bassa is the theme in Uppsala 1979 of a Teach-In, a mobilising method of several short lectures developed by radical movements in USA.



Fake headline poster by the Uppsala South Africa committee. "Genocide in Mozambique. ASEA profits. The government silent" This triggered the real one " The coup against the headline poster of Expressen a political flash action"

Communists, Vänsterpartiet kommunisterna). In March 1967 the First Chamber heard an unusually tough debate between Per Ahlmark and the Minister of Trade, Gunnar Lange, where the latter propounded the thesis of industrial development as a lever for democracy. The news about ASEA, ZAMCO and Cabora Bassa triggered the same debate within the social democratic party a year later.

In a series of *DN* articles in April 1968, Anders Johansson was the first international journalist to report from liberated areas in Mozambique, thereby undermining Portugal's credibility. A few months later he could show how Rhodesia was also involved in the Cabora Bassa project. Among leading activists on the left, like Dick Urban Vestbro, there was considerable scepticism towards Frelimo for quite a

while, which he later self-critically admitted:

We in the South Africa committees ... believed that our work against imperialism and capitalism was as important as Frelimo's, if not more so... We saw ourselves as true revolutionaries (and) had criticised Frelimo for being officially represented by an American middle-class woman (*Eduardo Mondlane's wife, Janet*) ... a housewife from Chicago.

SSU Stockholm was one of the first to demand that the government should stop ASEA's participation in the project. SSU was backed by *Aftonbladet*. On the other side stood the government and LO and its member Metall, the union that organised the metal workers at ASEA in Västerås. For them the issue concerned 300 jobs over three years.

The government was certainly critical of Swedish investments in Mozambique, Lange argued, but ASEA was not an investor, only a seller. In addition, a trade war was not the right way to oppose South Africa and Portugal. As previously, only the Security Council was seen as having the mandate to take binding resolutions about sanctions. The government chose to ignore information in mid-1968 that Rhodesian companies would be among the suppliers to the ZAMCO project. In the South Africa Committee in Uppsala this was taken as evidence that, for the social democrats, "class cooperation leads to ... structural fascism".

As the government continued to defend ASEA's role in ZAMCO, the UN General Assembly (November 1968) passed a resolution regretting the economic interests that operated in the Portuguese colonies. They "stand in the way ... of self-determination, freedom and independence and ... strengthen Portugal's military efforts". This was in line

with the arguments of Swedish critics.

Ten days later, Foreign Minister Torsten Nilsson declared that the government had contact with a number of African liberation movements and was “prepared to help ... with humanitarian support” which would make it easier for their members “to continue the struggle for the liberation of their people”. A few weeks earlier PAIGC’s president Amílcar Cabral visited Sweden for the first time to seek Swedish support. Before Christmas the Foreign Ministry began to explore how the government in Guinea-Conakry, where PAIGC had its external base, would interpret such support. The reply was positive.

In May 1969 parliament’s Standing Committee on Finance declared that support to African liberation movements was consistent with international law, since the UN had taken a clear stand against the oppression of people who strive for national freedom. It also approved the support to PAIGC, if only the practical questions could be resolved. Thereby Sweden became the first country in West to give direct official humanitarian assistance to liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies and in southern Africa.

Economic support was thus okay, but not economic sanctions – not even against Portugal.

Government policies were contradictory, which was pointed out by representatives of Frelimo and ZANU. Possibly it reflected internal contradictions. In any case, the Social Democratic Party was deeply split. At a party meeting in Stockholm in early 1969, which Tage Erlander addressed, a resolution was unanimously adopted that accused the party leadership of double moral standards. This initiative was taken by parliamentarian Oskar Lindqvist.

In late 1969 ASEA withdrew from the project, af-

ter parliament in May ratified UN sanctions against Rhodesia. Through this the government would have been able to stop ASEA. Now the law was never tested, since the company dropped out of its own accord.

Parliamentary debate on the Rhodesia law nevertheless gave an indication of the line the Social Democrats would follow with Olof Palme as party leader. Several members – both social democrats like Jan Bergqvist and liberals like Per Ahlmark and Ola Ulls-

ten – advocated increased control of private investments abroad. Birgitta Dahl (s) appealed for the coordination of trade, international development cooperation and foreign policy to foster international solidarity. Therefore development assistance policies ought to be aimed at progressive countries and support should be given to social liberation movements.

15. Sweden’s two faces

Since the 1920s and the League of Nations, international law has been the foundation on which Swe-



“ASEA pulls out from Cabora Bassa. The government relieved.” September 3 1969 ASEA give up. At the same time the poster declare the death of Ho Chi Min in Vietnam.

Hunted politicians and embarrassed generals

“It was dramatic,” Birgitta Dahl described her visit in 1970 to areas in Guinea Bissau liberated by PAIGC. Then she was a new member of parliament (s) and the first democratically elected parliamentarian to pay such a visit:

The Portuguese undertook a major attack while we were there. We walked at night between the villages, since they were pursuing us. We waded to our waists in dirty water, and active vaccines against all the risk factors did not exist. So I was affected by lice and diarrhoea.

We visited hospitals and schools and slept in ordinary huts on wooden bunks. We interviewed people and saw how it worked. Conversations and discussions sometimes had to be interpreted in three or four steps: Portuguese, French while in the villages they only spoke their local languages.

I met PAIGC-president Amílcar Cabral and he became my friend for life, as did others who I met there. In 1972 Cabral was the guest speaker at the party congress – just half a year before he was murdered. He was one of the greatest ideologists of the twentieth century, with a clearly thought-out ideology on how society should be constructed with respect for human rights and the country’s culture. He broke with the traditional view of women’s position.

In 1975 two generals came from the arena of the war in Guinea Bissau to Sweden as representatives



Birgitta Dahl visiting PAIGC in Guinea Bissau.

of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) – the Portuguese government. Birgitta Dahl was asked by Olof Palme to host to them for a day.

I was a young woman in a floral outfit, and they flirted shamelessly with me in a very male chauvinist way. We stood on the lawn at Harpsund and waited for Olof Palme, and then I thought that I must put an end to it, so I said: “Do you know that we have something in common?” – Oh, yes, they thought and believed something else. “We have all been in Guinea Bissau,” said I. Then they blushed, from their toes upwards.

One had been commander-in-chief and the other head of security, and responsible for attempts to capture me dead or alive. Now they realised that I was the same person and stood before them. In the end one of them succeeded in stammering: “Is it true, Madame, that you wore uniform?” “Yes”, I replied, “we were naïve enough to think you would respect international law.”

dish foreign policy has rested. It was defined as “non-interference in the internal affairs of independent states”. The most prominent advocate of this attitude was Östen Undén (Foreign Minister 1924–26 and 1945–62), who combined it with a cautious policy of strict neutrality to the power blocs. The UN Security Council was regarded as the guarantor of peace and security – even for small countries – which in turn should maintain a modest international profile.

This line was broken in December 1959, when Sweden was the first Western country to vote for Algeria’s right to self-determination. The Undén plan that aimed to stop nuclear proliferation (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1961) was another step in the same direction.

International law continued to be the basis of Swedish foreign policy, but its interpretation became increasingly activist. The world drew closer. Foreign policy ought thus not simply to respect international law but foster “peoples’ right to self-determination”. Thus, from being an argument for non-policies, international law became a reason for an active foreign policy. Several factors interacted to move Swedish foreign policy in this direction:

- The role of the Swede Dag Hammarskjöld – and not least his death in a plane over the Congo – while General Secretary of the UN, (1953–61);
- The 6 300 Swedish UN peace-keeping troops in Congo (1960–64), of whom 18 were killed;
- The dramatic decolonisation of Africa and southern Africa’s struggle for liberation;
- Swedish – particularly social democratic – politicians close relations to leaders of the Front Line States and liberation movements in southern Africa from the mid-1960s;
- The Vietnam war;



The engagement for Africa by the Swede Dag Hammarskjöld as the UN Secretary General had a great influence on the role of the Swedish government.

- A new generation of social democratic politicians gradually taking over, and Olof Palme being elected party chairman in 1969.

In 1965, Palme held an epoch-making foreign policy speech at the Christian Social Democrats Congress held in Gävle, where he spoke about an “explosive force of unbelievable strength... a tidal wave” posed by nationalism in Asia and Africa. “These strivings for liberation... We must learn to live *with* them and perhaps also for them.” At the same time he highlighted the catalogue of sins of the old colonial powers:

While proclaiming ideals of freedom for the citizens of one’s own country, one practised quite different policies in the foreign countries, exercising power over people that became increasingly oppressive... There is an illusory belief that one can meet demands for social justice with violence and military force.

In Gävle, Palme did not use the term human rights, but it was implicitly there, as a given condition for people’s right to freedom and self-determination:



Olof Palme and the trade union leader Arne Geijer meets the president of Tanzania Julius Nyerere 1969.

The basic values of democratic socialism oblige us ... to stand on the side of the oppressed against the oppressors, on the side of the miserable and the poor against those who exploit them and their masters.

It was perhaps an anti-imperialist speech, with the USA as the primary target (without letting the Soviet Union off the hook), and with consequences for relevant policies on both Vietnam and southern Africa.

Two articles in the journal *Tiden* can be said to stand for the state's two faces, and similarly for the old and new faces of social democracy. The parliamentarian Kaj Björk (s) maintained in *Sydafrika och vi* (1965, South Africa and us), written at the request of the board of the party, that support to liberation movements conducting an armed struggle contradicted the principle of non-involvement in the international law of nations. This argument did not reduce the criticism of the government. In 1968 Pierre Schori, then social democratic international secretary, wrote *Befrielseströrelserna och vi* (Liberation movements and us). His main message was the reverse; that the movements ought to get support on their own conditions. The same argument was later pursued by Foreign Minister Torsten Nilsson in a historic speech in December 1968. The cautious line of the old guard had lost – in principle.

While this created conditions for a political dialogue with radical younger groups in Sweden, it strengthened the ties to the liberation movements and thus also the opportunities of influencing them in a democratic direction. Perhaps it also, as diplomat Mats Bergquist pointed out, had:

“... a positive side-effect on security policies, when, through this, one gave a country a clear international profile. The country became visible, as a result of which the threshold for external political pressure was raised and the likelihood of international support actually increased.”

In 1965 Palme had been heavily criticised by the opposition for his speech in Gävle, but early in 1969 there was another mood. In a liberal party report, *Stöd åt Motståndsrörelser* (Support for Liberation movements) it said that “our feelings of sympathy ought not to be linked to some kind of diplomatic caution nor take cognizance of trade relations”. In its view of the liberation movements' violence it was close to the Lusaka Manifesto (see below) and was criticised for this from both the right and the left. In practice the principle “no military support but direct humanitarian support to the movements” became the guidelines not only for the liberal party. All members of parliament – except the moderates – wanted to regard themselves as friends of the liberation movements in southern Africa (on the question of Vietnam public opinion was very different, which may be linked to the USA being an actor there while it did not appear to be in southern Africa).

Contradictions remaining regarding economic sanctions against the Portuguese and southern African regimes nonetheless showed that Sweden had not yet come to terms with its two faces.



Portugal did not manage to crush the liberation movements despite the backing from NATO.

4.

1970–1975

PORTUGAL

PHASES OUT

ITS EMPIRE

16. From Khartoum to Lusaka

In January 1969 an international solidarity conference was organised in Khartoum. With strong support from the Eastern bloc, over 200 delegates from 50 countries participated. The majority were communists, but there were others like the British Labour Party and the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF). On behalf of the liberation movements Eduardo Mondlane explained that the “liberation movements believe that the shortest and only path to freedom is to be cleared by fire” – a declaration fitting the times.

It was of greater political significance that the decision was made to exclusively recognise MPLA, PAIGC, Frelimo, ANC, SWAPO and ZAPU. The last-named in time led to considerable problems, since ZANU revealed itself to be the stronger movement. Sweden’s government never formally took a position on the “Khartoum Alliance” but – irrespective of the political majority in parliament – in practice supported them, with the addition of ZANU. This attitude also came to be reflected in popular support to liberation movements.

Three months after Khartoum the representatives of thirteen independent states in East and Central Africa attended a meeting where Zambia’s Kenneth Kaunda presided and Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere had a leading part. It resulted in the Lusaka Manifesto on southern Africa, in which the tone differed. Based on the principle of human equality,



The presidents Kaunda (left) and Nyerere played a big role in supporting the liberation movements.

they explained that they had always preferred to achieve liberation without physical violence, and that they did not advocate violence, but an end to the violence ... perpetrated by the oppressors of Africa:

A divine South Africa committee?

In March 1970 Senegal's president Leopold Sédar Senghor blocked transport routes for PAIGC at Guinea-Conakry's northern border and closed their hospitals on Senegalese soil – a major setback for the movement. In April he landed in Sweden on a tour of Scandinavia. He was expected to pay an official visit in Uppsala on 6th May and lecture at the university on "African Socialism". This was a situation that called for action, the South Africa committee thought. In the words of activist Bertil Malmström:

When president Senghor arrived his first stop was at the University library, Carolina Redeviva. At the foot of the stairs the president was met not only by the vice-chancellor of the university and the head librarian, but also by innocently resting students who suddenly became demonstrators, spread out a banner and raised posters. A film team on site was actually our own. Inside, in the quiet of the reading room, people also silently raised signs with French text.

The main action took place at the public meeting at the university that evening. When Senghor and his companions walked into Hall IX, I walked past the chairperson of the Association of International Affairs, climbed onto the podium before him and told him: "I'll just say a few words". From the other side Pelle Jacobsson and Bert Fridlund came. We had all changed our usual casual jerseys for jackets and ties. I opened the meeting and introduced Pelle and it took a while before everyone grasped that we did not represent the association nor the respected Senghor.

Krister and Stefan, both large men, had joined us and were standing on either side of us. They were to act as gentle bodyguards, stand in the way, and talk calmly to anyone who wanted to interfere.

The association's chairperson tried to switch off the microphone and the Vice-Chancellor walked up to me below the stage and with a red face he cried, "Stop this nonsense!" but the audience showed their support and called out "Let him speak" and answered "Yes" to the question of whether we should have a discussion instead of a lecture. We naturally did not know what would happen at the meeting, we were prepared to have a debate, but it seemed as likely that we would be arrested. Surprisingly quickly, Senghor, his escorts and hosts decided to leave the hall, the audience applauded and our people opened out their hidden banners. According to police dressed in civilian clothes, who stood right at the back of the hall, it was all over in three minutes.

The reaction of the *Upsala Nya Tidning* (Uppsala New Paper) is expressed in the headline: *Does the Uppsala South Africa Committee believe it is divine?*

When president Senghor left the meeting the banners were unfolded.



A screen-printed poster seen everywhere where president Senghor came.



If peaceful progress to emancipation were possible (now) or ... in the future, we would urge our brothers in the liberation movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at a cost of some compromise in the timing of the change. But while peaceful progress is blocked by actions of those at present in power..., we have no choice but to give to the peoples of those territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggles against their oppressors.

Even if the manifesto was not exactly what the liberation movements desired, it later gained support from both the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN General Assembly. In March 1970 Foreign Minister Torsten Nilsson praised the African leaders for their high principles “to the great provocation by the white oppressor regimes” and called the manifesto “a Magna Carta for all who live in southern Africa”.

17. Swedish sardines confound the Portuguese military

In May 1969 parliament had approved direct humanitarian support to the liberation movements. In June, Curt Ström at Sida could report on his meeting in Conakry with Amílcar Cabral, “a cheerful young agronomist, elegant, intellectual [and] with a quick and lively way of talking. No pathetic appeals or solemn declarations”. The need for support was immeasurable, but PAIGC did not ask for arms, military resources or stipends from Sweden. Instead they requested food, material, blankets, pots and pans, crockery and cutlery, and resources for health care, education, etc. “within and outside the areas of

“The need for support was immeasurable, but PAIGC did not ask for arms, military resources or stipends from Sweden. Instead they requested food, material, blankets, pots and pans, crockery and cutlery, and resources for health care, education, etc.”

fighting”. Most of it ended up in Guinea Bissau, and once it was there the clinics and food supplies benefited both villagers and freedom fighters.

During Cabral’s visit to the Social Democratic Party Congress, the first delivery left on 29th September. This paved the way for support to several liberation movements, but PAIGC continued to be favoured until Guinea Bissau was free in 1974. In the liberated areas 80% of the population was illiterate, children, in particular, suffered from malnutrition, the whole health sector was problematic, and the supply of necessities was under constant threat of Portuguese bombings. For PAIGC – in practice with government responsibility for these areas – Sweden’s assistance not only filled a humanitarian but also a political function. “With schools and hospitals we can win the war,” declared Cabral.

For activists in the Africa Groups this was not enough. In 1972, when no military assistance was given, it was taken as evidence of paternalism and of government attempts to “achieve a neo-colonial solution” in the Portuguese colonies. In practice, humanitarian assistance acquired a fairly broad definition, as civilian or non-military. So Sida delivered two large trucks furnished with mobile radio transmitters and studio equipment to support PAIGC’S



The leader of PAIGC, Amílcar Cabral, pulled large crowds to his speech in the university hall in Uppsala October 3 1969.

educational programme, as well as hundreds of radio receivers. With them one could start broadcasting in September 1972 – and reach the whole of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde – naturally also with political propaganda.

It turned out that even a non-military commodity like Swedish sardines in tomato sauce could be utilised in psychological warfare. Stig Lövgren mentions that Sida once bought 400 000 tins (about 100 tons of tinned fish) from a Swedish factory that asked if they should print a special label. Lövgren contacted Onésimo Silveira, PAIGC'S representative in Sweden, who was very enthusiastic:

It was not until later that I realised why he became ecstatic. He decided on a label with the PAIGC flag and with the text, "From the libe-

rated areas of Guinea Bissau". Years after I was told that [PAIGC] had arranged for these tins to appear in different places where the Portuguese still held power. They even distributed some of the tins in Bissau, the capital. You can imagine what an effective psychological weapon this was.

18. Early support but late recognition

In April 1972 a group – sent by the UN Special Committee on Decolonization of which Sweden was the only West European member – visited the liberated areas in Guinea Bissau. The assignment, conducted in an "underground" way, led to strong Portuguese protests and intensified bombing of the liberated areas. Folke Löfgren, a Swedish diplomat

at the UN and one of the three in the group, later remarked, “We were naive enough to believe that it was not possible for Portugal to treat the UN in that manner”.

The UN delegation was “impressed by the enthusiastic and whole-hearted cooperation that PAIGC gets from the population in the liberated areas and of the extent to which they participate in the administration that the liberation movement has set up”. Their conclusion was that PAIGC effectively controlled the liberated areas. Though they recommended recognition of an independent Guinea Bissau, the Decolonization Committee contented itself with rapidly recognising PAIGC as the “territory’s sole and genuine representative”.

For the first time in the history of the UN, in this period, the liberation movements were invited to appear in the UN General Assembly. The idea was for Amílcar Cabral to have been given that honour, but Swedish and Nordic objections of a legalistic type frustrated this. In consideration to them he declined: “Look, the Nordic countries are our friends. They have supported us through thick and thin, and we do not wish to embarrass them.” Cabral’s pragmatic diplomacy was, however, badly rewarded by the Swedish government, which acted judicially rather than politically.

After elections in the liberated areas, Guinea Bissau was declared a sovereign republic on 24th September 1973 with Luís Cabral as president. The event was portrayed in a unique documentary for TV, *En nations födelse* (Birth of a nation), by the film team of Lennart Malmer and Ingela Romare, who later filmed a number of programmes on Guinea Bissau. After only a few weeks the new state had been recognised by over 60 governments, and on 19th November 1973 the republic of Guinea Bissau



*“Amílcar Cabral murdered 20.1.73. The struggle continues. Crush imperialism, support FRELIMO.”
Poster from the Uppsala Africa Group.*

was recognised by the OAU, though not by a doubting Sweden. The reason: PAIGC did not control the entire territory of Guinea Bissau.

The social democratic government was severely criticised for this position not only by the Africa Groups and the Left Party Communists but also by party members like Birgitta Dahl. The political dilemma was resolved through the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974 by MFA (Armed Forces Movement). It paved the way for democracy and a declaration in July on national independence for the colonies in Africa. On 9th August 1974 the Swedish government recognised the Republic of Guinea Bissau. A month later the republic was formally

declared independent and Guinea Bissau became a member of the UN.

Cape Verde's declaration of independence was delayed until July 1975, and in January 1981 the islands left the union with Guinea Bissau.

19. Success for Frelimo

At its most, Portugal had 70 000 troops in Mozambique. It meant an unbelievable amount of suffering for the local population. SSU (Swedish Social Democratic Youth) thus had strong arguments in its information campaign "Portugal out of southern Africa" and for its collection for the liberation movements PAIGC, MPLA and Frelimo. On the Sunday in 1970 when the Christmas decorations were set up, demonstrations were held throughout Sweden.

Frelimo had come to grips with its internal crisis, relations to Tanzania were resolved, and the Mozambique Institute had reopened at a new site. In November 1970 Joaquim Chissano, one of leaders and a future president of Mozambique, was in a delegation visiting Sweden to meet the Foreign Ministry, Emmaus Björkå, the social democrats, the Africa Groups and others. Discussions with Sida led to a formal application for support. Particular emphasis was placed on needs in relation to education and health care and for "people's shops" in the liberated areas.

Anders Forsse, Vice-General Director of Sida, met Marcelino dos Santos, Frelimo's Vice-President, in Dar es Salaam in February 1971, but Forsse was not impressed. In a report to the Board for Humanitarian Assistance – where decisions on support to liberation movements were taken – he maintained that the movement had developed "from Danton to Robespierre", that Janet Mondlane was "a

cooing ornament", and that dos Santos was rumoured "recently to have received a high Soviet decoration". His conclusion was that Frelimo's interest in "material support from us is strikingly weaker than our explicit interest in giving such support".

The Board, which was started in the 1960s, was made up of people from various parts of Swedish society; popular movements, organisations and knowledgeable individuals there in their personal capacity. As vice-chairperson, Forsse and his report should have weighed heavily. Despite this, it was recommended that support of 750 000 kronor should be disbursed through the Mozambique Institute to Frelimo – in line with Chissano's intentions. A determining factor was probably that Per Wästberg did not share Forsse's view. He wrote in DN: "It is a liberation to cross the border", a conclusion he drew from a visit to the area at the beginning of the year. Support to Frelimo grew rapidly but never reached the levels of that to PAIGC. Initially it was material support, but – after trucks shipped by boat were "hijacked" in Beira by the Portuguese security police – cash support became a growing part of the assistance.

More than any other liberation movement, Frelimo wanted military support, in vain. For this the government was criticised by the Africa Groups and – a surprising echo – by Maji Maji, the organ of the Tanganyika African National Union Youth League, which wrote about "Swedish imperialism". More important to the Swedish public was that Lennart Malmer and Ingela Romare in November 1971 accompanied Joaquim Chissano for three weeks in the Cabo Delgado province. Their TV documentary *I vårt land börjar kulorna blomma* (When bullets begin to flower) was broadcasted in early 1972.

1973 was the year of Frelimo's breakthrough in

Sweden and the Nordic countries as a whole. In April a major conference was held in Oslo on colonialism and apartheid, organised by the UN and OAU. The result was a victory, Marcelino dos Santos maintained on his visit to the Foreign Ministry afterwards. The liberation movements participated on the same terms as government representatives. Representatives of eight liberation movements came to Stockholm from Oslo. There was a good showing by the media, an official reception at the Foreign Ministry and diverse meetings with popular movements. In addition there was a special working lunch with Foreign Minister Krister Wickman and dos Santos as well as MPLA's president Agostinho Neto and Lucette Andrade Cabral, PAIGC.

In July the world press was rocked by dramatic news from Mozambique. To coincide with the visit to London of the Portuguese Premier Caetano, the British priest Adrian Hastings published eyewitness testimony from Spanish missionaries of a massacre in Wiriyaumu, a village south of the provincial capital Tete. A year earlier Portuguese paratroopers had slaughtered 400 villagers there.

Four days later Wickman launched an appeal in *Aftonbladet* to "initiate broad political action against Portugal's colonial wars in Africa". At the same time he criticised private companies' investments in Por-

tugal and described them as repulsive and a result of "suspect and short-term speculation".

Strong reactions also came from the liberal party.

Most biting was Per Ahlmark, who in an open letter in *Expressen* said to the executive directors of Swedish companies with significant economic interests in Portugal:

You contribute to prolonging the bloodbaths in three areas in Africa. In practice, you economically assist the Caetano regime to commit genocide.

News of the massacre fired political public opinion against Portugal, which was described by the Swedish government in the UN as "a tottering and tumbledown empire". Sweden also reiterated that the future of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau must be determined by their people.

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20. Divisions in and about Angola

Divide and rule – the classical doctrine of domination – seems to have lived a life of its own in Angola. Portugal did not need help, but got it anyway. From the first there were two movements that claimed to have started the armed struggle in 1961: MPLA, with Agostinho Neto as president and FN-LA, with Holden Roberto as the leader. For a short time Angola gained a great deal of attention in Sweden, but the struggle against apartheid soon absorbed most of the interest.



Marcelino dos Santos with Sören Lindh (left) and Hans Persson from ARO (The Africa Gorups) 1982.

Five years later Angola came into focus again:

Lund's South Africa Committee and its information bulletin *South and South West Africa* supported MPLA and laid down guidelines for the Africa Groups' understanding of the conflict. With their help the writer Peter Weiss later wrote the drama *Sången om Skräpuken* (Song of the Scarecrow), which deals with Portuguese colonialism and Western accomplices and had its premiere at Stockholm's Stadsteater in January 1967.

In 1966 a third liberation movement appeared; UNITA, headed by Jonas Savimbi. Initially it had good contacts with the Social Democratic Party. The party later developed contacts with MPLA,

uniquely close for a Western country, probably under the influence of Amílcar Cabral and Eduardo Mondlane. Both UNITA and FNLA regarded that as Olof Palme's fault: all he wanted was to counteract the USA influence.

Savimbi was previously close to Holden Roberto, but growing ethnic tensions ruined their cooperation. While Roberto had his base among the baCongo people in northern Angola, Savimbi was part of the Ovimbundu in southern and central Angola. The break with FNLA, according to close colleagues, resulted from Roberto "becoming far too dependent on the Americans and in addition not appearing inside Angola".



A demonstration organised by the Stockholm Africa Group in support of PAIGC, MPLA and FRELIMO 1974.

David Wirmark (fp) got to know Roberto earlier. In the early 1970s together with Olle Wästberg he made strong appeals for Swedish support to FNLA, perhaps because of anti-communism; MPLA had

good contacts with the East. In parliament the Centre and Liberal parties vainly advocated support to both MPLA and FNLA using the argument that both were recognised by the OAU.

Divisions among the opposition also led to split support from the neighbouring states. Congo-Kinshasa under Mobutu (Zaire 1971-97, afterwards the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC) stood close to FNLA and did not want to give space for an MPLA base in the country. After UNITA attacked the Angolan section of the Benguela railway – essential for Zambian exports – several times in 1967, Zambia once again only gave support to MPLA. Nor did the OAU recognise UNITA.

In the Swedish debate UNITA was marginalised. As late as the end of 1970, the journal *Tiden* published an article which described MPLA as communist-oriented and described UNITA positively. According to Lund's South Africa Committee this was a manifestation of "political ignorance" in the editorial board or elsewhere. By that time Agostinho Neto had already visited in Sweden as the Social Democratic Party's guest. Subsequently UNITA only gained support from small Maoist groups.

Relations between the three movements were tense the entire time. Occasionally the friction spilled over into direct armed conflict. In March 1967 twenty MPLA members, who were returning from northern Angola to Congo-Kinshasa, were arrested. They were transported to FNLA's base at Kinkuzu – "Africa's Buchenwald" – and executed.

When Olle Wästberg visited the camp a few years later, his impression was positive. Three Portuguese prisoners were "humanely" treated. Roberto's closest colleague and chief of security, José Manuel Peterson, was "baptised and brought up by Swedish missionaries" (according to others he was hardly characterised by Christian ethics, but instead

known for ruthlessly getting rid of political opponents).

According to Wästberg, Roberto himself often maintained: "Struggle unites Angola. A people who gain freedom through armed struggle will not later devote themselves to egoism and tribalism". In addition to having liberated sparsely populated parts of northern Angola, FNLA established itself as a "government" for about half a million Angolan refugees in Congo-Kinshasa.

Since MPLA at the same time claimed control over the same liberated area, there were many – among them Africa expert Basil Davidson – who questioned the veracity of Wästberg's portrayal. Agostinho Neto maintained that he had only been marched round in the Lower Congo and had not set foot in An-

gola. A decade later Anders Ehnmark published a satirical novel, *Ögonvittnet*, inspired by this incident.

Olle Wästberg's reports had a negligible influence on political decisions in Sweden. A motion in parliament in January 1971 by Birgitta Dahl and Lena Hjelm-Wallén (s) paved the way for a decision to give direct humanitarian support to MPLA, but it remained modest (of the 10 million kronor allocated between 1971–75 not even a quarter was paid out – mainly because of MPLA). Political support appears to have been more important for the leadership of the movement, and this was strong from both the Social Democrats and the Africa Groups.

The latter – together with the socialist monthly *Kommentar*, founded by intellectuals in Stockholm – presented political analyses of the situation in Angola. Their conclusion: Support MPLA! Emmaus Björkå supplied MPLA with 60 tons of clothes



Sticker "Support MPLA".

The brothers who disagreed

In the debate on southern Africa and its liberation movements the Wästberg brothers were prominent. Both became editors-in-chief – the older, the writer Per (1933-), for Dagens Nyheter (1976-82), and the younger, journalist and liberal party politician Olle (1945-), for Expressen (1994-95). Their basic views differed considerably.

With early personal experiences in Rhodesia (deported in 1959 and 1971), South Africa and Mozambique – depicted in books like *Förbjudet område* (Forbidden area) and *På svarta listan* (Blacklisted) – Per saw the conflicts from a South perspective. Like the broad solidarity movement, he thus identified largely with the “genuine” liberation movements and supported them both openly and through secret channels.

Active from an early stage within the Liberal Party Youth (FPU) Olle viewed the conflicts in

southern Africa more from an anti-communist East-West perspective. This was noticeable above all in his attitude towards the liberation movements in Angola. After covering an imposing 1 500 kilometres in 39 days during his visit to an FNLA area in northern Angola in 1969 he pleaded in articles, in the book *Angola*, and with the help of fellow party members in parliament for FNLA to receive official Swedish support.

Olle presented FNLA's president Holden Roberto as a sympathetic, “almost modest” man of simple habits, a non-smoker and teetotaler, reared by British missionaries. Whereas to Per, Roberto was untrustworthy: “I immediately thought this was a person with whom one could not have a deep relationship.” A man marked by tribalism, he and his comrades were “often dressed in smart clothes”.

worth 1,1 million kronor. The voluntary sector collected about 1,7 million kronor (today over 10 million) for MPLA in 1972. As Alberto Ribeiro (“Kabulu”) from MPLA later testified:

The support always began through the people, students, workers and trade unionists. ... In the socialist countries, the support came directly from the governments and from parties in one-party states. In the case of the Nordic countries, it first came through contacts from people to people. It was the civil society that was in touch with us. It made a big difference.

In addition to information and lobbying for MPLA, the Africa Groups supported radio and telecommu-

nications inside Angola and thereby also MPLA's military work. This included both procurement of equipment and handbooks in breaking codes. Official support soon came to include means of transport, trucks and motorcycles, as well as four-wheel drive ambulances.

21. MPLA's deep crisis and new start

The split between the three liberation movements in Angola muddled the opportunities for giving assistance. In 1973 Zambia suddenly brought UNITA into the picture again, Tanzania invited Roberto to deliberations, and the Soviet Union began to support a breakaway group within MPLA. In practice it became more complex to give assistance.

A military coup in Lisbon in April 1974 deposed the Caetano regime and created a new situation. One motive for the coup was the colonial wars, but the junta were no angels of peace. It was most difficult to give up Angola – the jewel of the Portuguese empire. Oil was there and strong international economic interests. In January 1975 nevertheless the three liberation movements and Portugal agreed on a transitional government to prepare for Angola's independence on 11th November 1975. It collapsed in mid-1975.

Late in 1975 the Africa Groups published a booklet *För ett fritt Angola! En studie av MPLA, FNLA och UNITA* (For a free Angola! A study of MPLA, FNLA and UNITA). The writer was anonymous but she turned out to be Hillevi Nilsson, who at the time of publication was already in Luanda working for MPLA. It was virtually a collection of arguments why only MPLA could be regarded as a genuine liberation movement, an attitude many embraced in the broad solidarity movement, though for varying reasons:

Only MPLA was national and revolutionary and could mobilise the people. Clearly its leaders were not without problems, but the movement had “built up a democratic social structure with conscientised members and functioning contacts between the different levels”. In contrast, FNLA and UNITA were ethnically based – the baCongo and the Ovimbundu – autocratically ruled and dependent on Zaire/USA and/or South Africa.

In October 1975 a force of 3 000 men from South Africa/UNITA/FNLA and a breakaway group from MPLA invaded Angola from the south, moving along the coast and up towards Luanda, at the same time as a joint Zaire and FNLA force attacked from Zaire. According to the CIA plan, the aim was to

prevent MPLA from taking over Luanda. In this situation MPLA asked Cuba for help, and these troops landed on 10th November; in addition MPLA again received support from the Soviet Union.

When Agostinho Neto on 11th November 1975 proclaimed the People's Republic of Angola, representatives of the Africa Groups in Sweden were also at the celebrations, an expression of the close relationship. In February 1976 in an important article in DN, Olof Palme propounded the principle that the “war in Angola does not stand between *the free world* and *communism*... It is fundamentally a continuation of the long liberation struggle that began a decade and a half ago.” Thus all foreign intervention was an abomination.

This basic attitude was confirmed in a speech by Foreign Minister Karin Söder (c) in late 1978, when



Agostinho Neto.

she pointed out that the “West must treat Africa as a continent in its own right... not as an object for superpower politics”. Nevertheless, USA and South Africa continued to assist UNITA militarily, with intermittent war as a result, first up to 1990 and then after 1992, when UNITA refused to accept the results of the presidential and parliamentary elections. The war only ended with the death of Savimbi in 2002.

In March 1976 South Africa was temporarily forced to withdraw to Namibia, but Angola remained one of the bloodiest theatres of the Cold War and thus is more devastated than any other country in southern Africa. The number and the proportion of people mangled by landmines is perhaps the greatest in the world. These hidden killers still continue to wreak sacrifices.

22. Silk, satin, rags, junk – for solidarity

The most popular man in France died in 2007 – the priest of the poor, Abbé Pierre, 94, who in 1949 founded the Emmaus movement, now spread in 50 countries. The name refers to a village on the West Bank where, according to the Bible, Jesus gave new hope to his disciples after the resurrection. Since the expulsion of 2 000 Palestinian villagers during the 1967 occupation the village became a recreational area for Israelis and is now called Canada Park.

Inga and Stellan Sandberg were among those who formed the first Emmaus group in Sweden in Lund in 1960 in the spirit of Abbé Pierre. The idea spread and in the early 1970s there were about ten groups, of which four came to focus mainly on support to liberation movements: Björkå (EB) outside Åseda, Fnysinge outside Enköping, Emmaus in Stockholm and Bread and Fishes (BoF) in Västerås. EB was the largest, followed by BoF.

In the 1960s the Emmaus groups were characterised by the movement’s original ideas: that one should not turn away a stranger, that one should not quiz him on who he is, where he is going or whence he comes, and that one share what one has. Believers added: “Never turn a stranger away, it could be a travelling angel.”

The fundamental idea was that the best kind of help to give is to give him/her something to live *for* and not merely something to live *off*. To stretch out a helping hand is great, but to give a needy person the opportunity to in turn stretch out his/her hand to another person in need is greater. This applies to both individuals and groups.

In the 1970s the first three Emmaus groups had their main sources of inspiration in the left movement and Marxist theory, while Bread and Fishes was largely inspired by radical Latin American liberation theologians. Common to all four groups was the conviction that support can only be meaningful if the basic cause of the injustices is attacked. Support was thus directed to movements and people who were working to change their situation and the unjust structures. This meant a transfer of resources in the form of clothes, material and money, resources collected in Sweden through the widespread collection of the affluent society’s discarded but fully functional products. Recycling was the key to practical solidarity.

Its day-to-day activities were often all but glamorous work in a dusty and dirty environment; the organisations were and are dependent on a living commitment to be able to continue to develop their work. The practical efforts were combined with active participation in the work of shaping public opinion for the liberation movements and against colonialism and apartheid.



Emmaus Björkå.

From 1973 EB drifted in the direction of KFML(r) (*Kommunistiska Förbundet Marxist-Leninsterna/revolutionärerna*; Communist League Marxist-Leninists /the revolutionaries/), which made cooperation with other left groups more difficult. It also kept some sympathisers at bay, among them Gunnar Björberg (who worked first at Emmaus Gothenburg, later at Björkå, 1965–70):

People with a less dogmatic view of life, among

whom I counted myself, were ideologically frightened off by the aggression that was revealed vis-à-vis society and its institutions ...

Even if I was more or less born a socialist and was a little amused and fascinated by the rhetoric of tribute/homage, in time it became, so to say, “too much of a good thing”.

In 1969 the first clothing from EB and Emmaus



*Abbé Pierre at a
visit to Emmaus
Stockholm 1971.*

Stockholm was sent to FNLA. In 1970 clothes were sent to PAIGC. In 1971 clothes were sent to as many as seven liberation movements but most went to Frelimo. After consultation with the Africa Groups, it was decided only to send clothes to MPLA in the future; thus, in this case, the evaluation of the liberation movements in Angola coincided with the government's.

The liberation movements' priorities varied over the years, and this also applied to material support (hospital equipment, school material, kitchen equipment, spectacles, etc). In the 1990s huge volumes of about 1 400 tons of clothing/year were sent to southern Africa. A major problem was the cost of shipping, but from 1972 Sida contributed to freight costs. EB showed it was capable of great expansion. From 15 people in 1965, by 1993-94 as many as 66 people worked there. The total turnover was over 21 million kronor, of which Sida contributed one third.

In 1972 the initiative to start BoF was taken by Bernt Kviberg, a youth instructor in the Baptist church, and Lennart Bendix, a practical visionary, employed by the cathedral in Västerås. A painting on glass in the latter's flat inspired the name. It represented the miracle in the New Testament where Jesus managed to feed thousands from five loaves of bread and two fishes.

Bernt Kviberg was inspired by *Ny gemenskap* (New Community), just formed in Stockholm. It was an organisation linked to the church and directed at social drop-outs. Among their other activities it organised *Alternativ Jul* (Alternative Xmas). On two occasions he also attended Emmaus international summer camps in France and Switzerland and was inspired by Latin America. Subsequently he worked

for a year at Emmaus Fny-singe.

The first *Ekumeniska u-veckan* (Ecumenical Development Week) was held in 1973 and was followed by several others up to the 1990s (see below). They were organised all over the country and became a source of inspiration and knowledge for BoF, specially during the 1970s, when the topics of the weeks were close to BoF's support for liberation movements in southern Africa. Behind the development weeks were SEN (Swedish Ecumenical Council), SMR (Swedish Mission Council) and SKU (Swedish Christian Youth Council). Bertil Högberg, later very active in the Africa Groups among other organisations, was organiser of studies for the Free Church Study Association (*Frikyrkliga Studieförbundet*) and charged with rooting the development week in the counties of Västmanland and Dalarna. He came in-to contact with BoF through this job and over time worked more and more with them.

In 1975 BoF defined itself as an anti-imperialistic organisation, but its source of inspiration was still "the Christian message of love and justice between people". BoF had an open character and put priority on cooperation with other organisations. A major crisis in 1977-78 led to the basic Christian ideas being relinquished. There was a high personnel turnover and, faced with the threat of closure, former



Emmaus Stockholm collecting clothes for the refugee settlements of ZANU.



Sorting at Emmaus Björkå in the early 70-s. Marion Sobeck left.



Bertil Högberg and Eva Strimling (Tänneryd) on the mountain of unsorted clothes at the Bread and Fishes 1980.

staff members like Bertil Högberg and Eva Strimling took over various tasks to save the organisation.

During the 1970s BoF started cooperating with a number of local Africa Groups, and shipped medical and dental equipment to Mozambique and to SWAPO, amongst large consignments of other materials. Things like baby kits (starter packs for the newborn) were produced together with the Västerås diocese of the Church of Sweden, a project with a large mobilising effect (they are still being produced today). It was part of the important work of influencing public opinion. With regard to clothing support, the most BoF collected was 1 000 tons. In the early 1990s there were 25 full-time jobs, and turnover was almost 9 million kronor, just over one third of which was contributed by Sida.



A wooden container with hospital beds and other medical equipment, is opened by SWAPO in Angola. The containers are then assembled as houses.

Income from sales among the organisations increased in time, but the most efficient venture to earn their own income and streamline their work first came during the 1990s, as a result of substantially reduced allocations from Sida. The ability to adapt was what was crucial and still determines the size of solidarity support and thus the organisations' right to exist.

In 1989 the national organisation *Praktisk Solidaritet* (Practical Solidarity) was formed. At the time Emmaus Björkå and Emmaus Stockholm advocated a fusion of the organisations. Bread and Fishes together with Emmaus Sundsvall (Fnysinge's heir) pleaded for independence but close cooperation. The latter line prevailed.



The noose is tightening around Ian Smith and the white minority regime in Rhodesia.

5.

1975–1980

**WHITE ON BLACK
– RENEWED
STRUGGLE**

23. The country that disappeared beyond the horizon

After Båstad all was quiet on Rhodesia. The country disappeared from sight in the Swedish debate. Perhaps – and paradoxically – it was because of the comprehensive sanctions Sweden introduced against Rhodesia in 1969 after the 1968 Security Council decision. The question was no longer a controversial political issue, neither between the government and opposition nor between the government and the Africa Groups. Sanctions also entailed that there was no longer a Swedish embassy in Salisbury (now Harare). The only Swedes who could fol-



Tore Bergman, missionary in Rhodesia and later Africa secretary at Church of Sweden Mission. Here with a student during a chemistry experiment in Chegato 1957.

low developments on site were missionaries, but there was no Gunnar Helander among them.

Most missionaries sent by SKM came from disciples of the eighteenth century Swedish priest Schartau, whose doctrines had a great influence on the west coast of Sweden. As a result they were conservative, and some were clearly racists. They had two arguments for not becoming involved in Rhodesian politics:

- They did not have the British background of the Rhodesian whites.
- Theologically they embraced the doctrine of two spheres – the division into a worldly rule and a spiritual realm; citizens should obey authority, which is appointed by God (Rom 13). “One must obey God more than people” according to the apostle Peter (Acts 5:29) and thus to defend the principle of all people’s equal worth before God was not a sufficiently important motive for them to become involved.

The Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, independent in 1963, in 1964 became a member of the newly formed Zimbabwe Christian Council, which had close relations to the World Council of Churches. Together with the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Lutheran Church developed increasingly severe criticism of the Smith regime, particularly on the question of its land and educational policies. Very little of this emerged in what was being discussed in Sweden.

In 1966, SKM’s Africa Secretary Holger Benetts-son published the book *Problemet Rhodesia* (The Rhodesian Problem) through NAI (Nordic Africa

Institute, formerly SIAS, Scandinavian Institute for African Studies). He maintained that the problem was rooted in white contempt for Africans, at the same time as he regretted the split between ZANU and ZAPU. This clear break with previous missionary reports confirmed that progressive Swedish missionaries who sympathised with the struggle for liberation did exist. Their influence on public opinion in Rhodesia and in Sweden was, however, limited.

The Catholic Church in Rhodesia was most outspoken and paid a high price. A bishop, 23 foreign missionaries and a local priest were killed by the regime's forces and by guerrillas. A bishop and 18 missionaries were deported and over 60 mission stations, schools and hospitals were closed. In the 1960s and 1970s the Catholic Church had a modest following in Sweden, and news of its Rhodesian sister church's great problems never reached the Swedish public.

It was not much better in the media in the early 1970s. With the exception of the odd series of articles on the cultural pages, very little attention was paid to Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front. Like South Africa, it subsequently evolved increasingly racist policies, even if they were not as far-reaching, judicially.

The situation in Rhodesia was absurd. 240 000 whites ruled over 5 million blacks through "just discrimination", which was seen to mean "to recognise the differences that exist among people" and to administer them "so that harmonic relationships and growing welfare is assured for all". In reality blacks were subjected to continual humiliation and economic difficulties.

Great Britain was hesitant, despite being charged by the UN to deal with the regime. For Smith the

"This clear break with previous missionary reports confirmed that progressive Swedish missionaries who sympathised with the struggle for liberation did exist. Their influence on public opinion in Rhodesia and in Sweden was, however, limited."

Catholic Church was a problem; it did not sound really credible to call it communist. It was easier to do this with The World Council of Churches. When they decided in 1970 to support the liberation movements, some protestant churches in Rhodesia became anxious and toned down their criticism of the regime's school policies. In turn, this reduced the inclination of the mother churches in the North to sound the alarm. There were, however, exceptions. At a Nordic Conference of church leaders in Oslo in January 1972 on the Africans' struggle in Namibia and Rhodesia, the Finnish theologian Fredrik Cleve declared:

The church's fear of polarisation has in practice meant that it easily ended up on the side of the oppressors. Polarisation as an instrument for integration and justice was disregarded. Racism is a class problem; discrimination is a way of crucifying Christ anew.

He gained support for this interpretation, and the churches criticised Western industrial investments in southern Africa "because of their general tendency (to function) to the detriment of the African population".

24. Black division complicates the picture

As the first of the liberation movements in southern Africa, ZANU received direct support from Sweden as early as 1969; whereas ZAPU received support not until 1973. The black opposition to the white regime was split by repeated internal conflicts. Some of these had ethnic roots: Shona ($\pm 80\%$ of the population) dominated ZANU, and Ndebele ($\pm 10\%$) dominated ZAPU. Internal power struggles were one cause, another was historical outrages between the ethnic groups. In addition the conflicts may have been stronger because ZANU leaders like Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe as well as ZAPU's Joshua Nkomo were imprisoned between 1964 and 1974.

In December 1971 – with the Methodist ministers Abel Muzorewa and Canaan Banana as its leaders – the African National Council (ANC) was formed to unite opposition to the proposed Anglo-Rhodesian settlement. The Swedish government saw the proposal as “a hard blow” to those who worked for equality between the races.

From the end of 1972 Sweden had contact with both ZANU and ZAPU. This gave Sweden a unique relationship compared to both the Western powers and the Eastern bloc. An expression of this was that Herbert Chitepo – ZANU's leader in exile and seen by some as Zimbabwe's Mandela – in October 1972 told Pierre Schori of the Foreign Ministry and Anders Möllander of Sida that – in agreement with Frelimo – it was decided to move the armed struggle eastwards before the end of the year with resultant new waves of refugees to take care of.



The button from the Africa Groups did not mention the names of the organisations.

The tension between ZANU and ZAPU continued, which may partly explain why the Africa Groups expressed a relatively absent-minded interest to the Smith-regime. The book *Afrika: Imperialism och Befrielsekamp* (1972, *Africa: Imperialism and the Liberation Struggle*) did not even discuss Zimbabwe. Then there was the notion of the absolute primacy of the armed struggle, while political mobilisation of the population was not accorded the same importance. Only in 1976 did the Africa Groups start a Zimbabwe campaign, to benefit the “guerrilla war”.

The change of government in Sweden in 1976 did not affect the size and principal direction of assistance. Because of the Liberal Party's anti-communist attitude on other questions, one might have expected that support to ZAPU would be called into question because of its good relations with the Eastern bloc. Instead the Liberal Party was ZAPU's strongest advocate in Sweden. Among the front line states Tanzania was closer to ZANU and Zambia closer to ZAPU, which may also have played a role. Zimbabwe was the only country where two liberation movements received state support from Sweden.

25. Détente with hindsight

During a visit to Sweden in November 1974, Herbert Chitepo was received like a head-of-state. He met the Prime Minister, the Foreign and Development Cooperation Ministers as well as Sida's General Director. TV2 recorded a programme with him and in general he attracted media attention. The re-

ason was that the previous week the Front Line States' presidents – Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Seretse Khama of Botswana and Samora Machel of Mozambique – had met leaders of the liberation movements in Zimbabwe.

Among them were the imprisoned Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo and Nbadaningi Sithole. They had been temporarily released, surprisingly, a result of negotiations between Kaunda and South Africa's Premier John Vorster. He had assured Kaunda that Smith was now prepared to accept majority rule. The aim of the meeting would be to discuss how a peaceful transition could be achieved. Chitepo was sceptical and believed that the will to negotiate was due rather to the liberation movements' military successes and that Smith wanted to gain time and undermine ZANU's position. The impending risk was a puppet government.

On 7th December 1974 a common manifesto, the *Lusaka Unity Accord*, was signed. It implied that all would assemble under the ANC's umbrella under the leadership of Bishop Abel Muzorewa. The structures would be rapidly coordinated with a joint congress in sight four months later. At the same time "the inevitability" of continued armed struggle was recognised as were all other forms of struggle until Zimbabwe was liberated.

It looked good on paper. Reality was different. There never was a united Zimbabwean liberation movement, on the contrary. Leadership struggles within ZANU between Sithole and Mugabe, among others, already existed when Chitepo was killed by a car bomb in Lusaka in March 1975. Irrespective of who did the deed – Smith or a ZANU rival – it led to the banning of ZANU and 1 660 ZANU supporters were arrested in Zambia, some of whom were tortured.

For the Smith regime this was the best thing that could have happened. On the surface, détente, but underneath the strongest opponent was disarmed. The Rhodesian position did not deteriorate when a few months later Sithole gave his support to the arrests. For the majority in ZANU's revolutionary council this meant that he had betrayed the revolution, and that Mugabe must take over the leadership. A minority left ZANU with Sithole.

Anders Bjurner, then at the Swedish embassy in Lusaka, made a strong plea for Sweden to support the relatives of the prisoners economically and to give the accused legal help, a politically sensitive matter in the light of Sweden's good relationship to Zambia. Through Swedish Amnesty Sweden gave the required support to the accused, which in the end – after 19 months – led to the release of the main accused, ZANU's head of defence, in October 1976.

Internal conflicts within liberation movements and their strained relationships to the Front Line States led to official Swedish support ending during 1975–77. Sida nevertheless continued to support Emmaus Björkä's and Bread and Fishes' freight transports to ZANU.

26. After détente

Détente in southern Africa died with the South African invasion in Angola in October 1975. ZAPU resumed its guerrilla actions from Zambia and Botswana, and ZANU stepped up its military activity from Mozambique. To crush this threat the infamous Selous Scouts undertook a raid over the border and brutally shot down over 1 000 refugees in the Nyadzonia massacre.

Before the Geneva Conference in December 1976 the ANC was reorganised and became the United

easier for Thorbjörn Fälldin's government to give increased support to ZANU and ZAPU despite the Moderates' critical attitude. To what extent the Moderate party's ideological organ *Svensk Tidskrift* reflected the views of the party leaders is unclear, but it did not mince matters regarding Development Cooperation Minister, Ola Ullsten (fp): Of the country's "quarrelling groups" he had:

opted for [the one] qualified to kill most whites in Rhodesia... The most communist supported [group], the so-called Patriotic Front, is to receive Swedish financial assistance... It is unbelievable how much the concept of neutrality can cover... Palme's government introduced support to revolutionary movements from the aid budget. The idea might have been raised in Moscow. Those who took up arms for socialism... were supported... Mr Ullsten innocently continues along Mr Palme's road.

Because of their scepticism towards both ZANU and ZAPU the Africa Groups had never actively pursued the issue of state support to them. However, Emmaus Björkå, Emmaus Stockholm and Bread and Fishes had long had a close relationship with ZANU. EB even had two "comrades" from ZANU placed with them in 1974–75 both for practical work and to work with information. In a letter between ZANU and EB not only practical questions were discussed, but also policies, in a tone of mutuality. They regarded each other as comrades in the struggle. Nevertheless the split was a problem.

Mai Palmberg recounts the following from a conference in Lisbon in April 1977, organised by the Soviet supported Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization. The issue of ZAPU's and ZANU's unity was at the top of the agenda, and the Nordic delega-



Robert Mugabe from ZANU has a limited interest in the meeting about unity with Joshua Nkomo at Easter time 1979 in Lusaka.

tes were able to meet ZAPU's president Joshua Nkomo and ZANU's president Robert Mugabe:

First Nkomo came. He was the picture of a father of his country. He sat there... in our midst, but said nothing worth quoting. Empty phrases. Then Mugabe came. Don't bother about the Patriotic Front, he said, give all support to us. He made a few sarcastic comments about ZAPU and Nkomo. After these interviews we had a meeting to discuss how we should relate to this. The best we can do for Zimbabwe's people is not to write anything at all, I suggested, and this was accepted as our line of action. We supported virtually all strivings for unity within the Patriotic Front. Censorship? Perhaps, but we did not want to join a game that might contribute to further divisions.



Första gången i Sverige för den afrikanska statsministern Robert Mugabe när han besökte Sverige. Bilden är från en tidning som heter "Dagens Nyheter". Bilden är från en tidning som heter "Dagens Nyheter".

Fälld för till för M

Robert Mugabe
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Först när han kom
till Sverige. Han har
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för att diskutera
Sveriges ställning
till Rhodesia.

Mugabe mötte regeringen, hustrun Afrikagrupperna

Picture from the visit by Mugabe to the Bread and Fishes in 1979. Then published in an editorial by Anders Mellbourn. Now in a rerun when he came as the prime minister.

When Mugabe came to Sweden in September 1977 he first went to BoF in Västerås to discuss the collection of clothes and delivery of goods, and continued to Sida, the Foreign Ministry and Ola Ullsten. He also visited *Kyrkans Hus*, home of the Church of Sweden, in Uppsala.

Under the influence of the Emmaus groups, the Africa Groups – like the government – began to support the Patriotic Front from their congress in 1977. In the light of this, AGIS board in November 1978 found it “unfortunate” that BoF had decided only to support ZANU. Bertil Högborg was charged with resolving the issue. In the end, those Africa Groups (among them Gothenburg) that wanted to,

could sort and pack clothes for ZAPU in BoF’s premises.

27. The Church of Sweden Mission and the liberation movements

Interestingly, the state established its support before the Africa Groups. To a great extent this was a result of the Church of Sweden Mission (SKM) on the basis of its work in Rhodesia developing direct contacts with the liberation movements (ZANU in 1976 and ZAPU in 1977). SKM’s relations to Sida and the Foreign Ministry were also close, through the Board for Humanitarian Assistance. During a



Liberation movement soldiers at the Church of Sweden Missions station Masase in southern Zimbabwe.

visit to Southern Rhodesia in November 1975, Tore Bergman, at the time Africa Secretary in SKM, noted that some of the “exiled youths in Mozambique are members of the Lutheran Church or come from that area”.

Because of external criticism of Church of Sweden support to The World Council of Churches’ *Programme to Combat Racism* (see below) Bergman acted “in his personal capacity”, for instance when he wrote to Mugabe in April 1976 and asked for more information to be able to mobilise support from Sweden if possible. At the same time he wrote to Jonas Shiri, Lutheran bishop in Bulawayo, that in Sweden people were bound to question whether:

the assistance [proposed] is not, de facto, indirectly, assistance for arms and soldiers. Can a church and a mission organisation involve it-

self in this? The reply... is not so easy. Are we not already as whites involved against the blacks? Who started the fighting – the strong man show – in Rhodesia? If we remain passive, are we not already taking sides, even militarily?

Bergman was rapidly answered by both Mugabe and Edgar Tekere, who described the great need among the 20 000 refugees in the camps: education for the younger ones (1 400 aged 7–15 years) and agricultural projects for self-support. Contacts with ZANU were controversial, especially within the Swedish church, but Bergman was soon supported by the board of SKM.

Through the newly formed Mozambican Christian Council and the Lutheran World Federation’s office in Maputo, SKM could soon channel

support to refugee children in the camps. In September 1976 ZANU sent a delegation to Sweden that included Didymus Mutasa, one of the founders of Cold Comfort Farm in Rhodesia (banned in 1971), and Ruvimbika Tekere, Edgar Tekere's wife and responsible for work with women at ZANU's London office. They visited SKM, Sida and Emmaus Björkå.

During a visit to SKM the previous year Robert Mugabe said of the armed struggle:

We do not say that you necessarily have to support [it], but the churches are duty bound to support the cause of justice. They must, at the very least, loudly denounce the regime.

He commended the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Christian Council and Christian Care, but stated:

The Swedish mission has not distinguished itself by denouncing the regime... it is true that we receive support from the government and Sida, but we appreciate the assistance even more, when it comes from people like yourselves. A government is a government. We would like to have our cause as deeply rooted in the hearts of the [Swedish] people as possible.

At this stage both ministers and members of the Lutheran church in Zimbabwe had been sent to prisons and to camps because of their political activities. The missionary Hugo Söderström reported that some of them might be released if they were permitted to go to Sweden. SKM took the economic responsibility, among others for pastor Arote Vellah, who became active in the Africa Group in Uppsala.

The Manama Exodus in January 1977 triggered SKM's close contact with ZAPU. The year before,

the liberation struggle reached SKM's mission area in southern Matabeleland, and many youths were travelling either to ZANU in Mozambique or to ZAPU in Zambia. Now over 300 youths, seven teachers, three nurses and a Lutheran minister left Manama Secondary School, 40 km from the Botswana border. Teacher Paulos Matjaka narrates:

We left in the evening of the first Sunday of the first term of the academic year. Some children ... were less than 13 years old. After travelling through the bush in pitch darkness throughout the night, sunrise found us crossing the Shashi River into Botswana en route to Zambia. We called it "going to Geneva"... We had two armed guerrillas in our company.

The school was founded early in the 1960s by Tore Bergman. Tord Harlin later became school principal. After Bergman returned home to Sweden he worked for SKM and Church of Sweden Aid. Several of the liberation movements' future leaders were educated in SKM schools, among them Edward Ndlovu, who in the late 1970s led most ZAPU delegations in their negotiations with Sida.

In March 1977 Tord Harlin went to Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia to find out what had happened to the Manama youth. In Lusaka, among others, he met ZAPU's leaders, who presented an educational project "New Manama". Later the project was estimated to cost about 10 million kronor for buildings, equipment etc. After having weighed the pros and cons of support to an armed liberation movement like ZAPU, Harlin observed that because of the actual situation there was no alternative way of helping and that SKM probably was "the first organisation that received a request of this kind".

The cost was assessed as being unreasonably

high. After much discussion back and forth SKM allocated 80 000 kronor in May to alleviate the most acute needs of 6 000 children. At the same time it tried to mobilise further support from Sida and through the Lutheran World Federation. A month later official state support to ZANU and ZAPU was reinstated.

28. South Africa returns – through the churches

While attention was on the wars in Vietnam and the Portuguese colonies, the issue of apartheid and white racism in South Africa had almost disappeared from the agenda. Its return largely depended on what happened within the churches, first internationally and then in Sweden.

At The World Council of Churches General Assembly in Uppsala in 1968 the churches of developing countries played a more prominent role than previously. In a strongly worded declaration the churches were exhorted to run a forceful campaign against racism and for full citizenship rights for its victims. Institutionalised racism as it appeared “in refined form” in many churches was declared scandalous. Instead the churches should withdraw their economic support from institutions that kept racism alive.

The issue of racism was closely linked to questions of economic justice and human rights. A Third World perspective dominated. It was also expressed in resolutions at a meeting of non-state churches in Örebro (March 1969). There, among other things, they declared their solidarity with Frelimo. By their “actions” Christians ought to try to



Nkomo is discussing building projects with a Yugoslav engineer. Left Ronald Henrysson that were with the CSM Africa secretary Tore Bergman and Tord Harling at this visit at the ZAPU “Victory Camp” 1977.

prevent the Cabora Bassa project and its support of white racism. They also expressed solidarity with the 30 or so priests and theologians accused of having organised a prayer service in Lund’s cathedral in protest against the churches’ indulgence towards a representative of the apartheid regime.

In 1969 the central committee of the World Council of Churches decided to launch the *Programme to Combat Racism* (PCR), linked to a fund from which it was later possible to give contributions to liberation movements for education, health care, legal aid. Conservative groups within and outside the churches saw this as evidence of communism in the World Council of Churches. They saw

their view being further confirmed by the World Council's 1972 decision to sell their own stocks and shares in companies working in countries ruled by Portugal and white racist regimes. At the same time, WCC encouraged member churches and individual Christians to use their influence, for example, at general meetings of shareholders.

In 1972 the Swedish Ecumenical Council (SEN) published a small but in principle important



The Africa group member Bertil Malmström was a resource person when the churches involved themselves in the liberation of southern Africa in a campaign week 1973.

brochure entitled *Kampen mot rasismen* (The struggle against racism). The Church of Sweden decided to donate a national collection to PCR, and both the Swedish Covenant Mission Church and Sida made donations to the same end. In Sida's case it was increased to a half million kronor in 1977 (today about 2 million) and from then it continued to grow. During the years 1986–91 more than 8 million kronor was donated to PCR through SEN, most of which came from Sida. The motivation was the need to combat racism both ideologically and practically and PCR was a good weapon in the struggle.

A large Christian National Meeting in Gothenburg in 1972 raised the issue of international justice. The decision was taken to hold an annual ecumenical development week to alert public opinion and create a Programme of Action. In 1973 the Development Week started with the topic *Rättvisan kan inte vänta* (Justice cannot wait), followed in 1974 by *Frihet åt förtryckta* (Freedom for the oppressed) with ambitious conceptual study books. In the latter, one of SEN's statements is reproduced, based on a major investigation undertaken on Swedish economic involvement in southern Africa. Churches and individuals were encouraged to review their shares in companies involved in South Africa, and it was suggested that the World Council of Churches cooperate with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) on actions against racial oppression in southern Africa. The Swedish companies working in South Africa were given two years to improve, but this did not help.

29. Kick out the priest!

SEN found that Swedish companies in South Africa were no better than other foreign firms on the question of pay differentials between whites and blacks.

At the suggestion of peace researcher Peter Walensteen, SEN decided that on the strength of having at least one share, it would be possible to take part in the shareholders' meetings of large companies.

The appearance of Lutheran Archbishop Olof Sundby and the leader of the Swedish Covenant Mission Church, Gösta Hedberg, at ASEA's shareholders' meeting on 14th March and Volvo's on 14th May 1975 attracted considerable attention in the press, radio and TV. They based their questions on observations made by Lester Wikström, secretary of SEN's international committee that visited South Africa at the beginning of the year. As requested, ASEA received the questions ahead of time. Wikström relates:

When we arrived at the shareholders meeting in Västerås we were informed the Archbishop would appear after the meeting and that ASEA had already answered the questions and would hand out both the questions and the answers after the shareholders' meeting. I explained that the Archbishop had prepared a number of further questions depending on the answers. In this way there would be a little dialogue. In addition we were there as shareholders with the right to put questions. Coverage by the mass media was very large.

A courteous atmosphere prevailed at ASEA's shareholders' meeting. One cannot say the same of Volvo's shareholders meeting. There the leader of the Swedish Covenant Mission Church, Gösta Hedberg addressed the board and put questions to them. After a relatively calm introduction one began to hear booing. Someone cried: "Throw out the priest!"

I also attended the Electrolux shareholders



"Throw out the priest – invest in South Africa" The shareholders of Volvo did not like it when the Swedish Ecumenical Council put forward questions by the church leader Gösta Hedberg.

meeting in Stockholm on 31st May 1976. In their answers to our written questions the company hid the cleaning services they ran in South Africa. They paid wages under the poverty line. At the shareholders meeting the company acknowledged the existence of the cleaning services and promised to review pay. I

still remember the company's advertisements in South Africa: "We keep South Africa clean".

The debate on sanctions against South Africa had moments when it was very heated. For my personal stand a statement in 1976 by the Christian Institute and its director Beyers Naudé was crucial: "Investments in South Africa are investments in apartheid and thus immoral, unjust and exploitative."

In its 1977 Programme of Action the SEN board gave its support to:

- an arms embargo against South Africa;
- efforts to ban new investments in South Africa through the UN;
- an increase in Swedish assistance to anti-apartheid organisations in southern Africa;
- a committee of enquiry tasked with investigating:
- the possibilities of changing Swedish currency laws so that new investments in South Africa could be stopped; and
- the preconditions for a gradual disinvestment of Sweden's economic relationships to South Africa.

SEN kept itself in the forefront of the debate and creation of public opinion in Sweden in regard to southern Africa during 1973–78. Focus lay on South Africa, but its international committee also followed and commented on developments in the other countries.

Lester Wikström later became deputy secretary in the South Africa commission of enquiry that the government appointed in 1977. The main secretary was Åke Magnusson. The following year its report, entitled *Förbud mot investeringar i Sydafrika* (SOU 1978:53, Prohibition on investments in South Afri-

ca) was published. The commission chose to define certain Volvo- and ASEA-controlled companies as outside the ambit of the proposal. This was later criticised by Claes Brundenius, Kenneth Hermele and Mai Palmberg in the book *Gränslösa affärer* (1980, Borderless business).

30. Massacre in Soweto

The relative calm in the early 1970s in South Africa was deceptive. The ANC had been forced into exile during the 1960s. With roots in the black churches, a new black awareness evolved through the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) with its base primarily among students in the South African Students Organization (SASO). Liberation was not seen as a purely political question; it also concerned liberating blacks from experiencing themselves as inferior to whites and required reconquering their cultural identity. To interpret this – as sometimes happens – as an expression of reverse racism and in contradiction to the ANC'S line is a false interpretation. Nothing indicated that the BCM leaders held such a view.

In 1972 an opinion poll among youths in Soweto showed that 98% did not want to be taught in the "oppressors' language" Afrikaans but preferred English. A decree in 1974 that Afrikaans must be used for the more theoretical subjects thus led to strong protests among pupils in Soweto. On 16th June 1976 several thousand students gathered for a peaceful protest march. The result was devastating with several hundred killed.

With the massacre in Soweto, international public opinion against apartheid was aroused again. It was further fuelled when in detention the young BCM leader Steve Biko was tortured to death by the police in 1977. He died. This brutal crime against

human rights made Biko a martyr in the eyes of the world; shortly afterwards the UN declared a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.

31. Political majority for sanctions

One of the first in Sweden to become involved in the question of apartheid was the Liberal Party's David Wirmark, who, in the late 1940s as a young politician in the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) came across the apartheid issue. In April 1960 he met Oliver Tambo in Tunis, and they became life-long friends. Around 1960 the liberals were in the vanguard of the first political debates on humanitarian assistance and apartheid.

Thorbjörn Fälldin's Centre Party had for years advocated sanctions against apartheid, as had the Left Party Communists. The Moderates, however, were consistently against all kinds of sanctions. For a long time the Social Democrats were indifferent to sanctions as a method, and it was primarily the trade union movement that acted as a brake. A certain UN fundamentalism – that only the Security Council ought to decide on sanctions – may also have played a role.

The government's critics did not keep silent. Their arguments had strong international backing from the World Council of Churches central committee in Utrecht in August 1972 and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) conference in Geneva in June 1973. The latter was a meeting against apartheid of 200 trade union organisations from the three trade union internationals; the Catholic World Confederation of Labour (WCL), the West-oriented ICFTU to which LO and TCO belong, and the East-oriented World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) to which the ANC's ally, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)



The southern Africa week of 1978 organised by the Africa Groups was advertised with Sam Nzimas picture of hector Pietersen, the first victim of the SWETO uprising.

was affiliated.

Both assemblies supported the idea of isolating the apartheid regime. While waiting for mandatory sanctions to be declared by the UN, they paved the way for a dialogue with foreign companies in South Africa on accepting black and non-racially based trade unions. The choice was isolation or involvement. Despite objections from the ANC and SACTU, both the churches and the unions in Sweden chose the latter alternative – initially – in LO/TCO's case after a controversial trip to South Africa in ear-



Palme at the meeting of the movement of Christian Social Democrats 1976.

ly 1975. Nevertheless the government could not hide behind these alternatives. Without a doubt Per Wästberg had the broad anti-apartheid movement behind him when, in mid-1974, he asked in *Dagens Nyheter*:

How long can Sweden support armed liberation movements and severely condemn apartheid without cutting off economic relationships to South Africa?

The massacres that began in Soweto increased the pressure on the Swedish government. As in 1965, when Olof Palme in Gävle announced a new and more critical attitude to the USA on the question of Vietnam, he chose the 1976 congress of the Christian Social Democrats to launch a more positive line on economic sanctions against South Africa.

In a six point programme for European Social Democracy Palme summarised a strategy against apartheid:

- A mandatory UN arms embargo;
- Support to liberation movements;
- No recognition of Bantustans;
- More extensive UN sanctions;
- An independent Namibia;
- Study the issue of foreign companies and new investments in South Africa.

Although the Social Democrats lost the elections in 1976, from 1977 there was a majority in Parliament in favour of economic sanctions against South Africa. On 1st July 1979 new investments and the export of capital to South Africa and Namibia were prohibited, in accordance with the proposals put by the commission of enquiry on South Africa.

32. The Africa Groups gird their loins

Writer Adam Hochschild, best known for the book *King Leopold's Ghost* claimed, in another book, *Bury the Chains!*, that since the British campaign against the slave trade, solidarity movements have been united by two things:

- The motive force of solidarity is human compassion, not self-interest;
- The belief that information on injustices can lead to popular mobilisation to end them.

The Africa Groups in Sweden (AGIS) can thus be seen as one in a series of these solidarity movements, where the requisite conditions are strong convictions and great tenacity. The road to the formal formation of the organisation in 1975 was long.

In the background were SUL's boycott campaign and the South Africa Committees of the 1960s. Under the pressure of the broad Vietnam involvement the groups took a back seat and the few that survived – mostly in the major University towns – came to direct their support primarily towards the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. In 1970 the activists from Lund, Uppsala and Stockholm agreed on this; they did not see any guerrilla war in South Africa and Zimbabwe and were therefore sceptical towards the movements there. In addition, they started calling themselves the Africa Groups with reference to both Guinea Bissau and other possible countries like Congo and Kenya. Only in November 1974 did they recognise the ANC as the leading liberation movement in South Africa.

In the 1970s the criteria for membership was to attend a minimum number of activities, which made it difficult to recruit new members and increased the risk of sectarianism. Categorical criticism of the Social Democratic government made it more dif-



The Africa Bulletin is sold and money collected to MPLA by Hasse Eriksson at Forumtorget in Uppsala 1975. The daily activist work.



"In the 1970s the criteria for membership was to attend a minimum number of activities, which made it difficult to recruit new members and increased the risk of sectarianism."

difficult to work with the trade unions and SSU. The attempt in 1973 to form a common national organisation based on a broad platform against South Africa's racism, Portugal's colonialism and USA's imperialism broke down. Not until June 1976 did the Africa Groups finally succeed in uniting on a common programme.

Although they were marginalised for a long time, the Africa Groups played an important role in forming public opinion, not least on the local level – with *Afrikabulletinen* as an important instrument. Through it one could spread information from Namibia and South Africa that was otherwise difficult to get. It was often written under a pseudonym or



anonymously, partly to protect sources and writers, and partly to emphasise collective responsibility. By the late 1970s the print-order was 5 000 copies. In the 1980s the *Africa Bulletin* became increasingly professional and in 1994 it changed its name to *Södra Afrika* (southern Africa). At its height AGIS had 30 local groups and over time a total of 50 groups as well as 20 contact people.

In certain groups conspiracy theories flourished. The fear of infiltration by the Swedish secret police, SÄPO, was perhaps particularly strong in Gothenburg Africa Group (GAG). There was considerable disagreement on Angola's liberation movements, just as among the parliamentary parties. Superpower politics and Swedish sympathisers loyal to various acronyms led to long discussions, also on Rhodesia. Despite this, GAG cooperated with many other organisations. Activists Gert Klaiber and Hans Tollin recall:

GAG also cooperated with CUF, the Liberal Youth, SSU, trade unions, church organisations and other organisations. There were only two groups that we never cooperated with: the ex-

treme right, which is self-explanatory, and the Moderates and their organisations, for reasons that are more difficult to explain. Perhaps they hoped that market forces would liberate Africa's oppressed people? The Moderate Youth League (MUF, Moderata Ungdomsförbundet) was always invited to our manifestations but refused each time with the argument that they did not work cross-politically.

The question of South Africa was also hotly discussed because of political differences.

Some members maintained that the ANC did not represent the broad masses of the people and that we ought to support other groups and movements. In the end, we decided to support the ANC to the hilt. One important reason was that we were not sure about what kind of freedom the other movements wanted. We fought against colonialism and did not wish for any form of neo-colonialism in liberated countries, nor in a majority ruled South Africa. Special to South Africa was that there were active trade

"Although they were marginalised for a long time, the Africa Groups played an important role in forming public opinion, not least on the local level – with Afrikabulletinen as an important instrument. Through it one could spread information from Namibia and South Africa."

unions that we could contact. We helped arrange meetings between SACTU and the trade unions at SKF, Volvo and the ship-building yard Götaverken.

Formally GAG was a democratic organisation with free debate, but in concrete work a handful of people took the decisions. The reason was partly the sectarian left-wing discussing climate:

We weren't armchair leftists; we wanted to achieve results. Thus it was important to become united within the group of leaders and then get going. We were forced to rely on one another. When we went round at night to paste up posters we were going beyond the bounds of the law. If someone was caught, we others could rely on her or him keeping quiet about any accomplices. We shared fines in solidarity. When we crept around in supermarkets and pasted small stickers with the text "Don't buy South African goods", we were not really legal either.

Our work bore the influence of the mood

after German terrorist attacks in Stockholm (hostage drama at the West German embassy in 1975, and in 1977 a foiled kidnap attempt of a cabinet minister, Anna-Greta Leijon). The government relinquished all democratic rules and threw people out, non-Swedish citizens, without giving a reason. Supervision of workplaces was also dramatically heightened. Revelations of a "hospital spy" employed to register left-wingers at Sahlgrenska Hospital in Gothenburg in 1975 produced shock waves. Certain liberation movements in Africa were still regarded as terrorists, and the ANC's status was ambiguous. Some of us were afraid that, as an activist in the Africa Groups, one might be accused of consorting with terrorists.

It was important for Africa Groups' campaigns to be based on both feelings and knowledge, and at times the demands made on members were draining. They were expected not only to be committed but also to share a common view of the conflicts. The publication and study of qualified study books was one way of reaching that goal. *Afrika: Imperialism och befrielsekamp* (Africa: Imperialism and liberation struggle) from 1972 was based on a Marxist analysis. *Befrielsekampen i Afrika* (The liberation struggle in Africa) edited by Mai Palmberg was published in 1977 (revised in 1980 and 1982) and was published in English in 1983 as *The Struggle for Africa* (Zed Press). 1990 saw the publication of *Södra Afrika: kamp för befrielse och utveckling* (Southern Africa: the struggle for liberation and development) written by Kenneth Hermele and Mai Palmberg.

For AGIS, 1978 marked the beginning of much greater influence than in the past. In May the organisation undertook a dramatic revision of its views



"The Liberation Struggle in Africa" the study book that created a financial base to start a national office. The book was later translated also published in English by ZED press.

on LO, TCO and the Social Democrats by both welcoming LO's campaign for the people in southern Africa and by revoking their own "earlier oversimplified statements about these organisations". With this they also cleared the way for the creation of ISAK (Isolate South Africa Committee).

Sales of the new study book *The liberation struggle in Africa* netted a surplus, and the Africa Groups opened an office. The Stockholm Africa Group rented out a part of its premises at Humlegårdsgatan on Östermalm. Bertil Högberg, Georg Dreifaldt and Lena Johansson were the first employees. Towards the end of 1982 AGIS moved to Solidaritetshuset, a

building of cultural and historic interest at Barnängen on the island of Södermalm, where a number of solidarity groups have their headquarters.

As a leftist organisation with roots in the anti-authoritarian revolt of 1968, AGIS avoided hierarchic structures. No one should stand above another. In practice Dick Urban Vestbro functioned as chairman. When Vestbro left the board in 1978 it became difficult to manage the work of the board, and in 1981 Bertil Högberg was secretly elected as chairperson. When, after a year away from the board, he was again elected to that post in 1983, he became the first official chairperson of the Africa Groups.



DEMONSTRATION

TOTAL BOJKOTT AV SYDAFRIKA!

**SAMLING 10.30 I HUMLEGÅRDEN
LÖRDAGEN DEN 11 OKTOBER**

Vi går till Sergels Torg där demonstrationen avslutas med ett möte kl. 12.00.

OLAV
TOMEDALIN SANDH
LENNAR MÅRTEN AFIC
NICKERÖD, SVARÖ
Lennart PERSSON, GÅIC



6.

1978–1983

**STAND UP FOR
SOUTHERN
AFRICA**

33. Rhodesia becomes Zimbabwe

By the late 1970s Sweden had become the most important donor in regard to non-military support to both ZANU and ZAPU, especially when it came to food and vehicles. Emmaus Björkå and Bread and Fishes continued donating clothes, and from old emergency stores 20 000 pairs of pants were sent to the movements. There was a great demand for medical support, and a complete field hospital was put at ZAPU's disposal in Zambia. The extent of the support did not eliminate certain internal tensions. There was even rivalry between the two movements about assistance.

Over the years support to ZANU came to be of an increasingly political kind, with support for the creation of civil institutions (they claimed to operate in 75% of Zimbabwe), while ZAPU support remained more humanitarian. The difference could, among other things, have had to do with the movements' own long-term strategies. The support was, however, not uncritical. Both ZAPU and ZANU were criticised in Sweden, the latter for death threats against "black traitors" like Muzorewa and Sithole in November 1978. Mugabe admitted that the statement "was perhaps formulated rather drastically".

By the end of the 1970s, 30 000 had been killed in war, and the regime – now formally ruled by a coalition under Muzorewa – was well on the way to collapse. The British government under Margaret

Thatcher was forced, at the Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka in August 1979, to begin negotiating with the Patriotic Front on independence. The Lancaster House Agreement of 21st December 1979 entailed that Great Britain for a time resumed the role of colonial power with a single task: to organise free elections to a parliament with a black majority of 80 seats. For a decade the remaining 20 seats were divided among whites, coloureds and Asians, who thus had heavy overrepresentation.

During the pre-election period Sweden continued to give humanitarian support not only to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) but also to ZANU and ZAPU for repatriation of refugees from Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia. The British government said this was giving an unfair advantage to the Patriotic Front's parties. They also received 200 000 kronor each from the Social Democrats.

In January 1980 the Africa Groups initiated a broad *ad hoc* committee, Friends of the Patriotic Front (*Patriotiska Frontens Vänner*), followed by an appeal in *Dagens Nyheter* signed by 50 Swedes, including parliamentarians from both blocks, among them CH Hermansson (vpk), Birgitta Dahl (s), Pär Granstedt (c) and Olle Wästberg (fp). The appeal was followed by a demonstration at the British embassy with the demand that the Thatcher government should see to it that the Lancaster House



Independence celebration in Zimbabwe 1980.



The ZANU print shop in Maputo. The Africa Groups, Bread and Fishes and Emmaus Björkå send a chartered aircraft with supplementary equipment to Salisbury that were seized.

Agreement was implemented.

In the appeal it was noted that South African troops remained in Rhodesia, that thousands of people were still in prison, that Muzorewa's private army terrorised people in the rural areas and that Rhodesian military and police were harassing the Patriotic Front. It concluded that the British governor, Lord Soames, was obviously permitting infringements of the Lancaster House Agreement. The British ambassador Jeffrey Petersen made an

indignant protest to the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

The strong tensions in Rhodesia created a lot of apprehension in Sweden that the elections on 27–29 February would not be held, an apprehension expressed by both Olof Palme and Ola Ullsten. The British were still hoping for a large coalition in Salisbury and on Swedish support for this. In a letter to the Swedish Foreign Ministry they explained:

There is no obligation on the [British] Governor to invite the leader of the largest party to form the government, unless that party has an absolute majority... We hope that the Swedish government will take every opportunity to explain to African governments that even if Mr Mugabe's party wins the most seats, it will not necessarily enter the government, perhaps referring to the fact that the largest single party in Sweden is in opposition.

To the overwhelming surprise of the British government – but not Swedish politicians – ZANU-PF won an absolute majority – 57 seats – while PF-ZAPU won 20 seats, Muzorewa's UANC 3 and Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front 20. ZANU-PF was dominated by the Shona – ±80% of the population – which may have contributed to the result.

On the 18th April 1980 the independent state of Zimbabwe was proclaimed. Popular mobilisation in Sweden could now focus on South Africa and Namibia.

34. The many faces of the trade unions

At ILO's major conference on apartheid in 1973, SACTU was recognised as a legitimate trade union representative for South Africa, while TUCSA (Trade Union Council of South Africa) was not permitted to participate in the conference as it was seen as

being too close to the regime. This was an international breakthrough for SACTU, which advocated and gained a hearing for the isolation of the South African regime. At the same time the importance of “economic, moral and material support to South African workers and people through their genuine trade unions and political organisations” was emphasised.

As has been previously mentioned, LO and TCO chose – together with their Nordic sister organisations and under the ICFTU umbrella –, the line of support rather than sanctions. SACTU’s affiliation to the East-oriented WFTU was for them not only a political but also a psychological obstacle to cooperation. This led to a paradoxical result:

While all the Swedish opponents to apartheid, including the labour movement, rallied to the support of the ANC, LO and TCO refused to cooperate with the ANC’s trade union ally. Nevertheless, one TCO-member, the Swedish Union of Clerical and Technical Employees in Industry (SIF), did give economic support to SACTU. At the same time SACTU – as the only non-liberation movement – received official Swedish support from 1977/78, and from 1983/84 was included in the support given to the ANC. Still, the strategic lines did cross one another.

While LO and TCO pleaded for a reformist line and for support to the emerging black trade unions in South Africa, they emphasised at the same time that Swedish investments in southern Africa entailed a support to the white and colonial regimes. The duty to stop them was, however, the government’s. Jan Olsson, international secretary of the Metal Workers’ Union (Metall) and one of the six members of LO/TCO’s delegation to South Africa in 1975:



SACTU was for a long time the only trade union that rejected racial division.

We saw that revolution would come rolling over the country in a number of years and asked ourselves: What should our policies as a trade union movement be up to this point? We saw that this revolution would not come from those who were outside the country, nor from those who sat on Robben Island, but from people in the townships. So we said: How shall we



Two trade union leaders at SKF in the beginning of the the 80-s, Göran Johansson from Gothenburg and Daniel Dube from Uitenhage.

deal with this? We decided that we wanted to support free union rights in South Africa. That was what we knew [we could do]. Let politicians fix what they are good at, we will look after the people – and the trade union movements.

SACTU's main line was isolation, at the same time as recognising a need to develop contacts with and support to the internal unions. As an exile organisation SACTU had some problems organising unions in South Africa; thus the political struggle tended to become more important than the trade union struggle.

LO's largest union, Metall, did not agree with

unilateral Swedish sanctions but supported sanctions declared by the UN. It said its South African partners agreed with this line. One of those who advocated "hibernation" and union organisation was Göran Johansson, then the chairman of Metall at SKF in Gothenburg and now a senior s-councillor in Gothenburg:

We demanded that the black workers ought to be treated as all the others. Fairly soon we felt that the greatest resistance to change did not come from management in the Swedish companies, but from the white foremen on the factory floor. It was very difficult to get at them and break down the barriers. Company mana-

gement did not know what was happening on the floor; there might be a white foreman who had a “black book”, in which he kept track of those he favoured and set his own pay levels.

What we learnt from the work in South Africa was how unbelievably important it was to get to know and understand the culture in different contexts. When I see South Africa today, what worries me most is that the “blacks have become so black”, people are sacked from – or do not get jobs – because they are not black enough. They are losing the strength they might have gained, because of these splits.

Within the Swedish Mine Workers Union (Gruv) and the Municipal Workers’ Union (Kommunal) the picture of South Africa differed, and they had a more positive view on sanctions. Anders Stendalen was chairman of Gruv:

The guidance I received from our comrades in South Africa was very important to me. We realised that an efficient weapon in the struggle against apartheid was to refuse companies to make new investments. Some thought this was a militant attitude, but we stood by our line. Mandela also said that one does not put out the fire just before the water boils.

Through direct adult education in South Africa, among other inputs, Gruv played a major role in building up the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Johan Peanberg, then Kommunal’s international secretary, said that even if the question of sanctions did not split the trade union movement it damaged its reputation as an anti-apartheid force. Kommunal supported sanctions and boycotts:

Metall’s divergent voice set the tone within the



Tormod Nasset left. With the American musician Little Steven, as a booster for the ISAK child campaign.

trade union movement, because export industries were leading. From previously having a common view, those of us who were positive to sanctions lost influence and the trade union movement followed a softer line. Still, after a while public opinion changed, and the view on sanctions and boycotts became tougher again.

Out in the country the conflicts at union headquarters were less noticeable. Most of the time everyone against apartheid cooperated without difficulties. In Oskarshamn, for example, Tormod Nasset was active in both Metall and the Social Democrats and was a member of the board of the local ISAK (see below). This contact came through a tip from LO. He and some friends one day decided that they wanted to do something against apartheid. They phoned LO and were told about ISAK:

ISAK had a simple constitution and all could join. We did not want to make it a party organisation. Anyway, everyone in Oskarshamn knew who we were. Each of us worked in our



Cyril Ramaphosa and the NUM leadership meets Olof Palme and Anders Stendalen.

respective organisations and initiated interest and support. There were several political parties and organisations, from Metall's Chapter 32 to Döderhults nature conservation society and Emmaus Björkå. ISAK accepted all who wanted to join and when we were involved in large campaigns like "Ungdom mot apartheid" (Youth against apartheid) everyone joined, the municipality, commerce and industry, social

democratic organisations and the trade unions.

In early 1977 Kristina Persson – later county governor and Deputy Director of the Bank of Sweden – visited South Africa at the behest of LO/TCO to review trade union activity and organisations. International contacts were still unusual:

I travelled round alone – to Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban. When I ca-

me to Durban, Alec Erwin from the Metal Workers Union was waiting for me at the airport.

“Kristina, you are not alone,” said Alec. After this I had about 10 guys shadowing me, three cars, a massive following, all the time. Thus I only met people who were openly union organisers formally and clearly. On one occasion when we wanted to talk about slightly more sensitive matters like how our support ought to be organised, Alec Erwin and I took a walk along the beach in Durban and talked about how we could transfer money, whether we should do it openly and bilaterally, through the trade union internationals, or the churches.

During the six weeks she spent in South Africa, Kristina Persson laid the basis for cooperation that acquired great importance for both the Swedish and the new South African trade union movement. It was cooperation based on trust, but it also involved the psychology of opposition to apartheid that created strong ties and a sense of community between people:

The struggle brought people together in a fascinating way. After only a few weeks I was clearly a part of the South African liberation struggle. I identified myself with those I met and they showed me they had very great confidence in me. It was the 1970s even in South Africa, and there were youths who identified with the left. To work with the unions was a way of strengthening the political opposition. I met young academics, Alec Erwin was one of them, Bernie Fanaroff another, who worked in exactly the same way as I did, because of ideals.

In a meeting with union organisers from Port Elizabeth and Durban she discovered that the unions were split and suspicious of each other:

I took up a discussion about whether they could not find a way of cooperating – it would also simplify contacts in the future; instead of the Swedish trade union movement they could distribute the funds themselves. They agreed with this. When I had been home for a couple of weeks, they contacted me and said: Now we have discussed this and we shall call a meeting of all the organisations and suggest that we form a confederation of South African trade unions.

It took time, but in 1979 FOSATU, the Federation of South African Trade Unions was formed, to be succeeded in 1985 by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). It chose not to join either of the trade union internationals. From the left Kristina Persson was accused of being a CIA-agent, and from the right she was seen as working for the KGB:

The presence of American interests and the American trade union movement was very clear in southern Africa, while there were Russian interests too. A Cold War and a struggle for souls were underway. There I stood with my social democratic message and was viewed with great suspicion in both camps. I interpreted it as though we'd found the middle ground.

35. LO's campaign for southern Africa

As part of their 80 year old celebration in May 1978 LO decided to start a big information and collection campaign for the liberation movements in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, starting in Sep-

tember. The largest international campaign in LO's history coincided with UN's International Anti-Apartheid year and was also supported by TCO and the Africa Groups.

The LO-campaign was a major adult education project for international solidarity. Exhibitions of South African art were arranged together with Riksställningar (Swedish Traveling Exhibitions), Sida, TCO, TBV and the Labour movement community centres. The recording company A-disc produced a record against apartheid and the film *Apartheid* was distributed to organisations by Föreningsfilmo. Swedish primary and secondary schools were invited to describe both the oppression and the liberation struggle in southern Africa in their own words and illustrations.

Ulf-Göran Widquist at Brevskolan (a correspondence college and publisher) was given the task of producing the material for LO's study circles. He travelled to Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and South Africa to meet representatives of different liberation movements and gather material:

I was careful, but we had good contacts, often through churches. Sweden had a good reputation in southern Africa, we did many good things, we gave support and money. The labour movement has never been as strong internationally as it was then, in all ways; conscious, knowledgeable when it concerned feelings for a major, important and good cause. This feeling permeated the whole movement. It was a question alongside pension issues and no one wondered why it took so much space on the agenda.



LO and TCO in a joint campaign year. "Support your comrade in South Africa".

The campaign culminated with 1st May celebrations in 1979 and collected 3,3 million kronor (today ±10,5 million).

When the trade union movement began to cooperate and support the unions in South Africa and Namibia, they needed more money and better organisation to be able to handle the work. In 1977 LO and TCO formed a joint aid organ. LO chairman Arne Geiger always maintained that the unions should not use state funds for solidarity, because the

state should never get involved in union work. Union solidarity was a question for the organisations themselves.

LO and TCO agreed, however, to hand on state assistance, if Sida in turn would not ask how LO and TCO would pay their own contributions, since they already contributed so much through their international union organisations. For LO/TCO it was an important principle to work multilaterally, and Sweden was strong in the international trade union movement.

In 1978 workers in the food industry (Livs), factory workers (Fabriks), and the Swedish Union of Foremen and Supervisors (SALF) got involved in an international sympathy strike for the right of employees at South African Unilever to organise themselves. The South African Food and Allied Workers Union led the strike. In Sweden it was the first sympathy strike of this kind and was supported by LO. In Nyköping, 700 workers at Sunlight went on strike. Local clerical and service workers (SIF) branches decided not to join in, for which SIF centrally expressed regrets in public. After the Unilever strike several individual trade unions became involved in conflicts at companies in South Africa in different ways, but not by striking.

36. Art, dance and music

The study books and the *Africa Bulletin* (under various names) were important to enrich members' knowledge, but to strengthen feelings, art and music were needed. This was true in the refugee camps as well, where common experiences and hopes needed to be interpreted and expressed through art, dance and music. To transfer this to Swedish solidarity work was natural.

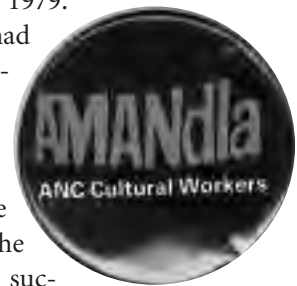
In 1976 the ANC, together with the Support

Group for South Africa's People (SSF, *Stödgruppen för Sydafrikas folk*), organised a tour with the ANC's cultural group *Mayibuye* whose members came from London and East Berlin. Three years later the Africa Groups organised a second tour with the ANC's *Mayibuye* group. At their first concert in Stockholm a woman suddenly hopped up onto the stage and joined in the songs, but the group was not fazed, on the contrary. Later the audience realised that this was Lindiwe Mabuza, ANC'S new representative in Stockholm, a recognised poet and writer. She was intensely involved in the role of culture as a factor for mobilisation and it became a great asset to solidarity work in Sweden.

On her suggestion the cultural group *Amandla* was invited to do a big tour. They lived in ANC housing in Luanda, Angola and were trained by a professional, South African composer and trombonist, Jonas Gwangwa. No fewer than 30 musicians, singers and dancers plus a few tour leaders and contacts for the mass media and organisations came to Gothenburg in late October 1979.

Unfortunately Gwangwa had broken his leg a few days before departure and was unable to join the group on its first visit.

Five weeks of work with the tour began, day and night. The very first performance was a success. The music, story, songs and dances were extremely skilful, and the group played to full houses all over Sweden, Finland, Norway, Germany and Holland. A record was cut and large numbers were sold. In late 1983 a similarly successful tour was organised in the same countries as well as Belgium. Swedish TV2 taped the show in Gothenburg, and a new





ANC cultural group Amandla performs the gum boot dance in Gothenburg.

record was made. The interchange was mutually constructive. Young people were able to show off their skills, their self-confidence rose, they were visible and could see the world, they were able to meet other young people and talk about music or singing, they got a taste of what normal societies can be, they acquired status in their own organisation.

Jan Henningsson from the Swedish Christian Youth Council (SKU) said:

In Sweden choir singing was a handle on the inner life of oppressed groups, their culture. There was no sense of being the victim, no em-

phasis on feeling sorry for others. Here they had something to give us, namely attractive, beautiful, easily learned choir music. We also had the musical group Fjedur, who in an act of brilliance popularised the Amandla songs, the we-shall-win-songs. People were singing them everywhere, not least in churches and chapels. They were even included in the new ecumenical psalm book. In a unique way songs in Zulu entered the treasury of sacral songs. If one started singing one of these hymns in a church in the countryside in the 1980s at least half the congregation joined in! They were incredibly

important in building a broad public opinion so that people could identify themselves with those who are oppressed and with whom they felt solidarity.

Choirs with South African repertoires in and outside the Africa Groups contributed to strengthening commitment among many of ISAK's member organisations. The group *Fjedur* with its Christian roots and with Anders Nyberg as leader acquired something of an icon status in its manner of uniting Swedish folk ballads and South African liberation songs. Their music was even played in other countries. *Falu Fredskör* in Falun, *Motvals* in Linköping and *Vred Fred* in Uppsala were some of the choirs that utilised this repertoire.

Culture came into the anti-apartheid work in many ways. In 1983, Artists against apartheid (*Konstnärer mot apartheid*) started. Lindiwe Mabuza was again the motor, and the chairperson was a working artist, Ursula Schütz. There were art exhibitions in Stockholm and Gothenburg, to which many known artists donated their work to benefit the ANC. *Artists against apartheid* continues today as *Artists for Africa*.

In 1985 the 29 November Committee organised two ANC galas called Rock against Apartheid (*Rock mot Apartheid*). Here widely differing artists like Björn Afzelius and Mikael Wiehe on the one hand and Tomas Ledin on the other cooperated. It was a huge success. With the on-going sales of records the total made may have reached over 10 million kronor. As well as providing economic support to the

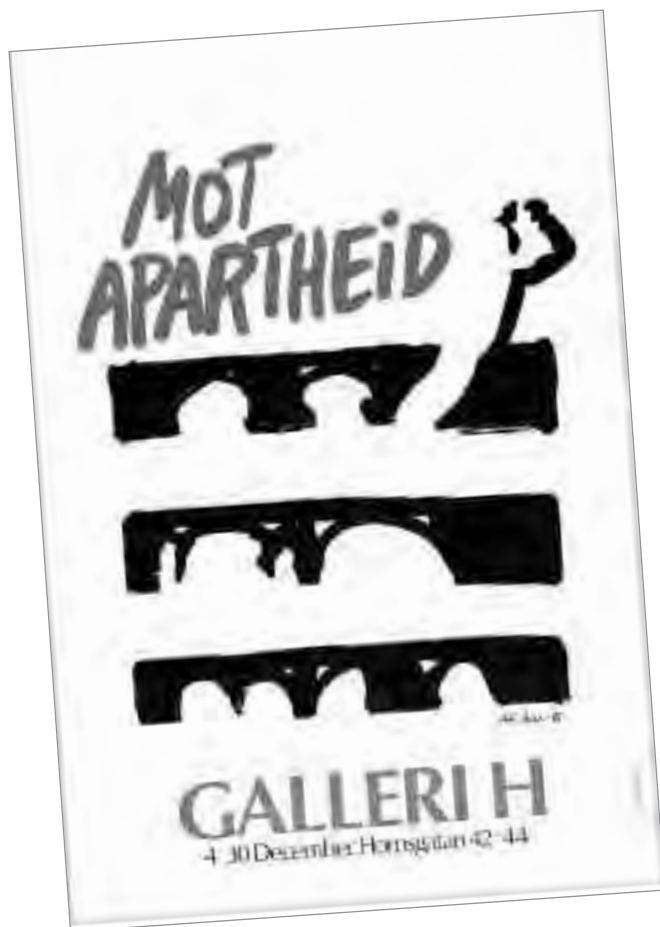


The song group *Fjedur* with its leader Anders Nyberg left, preforms at a rally by Gothenburg Africa Group at "Kopparmärra".

ANC, the concerts made an important contribution to rooting the anti-apartheid movement among a younger generation.

Tommy Hansson, writing in the moderate *Svensk Tidskrift*, claimed that the galas made "it possible for ANC to murder and mutilate still more innocent South Africans, black, white and coloured". For the majority, however, the reverse held. When Nadine Gordimer was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1991, ISAK organised a gala at Stadsteatern, where artists like Monika Zetterlund, Allan Edvall and Arja Saijonmaa paid tribute to the anti-apartheid author. The climax was a speech by writer Sara Lidman for the prize winner, a personal friend for many years.

Various kinds of cultural expression also played



an important role among activists in South Africa, who needed economic support from outside. Swedish assistance was channelled through SEN and later *Riksställningar* to projects like the Community Arts Project in Cape Town, where drama, dance, painting, sculpture and other work became modes of expression for people's protest against apartheid. The art school in Eshiyane, best known as Rorke's Drift and for many years supported by SKM, is another example of art and culture as a basis for self-respect and development.

37. South Africa's fifth province?

In 1884 Namibia became a German colony, known as German South West Africa. The administration was brutal and this led to many attempts at revolt. After the First World War, at the Peace of Versailles in 1919, Germany lost all its colonies. In 1920 the area was given to South Africa to administer through a mandate from the League of Nations. According to the mandate, South Africa ought to support the development of the area towards independence, but in practice it treated South West Africa as a fifth province.

In 1966 the UN General Assembly decided to get to grips with the situation and formally place the area under direct UN administration. In 1968 the UN gave this very sparsely populated area the name Namibia, in 1969 the Security Council declared the South African presence in Namibia illegal, and in 1971 the International Court of Justice in the Hague confirmed this.

Since Western powers refused to implement any economic measures, based on a triple strategy, South Africa could strengthen its grip on Namibia without fear of punishment:

- Combat SWAPO by military means with the aim of reducing its domestic and international credibility and legitimacy;
- Attempt to create support in Namibia for a domestic solution;
- Continue a diplomatic dialogue with external parties with the aim of buying time and preventing negotiations.

Through a series of "terror trials" from 1968 and onwards – foreign observers called them "travesties of justice" – South Africa tried to destroy its oppo-



SWAPO soldiers in a canoe from the film "The Liberation Struggle in Namibia" by Per Sandén.

nents. Long sentences – sometimes life terms – handed out to Namibian leaders like Andimba Toivo ya Toivo did not help. South Africa managed to buy time but not legitimacy. Instead, the UN recognised SWAPO as a genuine liberation movement in 1973, and as “the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people” in 1976.

Western powers negotiated a solution to the Namibian question (Resolution 435), which was accepted by SWAPO and South Africa in September 1978. In December 1978, in defiance of the agreement, South Africa decided to go it alone and hold elections in Namibia to guarantee continued South African rule. SWAPO and several other parties boycotted the elections.

From early on there was a strong commitment to

Namibia in Sweden, not least because of a positive interest on the part of the media. For instance, the news programme Rapport on TV2 in 1974 showed extracts from a film, *Frihetskampen* in Namibia (The liberation struggle in Namibia) by Per Sandén and Rudi Spee, distributed by *Filmcentrum*. It documented a massacre in the Caprivi Strip committed by the South African army in September 1973. The South African Defence Minister dismissed the charges as nonsense, and its Foreign Minister invited Swedish Television to participate in an “investigation” of the situation. On the advice of SWAPO, TV2 agreed, on condition that Sandén, Spee and the UN Namibia Commissioner were included – a condition that not surprisingly was not accepted.

An important motive for Sweden to support

SWAPO against South Africa was the issue of the UN's authority. As long as South Africa continued to defy the UN, any decision on UN administration of Namibia was dead in the water. Because of weak support from the Africa Groups, it was natural for SWAPO to seek to develop a relationship with the United Nations Association of Sweden (*Svenska FN-förbundet*). There was, however, a troublesome factor to deal with: the collaboration between SWAPO's military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and UNITA. It may be possible to describe it as geo-ethnically motivated. Utilising the

close relationship between the Ovambos in northern Namibia and UNITA's primary base among the Ovimbundus in central Angola was arguably a geographic necessity for PLAN's attacks in Namibia.

When the MPLA took power in Luanda in 1975 the situation changed. South Africa began to collaborate with UNITA, which in turn made it necessary for SWAPO to re-evaluate its policies and draw closer to Angola's new government. In 1976 this resulted in promises of bases in Angola and in direct cooperation between PLAN and the Angolan army.



Within the project "Medical Aid to SWAPO" material, medicine and equipment for more than 10 million SEK was sent and up to four doctors and nurses worked through the whole 1980-s in the refugee settlement in Kwanza Sul, Angola. Here the District nurse Magdalena Bjerneld.

On 4th May 1978 airborne South African forces attacked Casinga. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which had visited this SWAPO centre 250 km from the Namibian border three weeks previously, it was a rapidly growing but impressive and well-organised refugee camp. The massacre left about 600 dead, nearly half of whom were children and more than a quarter of whom were women. A further 600 were maimed and more were traumatised and injured by gas. Militarily it was a success but politically it turned out to be a catastrophe for South Africa. Per Sandén soon made a new film, *Här är Namibia* (Here is Namibia), which was widely disseminated through the Africa Groups and local audio-visual centres.

Within Sida there was some doubt as to SWAPO's administrative capacity – both initially and later. Emmaus Björkå and Bread and Fishes, however, did not share such doubts. The latter in particular developed very close relations with SWAPO. BoF's support to SWAPO came to exceed the sum of their support to all the other liberation movements. Shoes and clothes alone had, up to the time of Namibia's independence in 1990, reached almost 1 000 tons. To this should be added the Africa Groups' extensive collection of medicines and medical equipment. In cooperation with the local Africa Group and five schools in Västerås, BoF took part in *Operation Dagsverke*, which financed two Land Rover ambulances to SWAPO and at the same time increased public knowledge about Namibia.

One of the leaders of BoF – and also active in AGIS – was Bertil Högberg, who later (1977–79) worked as an employee at SWAPO's office in Stockholm. For a long time there was a great deal of doubt about SWAPO in the Africa Groups, since one could not point to any liberated areas. Through

its International Fund, the Social Democrats consistently supported the movement without hesitation. In time support from Sweden grew; the non-socialist government continued to increase official assistance to SWAPO and was backed in this by the Social Democrats and by that time also by the Africa Groups. (During 1969–91 SWAPO received a total of about 670 million kronor in current prices.) When the Africa Groups finally decided to support SWAPO in 1976, they came to exaggerate SWAPO's military successes during subsequent years.

In December 1979 BoF, AGIS and SWAPO agreed to apply to Sida for support for a major health care project, which, as a first step, allocated 1,4 million kronor in 1980 (today over 4 million). This confirmed the rapprochement that occurred between public authorities and voluntary organisations in their views of support to southern Africa. This was reinforced on a personal plane when Sida employees became active in the Africa Groups and its members were recruited by Sida as processing officers.

38. Isolate South Africa!

Towards the end of 1978 AGIS invited a large number of organisations to cooperate together against the white regime in South Africa. An earlier attempt, with human rights lawyer Hans-Göran Franck (s) as a draw card, had failed. AGIS had been allocated funds to reach the youth, and Lennart Renöfält, with his background in the Swedish Covenant Church Youth League (SMU, Svenska Missionsförbundets Ungdom), had responsibility for South African issues on the Africa Groups' board. Bertil Högberg from AGIS, later a ISAK chairperson, says:

He was cut out for the task. He became a part-

The union man who sold bibles

The LO-TCO Secretariat for International Trade Union Development Cooperation had initially a modest amount of work – about 15 projects, nearly all in South Africa, but also had partners in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia. In 1978 LO/TCO started a project to support the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). Palle Carlsson from LO visited them:

All we knew was the name of the chairman, Max Gerson, who was a priest in a church in Windhoek. I arrived there and found him. Then he revealed that no trade union existed. Max and I travelled round the country to mines and other workplaces. We were allowed in since he was a priest. I accompanied him and sold bibles, and afterwards I talked about the union and Max translated to Ovambo. The reason that he in particular started a union organisation was that like so many Namibians he'd been with missionaries to Finland. There were radical leaders within the church who were against apartheid.

On one occasion we visited a place where there was a Methodist church and one of the ministers came to look for us. "We have heard that you are a professor from the Methodist church in Sweden and that you are travelling round to meet ministers." I kept a straight face and was invited to the church, and thought that now things will be difficult. What would we talk about? The minister was friendly and suddenly suggested, "Should we not say The Lord's Prayer together?" The Lord's Prayer, I thought and all I could remember was that I'd read the name in a crossword puzzle. But I went along to the altar and there we stood. He began reciting it and I recognised it as Fader Vår (Our Father) so then I could pray with him – in Swedish, of course.



The Lutheran minister Max gerson that worked among the contract workers from northern Namibia was strongly involved I starting a trade union.

Palle Carlsson was in Namibia on a tourist visa and was forced to leave the country from time to time. The Swedish authorities had given him several passports, which meant that he only needed to leave for a short period. It appeared that SWAPO was not aware that NUNW did not have an organisation. However, soon 600 members signed up for training. The material was hand-produced by Palle and the co-workers he employed at the little office in Windhoek, next door to the security police:

To transfer our methods of study didn't work; people became angry if I asked them a question. "You are the expert, you must tell us", they said. Their most important union issue was to get a funeral policy, so their families could afford to return their bodies to their homes, if they died in the mines or at other workplaces.

The security police grew more and more interested, and at the end of 1979 deported Palle Carlsson from Namibia. NUNW developed rapidly and like most newly started trade unions received support and help with negotiations from lawyers on the spot. The well-known anti-apartheid advocate Anton Lubowski in Windhoek worked for the unions with support from LO/TCO. He was one of the first whites to become a member of SWAPO and was murdered in 1989 by South African security police.

time employee in our youth campaign, but his task shifted to building up ISAK with him as its first chairperson. Not exactly what we'd been given the money for, but it was important that ISAK had a proper start, and I believe history has forgiven us. The political party youth leagues of course did not want another party's youth league to have the chair, so only the Christians were left. With only two exceptions ISAK's chair came from the churches the rest of the time. The first was I myself, who had to hop in twice because there was no other candidate, although I represented AGIS.

21 organisations plus Hans-Göran Franck came to the constituent meeting in January 1979. In addition to AGIS, umbrella organisations like SKU and SUL wanted to join. Together they covered nearly all youth organisations. A number of political, Christian and other voluntary organisations also joined. During 1979 they agreed on a constitution and on a campaign:

- Do not buy South African goods!
- Withdraw Swedish investments from South Africa!
- No trade with South Africa!
- No cultural, academic, sporting or scientific exchange with representatives of apartheid!
- Free all political prisoners!
- Support the liberation struggle! Support the ANC!
- South Africa out of Namibia! Support SWAPO!

There was a great deal of enthusiasm among all who were there, confirmed Maria Leissner, then in the leadership of the Liberal Party Youth. Stephen Lind-



Early ISAK campaign in Västerås 1980. Don't buy South African fruit.

holm in the Communist Youth League strikes a similar tone:

It was great to get the young liberals, the Centre Party Youth and others who one normally didn't see in this type of work. It was not only true of the political side; I thought that we got quite a few of the Christian youth leagues, like the young Catholics. They were fairly middle-class, but joined in a good way on this issue. The SMU members shouldered a huge burden. The only ones absent were the young moderates.



Don't buy South African Products. The red sticker campaigners applied on products in the shops.



The board of the Moderate Party had taken a decision on the principle of never taking part in organisations working across party lines. Even the youth and student leagues respected this. ISAK nevertheless continued gaining large and growing support.

Several political women's leagues were members. Cooperation with individual trade unions and branches was good, even if it was a little stiff with LO and TCO centrally. The consumer boycott and ban on new investments might affect employment levels. With such large sections of Sweden's popular movements linked together, ISAK might have collapsed either because of ideological contradictions or because of the danger that when all are with you, no one is with you, at least no one who in practice is really involved. This did not happen. Jan Henningsson from SKU:

The humanitarian issue was so conspicuous, and with the unbelievably clear symbolic events like Sharpeville and Soweto like tragic baggage, it was not the correct place to discuss the party colours of the liberation movements. It became increasingly obvious that we were dealing with a humanitarian catastrophe also entailing a moral collapse for the white world.



Karl-Gunnar Norén – who was a campaign secretary in ISAK – points to several factors to account for the spirit of good fellowship:

- Nelson Mandela, a charismatic leader, had something in common with many ideologies: he was a Christian and unjustly

imprisoned freedom fighter;

- Many South Africans are Christian; thus there are common cultural expressions and values that made it easy to communicate with Swedes, such as through South African choral music;
- Among the ANC there was a desire for adult education that many Swedes could identify with;
- The absurdity of the apartheid system had for several decades sunk in among broad circles; thus there was both fertile soil and endurance for anti-apartheid work;
- The armed struggles of the ANC and SWAPO were clearly in defence of basic human rights and were conducted in forms that were experienced as not too brutal.



39. Campaigns begin to take shape

ISAK was formed in January 1979 for a trial period, but the results led to a continuation. A decision was taken on a consumer boycott beginning in April 1980. It was one way of influencing public opinion to put pressure

on the government for stronger laws. Through having built up a great deal of knowledge on southern Africa over many years, the Africa Groups had a great deal of influence over the work, and their demands on the whole became ISAK's joint demands.

In the early 1980s ISAK had to rely on the sale of material, in the form of stickers, posters, booklets, badges and other campaign material, that local groups and individuals could order, now with



ISAK's own logo. These sales were important for ISAK's finances, which were very weak in the beginning. In addition, with limited capacity it was often fairly difficult to implement all the projects, but ISAK also had friends outside the organisational and political contexts. Advertising campaigns initiated in the morning and evening press roused many individuals, and some companies continually supported their work. At the beginning contributions from Sida came solely from allocations for information, and only towards the late 1980s did Sida's humanitarian working committee open its purse, although it had for years supported quite a few international anti-apartheid projects.

ISAK combined different ways of working. One was purely influencing public opinion and political lobbying; here ISAK argued for generally recognised ethical norms. Another was for ISAK's member organisations to examine reality. If AGIS had not in 1980 already dug up the *National Key Points Act*, ISAK would probably not have known that the Swedish companies in South Africa actually participated in South Africa's military strategy. Now it was possible to inform the general public in Sweden about this – a weighty point in the campaign.

Through combining facts and ethics, ISAK's campaigns acquired considerable credibility and they could put pressure on the law-makers. A standing question was how to work to tighten the law. As the circle of lobbyists and friends within the administration and political organs grew and ISAK's own expertise increased, it became easier.

Thus on 13th April 1980 a new consumer boycott period began. ISAK also took part in the preparations for the third international conference of ICOSA, the International Committee against Apartheid, Racism and Colonialism, which was held in Södertälje



Don't buy South African products. Don't let your money support the oppressors buying of weapons.

in April 1980. This put ISAK on the international arena. There were now 28 member organisations, which with the participating umbrella organisations' own member organisations meant that practically all organised youths in Sweden supported the demands of the platform, as well as many adults.

40. ISAK presses the politicians

The tripartite non-socialist government fell apart

over the issue of nuclear power nearly two years after it won the elections in 1976. After that a Liberal Party minority government ruled Sweden from 1978-79, which was accepted by the Social Democrats. After having in vain tried to get commerce and industry to stop investments voluntarily, the government put forward a proposal for a stop to new investments, which became law in 1979. It would still be possible to upgrade and modernise machinery, if the company did not increase production. In practice it was impossible to check whether the law was being followed, and applications for exemptions were normally approved – and often classified secret – by the National Board of Trade (*Kommerskollegium*). When ISAK tried to review these documents, most of the text was censored with black ink. No public insight was possible at a time when the right of the public to have access to official documents was entrenched in Sweden. The prohibition on new investments was a paper tiger. More force, or rather more political will, was required to stop Swedish companies from supporting the apartheid regime.

Africa Group veteran Sören Lindh explains:

Even those who disliked us admitted that we knew what we were saying. Our breadth, expertise and commitment were the three important factors in this context. More and more people who had facts at their fingertips became involved, and it was not possible to deceive ISAK, in any case one would have to try very hard. We generally knew as much as the civil servants in the government departments. And we were always so fast off the mark that our force could compensate for the little we did not know.

One example of this is that ISAK managed to combine the debate on GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) with a Swedish trade embargo against South Africa. It appeared that the general free trade agreement had certain exceptions. Sören Lindh:

We skipped over the main body of text ... and looked among the exceptions. There we discovered that the import of goods produced by prisoners could be stopped. This had nothing to do with humanity, no. The basis of the argument was instead that prisoners could produce goods more cheaply, and thus have an impermissible competitive advantage. The Africa Groups and ISAK directed the debate to this exception and asked: Who knows if this orange was picked by a free man or by a prisoner?"

ISAK's strategy was intended to link the Swedish companies in South Africa to the regime, for instance, SKF, Sandvik and Atlas-Copco that worked with the mining industry. Through the National Key Points Act of 1980 strategically important companies like these were forced to set up and arm their own industrial civil defence units against uprisings.

An earlier law – the National Procurement Act – meant that the regime could compel a company to ... pay employees who were serving in the security forces and the army, and there was no information on companies refusing to do this.

Thus the Swedish companies in South Africa actually took part and paid their employees who, on their compulsory military service, for example, harried people in the townships or went to war in Angola. At the beginning this obligation was swept under the carpet, but af-

ter a while the issue became more sensitive, and in reality it remained in force till the end of sanctions.

In the second half of 1980 we wrote a letter to the Foreign Ministry and asked how Sweden would act in this new situation. There the letter caused some consternation and confusion, since the report from South Africa did not arrive as quickly as our question. For a long time after this we enjoyed a solidly established reputation at the ministry for being well informed.

It was not possible to place ISAK in a particular box, because ISAK had people from different camps and with real knowledge of different areas of expertise. The result? ISAK pushed the law-makers ahead of it, mildly but determinedly. An expert group could in 1981 note that there had not been any significant fall in investments since the prohibition on new investments became law, and that the value of production of both SKF and Sandvik had increased by about 50% between 1979 and 1981. The work of the expert group identified loopholes in the South Africa law that led to the appointment of a special South Africa Committee with Ambassador Sverker Åström as chairperson. Its official report in 1984 included several proposals to tighten loopholes like leasing equipment, transfer of patents etc. There were further limitations on the possibility of seeking exemptions. The new South Africa law came into force in 1985.

41. Pockets of resistance in industry

The influx of support from popular movements in Sweden in mobilising against apartheid policies did not strike a chord among management of Swedish companies with interests in South Africa. On the



Are South African soldiers paid by Swedish companies. Yes though salaries during military service Swedish companies have to leave South Africa.

contrary, in 1983 the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) published a 75-page booklet *Sydafrika och Svenskt Näringsliv* (South Africa and Swedish Commerce), written largely by Åke Magnusson. He had undertaken a long personal journey from in the 1960s being an anti-imperialist student who collected money for Frelimo, to the executive director's post in NIR, and en route working as a consultant and researcher for churches, the trade



The drawing by Karin Södergren in the Africa Bulletin that depicts how Foreign Minister Ola Ullsten and Prime Minister Torbjörn Fälldin, allow the investment law to leak as a sieve.

union movement and the state.

From this new position, Magnusson and NIR's board, led by Peter Wallenberg, a leading industrialist, launched "the new strategy" on "constructive engagement" – an echo of Reagan and Thatcher and a line that the churches and unions (with the exception of Metall) abandoned as unrealistic in the 1970s. Representatives for Alfa-Laval, Atlas Copco, Fagersta, Sandvik, SKF and Transatlantic were on the NIR board. The brochure maintained that "South Africa is not unique" and Swedish compa-

es "must follow the laws of the host country and in all essentials adapt to the applicable local business and work rules". The Swedish government's support to the ANC not only backs up "a confrontational line", but also "further ... isolates us from the Western world" and contributes to undermining the UN's "authority and credibility".

The booklet further argued that through its decision on sanctions Sweden "excluded the many blacks who prefer non-violent methods, economic development and political mobilisation to sabotage,

guerrilla war and perhaps civil war”. Aside from economic sanctions actually being a non-violent method, the credibility of the argument was not strengthened by NIR promoting Inkatha as a *non-violent alternative*. The real reason for this choice seems to have been that its president Gatsha Buthelezi pleaded for foreign investments in the “homelands”.

Peter Wallenberg continued to criticise Sweden’s support to ANC. In March 1992 he said:

I wonder exactly what we would think if someone sat and shovelled in a great deal of cash to the Lapps (the indigenous Sámi people in northern Europe) so that they could make a lot of trouble for the Swedish government ... I suspect that then there would be an incredible amount of shouting.

In September 1994 – in other words after the ANC won the elections – Wallenberg informed the world that the “apartheid system... had certain aspects that were necessary under current conditions” and that South African blacks would absolutely not manage without the whites. “Blacks simply do not have the competence required... they are more or less at the same level of development as we were 100 or 150 years ago”. This remark was made by one of Sweden’s most prominent businessmen.



Alfa Laval milks South Africa. Divest from South Africa!

A mighty wave of solidarity and its sources

What was driving the activists? Sverker Sörlin, now a professor of science and ideas, tries to give an answer. He was one of many in the Umeå Africa Group from 1977 and the decade following, and also did some work on a national level. The activists learnt to keep the minutes of meetings and developed a relatively “puritanical ... Nordic popular movement ethic”, but how did this solidarity come about? Sörlin points to several roots: the trade union movement, the co-op movement, the phenomenon of national insurance, the Christian sphere. Suddenly it all coalesced in time into a mighty wave of solidarity:

In the first place it was concerned with solidarity with developing countries... But on a more general and extended sense solidarity could refer to a great deal. Africa was naturally included. Even those who generally knew nothing about this continent would in some way feel convinced that one ought to show solidarity with it and its people.

This sense of solidarity coincided in time and ought to have guaranteed unity, and the common ecumenical view of solidarity as a core must have meant a good deal for the broad recruitment base of the Africa Groups in Sweden. Here people from different social groups agreed, though there was a certain over-representation of highly educated people. Health care personnel made up a significant category, as did teachers and other professional groups like veterinarians and agronomists, who could all take



part in concrete tasks in Africa's developing countries. The longer time passed, the more clearly one could feel the roots threading back to missionaries and philanthropy, particularly when we be-

gan to send our own personnel to Africa.

Behind the ecumenical facade there was also something else. So, long afterwards I remember one thing that was striking: that this movement of a relatively modest size contained such strong tensions. Solidarity was a uniting factor, but several different solidarities existed. Two poles seem to me to be clearer than others.

The one type of solidarity originated in the Christian sphere. Here was the patient striving and happy struggling, the inner flame of which I didn't understand in the beginning but which sooner or later showed itself. Then it came like a revelation. Between them, I sometimes thought, lay a silent and mutual understanding. One was working for a higher goal, but what could not really be said. Those who knew, knew.

The other was communist. This ideological basis was nothing that was demanded according to the constitution. Thus it was seldom expressed, as little as the religiously oriented desired the non-believers' sympathy for their views. But it was unmistakable, and sometimes declared, in fact somewhat more loudly than the believers'. At one congress one of the



Lennart Renöfält with pram outside the South African Legation. At the request of the Africa Groups he started up ISAK and was the chair for several mandates.

prominent figures wore a red T-shirt with the text “Sure, I’m a Marxist”. A similar confession about the prophets I never saw on anyone’s chest, only discrete crosses here and there.

Those who represented this position in the debate acted with a conviction that I found at least as enigmatic as that of the faithful. They seemed so sure of what was the right thing to do, more assured than what I thought there was a reasonable foundation for. Here there were also those who knew.

Fundamentally this kind of thinking often rests on metaphysics. History has a meaning and a direc-

tion, even in southern Africa. To start with, colonialism and apartheid must be abolished, and then the realisation of socialism will begin. Thus solidarity with the ANC will continue. A few of us were doubtful of how judicious it was for a movement like the Africa Groups to, without further ado, devote itself to a state and its government’s policies, rather than to principles of freedom, democracy and human dignity, and in a while these ambitions were moderated.

They had a positive effect in that the Africa Groups became directly involved in providing assistance in the former Portuguese colonies and later in Zimbabwe. This meant that the organisation began to accept contributions from Sida and that the work got a practical solidarity side. Balancing the accounts, annual reports and staff policies stabilised and set a framework for the most metaphysical hopes.

This does not mean that hope ended, but that the influence of the ideologies on the organisation’s reliability was neutralised. The Africa Groups became a partner in global solidarity work. There were missionaries and Christian groups since earlier, charity organisations, whose new, or for Sweden new, voices were heard, like Oxfam, Doctors without Borders and Greenpeace, that grew dramatically during the 1980s. The organisation increasingly began to take a place in a rainbow human rights and charity panorama. There was still the question of solidarity ... in the light of a later world it always appears to defend the struggle against apartheid and for freedom, democracy and human dignity like the backbone of the organisation... The solidarities were united.

ISAK was the organisational expression of the unified solidarities.



Boycott demonstration in the 80-s. At the front Kaire Mbuende, SWAPO Eddie Funde, ANC Hans Göran Frank and Anna Lindh the Social Democratic Party.

7.

1983–1988

**THE CRUCIAL
YEARS**

42. The third wave of resistance

The years 1983–88 were crucial to the struggle against apartheid. After the ANC and PAC were banned in 1960 the opposition against apartheid inside South Africa was virtually destroyed and it took a decade before a new generation reorganised protests again.

In 1973 extensive spontaneous strikes broke out in Durban and Johannesburg, and in Namibia, where workers protested against the disgusting conditions. The strikes did not lead to any improvements for the workers, but at the universities the strikes did have consequences. The youth gathered round the black consciousness movement, Steve Biko and SASO, the South African Students Organisation. In 1977 Biko was murdered while in detention and SASO was banned. The UN responded with a mandatory arms embargo.

At the same time students and intellectuals started forming what would become a new trade union movement. If trade unions were to be built up and survive in South Africa, they could not be associated with the ANC nor become involved in open political activities. They must be organised at the workplace, not in residential areas. If the president were arrested, there should always be others who could take over.

In addition, citizens' groups were built up, so-called civics. They included tenants' associations, women's organisations, funeral societies and co-operatives – South Africa's blacks had never been so

well organised before. Less spectacularly, but with a very long-term view, people began to build up a civil society as a base both for their own development and for opposition to the regime's policies.

An important condition had thus been created for the third wave of opposition. In the same way as Reagan became the foremost recruitment officer for the American peace movement in the 1980s, President Botha, "the old crocodile", was the one to give the new wave of opposition a lift. He believed that he would be able to split the movement through offering coloureds and Indians – but not blacks – a chamber each in a revamped parliament. This, he believed, would silence their criticism without him having to give up the apartheid system. Botha proclaimed a referendum on the proposal, thus making a strategic mistake.

Up until 1983 citizens' groups worked separately. They were not formally coordinated even if they cooperated with one another. Now suddenly there was need for a united front against apartheid. Close to 600 citizens' groups joined together to form an umbrella organisation, the United Democratic Front (UDF), to run a joint campaign for the boycott of the referendum on the tricameral parliament. The UDF was launched on 20th August at a meeting in Cape Town with 10 000 participants. The main speaker was Pastor Frank Chikane, the General Secretary of the Institute for Contextual Theology.

The regime immediately accused the UDF of be-



The start of UDF.

ing a disguised internal wing of the ANC. This was not true. Even if the ANC in the late 1970s discussed an internal national civil rights movement as a strategy for the liberation struggle, the UDF was independent. In fact, at the beginning there was considerable scepticism within ANC towards the UDF, which on the other hand had great faith in the ANC. They shared the same principles. The problems of relationships and the division of roles was sorted out at a secret meeting between the ANC's

exile leadership and representatives of the UDF held at Bommersvik in Sweden in January 1986.

Only a few weeks after the formation of the UDF, Aurret van Heerden, president of the white student movement NUSAS (National Union of South African Students), landed in Sweden to meet representatives of ISAK, the Africa Groups and the Labour Movement's International Centre (AIC) to discuss how the UDF could get Swedish support. Bengt Sävve-Söderbergh was at the time head of the AIC:



Frank Chikane, Olof Palme and Cassim Saloojee.

There was a feeling of “now or never”. During the year we had received information from various sources, among them the trade union movement, that the formation of the UDF was imminent. This was positive for we had expected that a broad political movement would be formed inside the country. The liberation of a

country must come from within. The ANC also had major problems at this time; South Africa was engaged in war against the neighbouring countries that were independent states, under the pretext that they posed a communist threat.

Only a few months later the newspaper *Arbetet* presented the *Let Live Award* to the UDF, and two of its foremost leaders, Murphy Morobe and Cassim Saloojee, came to Sweden to receive the prize. In January 1987 Frank Chikane, currently head of President Thabo Mbeki's secretariat, came to receive a peace prize from the ecumenical development NGO, Diakonia. Unlike the ANC, which was happy to appear in different political contexts all over the world, the UDF's leaders were doubtful about making international appearances. Each time they returned to Johannesburg they ran the risk of being arrested at the airport, even if they had only fetched a symbolic prize.

The AIC rapidly took the decision to support the UDF with money from its *I-fund*, but much more was needed than the labour movement itself could provide. Sida was initially doubtful. To support the ANC and SWAPO in exile was no problem, but to give assistance to an organisation inside the country was completely new. Formally it could be questioned if this did not conflict with international law. South Africa was an independent state. To send money to the UDF meant that the Swedish state supported the opposition inside the country, which, though it was not declared illegal, did have the aim of deposing the regime.

The UDF's campaign against the referendum was a success. 85% of those entitled to vote boycotted it, but the tricameral parliament was nevertheless introduced in 1984. Not much time passed before the UDF was banned from accepting foreign money.

43. Boycotts and sanctions

The aim of the consumer boycott was primarily to increase ordinary people's knowledge of racial oppression in South Africa and Namibia and thus

also the pressure on politicians to take new measures. South African fruit, wine, preserves and Namibian Swakara furs were targets. Soon stickers with the text "Don't buy South African goods!" (Köp inte Sydafrikanska varor) were spread all over Sweden. When ISAK focused on the procurement by municipalities and county councils, they were often successful.

In early 1985 local ISAK committees did a detailed survey of nearly two hundred shops about supplying South African goods and attitudes to boycott. Not surprisingly it appeared that most private supermarkets and even many members of the cooperative sold them. The exception was Konsum (coop) in greater Stockholm, which still maintained the boycott from the 1960s. More surprising was that three-quarters of the store managers were prepared not to buy South African goods, if there was a common action. Only a few per cent were negative to a boycott.

That political work and influencing public opinion is boring is a myth. Fruit was an important and relevant question to draw in youth in the work. Maria Leissner remembers it clearly:

It was fun, exciting and we had butterflies in our stomachs and were a little nervous, when we went into all these shops to check whether they had KOO marmalade or South African grapes. Then we tried to start a discussion with

»Tre fjärdedelar av butiksföreståndarna var beredda att avstå från sydafrikanska varor, om det skedde i en gemensam aktion. Bara några få procent var avvisande till bojkott.«

*Continues
on page 132*

Secret funds – and open transfers

Sida's support to the liberation movements was, in principle, simple. To a great extent it involved the transport of goods. As long as the host country and the liberation movement had a good relationship, there were seldom serious difficulties. Similarly, support went to services like education, health care etc. If there were liberated areas, it

was up to the movements to see to it that goods and services were provided where they were needed. To manage this they were often also given trucks.

South Africa was more difficult. The ANC never tried to liberate any areas. Yet the needs inside South Africa grew ever larger. Support in the form of goods was unthinkable. Assistance must be given in the form of

UDF and 200 million (over 325 million) to COSATU to mention only two recipients. (The ANC received the most, a total of almost 900 million during the period 1969–94 in current prices, including support inside and outside South Africa). It could not be done through the Swedish legation in Pretoria. On the contrary, the fact that the Swedish government tried to contribute economically to overturn the white regime had to be hidden. Thus the decisions on allocations were kept secret, and the funds were passed through Swedish popular movements without informing the movements' members.

There were many ways to move money:

To qualify for a scholarship for tertiary studies one had to have been politically active and have been given a written recommendation by a credible authority. The Ecumenical Advice Bureau in Johannesburg was responsible for selection and student guidance. At most 270 people participated in the programme. To everyone's great surprise it was possible to send the money individually to the recipients. Probably the amounts were too small for the control apparatus to react, but the administrative burden for SEN was great; and this was before wholesale computerisation. Another channel for scholarships was WUS, World University Service.

One method to transfer money was to sign a formal and expensive contract on the purchase of e.g. news and other information on a monthly basis. FOSATU produced a film, which was sold at extremely high prices overseas. Many UDF leaders were lawyers and a South African law firm could send an invoice to a foreign law firm.

Christian Åhlund at *Advokatbyrån Sju advokater* (Seven



Thank you letter from scholarship holder.

money – but how? The white regime tried in all possible ways to choke off international support to the opposition against apartheid. How could one succeed in outwitting the controlling apparatus, based as it was on an increasingly stringent Fund Raising Act?

Sweden was probably the country that transferred the most money to the liberation struggle inside South Africa: 100 million kronor (today closer to 175 million) to

Advocates) was an important secret link between AIC and UDF. Money was sent through him. He was also on the board of the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) in London, which is estimated to have been involved in 25 000 trials. IDAF and AIC used “the radio” to cover acute transactions to UDF. On the telephone a radio interview was discussed, and the time mentioned was the sum to be transferred. The route the funds took had been worked out previously.

In South Africa, both jokingly and seriously, it was said that many advocates survived the apartheid years on Swedish assistance. When the unions were newly formed, they often turned to lawyers for help in conflicts and negotiations. Certain lawyers, opponents of apartheid, charged a significantly lower fee for union work, R120 per hour, while ordinary lawyers took R500. The Legal Resources Centre, with six regional offices, filled two tasks: free legal assistance to poor blacks and practice for newly qualified black lawyers.

Another way was to exchange money. Swedish money was deposited in an account somewhere in Europe. It was then withdrawn by a person or organisation in South Africa with money in a bank account in South Africa that could not be transferred out of the country, while the UDF could withdraw the corresponding amount in rand.

It could, however, also be considerably more complicated than this. During the major miners strike in 1986, when 360 000 workers downed tools, Swedish miners and other organisations within the labour movement collected over 3 million kronor (today over 5 million) to save NUM, the National Union of Mineworkers. The unions were prohibited from accepting foreign support, so the money had to be smuggled in. Peter Jansson was in Tanzania working for the Swedish Municipal Workers Union to

train union leaders, but he also had another task:

The Swedish money came to the union in Tanzania, where it was withdrawn in dollars. I received the money, fetched it in brown paper bags and then I took the train to Lake Malawi. It was trying; a 23-hour long trip on a train that only had simple bunks. In first class there are four bunks in a compartment. I couldn't leave the compartment, the money

was in a cloth bag so that it should not draw attention. I slept with the bag as a pillow. When I arrived a person met me, took the money and took the boat over to Malawi, where it was simple to exchange it to rand.

It was like an old black-and-white espionage film. We used code words. I was told that the contact “would wear horizontally striped clothes” and use passwords: “Where is this place?” I'd ask, I think it was a hotel, and he'd reply: “It isn't in this town”. The second and third times were not so hard; it was the same person. I did three trips.

From Malawi a new courier took over and entered South Africa through the Kruger National Park and Swaziland. It was dangerous, as soldiers chased them. The Kruger Park is full of wild animals and some couriers. The whole chain was dangerous since we handled a great deal of money. A half million kronor



South African Literary Service mediated literature and information between South Africa and the surrounding world.



the



ISAK tried indifferent ways to stop trade with South Africa.

*continued
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manager of the shop or the poor girl or boy who stood by the cash register. We took ISAK's campaigns to FPU, the Liberal Party Youth, and ran them like our own campaigns. As youth league secretary I attended different meetings and we nearly always had a public action linked to them, for instance, a raid in shops in the town.

Lobbying at a political level bore fruit, and in June 1985 a ban on the import of agricultural goods came into effect. It also gave municipalities and county



No business with Apartheid.

councils the right to counteract apartheid politics when doing their own procurement. After this ISAK devoted itself to discovering the fruit and not least the juice that trickled in under false certificates of origin. It turned out to be quite a lot. Swaziland, for instance, produced less than half of what was exported in that country's name.

During a follow-up in 1987 ISAK found to its great and positive surprise that 21 of the 26 municipalities asked had utilised the new opportunities to act against apartheid. There was thus widespread public opinion against South Africa's policies, and it was necessary to pass laws to simplify conditions for taking effective measures. Under heavy pressure from public opinion, large sections of their own

party, all the other parliamentary parties except the Moderates, as well as the other Nordic governments, the social democratic government was finally forced to give in and in February 1987 it presented a proposition on the banning of trade with South Africa. The party board had with considerable doubt placed "commitment before principles". Prior to this, Great Britain and USA had once again vetoed sanctions in the Security Council. The Swedish embargo on imports and exports was a step in the right direction, but there were loopholes in the law.

It was also important to block



Young and joyful activists in Gothenburg.

South Africans wherever they appeared in an international context. The aim was to prevent them from moving in and posing as honourable citizens from a nation with no major faults.. They came to Sweden

on tourist visas and in other ways. Scouts, physiotherapists, scientists – everyone should be targeted. The argument, “I am not interested in politics, I do research”, or “We scouts all have the same scout

*Continues
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The Foreign Ministry's secret agents

During the period 1982-88, while the protest movement took shape, Birgitta Karlström Dorph was working at the Swedish Legation in Pretoria. She had contact with individuals and groups who were building up the opposition inside the country. She looked at and evaluated who should get help and then suggested which Swedish organisations should become partners in such cooperation.

I came from Angola and had received the advice to contact Beyers Naudé who was a white minister, a Boer who had rejected apartheid. He was, after Mandela, the leader of the liberation struggle; people had confidence in him and he knew most of what was happening. The first time I met him he came dressed as an electrician, since he was banned. We met in principle every fortnight during my stay in South Africa and it was through Beyers that I was led into the whole opposition movement.

In townships, churches, cafés and shops Birgitta Karlström Dorph met people who she heard were important, or were busy building up an organisation or were doing some work. Security was rigorous.

It was essential not to make the contacts on the telephone or write letters but to meet. Our greatest fear was that the apartheid government would realise what we were doing and close the legation. It was important for me not to do anything illegal. It was a balancing act all the time.

Everything was unique. Beyers had ideas of what we could do. He also understood our role as a legation. From the start I felt an immediate and complete trust in him. Without him we would never have



Birgitta Karlström-Dorph and Beyers Naudé.

been able to do what we did. After a while – as he got to know me better – my contacts widened and I began to get my own ideas.

If I was doubtful I always went back to Beyers. Then he would check through his contacts. He had a unique contact network. He never talked about who his contacts were. I never talked with him about whom I had spoken to, but we compared notes and he came back and made comments. In South Africa, after Mandela, he was the leader of the opposition. He ought to have been awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

It was necessary to find the right organisations and the right people, to try to assure oneself that the organisation in question was not infiltrated and that it was not an agent of the South African government acting as the counterpart. Birgitta Karlström Dorph was quite alone in using this method of working.

After a while it became clear to me that we had to have a range of organisations: some that were uncontroversial so that we could also have some that were more controversial. We needed the full range. The South African government naturally knew that we met the opposition, but I still believe today – and possibly I’m naïve – that they did not see the scale of what we were doing. In that case we would have been expelled.

Through Birgitta Karlström Dorph and her successor Anders Möllander – today Swedish Ambassador to South Africa – the Legation became a strategic link between South African organisations and Swedish ones like AGIS, AIC and SEN. Möllander worked in the same way as his predecessor and looked for critical references:

Two people who I had great confidence in were Jesse Duarte and the current Vice-President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

He also provided important support to the AIC with contacts that were already established and could follow up less satisfactory economic reports, as on one occasion with UDF:

I was called to a meeting with UDF, which was being pursued and persecuted by the regime in every way. I went to a restaurant in Johannesburg and was shown to a private room. There the entire leadership of the UDF were sitting. They took an enormous risk by gathering in this way, as several were wanted by the police. But they were keen to sort out the problem and so we did it.

On many occasions during the five years I was in South Africa, I knew that what I did made a difference. My wife and I were often invited to disguised political meetings like funerals, church assemblies and so on. They were nervous; the atmosphere at this time was often loaded, there was so much hate that it was tangible.

Often we diplomats had a certain protective function, for example for guests at a funeral. I remember one occasion in Tomahole – AIC supported the civics there – we attended a funeral. Outside the family’s house a Casspir was standing, an armoured military vehicle used by the police. It did not matter, but when the time came for us to leave the house the father of the family asked us to stay, because, “as soon as you have left they will attack us, at least with teargas, and then we can’t eat the food”.

Sometimes it could be difficult to keep the roles apart and one had to set boundaries. Today I am often called “Comrade Ambassador”, which reflects how UDI members thought of me then. But I have never smuggled anything. I didn’t want to be deported, and Sweden was really viewed as an enemy of the apartheid regime and thus they always kept an eye on us.



The Apartheid government not only imprisoned criminals but also political opponents.

teams even if we come from a Bantustan” was dismissed. Those who did not take a stand against the apartheid system contributed to its survival. There was little acceptance of a position in a grey area. Quite literally, lives were at stake, the lives of the children of Soweto and of many more.

The effect of the organised anti-apartheid work was clear. Furthermore there were many eyes, even outside activist circles, that registered attempts at various kinds of exchange. These protests or warning signals compensated for the laws that were not passed. One group that was on the mark was physiotherapists, who early blocked South Africans internationally.

Blacklisting reminded the white population how the rest of the world loathed apartheid, and the regime reacted in various ways to circumvent the boycott. Artists and sportsmen were lured to South Africa with huge fees, and, under cover of the so-called independent homelands concerts and tours were arranged in the amusement metropolis of Sun City in one of South Africa’s bantustans. The boycott drew spectacular attention when artists and sportsmen were pilloried in the press for having broken the UN boycott by appearing on stage or playing sport in South Africa. If the sinner then apologised, the media could tell the story once more.

44. Treason trials and reactions

UDF’s successes led to yet stronger protests – there was a growing feeling that the system was beginning to crack. The unrest in the townships increased, starting round Johannesburg. School and rent boycotts caused chaos. The anti-apartheid movement’s strategy was to make the country ungovernable. Instead of creating calm, the regime’s attempt at re-



Organisations took turns to demonstrate outside the South African Legation. Advertisement telling which trade unions were responsible during one week.

form had strengthened the resistance and paved the way for the system being overthrown from below.

In 1985 a state of emergency was introduced, and in all 38 people – most of them active in UDF – were charged with “high treason against the state”. In a series of trials they were accused of instigating violence and unrest in the townships, and for terrorism and murder.

Through several trials of this type the apartheid regime attempted to crush the UDF, which was now seen as a real threat. The regime tried to prove that the UDF was a branch of the banned ANC. Altogether there were around a dozen trials over a four-year period against UDF but the regime did not succeed in proving that the UDF was the ANC. Instead the UDF drew considerable international attention.

Early in 1985 the AIC started a petition to protest against apartheid and in particular the treason trials. 100 000 names were collected on lists to be handed over to South Africa’s legation. Each day for over a month the AIC’s 33 member organisations picketed the South African Legation in Stockholm. One day an entire union congress protested – 400 people from the National Union of Government Workers (SF).

The legation refused to accept the petitions. “You can burn them”, they replied. The petitions, tied together with black mourning tape, were dropped in the legation’s letterbox. The demonstrations ended with the Social Democrats inviting all the other

parliamentary parties to a common manifestation on 11th September; one way of showing that the entire Swedish people stood behind the protests against apartheid. All participated – except the Moderates.

ISAK and SEN produced material for a letter campaign. This was partly for traditional letters addressed to the apartheid regime, and partly the unconventional approach, where Swedes were encouraged to write to “ordinary” white South Africans to draw their attention to what the regime was doing. They were also encouraged to write to the accused to show their support. Further, school

classes were asked to write to school classes in South Africa to stimulate mental processes that in the long term might disturb the regime. A small brochure with facts about the campaign was published in December 1985.

The Swedish Legation in Pretoria followed the treason trials and reported home. Magnus Walan from ISAK also paid visits to South Africa and passed information to and from the accused. In February 1986 the trial in Pietersburg was meant to resume, after charges against twelve of the sixteen accused were withdrawn. SEN’s secretary Rune Forsbeck writes:

We tried to get Swedish lawyers down to follow the trials and in this had strong support from the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. A number of senior jurists were in-

“Early in 1985 the AIC started a petition to protest against apartheid and in particular the treason trials. 100 000 names were collected on lists to be handed over to South Africa’s legation.”

terested in going down, among them Sweden's former Minister of Justice, Lennart Geijer. In the end we decided on Hans-Göran Franck and Staffan Vängby. They applied for visas, and although our opinion was that the regime would be ashamed to deny a qualified delegation visas, that is nevertheless what happened. There was no delegation, and yet something happened.

The regime preferred the shame to more witnesses.

In Alexandra township in Johannesburg, residents succeeded for six days in 1986 in setting up barricades against the police and military, who were prevented from entering the area. Their willingness to protest had had been strengthened through organisations like the Alexandra Arts Centre, the Alexandra Civic Association and the Alexandra Action Committee. This demonstration of strength was an important injection in the liberation struggle.

Leaders were imprisoned, among them the general secretary of the Metal Workers Union, Moses Mayekiso, who was taken by police at the airport, after returning from a visit to the Swedish metal workers. He was accused of high treason; he had organised people in street and residential committees and initiated boycotts. The trial was important for the whole of UDF's future; was it treason when ordinary people protested against apartheid using peaceful means – where was the border?

The trials evoked powerful reactions. South Africa hit the headlines and was often the first news item in the media. The International Metalworkers' Federation started a collection campaign for the defence. Swedish Metal workers contributed 2,6 million kronor (today about 4,5 million). After three years in prison Moses Mayekiso and the other anti-

apartheid leaders were completely exonerated and released.

45. A major breakthrough

To start ISAK, three separate streams united to form a broad river that played an active international role in the coordination of the work against apartheid:

The first stream consisted of the Christian youth organisations in both the Church of Sweden and the free churches. The second was made up of the political youth leagues and other actors who early identified international solidarity as important. The third stream was the Africa Groups, which not only took the initiative but also had both current and far-reaching knowledge about conditions inside South Africa and Namibia.

From around 1984 a media wave came and the issue of South Africa soon widened to become a turbulent river. Media penetration and political explosiveness had already been revealed during the Vietnam war. The cruelty of that war penetrated to TV couches. Now history repeated itself. The brutality of the apartheid system became visible through international TV news and features. At the same time there was an increase in pressure on the press to give place for facts and debate, but most of the media did not have local reporters. The national news agency, TT or *Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå*, had to supplement its sources. Now the joint strength of the ISAK umbrella was revealed, and it had previously undreamt of opportunities of making its voice heard. Both central and local activities were reported, and the discussion pages of the major newspapers were happy to publish contributions from ISAK.

**"That the charismatic
archbishop Desmond Tutu
was awarded the Nobel
Peace Prize in December
1984 for his struggle
against apartheid
increased the strength of
the media winds."**

That the charismatic archbishop Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1984 for his struggle against apartheid increased the strength of the media winds. When pupils in Soweto demonstrated in 1976 Tutu had already challenged the international community to boycott South

Africa economically. Since Tutu was general secretary of the South African Council of Churches from 1978 he was well-known internationally, so he had a certain room to manoeuvre and could both publish his writings and travel abroad.

Pastor Lennart Renöfält was ISAK's first chairperson and was re-elected to this position in the mid-1980s, when

the organisation enjoyed a major breakthrough in the media:

From the beginning up to the first part of 1984 one always had to present oneself and explain, but somewhere there it shifted, and one only needed to say ISAK. Afterwards journalists were continuously on the phone, as soon as something happened in South Africa or some Swedish relationship with South Africa defied the boycott. We sometimes didn't even manage to put something out ourselves before we were contacted. But this did not happen out of the blue; it was preceded by a long and unyielding drive to cultivate contacts, and to learn what it was possible to do in relation to public opinion. We were fairly good at this. Another positive approach was our research, where we dug up unique data that we then launched in the

media. It gave us a serious role when we could formulate questions that then waltzed round in the mass media. ISAK acquired a reliable voice in the mass media.

The accelerating developments in South Africa, with increased protest and thereby increased repression by the regime, could now be matched with growing solidarity. More and more organisations applied to join. Despite a strained economy the board decided to invest in an office. With a few employees the board could prepare, visit and lobby ministers, members of parliament and government services.

ISAK's unique breadth was a significant example abroad and also gave it an important role in the coordination of international public opinion. Personal meetings with significant people from the liberation movements contributed to its perseverance in the work. The media and other actors increasingly realised that even if the tempo was high, ISAK had a clear and well-founded strategy. ISAK's relationship to the ANC and SWAPO was not because it slavishly followed some doctrine, but because of an ongoing analysis of the situation.

The UN's Special Committee against Apartheid from time to time invited selected organisations, among them ISAK, which the UN regarded as one of the leading anti-apartheid movements (AA) in the world. Its international secretary Lotta Johnson-Fornarve represented the Nordic anti-apartheid movements on one occasion. The international work started early with a joint Nordic campaign against the Nordic carrier SAS's flights to South Africa:

In Stockholm we organised street theatre with a model of an SAS plane on a wheelbarrow



In connection with receiving the Nobel Peace Price 1984 Desmond Tutu also visted Stockholm. The Secretary general of the Ecumenical Council, Lars B. Stenström interpreted the long talked about sermon he held at the Stockholm Cathedral.



The joint campaign against the Scandinavian Airline, SAS flights to South Africa was one example of the Nordic cooperation.

and representatives of Swedish companies in South Africa in the plane. Parallel with that we played a scene showing how badly black mine workers were treated. When it was performed outside SAS offices on Sveavägen in Stockholm the work stopped and the staff came out to stare in amazement at our “aeroplane”.

The Nordic AA organisations met regularly and kept an eye on, among other things, the Nordic meetings of foreign ministers to ensure that the South African issue always remained on the agenda. When Czechoslovakia, after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, wanted to end sanctions linked to the old regime, ISAK succeeded in helping to prevent this by reference to Swedish AA work.

For a long time ISAK’s activities were run by a small activist office in AGIS premises. Only in 1985 did ISAK get its own 11m2 room in Solidaritetshuset. The following year staff was expanded to four employees, including one doing his national service as a conscientious objector. The local and central activities were now so newsworthy that ISAK had to stop subscribing to a press clippings service so that its finances would not break down.

46. Forming public opinion in South Africa

A growing plethora of organisations and traditional oral communication were naturally central elements in the formation of domestic public opinion against apartheid policies. Other media were also needed, and required resources – both in terms of personnel and financial. The former had to be available on site, but the latter could possibly come from outside, which is what happened in various ways.

The ANC's *Radio Freedom* was broadcast from five African countries, but to listen to it could lead to five years in prison. Nevertheless people listened to the messages and challenges, to liberation songs and news that were censored in the radio, TV and press inside South Africa. Radio Freedom required many kinds of support: money and help to procure expensive transmission and reception equipment but also simple things like ordinary cassette tapes. Don Ngubeni of the editorial staff in Lusaka put it this way when he visited Sweden in 1988:



For us a cassette is an important part of our work. Sound is what radio deals with. We broadcast the recorded voice, not a written speech a piece of paper. The living voices of ANC's leaders are personal, and people listen. You can form your own opinion: What kind of person is this? We send our cassettes to people in South Africa. They are listened to. They are copied onto other cassettes and spread. They play a big role in the struggle against apartheid.

Some cassettes were sent in empty, or with the donor's old music remaining to appear innocent. Once in the country they were kept for upcoming transmissions. On some, one kept the old contents for 5–10 minutes before recording banned information. About 20–50 blacks would gather round each cassette to hear the latest about the struggle. This meant that old cassettes that were simply lying around could help provide thousands with the very message they needed to understand the situation and participate in the struggle. Tormod Nesset ex-



*5 years in prison for listening to Radio...
Campaign for economic support to ANC Radio Freedom.*

plains how ISAK in Oskarshamn collected cassettes:

It was great fun! At some of the municipality's youth centres boxes were made in the shape of huge piggy banks with a slit where visitors could drop the tapes. We talked with the youth about the aim, and asked them not to turn the piggy banks into rubbish bins for diverse junk, to be serious. Very little junk was thrown in. We trained some young people from each centre, and they talked about the struggle and



Weekly Mail was very effective in exposing the Apartheid regime.

guarded the boxes till the centre closed. They did a great job. Masses of tapes were collected and in the process we mobilised a youth group for ISAK.

The original initiative was taken in Holland, and the idea was taken over by the local branch of SIF, the Swedish Union of Clerical and Service Workers at Swedish Radio. Kristian Romare on the radio con-

tacted ISAK in early 1985 and wanted to broaden the campaign by cooperating with the collection of cassette tapes. The public response was so overwhelming that ISAK had to stop the collection!

Bush Radio in Cape Town never got a broadcasting licence but nevertheless sent programmes. They were stopped and the equipment was confiscated. The alternative ether media was too popular to be permitted. Thus most of the support Sida channelled through the Africa Groups was directed to the written media, which had the only opportunity of publishing information critical of apartheid. In time a number of text media which were critical of the regime, and were often community-based, appeared in South Africa. They had both financial and political problems. Several editors spent more time in court than at the paper. Their investigative journalism was very embarrassing to the government and it was probably among the most skilled and courageous in the world at this time.

When the *Weekly Mail* (now *Mail & Guardian*) was suspended for a month in late 1988, AGIS, with the help of Sida, was able to finance staff training to keep it together, until the paper could start publishing again. This was the beginning of AGIS support to journalist training that continued for over a decade. On a previous occasion the Stockholm chapter of the Swedish Union of Journalists sent money they had collected for journalist training that helped the *Weekly Mail* survive during a three-month suspension. This training suited the times; there were only a few black journalists, and even the large dailies needed to have reporters in the black townships. Another alternative paper in Johannesburg was the fortnightly *Indicator*. Each edition of about 30 000 copies (1990) was largely free-of-charge and mainly advertisement financed.

Support to Afrikaans language alternative media, like *Saamstaan* in Oudtshoorn and *Namaquanius* in Springbok, was of extra value. The most successful was *Vrye Weekblad*. Even here the support was related to training. The paper became famous for its revelations of the police's clandestine methods and it was the first Afrikaans paper against apartheid. It was edited by Max du Preez, later a TV commentator (but suspended in 1999), a genuine Boer if more radical than most. He loved his Volk and represented a positive Afrikanerdom without racist ideas. In and around Cape Town there was media training at grassroots level producing simply laid out newssheets, filled with explosive material. They wrote about and for farm workers, who were strictly controlled but could be reached on the occasions they were permitted to leave their workplaces.

To shape internal opinion, access to books was also required. Through SEN resources were channelled to several publishers:

Ravan Press was founded in 1972 by Beyers Naudé and others linked to the Christian Institute, in the first hand to publish studies on the effects of race policies. Their books were also used in shaping Swedish public opinion. *Staffrider* was launched after Soweto in 1976 as a forum for mainly black writers. Many of their publications were banned.

Skotaville Publishers aimed to give blacks a chance of making their voices heard and through very low prices reach as many as possible. Non-fiction dominated their publications, including a series on African Theology. In May 1986



The Unquestionable Right to Be Free was banned. *Essays in Black Theology*, and the State of Emergency of the same year led bookshops to remove Skotaville's books from their shelves so that they would not be penalised.

When André Brink's novel *Kennis van die sand* was banned in 1974, Taurus Publishers distributed the book as a pure protest action by a few university lecturers. This publisher became one of the few that writers threatened by censorship could turn to. They included Breyten Breytenbach, Nadine Gordimer, John Miles, Wilma Stockenström and Lettie Viljoen. Most of the practical work was voluntarily done without pay by the owners themselves in their spare time. They were opposed to state interference in publishing and never negotiated with the Censorship Board. For the same reason they never appealed against the banning of a book.

There were several attempts to start some kind of news agency, *inter alia* Africa Press News and Information Agency with Zwelakhe Sisulu in the vanguard. The idea was to compile information and produce articles on detained, killed and missing people, for both internal and international consumers. Through SEN, Sida granted support but Sisulu was imprisoned in June 1986, and the project did not get off the ground. A similar fate affected the support that was intended for *The Press Trust of South Africa*, an independent news agency with its main office in Durban.

47. No business with apartheid

From the beginning ISAK's work was strategically focused on the annual and increasingly professional campaign week held to commemorate Sharpeville in March. In 1984 the topic was "Nordic action against apartheid", and the local work highlighted

parliament's review of the ban on new investments, the consumer boycott, the release of political prisoners and support to ANC and SWAPO. Shortly before the campaign week *Toivo ya Toivo*, one of SWAPO's founders, was released from Robben Island.

The topic in 1985 was "Youth against apartheid" and the campaign was held in 60 towns and villages. In cooperation with the Africa Groups and the School Student Organisation of Sweden, SECO, the office helped to organise ten seminars and offered to send speakers to the local groups. Fruit pickets and demonstrations were part of the arsenal.

"For a free Namibia – isolate South Africa!" was the topic in 1986. Now for the first time Namibia was in focus, and actions against Swakara furs were held in many places. As South Africa's military presence increased, protests grew. Over 100 places took part in the week.

In 1987 the topic "No business with apartheid" largely summarised the core of ISAK's work. Shortly before the campaign week, information was released on a Swedish trade embargo from 1st July. Even if media interest had begun to cool, ISAK now had to trace the companies that sought loopholes in the law. 160 sites were now involved in the campaign week.

1988 featured the twin topics: "Children against apartheid – No business with South Africa". As the previous year the campaign paper came out as a tabloid, which made it both cheaper to print and easier to read. It was also less pretentious. Through a child's perspective one could reach new groups, above all schools. On the business side, with the book *Morality for sale: Apartheid business on new routes* by "Henrik Adolfsson" alias the journalist Lasse Herneklint, one could follow up a previous publica-

tion, *Apartheid*. After a visit to a goldmine he wrote: testing room was shown, a large gymnastic hall of concrete with some kind of solid benches set in the floor. Here the so-called migrant workers from The Front Line States round South Africa were brought, and the temperature and humidity were raised to the conditions prevailing under ground. Then the workers had to climb up and down concrete blocks for hours. Those who passed the test were employed, the rest were returned. The better one did on the test, the further down the mine one was assigned. In Sweden one cannot even do this to cattle without being reported to the authorities.

The Swedish companies that did not withdraw from South Africa also sat on the International Council of Swedish Industry. Internationalism apparently had a somewhat limited focus. Aside from PR gains to South Africa, their presence was technologically valuable, in certain respects crucial. Atlas Copco and the other mine suppliers were at the pinnacle of international mining operations. Without them it would be difficult to fetch the gold from the kilometre deep shafts. ABB's optical fibre cables and advanced power transfer were important technological advances. SKF's ball bearings were not technically pioneering, but without them it would not be possible to keep armoured vehicles rolling in the hunt for school children in the townships. The Africa Groups' slogan *SKF keeps South Africa rolling* was a reality, and company taxes went straight to the national budget, which at that time allocated 40% to the military.

ISAK was successful in its work towards legal sanctions, and from an international perspective



The campaign Youth Against Apartheid was very successful around the country.



SKF Keeps South Africa Rolling. Poster in a series produced by the Gothenburg Africa Group.



Picket outside the SKF headquarter in Gothenburg.

Sweden was far ahead, but the loopholes meant Swedish legislation leaked like a sieve.

48. Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid

Inspired by the Swedish People's Parliament for Disarmament in 1983, ISAK, together with the Swedish UN Association, among many others, organised the *Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid* on 21–23 February, 1986. It was a mighty manifestation of the commitment of Sweden's popular movements on the issue: 1 000 delegates from 700 organisations dealt with motions in six committees:

South Africa as a threat to world peace, support to the liberation struggle in South Africa and to Na-

mbia's route to independence, but also the plunder of Namibia's natural resources, development cooperation to the Front Line States, as well as ISAK's core issues like economic sanctions and the UN's blacklisting of sport and cultural exchange.

The resolutions of the People's Parliament were taken in plenary sessions after discussion on the statements of the committees.

Prime Minister Olof Palme held what would become his last speech in public at the People's Parliament, and a historic photo of ANC President Oliver Tambo and Olof Palme next to each other was taken here. A week later Olof Palme was shot dead on a street in Stockholm. Lotta Johnsson-Fornarve, then a member of the ISAK board, recalls the drudgery before the age of the personal computer:



The peoples Parliament against Apartheid gathered many organisations also outside ISAK.

Everything had to be typewritten and all changes had to be cut and pasted in. Several hundred functionaries of all kinds had to be organised to do everything from guarding the doors to typewriting. The People's Parliament was a huge lift for the issues of apartheid and sanctions, and contributed to making South Africa the greatest international issue of the time. Absolutely everyone joined, even the Moderate Youth League, which on principle opposed everything. This was excellent, since it created a polarisation that was easy to relate to, and the effect was unifying for the other delegates.

It was the largest and broadest assembly on the issue, and could with its organisation take

important political decisions that were very significant in future opinion work, since one could refer to them. It also gave an enormous lift to the work throughout the country. Many sport clubs and recreation organisations, trade unions and other local organisations that normally did not bother about social issues were present. Tremendous!

49. Shell campaign – success or failure?

For over 15 years, in violation of the UN oil boycott, Shell supplied Rhodesia with oil, roughly 50% of its needs, and in the same way it supplied South Africa. In 1986 ISAK began to boycott Shell. A combination of poor union conditions at Shell installations in South Africa and Shell's strategic importance to

the apartheid regime triggered an international boycott. When the company fired 80 miners at a coalmine in Rietspruit in 1985, the ICFTU objected. In less than two years the boycott had support from unions throughout the world. The time had come for the most powerful action thus far against one of the many companies that supported the apartheid state.

Already in 1984 at a UN conference in Paris the ANC had recommended a boycott of Shell, and in May 1985 the World Council of Churches discussed an international boycott of Shell. That both trade unions and the church were involved at an early stage meant a lot for its subsequent breadth. Jonas Ideström, doing VTP weapons-free service at ISAK, began to work on the campaign in 1986:

I had long had a burning interest in Africa, and came right into the Shell campaign. In the circles in which I moved, the Church of Sweden Youth, the boycott of Shell was obvious, in the same way obvious to boycott Nestlé. I'm aware that I still never fill up at Shell, and I know others who say the same thing. It drew a lot of attention.

In Sweden, Shell's fuel and heating oil were not sold only by its own outlets but mainly by private businesses with leasing agreements. Shortly before the middle of the year ISAK urged companies, institutions, buildings and other major consumers not to procure oil from Shell, and the public to boycott Shell's filling stations.

The Swedish Shell traders' association, whose members ran Shell filling stations, made contact with ISAK and offered to try to get Shell to withdraw from South Africa. In return ISAK postponed



the boycott of these garages to mid-August. The boycott of Shell's own outlets and other products continued. August came and went, but it was no surprise that Shell did not leave South Africa. ISAK judged that as long as the traders cooperated with ISAK it might hurt Shell, and thus found it difficult to argue for a boycott of the traders. Thus ISAK put two demands that the traders' association agreed to:

- To send a joint delegation to Shell's international headquarters;
- To distribute a joint statement on Shell's com-

mitments in South Africa that would be available in Shell filling stations.

Shell pretended it was unaffected by the boycott, but hired the consultants Pagan International, which specialised in counteracting boycott campaigns. It had practised on Union Carbide's blackout of the gas leak catastrophe in Bhopal in India as well as on Nestlé's substitute for mothers' milk that was killing babies in developing countries. Among other measures Pagan recommended a "meaningful dialogue" with churches and unions through intermediaries. These were exactly the same tactics used by the Shell traders. When they did not live up to the conditions in an honourable way, the boycott was also extended to them. In the meantime a dilemma arose in the campaign, exactly what the Pagan strategy intended.

Although Swedish Shell tried to pretend it was unaffected by the campaign the oil company's activities indicated the reverse. When the international company held a shareholders meeting in the Hague in 1990 there was a 36 % drop in profits. This plunge openly disturbed the shareholders. The board did not give the reason for the deterioration, but kept a straight face.

Holger Sandelin also did VTP service at ISAK's office:

Before the Shell campaign it was simple, but now suddenly ambivalence arose among our members. When Swedish Shell showed individual garage owners, problems arose. When it came to acquaintances in one's neighbourhood

who might go bankrupt, the great public support for a boycott of South Africa was inadequate. It was a educational conundrum to boycott Shell and - at the same time - except those Shell garages owned by local businessmen.

Problems mounted and vandalism of Shell garages by militant groups outside ISAK were a clearly a blow to the campaign. The members with a commitment in international questions had great confidence in ISAK; there the campaign was not so controversial. Theoretically the campaign was not a problem, but in practice it became difficult because of the sabotage of garages, rather like breathing out with flour in ones mouth.

Suddenly ISAK found itself in a similar position as the Shell traders' association that claimed: "We have done what we could and asked Shell to leave South Africa, but they ignore this." Now ISAK said: "We have challenged these activists not to vandalise, but they ignore this."

When the assaults continued despite this, the campaign was in difficulties from two sides. The militants thought that ISAK was taking too much consideration, was too cowardly. It was not too difficult to ride this. What was worse was that doubt arose within ISAK, mainly among the liberal organisations. FPU left ISAK, and the Liberal Party Women were also critical but remained. The Church of Sweden was a rock and there the campaign was sanctioned at the highest level in the AGM in 1987. The hitherto youngest delegate wrote the motion on the Shell boycott that

"Shell pretended it was unaffected by the boycott, but hired the consultants Pagan International, which specialised in counteracting boycott campaigns."



To cut credit cards became part of the campaign.

was adopted without debate or reservation. His name was Holger Sandelin.

Together with the campaigns on business and Children against Apartheid, the Shell campaign became a kind of flagship for ISAK. When connec-

ting social commitment with concrete action it was a simple way of doing something. Since ordinary people do not usually buy very many drilling rigs or mining equipment, it was difficult for consumers to boycott Atlas-Copco. The Shell campaign was more

tangible, since it was not a particularly great sacrifice find another filling station.

ISAK's former organisation secretary Peter Göransson sees advantages to the campaign:

It was good to gather people around this issue since the trade embargo had removed South African goods from the shelves. The campaign meant that Shell's trademark was blemished. Had Shell been untouched, they would not have bothered to contact us. Unfortunately it was mainly the attacks on Shell filling stations that were seen by those who read the evening news. Locally as in Dalarna and Oskarshamn it was different with the peaceful actions that were the aim of the campaign. Incidentally I almost got a new job. The information secretary at Shell asked me: "Peter, what are your qualifications? We need people like you at Swedish Shell."



Church of Sweden marched in front of the Shell campaign.

NELSON MANDELA



To the People of Sweden:

The path to Peoples victory is
illuminated by your selfless
Solidarity

Nelson Mandela

41. 3. 90

NELSON MANDELA STOCKHOLM SVERIGE MARS 1990

The message from Mandela on his visit to Sweden in March 1990: To the people of Sweden: The path towards peoples victory is illuminated by your unselfish solidarity.

8.

1988–1994

**TIME TO BRING
THE HARVEST IN**

50. Namibia is liberated

In 1982 under the leadership of Martti Ahtisaari, the fifth UN Commissioner on Namibia, the Western powers, SWAPO and the Front Line States united on the constitutional principles for Namibia, at a time when the prospects appeared dim. In 1981 France, Great Britain and USA had vetoed sanctions against South Africa, and the USA refused to condemn South Africa's latest military invasion in Angola. Instead it demanded that Cuban troops should leave Angola so that South African troops would withdraw from Namibia. That the former were there on the invitation of Angola's government and that the latter were there illegally did not matter. It was more important for USA to reduce the influence of the Soviet Union and Cuba than to give Namibia freedom. SWAPO's response was to intensify the armed struggle and prepare for a lengthier exile.

When its president, Sam Nujoma, came to Sweden in May 1983, he was received like a head of state. In addition to meetings with Palme and the



President Sam Nujoma presenting the Namibian flag.

Foreign Minister Lennart Bodström, he met the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and all the party leaders. Official assistance was increasingly allocated to development projects, and from 1982–83 Sida and the Foreign Ministry treated SWAPO as if it were a government. This put completely new demands on planning and transparency. Adult education at Sandöskolan in administration and economy thus became a strategically important part of the support. Recognition of the need existed on both sides, which was also a precondition for the growing support. Erik Karlsson, among other things a former deputy director of Sweden's national bank and a director of the central bank in Lesotho, in an extension of this cooperation later became economic advisor to Sam Nujoma and ended up as director of Namibia's central bank.

In 1987 the Swede Bernt Carlsson was appointed the seventh UN Commissioner for Namibia to lead the transition to democracy. He had worked together with Olof Palme on negotiations on peace in the Iran/Iraq conflict, and had been the Social Democratic Party's international secretary and general secretary in the Socialist International as well as the NGO Ambassador at the Foreign Ministry. South Africa had just suffered a humiliating military defeat in Angola. At last the situation looked brighter. In 1988 Bernt Carlsson organised a meeting between SWAPO and white Namibians, and South Africa was on the way to giving up control over Namibia. In September 1988 Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev had agreed that the Cuban troops would go home after the South African troops withdrew to South Africa. Resolution 435 on the independence



The South Africa flag is lowered once and for all in the Namibian capital Windhoek. The photographer Kaleni Hiyalwa was part of a Africa Group project with SWAPO.

of Namibia could now be implemented.

On 20th December Bernt Carlsson was to fly to New York to sign the accord with the other signatories. His plans changed at the request of a South African mining company, de Beers, who wanted to meet him in London for discussions on Namibia's diamonds. It led to his death. He was one of 270 killed when PAN AM 103 was blown up over Lockerbie in Scotland.

Work for Namibia's independence continued – despite certain armed skirmishes – under the leadership of Martti Ahtisaari from neighbouring Finland. Elections were held in November 1989. Although South Africa had supported the election campaigns of seven other parties to the tune of roughly 300 million kronor 1989 (=almost 600 million 2019), the election was convincingly won by SWAPO (57%), while the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, which was close to South Africa, got 29%.

On 21st March 1990 – to the day 30 years after the Sharpeville massacre – Namibia finally was free, and Sam Nujoma installed as the country's first president. In accordance with Resolution 432 from 1978, the enclave of Walvis Bay was also returned to Namibia in 1994.

51. Retreat of the apartheid regime

Developments in Namibia had shown that not even the leading Western powers could, in the long run, prevent the white regime from collapsing. The strategic oil boycott had in the late 1980s begun to affect industry badly. In addition South Africa lost more important trading markets. Prospects of turning the economic crisis around were bleak.

In the meantime, through the UDF and COSATU, civil society's black/non-white majority had gained a strong position, while white youths increa-

singly distanced themselves from the prevailing politics. Within the NP a revolt emerged. The regime had to prepare a soft landing.

Secret discussions started with Nelson Mandela. In late 1989 several imprisoned black leaders were released, but Mandela put political conditions on his own release. On 2nd February 1990 the banning of the ANC and 30 other organisations was lifted, and nine days later Mandela became a free man. His message was clear: Isolate South Africa! Continue with sanctions! There is a long road to a non-racist society. With support of the World Council of Churches, Frank Chikane, then General Secretary of South Africa's Christian Council, emphasised that it would be "a grave mistake if the international pressures against the regime were reduced at this stage", and COSATU's vice-president Chris Dlamini made a similar appeal.

What ought ISAK – and its 63 member organisations and 100 supporting organisations – do? Continue, yes, but how? There was a great need for analytical material. In October 1991 a delegation went to South Africa. The result was a series of publications *På väg mot ett fritt Sydafrika med apartheid i bagaget* (On the road to a free South Africa with apartheid in one's luggage). Questions that were raised included violence, the development of trade unions, the education situation, land questions, the economy, culture etc. Already in April 1990, in the publication *Sanktioner och Sydafrikas mineraler* (Sanctions and South Africa's minerals), Hans Gustafsson, Bertil Odén and Andreas Tegen had shown that the world would manage quite well without South African minerals. The world was new after the fall of the Berlin wall.

The coming elections – it was unclear when – would put great demands on the ANC, and ISAK



The newly released ANC leaders are welcomed to Stockholm in January 1990.

needed to make a decent contribution. Pelle Knutsson took hold of the campaign *Tänd ett ljus – släck apartheid* (Light a candle – extinguish apartheid):

It was a greater sales success than the campaign paper. I do not know how many candles we sold but I remember Patrik standing and loaded cartons of candles onto postal vans. We or-

dered new supplies but before they were all distributed the campaign ebbed out. It had reached the threshold of our distribution network and it took us a long time to get rid of all the candles, since we ordered a whole lot in the second round.

Not everything that ISAK did bear fruit, for instance a campaign *Så ett frö för Sydafrika* (Sow a seed for South Africa), as South African seeds did not grow well in Swedish soil. In the past collections were mostly run locally and by member organisations. Now one had to gear up for a central collection and new means. In late 1991 Patrik Lönn was charged with developing and coordinating these efforts:

My role was to try to collect as much money as possible... even important symbolically. For ANC it was also important that the funds were not taken from the ordinary Sida support. We now began to interleave leaflets about the collection in papers like the Social Democratic Women's League paper among others, and produced a professional wall calendar that many even outside solidarity circles bought, since it was so well done. The year before the elections we collected a million kronor, and both the ANC and ourselves were pleased with that.

In a referendum in March 1992, 68% of the white electorate voted to end apartheid through negotiations. At last they had seen the writing on the wall. For many the chance of renewed international sport was a strong argument. After several years of negotiations in CODESA, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, the parties could present a new draft constitution: equal suffrage for all, two cham-



Buy the ISAK candles.

bers and a united state with federal and regional bodies.

In April 1994 for the first time general elections would be held in South Africa. Who could guarantee that they would be free and fair and thus democratic? Up to the last minute the IFP, Inkatha Freedom Party, tried to sabotage the process and only decided to participate a few days before the elections.

50. Mandela at the Globe

"Don't put out the fire just when the pot is beginning to boil" were Nelson Mandela's words to 12 000 enthusiastic spectators at the solidarity gala held in *Globen*, the Globe, on 16th March 1990, just over a month after his release. Sweden was the first the country outside Africa on his trip abroad, and this was not a coincidence. *The Committee for Nelson Mandela's Release* organised the event. Most of ISAK's member organisations were there, Sida and several trade union organisations, etc. It was a financial gamble, although the artists performed gratis. Sound, rent and pay to around 250 people for other services cost money, but it all worked.

The evening became a world event with artists like Miriam Makeba, Cyndee Peters, Astrid Assefa, Tomas Ledin and others, plus a speech by Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson as well as a large number of choirs, which for the evening formed a giant choir of 700, to sing African songs, ending their appearance with *Nkosi, sikelel' iAfrika!*

Suddenly US presidential candidate Jesse Jackson arrived with a party, without prior warning. Not a chair was to be found on the VIP platform, but the ANC's Alfred Nzo and his wife had excused them-



The Swedish artista Asrid Assefa, Cyndee Peters, Elsie Einarsdotter with Nelson Mandela.

selves, so two places were free. The rest of the company waited in the corridor.

53. Black townships and violence

Apartheid was still alive, weak but not dead. Thus it was important to portray the situation in the country. In 1991 ISAK chose to try and interpret the feeling of the black township through a project cal-

led *Den Svarta Förstaden*, (The Black Township). The idea was to portray both the oppression and the strength in the poverty, the protests. A mobile exhibition of 60m² was created. It had sound and images and a culvert led right into the township and its scenes with a real tin shanty with a bed, wallpapered with posters. The smells and sounds recreated were not appreciated by all the libraries that showed it,

but visitors' empathy was strong. When human rights activist Howard Varney from Legal Resources Centre in Durban saw the exhibition he was amazed:

"How on earth did you manage to do this?" it was all so authentic that he felt as though he was walking into Alexandra! Particularly the images of the police and military who were often in the townships depicted in the form of welded scrap metal sculptures instead of scarecrows.

Even with Mandela free, the democratic process was far from assured. Political violence was real in the black townships. Black-on-black violence was ideal from the regime's perspective, which did all it could to exacerbate existing tension. The IFP, led by Gatsha Buthelezi, lent itself to this, and its warriors received weapons training on secret farms of the South African army.

In September 1991 the National Peace Accord was signed between 26 of the most significant actors. COSATU in Durban had for several years worked out conflict resolution methods and achieved local peace pacts. They were used as guidelines in negotiating the peace accord. The military as well as right and leftwing extremists, however, remained outside the fold.

In 1992 the violence accelerated. In June 46 people in Boipatong were killed in a massacre that led to the ANC walking out of the negotiations. The perpetrators were vigilantes – the regime's minions – not new, already known from the 1980s. The international media was often ill-informed and uncritically disseminated the official police version. IFP-supporters were bussed to hostels in the vicinity of mines and other industries, from whence they went on night time raids in the townships. If there was a direct fire fight between the ANC and IFP, the



Poster for "The Black Township".

police and army chose either to look the other way or to support the IFP.

Many feared that a civil war would break out in the black townships. White fascists like the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) armed themselves. In this situation the need for independent information was great. ISAK thus tried to form a picture of the situation not only from ANC but also from the Legal Resource Centre, the ecumenical organisation Diakonia based in Durban and the Network of Independent Monitors (NIM), which tried to monitor and document the violence in the townships.

An activist reflects

Magnus Walan was one of the activists involved in solidarity work for many years both as a volunteer and professionally:

My journey with the Africa Groups began in secondary school in 1974–75. I was angry because the media placed the liberation movement MPLA in Angola on an equal footing with the armed groups, cooperating with the South African forces. I remember a meeting at the library in Linköping where Sören Lindh was one of the speakers.

I was on the board of the Africa Groups, went on a study trip to Guinea Bissau in 1976–77, did more than ten years work on ISAK's board and was at the independence celebrations in Zimbabwe in 1980. Through my work in the Africa Groups and ISAK I was entrusted by the ANC to visit apartheid South Africa as a representative for the solidarity movement in the West. My South African trips to the ANC underground started in 1984 and continued up to the elections in 1994.

In South Africa I had very strong experiences. I remember the mourning women at a mass funeral in Alexandra who showed me no hate as a white, although their children had recently been killed by white soldiers, how I instead was warmly embraced. How at the post and telephone workers trade union congress I was spontaneously called on to talk about solidarity work in Sweden. Or when we were stopped at a roadblock by soldiers from the Riot Squad and had to pretend that UDF chairperson, Albertina Sisulu, was a domestic worker in our home in Johannesburg and I was only driving her home. What it was like to travel to the forced removal camps in KwaZulu-Natal disguised as a Catholic priest.

South Africa was a political school on various pla-



Magnus Walan represented the Africa Groups at The extra ordinary General assembly of UNESCO in Paris about Namibia in 1980. To he right Ruth Mompoti from ANC.

nes. When friends in human rights work in South Africa asked me for a comment on the news that the ANC in its Angolan camps had used torture, and executed political dissidents and suspected spies, I evaded the issue and said that they were in a difficult situation. Then I was told off in no uncertain terms, correctly, I later realised.

Torture is never acceptable. Loyalty to parties should never be more important than loyalty to basic rights and principles like never accepting torture and to always start from the poor person's perspective and interests. On this point I think the Africa Groups have sometimes been weak because of loyalty to parties and states. This had an influence, for instance, when Swedish pressure persuaded South Africa to buy the JAS Gripen fighter plane.

Yet this does not blemish the whole. Without the Africa Groups, Sweden would have been poorer. And my life would have been very different, very much poorer.

As expected the violence died down soon after the elections in 1994, except in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Buthelezi's home territory, where a power struggle with the ANC continued.

54. New roads to peace

In 1992 the UN decided to send Peace Monitors to South Africa try to reduce the violence and make it possible to hold general elections. In South Africa, fear of the escalating violence was growing. The National Peace Accord was a positive but insufficient contribution. In August 1992 the World Council of Churches launched the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa (EMPSA) so that the churches through an international presence could complement inputs by governments. The international coordinator was Barney Pityana, former BCM member, amongst other things. Beyers Naudé was EMPSA president in South Africa.

Swedish EMPSA was largely integrated into PEMSA, Peace Monitoring in South Africa. Earlier common experiences and new impulses facilitated the project. In all 17 organisations with trade union, Christian, peace and solidarity movement background were involved. 66 peace monitors undertook to do at least six weeks monitoring for five months before, during and after the elections in April 1994.

These points are essential to explain that the broad cooperation around PEMSA was possible.

There were three important pre-requisites for the project:

1. The broad and many years of cooperation in ISAK was not only an important practical experience but also an expression of a common system of values.
2. Early contacts with EMPSA on behalf of the

churches and with NIM in South Africa on behalf of the Olof Palme International Centre (successor to AIC) contributed to insights on both the needs and the possibilities. Their representatives also took part in a meeting in June 1993 to draw up guidelines for the cooperation.

3. Led by the firebrand Margareta Ingelstam, SEN (later the Christian Council of Sweden) had for several years worked on developing non-violent strategies. A result of this was a course in conflict resolution, communication, negotiation methodology and nonviolence, prepared by herself and Joe Seremano, head of the Justice and Reconciliation Department at South African Christian Council. The first course was held in Sigtuna with 15 participants from South Africa and Sweden.

PEMSA required practical assistance in organising, recruiting, educating and debriefing peace monitors, who were at the disposal of voluntary organisations in South Africa. The methods were based on experiences of similar tasks within churches and peace movements but were nevertheless new in terms of form and comprehensiveness. An absolute condition for the project was that Sida financed it. PEMSA was also seen in Sweden as a pilot project to develop a model for peace services, and the methods were later employed by Swedish organisations in connection with tasks for peace and election monitoring elsewhere.

A fact-finding mission to South Africa was part of the preparations, in which Pelle Knutsson and Magnus Walan participated on behalf of ISAK. The former says:

Among my most shattering meetings was when Magnus and I sat in Inkatha's office and

talked with these men who went out and murdered people at night, and we conversed with them about a democratic South Africa. Everyone knew exactly who everyone was, everyone knew what everyone else did, and everyone knew where everyone was sleeping that night. There we sat and had a dialogue that was ice-cold on the surface. I felt that anything could happen in this environment.

A few nights later we drove out of a township near Port Shepstone. There was only one entrance and one exit to be able to control the residents. A SADF military vehicle stopped us, and a pale pimply soldier with shaky hands and armed to the teeth lit up the car with a torch and wanted to know everything before we could leave. The boot was full of ANC jerseys and if he had opened it anything might have happened. I was really scared then.

A few weeks before the elections 21 representatives from ISAK arrived to function as election observers in, among other places, one of the country's largest townships, Mdantsane on the outskirts of East London in the Eastern Cape. They monitored things like the parties' election meetings, public debates, marches and demonstrations. During the elections they observed and reported on how the elections were run in different polling stations, particularly in the countryside, where there were few other international observers.

It was with pride and commitment that the electorate went to the elections. More than 90% voted and, to the surprise of many, the elections proceeded peacefully.



Four Swedes that were part of PEMSA. From the left Martin Misgeld, Robert Eriksson, Bengt Gabrielsson and Åke Forsberg.

55. The route to the elections

The vast majority of those eligible to vote had never voted. How could one get all of them to go to the polling stations? This – and not competition from other parties – was the ANC's main concern. On the advice of the Social Democrats and after a certain hesitation from the ANC a special organisation for voter education was formed – the Voter Education and Election Training Unit (VEETU) – in September 1992. Its strength lay in the breadth of its religious, union, civil and women's organisations, and an approach to adult education that had never been tried in South Africa. Its impartiality made it possible for Sida to support this work.

The VEETU project had a clear goal. All who were eligible should go and vote on election day. To reach over 20 million voters there had to be a snowball effect through training on an industrial scale. From January 1993 to the elections in April 1994



The group of ISAK election observers in Eastern Cape.

(16 months) VEETU held 467 training courses on weekends and during the week, often with accommodation and food, sometimes with more than 1 000 participants. About 77 000 course leaders were trained in this time and one reached 2,2 million voters directly. In one trial election 60 000 people took part.

VEETU's work was documented and evaluated, both in Sweden and in South Africa. It was a unique public education project, not only from a South African perspective. It wrote *Bringing out the Vote: Mass training as an organising tool* – as a handbook for others who wanted to do the same thing.

After the CODESA agreement, the political parties could no longer exert any influence over the

election procedures themselves. The Independent Electoral Commission was responsible. The election would be run in close cooperation with the international community. The UN charged many countries, including Sweden, to appoint a sum total of 250 election observers.

One problem was that white society, with state support, controlled radio and TV, large sections of the press, as well as the election apparatus. In addition, many in the new electorate were illiterate. It was also a problem that white farmers did not want to permit the ANC's election officers onto their farms, while the black workers refused to listen to those of the NP.

ISAK's and Africa Groups' *Fritt Sydafrika* (Free

South Africa) and *Slå på trumman* (Beat the drum) collections got into high gear, where one of the goals was to equip a video vehicle and train the crew and driver. They began by visiting villages in Northern Transvaal with its three homelands of Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu, where the population was among the most disadvantaged. Many single women support large families on small overused plots, while the men work in Johannesburg. The money also went to support the training of election workers from the ANC and its allies, and to printing the ANC's handbook for training election workers.

Solidarity imperialism was a problem. Many international actors wanted to tell South Africans what they ought to do. The National Democratic Institute had both money and staff but wanted to train people for an American electoral system. Beatie Hofmeyr cooperated with Bo Toresson and Birgitta Silén, among others, and wrote South Africa's first election handbook:

I remember a discussion with an Afro-American woman where I questioned their methods. In her broadest American she said, "Honey, you must just trust us, we have done this for more than a hundred years". I could not help replying, "How come fewer than 25 per cent of the Afro-American population actually vote? We hope for at least 80 per cent." That was the end of our cooperation with Americans. Yet they were not the only ones who behaved in this way. Britons, Germans, Italians and the Irish all had similar attitudes.

The Swedes were quite different. I'll never forget the first meeting with Bo Krogvig. We took up all sorts of things and he said: "Everything you do will be assessed on whether you have put the voters in the centre of the activiti-



Beatie Hofmeyr and Roshene Singh are planning voter education.

es". This became a guiding light for us. The Swedes had a way of always quickly coming to the point in a very simple manner. We only had a direct partnership with the Swedes. It was the largest assistance and we had most use of it. We appreciated that they gave us input where they were experts, with preparations, planning, and writing handbooks – but also that they let us take the main role.

56. Mission accomplished

ANC won a landslide victory in the elections, garnering nearly 63% and formed – as agreed in the CODESA Accord – a Government of National Uni-

Beat the drum.
Big joint money collection
campaign by
ISAK and the
Africa Groups.



ty (GNU) together with the NP and the IFP. On 10th May 1994 Nelson Mandela was sworn in as President, and the Vice-Presidents were Thabo Mbeki and F W de Klerk. ISAK had reason to say, *Mission accomplished*, something that is granted to few popular movements. ISAK was thus closed down a year later.

ISAK was the culmination of the many years of work in the Swedish solidarity movement for southern Africa's liberation and came to embrace a uniquely large section of the Swedish people. It was not as visible on the streets as the more attention-

getting Vietnam movement, but its size, popular base and influence over political decisions was much greater.

ISAK had an heir: Network for Southern Africa. Its members today comprise solidarity groups, friendship associations, churches, folk high schools, study associations and political organisations. Its aim is to support sustainable development in southern Africa – based on social and economic justice, peace and democracy – through widespread cooperation.

57. An impatient patience

Globally the major story dealt with the liberation of the Third World, the two thirds world, as it is sometimes called, based on population numbers, although the figure was an underestimation already in the year 1900. Now over four fifths live in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the early 1960s the winds of change swept over Africa, a steady trade wind that swept away the colonial powers in 19 African countries in 1960 (a total of 35 over a decade). In southern Africa, the white regimes grasped power tightly, and the dictatorship in Portugal refused to liberate its colonies.

The result was the Thirty Years War that encompassed many wars in many countries with many different motive forces. It meant that at least 150 000 people were actively deprived of their lives. In the liberation wars hundreds of thousands of people were injured, hundreds of thousands of children were deprived of their childhood (some to become child soldiers), the extent of the life-long trauma caused to southern Africa's population cannot be estimated, direct and indirect violence is still a living reality in many of the affected countries, human rights are being squeezed in many places, justice and

peace have not arrived, the poorest are even poorer. Was all the solidarity work in vain?

No.

It might have been better if some countries had not had natural resources that were so rich that they were tempting boothies to the superpowers and multinationals. Oil and diamonds (Angola), platinum, gold and coal (South Africa), aluminium and hydroelectric power (Mozambique), uranium and diamonds (Namibia), and very fertile soil (Zimbabwe), are examples of their raw materials. The struggle was prolonged and today they are a source of political unrest.

It might have been better if the superpowers had not interfered so much, if they had not so energetically devoted themselves to proxy wars, superpower confrontation through agents, backed up and supported with arms and other military equipment. The worst affected by this phenomenon were Angola and Mozambique, which in 1980–88 were exposed to devastating attacks by South Africa – cheered on by USA and Great Britain in the Cold War. According to UNICEF the excess death toll reached 1,5 million in southern Africa, of whom 100 000 died in the Front Line States, 500 000 in Angola and 900 000 in Mozambique. Nearly two thirds were children under five years. According to a 1989 UN report, South Africa's aggression led to 1,5 million refugees from the above-mentioned countries fleeing to neighbouring states, over 6 million internal refugees, and the economic losses reaching an inconceivable over 100 billion dollars.

It might have been better if the international community had become involved earlier and more firmly, or if the Security Council had earlier main-
tained:

- *that* the Portuguese colonies must be rapidly wound up in accordance with previous UN resolutions;
- *that* systematic violation of fundamental human rights on the Rhodesian and South African scale was completely unacceptable and therefore had to stop immediately;
- *that* continued refusal to follow these principles would elicit the response of a far-reaching economic, cultural, political and social blockade of these countries.

If all this had been the case, hundreds of thousands of people's lives as well as great economic, cultural and social values would have been saved. This did not happen.

It might have been worse. If there had not been a broad international solidarity movement that squeezed into nooks and crannies and reached into people's hearts through new and old popular movements, then the established economic and political interests would have dominated alone and in practice ruled the agenda of the international world. Who knows if both Portugal's colonial rule and the white minority regimes may have remained in one or other form?

It might have been worse, if the politicians and governments of many countries – particularly in Sweden and in the other Nordic countries – were not forced to listen to and give in to wide-spread public opinion that demanded morally defensible policies towards the liberation movements and the regimes they combated.





South Africa with the support from USA , created death and destruction in major parts of southern Africa. Here a bombed furniture factory in Angola 1979.

It might have been better. It might have been worse. However, a different world became possible. How did this happen? Several interacting factors and perspectives came to direct Sweden's disproportionately large influence on all the areas of the liberation struggle – except the military:

1. **THE EARLY SWEDISH** creators of public opinion were not on the fringe of the political field. On the contrary they had central positions in the liberal press, intellectual and religious leaders made themselves heard, and African voices were published early by Christian publishers.
2. **THE FIRST WAVE'S** organisational base was among

pupil and student organisations, then among the Christian youth organisations, after that within the political youth leagues in the middle and on the left as well as among other, internationally oriented, actors. In the second wave the coordinating Africa Groups came with both commitment and current and deep knowledge from inside Portugal's colonies and on South Africa and Namibia. In a third wave in the mid-1980s the media, which had finally woken up and made serious inputs. The patient work of solidarity had on this point finally borne fruit.

3. **EARLY ON, OLOF PALME** had developed close perso-

nal contacts with the Front Line States' most important presidents, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere and Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda. Therefore, Palme did not see the struggle against Portugal and the white minority regimes in an East-West perspective but from a South perspective. In connection with a small country's own interest in maintaining respect for international law, this entails an almost anti-imperialist understanding of the conflict. Interestingly enough, the same interpretation seemed to characterise the views of leaders of the Centre and Liberal parties.

4. **FURTHERMORE**, the conflict was viewed from a democratic perspective: the right to majority rule and thus self-determination was a condition – but not a guarantee – of human rights and a dignified life.
5. **Finally**, there was a Swedish interest in strengthening the non-aligned bloc through trying to prevent the liberation movements becoming over-dependent on one or the other side in the Cold War. Through economic and political support, conditions for a political dialogue were created, although the support was given without ideological ties.

With strong support in popular public opinion it was thus natural for Swedish governments – independently of party colour – to develop close relationships to the liberation movements and their leaders. However, on one point there was, nearly all the time, a conflict between the political establishment and the broad solidarity movement: *the issue of economic sanctions*.

Why did the governments not want to introduce unilateral economic sanctions against Portugal and South Africa? (In the case of Rhodesia there was a



Poster by the artist Chister Temptander that was sold by the Africa groups to benefit ANC.

mandatory decision by the Security Council.) Why – when they did come – was it in such small steps? Two main motives are conceivable:

- **economic**, i.e. concern for Swedish companies in both countries and for Swedish exports and thus the issue of employment in Sweden;
- the fear that a deviation from **international law**

would undermine it to the detriment of a small country like Sweden.

Which of these motives was the stronger is difficult to estimate. While international law on the question of economic support to the liberation movements was seen as an argument for support (if not initially), international law on the question of economic sanctions was seen as a strong argument against action. In the one case political reality took over the judicial principles. On the question of positive support these were seen as more elastic.

In the second case the judicial principles (only the Security Council has the mandate to take resolutions on mandatory sanctions) were for long far more important than the political reality: The Security Council could never be expected to pass any resolutions on economic sanctions; a veto from the Western powers was unavoidable. This also occurred when Sweden sat in the Security Council, and, with strong Nordic backing, put forward a motion on sanctions. Only after this failure did Sweden (after Denmark and Norway) decide to introduce a general embargo on trade with South Africa.

In the end it became politically impossible to withstand public opinion's persistent impatience. This is an important lesson for the future. Another policy became possible.

58. What happened then?

Another world was possible, but how did it turn out? The picture has shades of dark and dawn:

In Mozambique it is estimated that 110 000 were killed in a 15-year war (1977-92) between the government and Renamo (Mozambican National Resistance), the latter supported by Rhodesia, South Africa and USA. In Angola's internal armed con-

flicts from 1975-2002, with and without foreign involvement, an estimated 150 000 people were killed. Guinea Bissau has suffered several military coups, Namibia has had a minor revolt, South Africa has protected both Burma's military junta in the Security Council and its neighbour Mugabe, and Zimbabwe has been badly affected by misrule and violence with catastrophic consequences for the population. All these countries now lie far down on the welfare scale Human Development Index. A contributory cause, in addition to the above problems, is HIV/Aids.

Tragically enough, development is not only or even mainly characterised by justice, peace, democracy, human rights, economic and social blossoming. There are too many scars from too many years of war. Their natural resources have been too tempting for international interests. Power has been too attractive for those who did not win for them to lay down their arms. To "resolve" conflicts with violence easily becomes habitual, also for the victors.

Should the mass international solidarity movement have been more critical of the "genuine" liberation movements? Yes, for their own sakes, and for the sake of the people affected (see above: *An activist reflects*). There is an art to saying, "You have the right to conduct the liberation struggle on your own terms" on the one hand, and on the other hand to caution, "Violence carries the risk of generating more violence; thus minimise the violence and do all you can to break its evil circle". That art is hard. To exchange solidarity with the oppressed for critical reviews of the new power holders after the liberation is an even more difficult art, a different expression of solidarity. The solidarity movement did not manage to live up to this.

On the other hand, Angola and Mozambique



A land reform in South Africa is compensating for forced removals. Dancing an jubilant women in Kaikamahoek, Eastern Cape after the signing of an agreement for compensation is signed by the minister Thoko Didiza. One example where Swedish NGO support has been assisting.

have moved out of the shadow of war and now have strong (if skewed) economic development. Democracy has been introduced in Mozambique.

Namibia has, for African conditions, a robust democracy; its constitution is a democratic model. It has always had a positive economic development even if it is not strong enough to lift the people out of poverty.

South Africa has fairly successfully handled the conflict inherited from apartheid through impressive work of reconciliation. As a regional superpower it has strengthened Africa's place internationally. Furthermore there is now the economic development that makes it possible to reinforce the economic safety net for the weakest and even begin to reduce unemployment.

Zimbabwe under Mugabe remains a sad story until democratically inclined forces take over.

What happened to Swedish solidarity?

After liberation the Africa Groups started sending volunteers to each country and later got involved in projects, but have now left Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau. As to South Africa, the commitment of the broad popular movement led to many small development cooperation and exchange projects by many different organisations. South Africa has become the country with the most NGO projects. The academic boycott has also changed into an intensive exchange. It is the most popular country in the South for Swedish students' field studies and theses.

All the countries discussed have become major

recipients of state assistance, the most going to Mozambique. Now assistance to Namibia and South Africa is being terminated. In Angola termination is already a fact, while support to Zimbabwe is suspended while waiting for a change of government.

59. What is happening now?

In the time of neo-liberal globalisation there is a risk that old divisions between North and South will be cemented and new ones arise. The limited access to natural resources like oil, diamonds and strategic metals leads to a race between both state and private actors with economic interests, in which potential conflicts may be exacerbated and flare up in the form of armed violence. In addition there is a risk for a short-sighted over-exploitation of renewable natural resources, that may have devastating consequences in the long-term.

Against this background there is need of a deeply rooted and broad international solidarity movement larger than anything previously. The worldwide support of the World Social Forum is a sign that this is happening, though in a new form. The main story today deals with a need for global solidarity that must embrace not only rich and poor, industrialised countries and developing countries, but also present and coming generations.

A solidarity existing not only in space but over time – with political consequences already in the present – particularly in the North. To create such a movement many uncomfortable and persistent truth tellers are needed, with no guarantees of success but with peace and environment in focus, and a patient impatience to achieve results and with the conviction that another world is possible.

Country	Population	Proportion living under 2\$ a day	Porportion HIV infected between 15–49 years	Orphans due to AIDS 0–17år	Life expect- ancy men
ANGOLA	15,9 milj	i u	3,7 % (280 000)	160 000	38
BOTSWANA	1,7 milj	50,1	24,1 % (260 000)	120 000	40
MOÇAMBIQUE	19,7	78,4	16,1 % (1,6 milj)	510 000	44
NAMIBIA	2 milj	55,8	19,6 % (210 000)	85 000	52
SYDAFRIKA	47 milj	34,1	18,8 % (5,3milj)	1 200 000	47
TANZANIA	38 milj	59,7	6,5 % (1,3 milj)	1 100 000	47
ZAMBIA	11,7 milj	87,4	17,0 % (1 milj)	710 000	40
ZIMBABWE	13 milj	83	20,1 % (1,5 milj)	1 100 000	37
			11 450 000	4 985 000	

Source: UNAIDS 2006

HIV/AIDS is the biggest threat against development in southern Africa and despite other positive developments this contributes to the fall in the index for Human development, HDI.

The documentation project "Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with Southern Africa"

1994 SOUTH AFRICA BECAME A DEMOCRACY after more than 50 years of Apartheid. The other countries in southern Africa were "liberated" way earlier, but some of them suffered civil war and other difficulties. In Sweden the popular solidarity with the struggle for liberation in the region – from the 60s until 1994 – got a unique width and scope. The existing engagement for the region is largely remaining as an effect of that. In southern Africa there is an interest to have the work of the solidarity movements documented as well as the work of the representatives of the liberation movements stationed here during the struggle. On the requests from archives in southern Africa The Nordic Africa Institute took upon themselves to map relevant archives in the Nordic area that may document these activities. Archival work in southern Africa has also been supported from Sweden. On the homepage www.liberationafrica.se these archives are presented together with interviews with different actors, other stories and some pictures. Here you may also find other material collected by Tor Sellström for his books. The material collected for this project has still to find a place there. The five first books in the project are available as PDF documents there. They are unfortunately only available in Swedish.

This project is an initiative by the organisations that were the main actors in coordinating the popular solidarity work. The project has been coordinated by the Africa Groups of Sweden (Afrikagrupperna) who also took responsibility for the documentation of the Isolate South Africa Committee (ISAK) that no longer exist. A group of individuals

from the ISAK leadership and staff took charge of it.

The practical solidarity work in the form of shipments of clothes and other material has been documented by the organisation "Practical Solidarity". The story of the wider church based work within the then Swedish Ecumenical Council (SEN) and its different member churches has been the responsibility of the Swedish Christian Council. Olof Palme International Center (OPIC) did the book that covered the work of the labour movement. These five books were published between November 2006 and May 2007.

These books supplemented the three books in English about the Swedish relation to the liberation struggle in southern Africa by Tor Sellström "Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa", published by the Nordic Africa Institute. They have more focus on the Swedish state and Government actions in relation to the liberation struggle.

The five books produced within this project and the books by Tor Sellström have subsequently been the basis for this book. The aim of this book is to give a more easily accessible summary of the Swedish support and popular solidarity work. The intention was also to have this book published in English. That never materialized. Only now in 2019 have we been able to have it available in PDF format in English. This thanks to support from Afrikagrupperna, the Olof Palme International Centre and Tommy Andersson Emmaus Stockholm/PS.

Another end product of this project was a concluding seminar held in 2008 with the title "Modern

Solidarity”. Activists from the different organisations as well as guests from southern Africa discussed the experiences and learnings from the past and the meaning of this in the new era.

The project is meant to cover the period from 1960 up to the liberation or democratization and that means to 1994. The various books cover varied time periods depending on when the involvement started. Which country that is covered also varies between the different projects. South

Africa and Namibia are however covered in all five books. Even if it deals mostly with the period up to “liberation” some aspects of what happened with the solidarity afterwards are also present. The focus is on the work done in Sweden but even the work done or supported in southern Africa played a role for the actions at home. In many cases the work supported inside Namibia and South Africa was



unknown to the public because Sida demanded secrecy. The project has not been able to cover all of the very extensive work done but will at least present the main trends and give glimpses of the very varied activities taking place.

BERTIL HÖGBERG
Project Coordinator

Photographers and Illustrators

Some of the photos and illustrations come from the picture archive of the Africa Groups of Sweden. Here under the name *Afrikabild*. Most of it has been used in "Afrikabulletinen / Södra Afrika or I various other publications. Since contributions to the publications for a long time were anonymous, there is often no indication as to who is the photographer.

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- 14 Ur Befrielsekampen i Afrika. Afrikagrupperna 1977
- 15 Ur När Sverige upptäckte Afrika. Lasse Berg
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- 56 Anders Nilsson AIM/ Afrikabild
- 57 Sture Lidén/ Afrikabild

Some pictures that have been sourced privately have also been difficult to trace who is the photographer. We regret if some photographers not made it to this list. We thank everyone that has supplied photographs. Posters, stickers and buttons are scanned from the Africa Group archive.

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- 64 Afrikabild
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On the Road towards Liberation
Swedish Solidarity with the Struggle
for Freedom in Southern Africa



BERNT JONSSON has worked as a journalist at newspapers, radio, magazines and TV, both locally and at national level, with focus on politics, culture and religion. During the 80-s and 90-s he worked at the Foreign Office and at the Life & Peace institute in Uppsala with international issues, particularly disarmament, peace and reconciliation. Nowadays he is a freelance journalist focusing on the Middle East.

By Bernt Jonsson

On the Road towards Liberation

**Swedish Solidarity with the Struggle
for Freedom in Southern Africa**

Translated by Madi Gray

The book is part of the series Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with Southern Africa.

Produced by Afrikagrupperna together with Olof Palme international center, Practical Solidarity, Christian Council of Sweden with support from Sida via the Nordic Africa Institute.

This PDF version in English has been made possible by contributions from Afrikagrupperna, Olof Palme International's Centre and Tommy Johansson.

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Foreword

THIS PUBLICATION is a translation of the sixth and final book in the Swedish series *Folkrörelsernas solidaritetsarbete med södra Afrika* (Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with southern Africa). In a factual and accessible way, the aim is to sketch a comprehensive picture of the grassroots work in Sweden for a free southern Africa and of its relation to official government policies in this arena. At the same time the reader should be aware that the selection and presentation of historical events and developments is never totally objective but always “carries the fingerprints of the interpreter” (Alan Munslow in *Deconstructing History*).

My personal experiences of the student movements of the 1950s and 1960s and from many years within the peace movement, the non-conformist Churches and the Christian Social Democrats (*Broderskapsrörelsen*) form part of my frame of reference. My professional background as a journalist in various roles and as an actor in international affairs – in the Foreign Ministry and the Life & Peace Institute – form other parts. This framework influences my perspective and will unconsciously colour my presentation.

Without being weighed down by footnotes, the presentation draws heavily on Tor Sellström’s extensive study in three volumes called *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Nordic Africa Institute, 1999 and 2002, and on the five books published within the framework of this project during 2006–2007:

Karl-Gunnar Norén: *Under ISAK’s paraply*. Isolera Sydafrikakommittén 1979–1995 (Under the ISAK Umbrella: Isolate South Africa Committee).

Anja Björk: *Den stillsamma vreden*. Praktisk soli-

daritet 1969 – 1994 (Sedate Wrath: Practical Solidarity)

Birgitta Silén: *Uppdrag solidaritet*. Arbetarrörelsen och Södra Afrika 1960 – 1994 (Assignment Solidarity: The Labour Movement and Southern Africa).

Rune Forsbeck: *”Gör ni då inte åtskillnad...?”* Kyrkorna och Södra Afrika 1960–1994 (“Do you not Differentiate ...?” The Churches and Southern Africa).

Mai Palmberg (ed.): *När södra Afrikas frihet var vår*. Afrikagrupperna 1968–1994 (When Southern Africa’s Freedom was Ours: Africa Groups).

These five books are self-portraits, i.e. written from within the movements by people who took part themselves. In contrast, my text is written one step removed, partly from the outside, close to their commitment and yet with an approach from the outskirts; with impressions gained from a three months trip as a journalist in Southern and Eastern Africa in 1971 at the back of my mind, but without any direct experience of the hub of the movements’ work for the liberation of southern Africa from colonialism and apartheid; with the ambition of, as fair as possible, sketching people and groups, their successes and failures during a unique period in Swedish politics; and with a certain longing for a time when international solidarity informed Swedish debate and activities to such a degree that ANC president Oliver Tambo could justifiably describe relations between Sweden and southern Africa as “a natural system ... from people to people”.

Uppsala april 2007/English version March 2019

BERNT JONSSON

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“Many activists in the Africa groups spend off their time awake on solidarity work. It became an important part of our lives. The liberation of Southern Africa was also about out liberation from racism and oppression.”

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The documentation project "Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with Southern Africa"

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This is when it happened

- 1912** ANC is born.
- 1948** The Nationalist Party takes power in South Africa.
- 1954** Herbert Tingsten publishes *Problemet Sydafrika* (The South African problem).
- 1959** Blacks are divided into eight ethnic groups each with its own "homeland". The Fund for the Victims of Racial Oppression is started.
- 1960** The Sharpeville massacre
ANC and PAC are banned.
SWAPO is formed in Namibia.
Per Wästberg's *Förbjudet område* (Forbidden Territory) and *På svarta listan* (Blacklisted) are published.
LO/TCO/KF call for the first consumer boycott.
- 1961** MPLA and UPA (FNLA) take up arms in Angola and the ANC in South Africa.
Albert Luthuli awarded the Nobel peace prize.
The Swedish South Africa committee is formed.
- 1962** Oliver Tambo addresses a 1st May rally in Gothenburg.
Local South Africa committees are formed.
- 1963** PAIGC takes up arms in Guinea-Bissau.
ZANU breaks away from ZAPU.
ANC's leadership is imprisoned.
Södra Vätterbygdens South Africa Committee publishes precursor to the *Africa Bulletin*.
SUL calls for a new consumer boycott.
- 1964** Frelimo takes up arms in Mozambique.
The Commission for Humanitarian Assistance is set up.
- Eduardo and Janet Mondlane pay their first visit to Sweden.
- 1965** The Smith regime declares Unilateral Independence in Rhodesia.
First parliamentary motions on economic sanctions against South Africa.
Olof Palme supports liberation movements in significant speech in Gävle.
- 1966** ZANU takes up arms in Zimbabwe and SWAPO in Namibia.
- 1967** Frelimo appoints a representative in Sweden.
Southern Africa Information Bulletin is now printed.
- 1968** Davis Cup match against Rhodesia is stopped by demonstrators.
- 1969** Frelimo's president Eduardo Mondlane is assassinated.
The World Council of Churches launches the Programme to Combat Racism.
Conferences in Khartoum and Lusaka analyse liberation movements.
Widespread support for campaign against ASEA's role in Cabora Bassa hydro-electric project.
Parliament's OK to direct humanitarian support to liberation movements.
Trade with Rhodesia embargoed.
Emmaus groups start sending clothes to the liberation movements.
- 1970** First Sida contributions to PAIGC and ZANU.
MPLA appoints a representative to the Nordic countries.
- 1971** International Court decides South Africa's occupation of Namibia is illegal.
SWAPO appoints representatives to Scandinavia, among other places.
- First Sida contribution to SWAPO.
Africa Groups start a collection for MPLA.
- 1972** First Sida contribution to MPLA.
Africa Groups' first study book: *Imperialism och befrielsekamp* (Imperialism and liberation struggle).
SEN publishes *Kampen mot rasismen* (Struggle against racism).
- 1973** PAIGC president Amilcar Cabral assassinated.
UN/OAU Conference on southern Africa and ILO conference against apartheid.
First Sida contributions to ANC and ZAPU.
- 1974** Coup in Portugal against fascism and colonial wars.
Guinea Bissau independent.
Frihet åt förtryckta (Freedom for the oppressed) is the topic of the ecumenical development week.
- 1975** ZANU leader Herbert Chitepo killed by a car bomb.
Mozambique and Angola independent.
LO/TCO delegation pay controversial visit to South Africa.
Africa Groups in Sweden form a national organisation (AGIS).
Church leaders create a debate on South Africa at company AGMs.
- 1976** Massacre during peaceful protest march in Soweto leads to nationwide uprising.
South Africa's troops forced out of Angola temporarily.
ZANU and ZAPU form the Patriotic Front.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|---|---|
| 1977 | Black Consciousness Movement, Christian Institute et al. banned. Steve Biko killed in prison. Beyers Naudé banned. SACTU gets official Swedish support. AGIS publishes <i>Befrielsekampen i Afrika</i> (The Liberation Struggle in Africa). SEN adopts Programme of Action against Apartheid. | | Matabeleland. NIR publishes <i>Sydafrika och Svenskt Näringsliv</i> (South Africa and Swedish Commerce and Industry). UDF awarded newspaper Arbetet's <i>Låt Leva Pris</i> (Let Live Prize). | South Africa's president. Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu and other ANC leaders released. SWAPO wins an absolute majority in UN organised elections. | |
| 1978 | UN's International Year against Apartheid. South African attack kills over 600 in refugee camp in Casinga, Angola. UN's Security Council adopts Resolution 435 on Namibia. Major LO campaign for ANC, SWAPO, ZANU and ZAPU. AGIS- congress re-evaluates its negative view of LO. | 1984 | Nkomati Accord between Mozambique's government and apartheid regime. Black townships in South Africa protest against new tricameral constitution. Desmond Tutu awarded Nobel Peace Prize. Media breakthrough for ISAK. | 1990 | Namibia gains independence. Banning of ANC, PAC, SACP revoked. Nelson Mandela released. Tributes flow to Mandela at solidarity gala at the Globe. |
| 1979 | ISAK formed on 15th January. Sweden bans new investments in South Africa and Namibia. | 1985 | Newly formed COSATU organises South African trade union organisations. Treason trials begin. Secret "talks about talks" begin between the apartheid regime and the ANC. ANC galas in Gothenburg and Stockholm. Ban on import of agricultural produce from South Africa. Nordic "Operation A Day's Work" collects 26 million kronor for the ANC's refugee schools. | 1991 | CODESA negotiations start. ISAK exhibition <i>Den Svarta Förstaden</i> (the Black Townships) tours Sweden. |
| 1980 | Zimbabwe independent. Strategically important companies in South Africa forced to have their own militias. Brödet and Fiskarna (Bread and Fishes) initiate a Sida supported health care project with SWAPO. New consumer boycott started by ISAK. | 1986 | Mozambique's president Samora Machel killed in plane crash. USA's congress adopts partial economic sanctions against South Africa. Impressive Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid. Controversial campaign for boycott of Shell. | 1992 | Whites support negotiations in referendum. ANC leaves negotiations after Boipathong massacre. Peace accord between Mozambique's government and Renamo. VEETU formed with support from Sida. ISAK starts fundraising for the elections. |
| 1981 | Many homeless because of major South African invasion in Angola. Western powers veto sanctions against South Africa. | | | 1993 | Accord on democratic elections to be held in April 1994. Mandela: Revoke economic sanctions! CODESA agreement on provisional non-racial democratic constitution. Mandela and the Klerk share Nobel Peace Prize. EMPSA and PEMSA formed. |
| 1982 | Western powers, Front Line States and SWAPO unite on constitutional principles. | 1987 | Swedish trade embargo with South Africa. | 1994 | Landslide ANC victory in South Africa's first free and fair general elections. Mandela elected president. 66 peace observers sent from Sweden to help limit violence. |
| 1983 | UDF new umbrella organisation for opposition to apartheid. Mugabe regime crushes uprising in | 1988 | UN's Namibia Commissioner Bernt Carlsson killed when plane blown up over Lockerbie in Scotland. | 1995 | ISAK closed down. Network for southern Africa launched. |
| | | 1989 | F.W. de Klerk succeeds P.W. Botha as | | |



Apartheid a crime against humanity. ! May rally 1963.

1. SWEDEN GETS INVOLVED

1. We all come from Africa

When does history begin? And where? With Adam and Eve and the myth of creation in the Middle East or with palaeontologists' famed Lucy in East Africa, or with a yet to be named early hominid in Chad?

The answer – as far as we know – is Africa, somewhere in Africa.

When did humankind leave Africa and conquer the world? Probably in stages, in several waves of migration and each time as an increasingly modern hominid, i.e. biologically more like ourselves. We are all Africans.

It is a historical irony, that re-immigration to our original home in Africa led to, amongst other things, apartheid – policies for separate development and differentiation. In practice the immigrants' descendants oppressed the heirs of the original inhabitants. People with the “wrong” skin colour were cheated of their full humanity. Oppression was systematic. Its primary instrument was bureaucracy, while discriminatory legislation was upheld through direct physical violence.

None of this is particularly new. Apartheid was an offshoot of colonialism, a logical continuation, a consequence of colonialism's basic myth: the myth of white supremacy, the arrogance of regarding oneself as superior and thus having the right to ru-

le and, in practice, to oppress. When the colonial powers could no longer rule from the outside, a domestic ideology was developed to justify and thus preserve white supremacy. This solution was apartheid.

The liberation struggle in the different countries of southern Africa was thus concerned – although the political structures and the political opposition looked different – with one and the same thing: liberation from colonialism and racism. In time these efforts elicited growing international support. This book deals with Swedish participation in this global movement.

2. The scramble for Africa

In all periods strong states have tried to build up large countries and create empires. Unique to the West European empire builders is that they sailed over the oceans. After men like Columbus and Vasco da Gama “discovered” other continents, their appetite grew. Rival superpowers were driven to control territories that were as large as possible. Even if economic motives like access to raw materials and potential markets played a role, political motives were possibly more important. Economically, colonisation was a doubtful business in the long run, but through colonies states could display their grandeur and power. Thus they were able to

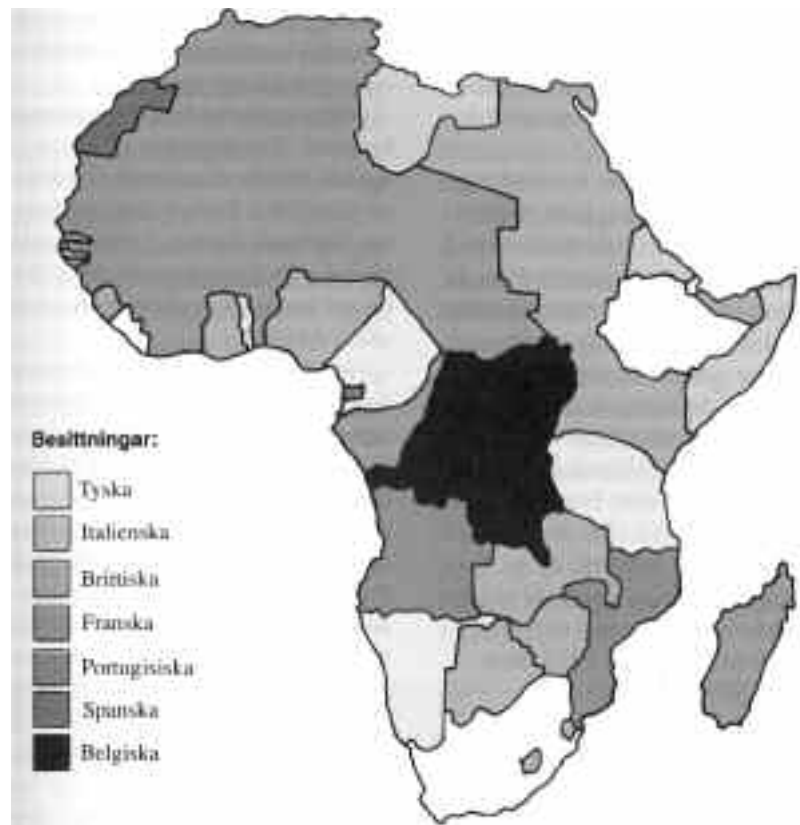
reinforce feelings of nationalism and dampen growing class contradictions. Imperialism could toy with the same sentiments that fascism later did.

When necessary, egotistical motives were gilded with arguments like “Raising the inferior races’ educational level and technical skills”, “Spreading Christian civilisation”, “Stopping the Arab slave trade” etc. Perfectly voluntarily Europeans shouldered “The White Man’s Burden”; interpreted by Kipling in a poem as the difficult role of Europeans as rulers and teachers of foreign races. Even if one or other individual actor may have had noble motives, the underlying racism was an important precondition.

Africa was the continent worst affected by colonial imperialism. It lay nearest Europe. In addition, “discoverers” like Livingstone and Stanley, driven by completely different motives, laid the foundation for the military conquest of the interior of the continent. Africa had already been badly weakened by the slave trade, first the Arabic in East Africa and later the European, trans-Atlantic traffic in West Africa. There is considerable disagreement about its extent – from 8 to 25 million people in the former case and from 12 to 40 million in the latter.

In the great scramble for Africa between 1870 and 1914 the whole continent was cut up except Ethiopia and Liberia. The butchers were Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain and Germany. The Berlin Congress in 1884–85 set the rules. Its ban on the slave trade in no way put an end to slavery in, for example, the King Leopold’s Belgian Congo.

The modernisation of weapons in the 1870s and the use of machine guns from the 1880s made conquest a technologically simple affair. If Africans tried armed resistance to the colonisers, they could be brutally shot



Colonial powers 1914.

down before the battle even began. The conquerors violated Africans’ humanity, whereas ivory and rubber had economic value.

Africa remained a “European” continent until after the Second World War. The colonial powers seemed unassailable.

3. The rise and fall of colonialism

Colonialism triumphed but suffered from internal contradictions. Humanitarian arguments for its civilising role could also be used against the system, when it was seen as far too brutal, as in King Leo-

pold's plundering of the Congo. Most missionaries reflected the values of their time and had close relations to the colonial powers. Some – like the black American William Sheppard – nevertheless became awkward spokesmen for the domestic population's opposition to European businessmen and colonial officials.

Two types of domestic churches emerged on African soil: the “Ethiopian” – sister churches to those of the missions, but with African leadership – and

“Zionist” or charismatic churches, often led by a prophet with special religious gifts. The latter was particularly common in southern and central Africa, where social tensions were strongest. By standing for a perspective from below and criticising capitalism and colonialism, they were often seen as posing a threat to the colonial power. Thus they were attacked, sometimes with considerable force. Treatment of the Kimbanguist movement in Congo in the 1920s is an example of this.

After the First World War, the loot – the German possessions in Africa – was shared. France got Togo and Cameroon, Great Britain took over Tanganyika (now Tanzania, after union with Zanzibar in 1964), and South West Africa was ceded to South Africa, at the time a British dominion. Formally the areas were taken over under a mandate from the League of Nations to lead these countries to self-governance, but there was little intention of fulfilling this task. Only after the Second World War did liberation become a reality, in most cases long after the end of the war.

The UN constitution of 1945 was the beginning of the end for the West European colonial powers. Winds of change began sweeping over Africa. The UN denoted 1960 as the Year of Africa and the General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples* (Resolution 1514), which declared the colonial system to be illegal. Among those behind this decision were the USA and the Soviet Union, though for entirely different reasons.

No fewer than 19 African colonies gained their independence in 1960. Apart from Congo-Kinshasa (Belgian) and Nigeria and Somalia (British) all were French. In many cases – though not in all – decolonisation proceeded without bloodshed.



Africa 1960. Year of independence.

While those who were liberated regarded themselves as having gained their freedom through struggle – often peaceful – the old colonial powers saw themselves as having given “the natives” their freedom and in addition the knowledge to carry it off. The new states tended to inherit the colonial borders and populations, where no consideration was taken of ethnic and cultural differences, which paved the way for new conflicts.

The blood-soaked treaties led to the liberation of the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, which occurred in the mid-1970s after a revolution in Portugal. Zimbabwe became internationally acknowledged as independent in 1980. Namibia’s independence was delayed to 1990, and South Africa’s black majority did not receive full citizenship rights until 1994.

4. Sweden as an unsuccessful colonial power

Sweden was in luck! Its period as a colonial power in Africa lasted only 15 years, from 1649 – 1664. In all it had five small colonies on the west coast of Africa with Cabo Corso in today’s Ghana as the centre of the first and last colony. At the time Sweden was certainly a great power in Europe, but the Dutch and English tolerated no competition and thus saved us from playing a dubious role as colonial masters. Instead it was said in the 1930s: “the only light in this failed enterprise was the Negros’ affection for the Swedes, who tried to help them”. (Gerhard Lindblom in *Röster i Radio* (Voices on the radio) 1933.)

This does not, however, mean that Sweden’s interest in Africa disappeared completely. King Gustav III (1771–1792) believed in gold in Senegal,



The Linnaeus disciple Sparrman documented not only South African Zoology.

whence the philanthropist Carl Bernhard Wadström moved to build a utopian society in the spirit of the Swedish mystic and seer, Emanuel Swedenborg, though it came to a similar disappointing end as in the previous century. Great honours were heaped on students of the Swedish scientist Carolus Linnéus who explored South Africa, namely Anders Sparrman and Carl Peter Thunberg. Other Swedes acquired leading positions or made fortunes for themselves in the Cape Colony in the early 1800s.

Nineteenth century Swedish seamen and soldiers could talk about their meetings with Africa. Among the latter, some were grim participants in Leopold’s reign of terror. Thanks for the well-developed fee-

ling in Sweden for Africa should above all go to Swedish missionaries, who were in Eritrea and Abyssinia/Ethiopia since 1865, and in South Africa and Congo since 1876 and 1881 respectively. In many quarters their letters and illustrated lectures created a sense of identification with Africans, who were given names and identities. In the international campaign against King Leopold's tyranny in the Congo a Swedish missionary, F V Sjöblom, played a significant role.

Swedish horror after Italy's bombings in 1935–36 of Abyssinia (and a Swedish Red Cross ambulance) should be seen against this background. The participation of Swedish UN troops in the Congo during the years of decolonisation later reinforced Swedes' feeling of community with Africa. Carl Gustaf von Rosen's airlift of food to relieve the humanitarian disaster during the Biafra conflict in the Nigerian civil war from 1967–70 drew media attention that had a similar effect.

As a country and a people without a colonial past and situated between East and West, Sweden was well-qualified to become involved in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid.

5. Swedish public opinion emerges

At the end of the Second World War, when the UN was young, a new desire to change the world emerged among power holders. The genocide of Jews and others had put racism in the spotlight, and in 1948 a UN commission was given the task of analysing and finding methods to prevent it. Twelve years later its twin, colonialism, was declared illegal.

In South Africa, however, developments went in the opposite direction. The Nationalist Party (NP) won the elections in 1948 on the promise of safeguarding white supremacy. It did not only have the



Gunnar Helander.



Per Wästberg.

support of white Afrikaans speakers, but also of many English-speaking whites. The whites had long held the economic power. With political power the NP could, through far-reaching racist legislation, exclude blacks from more and more of social sectors. They were only permitted to stay in the towns, mines and other "white" areas as migrant workers and a labour force for the whites. In all other cases they were banished to their so-called "homelands", economically unviable areas, where in many cases they had never set foot.

If discrimination had been limited to the economy and the bureaucracy, apartheid might have had a longer lifespan. However, a strategic mistake was made by making the oppression visible, through prohibiting whites and blacks from taking the same bus, sitting on the same park benches, playing sport together, etc. This "petty apartheid" showed how absurd the system was. International public opinion was eventually roused.

In Sweden, publicists, like editor-in-chiefs Ivar Harrie, *Expressen* (1949) and Herbert Tingsten, *Dagens Nyheter* (DN, 1953) continued to influence public opinion. In articles and the book *Problemet Sydafrika* (The South African problem) (1954) the latter also turned his attention to the opposition, i.e. the African National Congress (ANC) and the communist party. Despite his strong anti-communism Tingsten described it as liberal, and despite his well-known anti-clericalism he denoted Swedish missionaries as “the greatest liberal group in South Africa”.

Important for this stance was the fact that Tingssten had met Gunnar Helander, sent by the Church of Sweden Mission (SKM) to South Africa from 1938–56. In 1941 Helander had already sent articles to Swedish newspapers criticising race policies – initially without a response. After a while he was published in Gothenburg’s *Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* (Trade and Shipping News), in novels like *Zulu möter vit man* (Zulu meets white man) (1949) and in innumerable lectures at folk high schools, in churches, at social democratic and liberal party groups, and at universities. The apartheid regime responded to his outspoken criticism with gross slander. As Dean of the cathedral in Västerås – in cooperation with writer Per Wästberg – Helander became one of the most zealous figures in the first major wave of criticism of apartheid.

As a Rotary scholar in Rhodesia in 1959, Per Wästberg was responsible for a series of critical articles in DN and was thus deported, which led him to South Africa and further reinforced his commitment against racism. The articles were expanded the following year into two books: *Förbjudet område* (Forbidden Territory, Zimbabwe) and *På svartalistan* (Blacklisted, South Africa), in which he described Christians and Marxists “as the only ones

who dare to practice what they preach”. Public response was enormous, and in Sweden alone 90 000 and 80 000 copies were sold respectively.

Struggle against apartheid never became an antagonistic right/left issue (with the exception, for a certain period, of the issue of sanctions). Instead it became broadly rooted among the general public in Sweden, because those who pursued these questions were from the beginning religious, liberal, trade union and intellectual actors. With few exceptions this also came to apply to the national liberation movements.

Perhaps the most basic reason can be found in the following, by the writer Anders Ehnmark:

Africa, like America, is close by. The upper classes in Sweden have looked towards the European superpowers, Germany, France or England, but the people have turned towards America, because of the emigrants, and Africa, because of the missionaries. They have always found an Aunt Eleonora in America or a Cousin Agnes who was a missionary in the Congo.

(*Resan till Kilimanjaro. En essä om Afrika efter befrielsen* Trip to Kilimanjaro. An essay on Africa after liberation)

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South Africa's race laws

If I see the colour of your skin, I can tell you which human rights you have – might be a summary of the ideological basis for South African apartheid policies. To be white was to have a winning ticket, to be black meant drawing blank lots. For coloured and several Asian groups small lottery prizes could be won.

As early as the **1910s–20s** laws were promulgated that in principle entailed that the towns and cities became white by night, except for blacks with (often domestic) work. When the NP came to power in **1948** they passed a series of apartheid laws of varied weight and consequences, inter alia the following:

The **1950** National Register, defined a person's racial identity. Residential areas were classified according to race; those who lived in "the wrong" group area were forcibly removed; (Group Areas Act).

In **1952** new pass laws demanded that blacks must always carry their detailed ID-documents/passes with them; there were heavy penalties for forgetting – all to increase control.

In **1953** a special department for "Bantu Education" was started to develop a syllabus "suited to Bantu nature and potential"; the expressed intention was to prevent Africans from gaining the kind of education that might encourage them to apply for posts from which they were precluded under apartheid.

In **1959** blacks were divided into eight ethnic groups, allocated a "homeland".

The **1970** Bantu Homelands Citizens Act in principle deprived all blacks of their South African citizenship and forced on each of them citizenship in a "homeland", irrespective of whether or not they had ever lived there.

Not all Swedes agreed. The majority of the Swedish Alliance Mission and some of the Church of Sweden missionaries in South Africa were conservatives, as were diplomats of the old school. Despite the UN General Assembly's arms embargo, Swedish gas masks were exported to South Africa in 1963. ASEA director Åke Vrethem hailed South Africa as the "foremost outpost of civilisation in Africa" and Captain Lars Saltin on Transatlantic's ship *Sunnaren* betrayed a political refugee. The Moderate Party consistently stood outside joint political actions against apartheid, and the reactionary rightwing paper *Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar* stood out through its defence of the apartheid regime.

6. Forced Removals

After implementing the Group Areas Act, mass forced removals began in the 1950s. They continued up to the 1990s and according to certain observers may have affected over 3,5 million people. Among the victims of these policies were:

- black tenants on farms owned by whites;
- residents of "black spots", areas owned by blacks but surrounded by white farms;
- working class families in townships close to homelands;
- "superfluous" people (i.e. unemployed blacks) in urban areas.

The most notorious of the 1950s forced removals



People thrown out of their houses when the racially mixed township Sophiatown is demolished.



The leader of Frelimo Eduardo Mondlane studied on a Swedish scholarship after the Apartheid government denied him study possibilities in South Africa.

was when 60 000 people were forced from Sophiatown in Johannesburg to the new and later very newsworthy Soweto (South-Western Townships). In the 1970s a similar number were forced to leave District Six in Cape Town.

Up to 1955 Sophiatown was one of the few suburbs where blacks could own land. It was one of the oldest settlements and was in the process of developing into a living multi-ethnic community. Here was the only swimming pool for black children in Johannesburg. Growing numbers of industrial workers came to live, close to the growing industries in the city. Despite a forceful protest campaign by the

ANC and despite international publicity, heavily armed police forced residents out of their homes on the morning of 9th February 1955, loaded their belongings onto lorries and transported it all to an area twenty km outside the city. Sophiatown was bulldozed, and a white suburb called Triomf (triumph) was built in its place.

The pattern was repeated over the whole country. In all, 600 000 coloureds, Indians and Chinese, 40 000 whites, plus at least two million blacks were forcibly removed under the above-mentioned law.



The author Sara Lidman raised public awareness

7. Race laws and Swedish public opinion

The growth of Swedish public opinion against the South African apartheid regime was naturally connected to the increasingly oppressive race laws. The withdrawal of government study grants from black students at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, led for instance to the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) starting a bursary fund for black students in 1950, partly through a campaign to donate blood. It was an answer to an appeal by NUSAS, the National Union of South African Students, and SFS' counterpart in South Africa, which

campaigned for "everyone's right to freedom of expression and equal educational and economic opportunities".

The campaign did not, perhaps, raise a great deal of money, but one of those who had use of it was Eduardo Mondlane – future president of Frelimo. He had lost his bursary, since he was – in a somewhat illogical apartheid phrase – "a foreign native". More important in the long run were possibly the articles that SFS' international secretary Olof G Tandberg wrote after a study trip to South Africa in 1956. In five long reports in *Stockholms Tidningen*

The Apartheid Bible

In 1857 the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa decided that whites and blacks should have separate religious services because of white “weakness”! In the 1930s white theologians began to look for theological arguments to underpin apartheid, and summarised them in a report in 1948. On the whole, the white Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa supported apartheid policies, the largest to such a degree that it was described as “the Nationalist party engrossed in prayer”.

An international ecumenical conference in 1960 in Cottesloe, South Africa, repudiated every form of racial discrimination, which led the above churches to disassociate themselves from The World Council of Churches. In 1982 the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) declared apartheid theology to be a false doctrine. Two Dutch Reformed ministers, Beyers Naudé (white) and Allan Boesak (coloured), were leading and outspoken critics of both the regime and the churches.

The former broke with his church and refrained from following a flourishing career, devoting himself instead to combating apartheid policies in various roles, inter alia as the founder of the Christian Institute and as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. Naudé was under house arrest from 1977–84 and, after the banning of the ANC when its leaders were either in prison or in exile, he became an informal leader of the opposition to apartheid.

The latter was a liberation theologian, Chairman of WARC from 1982–91, one of those to take the initiative to start the United Democratic Front (UDF), a brilliant speaker and later a prominent ANC politician. In 1999 Boesak was sentenced for embezzling aid

funds but was later pardoned and is again in service as a pastor. His political career seems to be on hold.

Both Naudé and Boesak had close contacts with churches in Sweden; Boesak also with the social democrats.

How could South African Christians justify apartheid? Clearly through carefully selected and interpreted biblical texts, so that they together formed a whole – an Apartheid Bible. The most popular text concerned the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9), where people’s attempt to build a tower to reach the heavens was confounded by the sudden appearance of many languages, after which people spread all over the world. This was the Lord’s will, and that is the way it should stay – according to the advocates of apartheid. They also referred to Deuteronomy 32:8, where it says that “the Lord gave land to the people and separated them from one another”.

The description of the first Pentecost says that “every man heard them speak in his own language.” (Acts 2:6). In a traditional Christian interpretation this is usually seen as a new start for a common humanity, where the Tower of Babel and the time of chaotic languages is past. In one of Revelations’ apocalyptic visions (7:9) one can read, that “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands”. Where other Christians regard this as an expression of absolute community, followers of apartheid regarded it as proof of the correctness of separating people from each other.

(Stockholm's Newspaper) he sketched a dark picture:

One left the Union of South Africa with a bitter taste in one's mouth..., shame over one's white skin... In the course of a few years a white police state has been created, which in the name of "Christian Nationalism" conducts a cold-blooded and intentional exploitation of the non-white population groups.

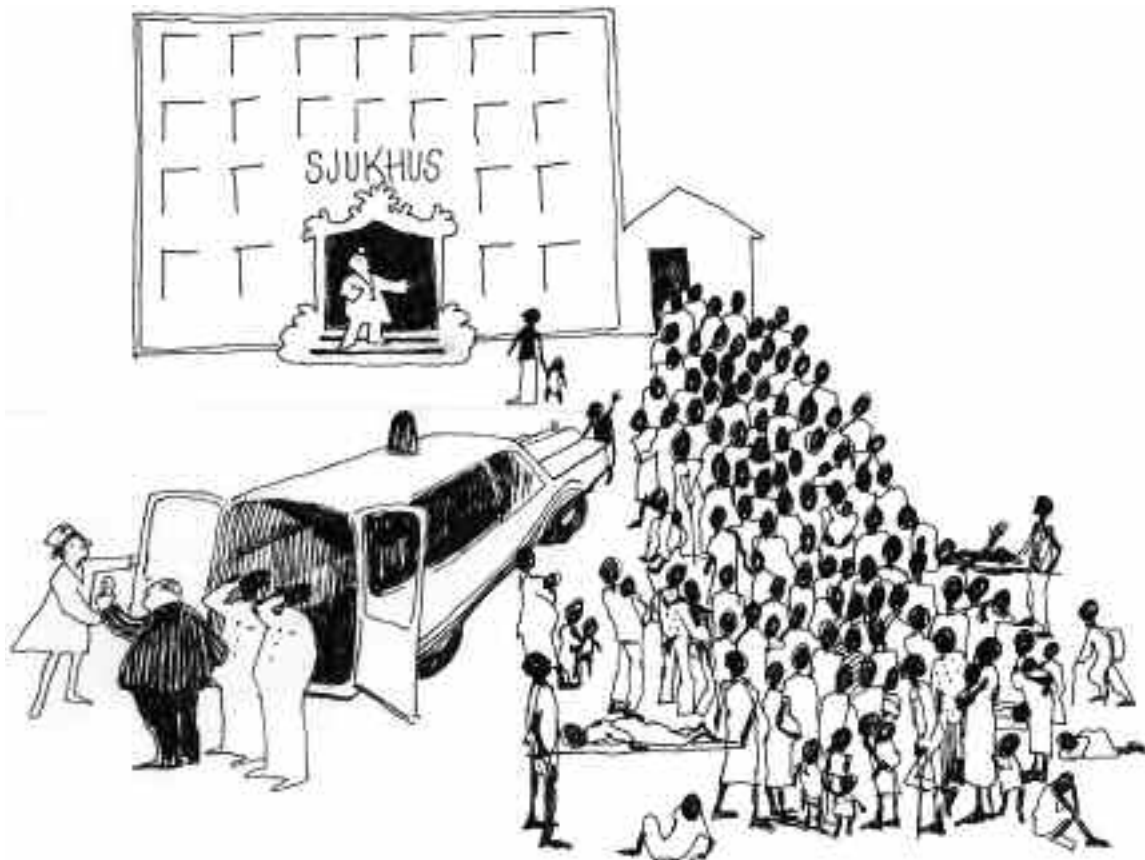
After 1959 no black student was permitted to register at the four earlier racially open English-speaking universities without special permission from the Department of Education. White students who took part in classes at black institutions of higher learning could be sentenced to up to six months in prison. The Minister of Bantu Education became responsible for the black Fort Hare University College, i.e. in practice it meant a downgrading of advanced tertiary studies for blacks. Professors in Stockholm protested in a letter to South Africa's government against this segregation of higher education.

Late in the same year Gunnar Helander and Per Wästberg took the initiative to start a fund for the victims of racial oppression in South Africa. After

active lobbying SFS succeeded in influencing the government, so that in his address to the UN General Assembly in 1959 the social democratic Foreign Minister Östen Undén raised the issue of the non-white students' deteriorating situation. It was the first time Sweden talked about apartheid in the UN.

Among the laws passed by the regime that revealed the absurdity of apartheid policies were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Amendment Act against sexual relations between whites and blacks (1950). That Swedish seamen were sentenced to whipping in 1960-61 for offences against the sex laws did hold apartheid legislation up to ridicule, but it hardly caused a public outcry in Sweden.

When, however, the writer Sara Lidman, together with Peter Nthite, formerly an organisational secretary of the ANC Youth League and already accused of treason, were arrested in Johannesburg for offences against the same laws, there were big black headlines both in South Africa and Sweden. The punishment could be up to ten lashes and seven years in prison. Sara Lidman defended their relationship, but she had to leave the country before the trial, after which charges against Nthite were withdrawn.



Apartheid meant completely different living conditions for black and white.

2.

1960 – 1965

VIOLENCE

ESCALATES

8. The massacre in Sharpeville and its aftermath

In the late 1950s international solidarity acquired an increasingly prominent place among both the unions and the social democrats. In late 1959, for instance, the blue-collar confederation LO started a collection called *LO assists over borders* collecting 7,4 million kronor (today valued at over 75 million) in the first year. The salaried employees central organisation TCO took similar initiatives. In January 1960 LO decided to launch a consumer boycott during April and May. It was supported by the Cooperative Federation (KF), which at the time was responsible for 10-20% of the fruit import from South Africa and regarding oranges 20-30%.

On 21st March 1960 thousands of people gathered in Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, in a peaceful singing demonstration to protest and ask the local police to arrest them for breaking the pass laws. The response was bloody. 300 police opened fire. The result: 69 killed and 186 wounded most shot from behind.

The massacre escalated the conflict. On the part of the regime: the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC, a more militant breakaway group, formed in 1959) were banned and sweeping powers were extended to the security forces, who arrested 18 000 people. On the part of the liberation movement: initially extensive strikes

and consumer boycotts, and from 1961 the armed struggle began in the form of sabotage and bombs against power supplies, railways, police stations and government buildings.

Sharpeville roused international public opinion. In Sweden reactions were strong throughout the country. Trade unions organised spontaneous meetings in factories and on building sites. Often formal resolutions were adopted condemning the apartheid regime. In 1960 for the first time, the labour movements' 1st May demonstrations focused on the liberation struggle in Africa. Because of Sharpeville the LO/TCO/KF boycott was extended to last five months.

Private importers and shops did not participate, which led to the demand for political decisions on economic sanctions. Like nearly all Sweden's parliamentary parties the social democratic government was cold-hearted to this demand, which was repeated at regular intervals in the following decades and became increasingly strong even among Social Democrats. Leaders of companies with interests in South Africa described the boycott as "irresponsible". In the South African press "the Swedish people's hostility towards South Africa" was seen to have reached new heights, which made the ANC happy; the attacks on Sweden informed the opposition in South Africa that it had international friends.

The economic effects on South Africa were limited; this later became a weapon – both for and



The massacre in Sharpville March 21 1960 awakened the international opinion.

against – in debates on sanctions. As an expression of solidarity the boycott was a success. Its main instructive value was that it broadened and deepened awareness of the consequences of apartheid policies.

In March 1961 the Swedish South Africa Committee (SSAK) was formed with widespread support in trade union, cultural, liberal and social democratic circles and spearheaded by Gunnar Hellander and Per Wästberg. Only the Moderates did not join. Encouraged by the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) and on the initiative of Swedish soci-

alists and liberals the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (SUL, now LSU) started both a collection and a consumer boycott of South African goods on 1st March 1963. Over 200 local action groups were started all over the country, and pressure from below grew strongly, particularly when individual activists joined in the work.

ICA, Tempo, EPA (private importers) and KF decided to stop importing South African goods, and Systembolaget (state-owned liquor outlets) stopped selling wines from South Africa. Imports fell by 10%, but exports increased by 16%, since Swedish

African writers reach Swedish readers

Not only Swedish writers and journalists paved the way for strong public opinion in favour of the liberation of southern Africa. A number of African writers also found a voice – in several cases, interestingly enough, translated and published by church owned publishers. A probable cause was that many African writers in one or another way belonged to or came from a Christian tradition.

African Nationalism, 1960 was the title of the first book by reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, later president of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). *Africa Narrates*, an anthology of short stories edited by Per Wästberg and dominated by South and West African writers came out in 1961. Anders Ehnmark and Sven Hamrell edited *Africans on Africa*, 1962, a collection of essays by well-known political leaders. Albert Luthuli's 1962, *Let my People Go!* was published in the same year. Amnesty-inspired *The Anatomy of Apartheid*, 1964 was a collection of texts by critical white and black South Africans edited by Marion Friedman. Nelson Mandela's *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, 1965 in-



cluded his famous Rivonia trial speech.

In Rhodesia (1967) Judith Todd (daughter of Garfield Todd, a Protestant missionary from New Zealand and prime minister of Southern Rhodesia from 1953–58) sketched the conflict from a ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) perspective. Alan Paton was a South African writer and leading liberal whose *The Long View*, 1969 was a selection of articles from a journal, *Contact*. Kenneth Kaunda's *Zambia Shall Be Free*, 1963 was followed by *A Humanist in Africa*, 1969, letters to Colin Morris, a missionary who made the previous white regime feel uncomfortable and later became one of Kaunda's counsellors.

Wästberg's anthology was printed in 16 000 copies and though none of the other books reached these figures, the Swedish debate was influenced by them. African leaders became directly and indirectly known to a broad public through these books, which led to an understanding of their message and a willingness to support them.

companies obstructed the boycott. After a while it came to an end, although KF maintained it up to 1969. Other issues – like the Vietnam war and the liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies – took over. Nevertheless, the first wave of South Africa campaigns had an influence on Swedish commitment in other international questions.

9. Nobel Peace Prize winner intercepted in Gothenburg

A Christian Social Democrat, Evert Svensson suggested in 1960 – with support of members of parliament from the Centre and Liberal parties – that ANC president Albert Luthuli should be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The suggestion was well-received, but partly because of the war in the Congo

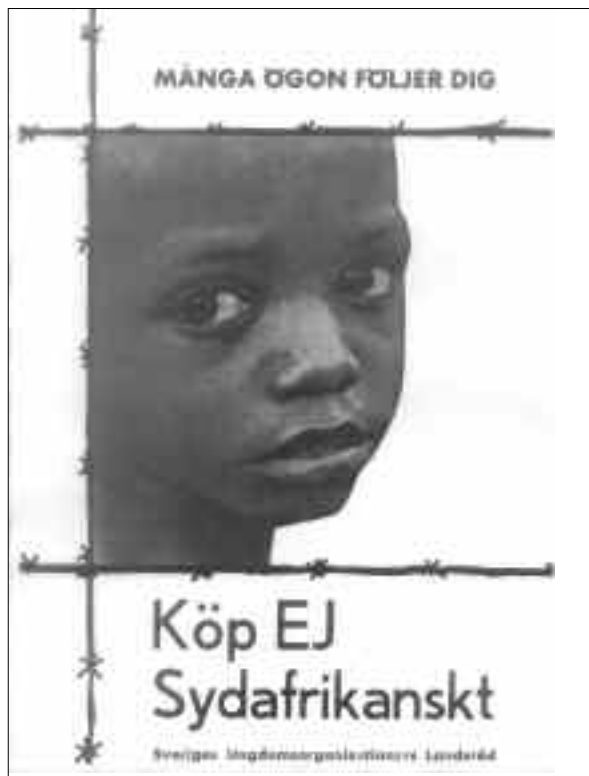


En skog av fanor bildade fond vid uppvaktningen på Torslanda flygplats. På bilden ses fr. Nokukhanya Lutuli, Albert Lutuli, ordf. i GFS Bengt C:son Sandkull, riksdagsman Evert Svensson och ombudsman Oastan Kristensson.

Albert Lutuli fick en stilfull studenthyllning på Torslanda

Så kallt här är! sade fru Nokukhanya Lutuli när hon tillsammans med sin make fredspristagaren Albert Lutuli vid halv sextiden på torsdagskvällen steg ned för trappan från SAS-planet Atle Viking på Torslanda flygplats. Hon ångrade strax sina ord. Ett varmare andligt välkomnande än det paret fick i Göteborg hade de inte mött av på någon av de platser de passerat under sin färd till Nobelfesten i Oslo.

"Worthy of a Zulu Chief" wrote Göteborgs Posten about the tributes to Luthuli.



"Many eyes follow you. Don't buy South African" Poster from the Swedish Youth Council.

the prize was handed out the following year, at the same time as the 1961 peace prize to the late Dag Hammarskjöld. Both SUL and the Christian Social Democrats invited Luthuli to come to Sweden in connection with the prize giving in the Norwegian capital, Oslo. The apartheid regime refused. Evert Svensson said:

Luthuli was confined to the village of Groutville and had to apply for special permission to leave South Africa and then only for the purpose of visiting Oslo. He was not permitted to stop anywhere else, not even in other parts of

Norway. We in the Christian Social Democratic movement asked the Foreign Minister, Östen Undén, to help us so he wrote a letter to Pretoria but it did not help. We knew that Luthuli's plane would touch down at Torslanda – at that time planes from Copenhagen to Oslo always landed in Gothenburg.

Then I had an idea. I asked the airport manager for permission to greet Luthuli on the tarmac. He agreed and we immediately started working with the social democratic students in Gothenburg to organise a meeting. We rigged up a rostrum and found an orchestra. Luthuli himself did not know that he would be met in Gothenburg until shortly before he landed.

When the plane landed 500 people stood on the tarmac. They were from the Christian Social Democrats, the Social Democratic students and 20 trade unions. Luthuli was both surprised and moved, and the event attracted considerable media attention. "A real live Christian Zulu Chief", the press wrote.

10. The first decade of the Thirty Years War

In Swedish history the period between 1618 and 1648 is often referred to as the "Thirty Years War", which ended with the Peace of Westphalia. Mainly for older Swedes perhaps, the name is associated with an illustrious time. Sweden was a great European power, and Swedish King Gustavus II Adolphus saved Protestantism despite losing his life in the mist at the battlefield of Lützen. Others, however, do not regard the period as being one of high ideals, but as full of misery, violent outrage and the further impoverishment of the already poor, both in Sweden and on the continent.

Irrespective of one's values, the concept is misleading on one point: There was not *one* war, but many. Nevertheless they were closely related. One can describe the armed struggles in southern Africa that began in 1961 in a similar way. Even here the "Thirty Years War" has been launched as a collective concept (John S Saul: Recolonization and Resistance: Southern Africa in the 1990s). It was also not one war but many, yet they were closely related, in the first hand in two blocs or – using a musical term – in two clusters:

On the one hand the white minority regimes in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, on the other the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique.

The last-named country was regarded as strategically important by both sides and a reason for the regimes in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Portugal to coordinate their intelligence services. The liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies cooperated closely with one another and with those fighting the white regimes.

This Thirty Years War was preceded by the violence of the colonial powers and the white minority regimes. In South Africa and the Central African Federation (Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe) black demonstrators were shot to death. In Guinea Bissau the Portuguese police killed 50 striking dockworkers in Pijiguiti in August 1959. In Windhoek in Namibia, South African police in December 1959 shot and killed 13 people who opposed forced removals. In Angola a series of assaults culminated in a massacre in Catete (June 1960), where over 30 demonstrators were killed and 200 wounded by Portuguese troops. That month the Portuguese mowed down 500 unarmed demonstrators in Mueda in northern Mozambique.

What is a liberation movement?

A national liberation movement is defined as

- a) a political organisation which
- b) strives to attain independence and form a government for
- c) a colonised people or otherwise oppressed people and which
- d) is recognised by the United Nations and/or the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as representing that people.

Tor Sellström: Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa

THE ROAD TO SWEDISH COMMITMENT

The liberation wars in southern Africa began in Angola in February–March 1961, when the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), attacked the prison in Luanda armed with clubs and knives in a vain attempt to free their imprisoned leaders. At the same time, the UPA (Union of the Populations of Angola). later called FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola), inspired a popular uprising in the northern provinces. In revenge, the Portuguese massacred several hundred Africans in Luanda's slums. The uprising coincided with the hijack by a Portuguese captain, Henrique Galvão, of the cruise ship Santa Maria, in protest against colonial violence and Portugal's fascist regime.

International media saw a connection here. Many journalists thus gathered in Luanda, among them Sven Aurén from *Svenska Dagbladet* (conservative daily). He was critical of this "revolt of the unci-

vilised against the civilised”. The alternative to Portuguese rule was “chaos” and opportunities for international communism. Thus it was “Portugal’s duty to remain strong in Angola, both for the sake of the black population and for the Western world”.

Similar sentiments were echoed in the Moderates’ theoretical journal *Svensk Tidskrift* (Swedish Journal), where all was peace and joy in Angola. The editor, Professor Erik Anners, a member of parliament from 1963, said it was “amazing” that the greater part of the Swedish press was “prepared to believe in anti-colonial propaganda run by the Soviet bloc”. His views were criticised even within the conservative press, and public opinion did not back Portugal.

In July–September 1961 *Expressen* ran a collection called *Angolahjälpen* (Assist Angola) to support Angolan refugees in Congo. It was a response to an appeal by CONCP (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies), an organ for the cooperation of MPLA, Frelimo and PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde). 4,5 tons of medicines were collected – mostly penicillin – and reached the refugees through MPLA.

On 16th December 1961 – the day after Albert Luthuli returned from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo – a number of bombs exploded at power stations and government buildings in South

Africa. *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK, Spear of the Nation), the ANC’s newly formed armed wing, claimed these actions. At the same time the ANC explained in a manifesto spread over all



Umkhonto we Sizwe. The armed wing of ANC.

South Africa, that its non-violent line had been regarded as an expression of weakness and as a green light for the regime’s use of violence; thus one must now adopt new methods. Round that time a group of young liberals launched a secret sabotage group, later called the ARM (Armed Resistance Movement). Subsequently the liberal party was also banned.

The change in the methods of opposition did not have a great impact on Swedish public opinion, as it was already very critical of the apartheid regime. The Peace Prize to Luthuli placed the ANC in everyone’s consciousness as the movement of hope in South Africa.

In Guinea Bissau there were only 2 000 Europeans, which was probably one explanation for the PAIGC’S rapid military successes after starting its armed struggle in January 1963. Another reason may have been that the PAIGC had a well-laid strategy, based on the political mobilisation of farmers in southern Guinea Bissau combined with civil disobedience and sabotage. They were also systematic in the administration of the liberated areas. PAIGC became “an ideal kind of organisation for us”, an official



Amilcar Cabral made several high profile visits to Sweden. Poster from a public meeting in Uppsala 1968.

at Sida said later.

Swedish contacts with PAIGC were broad, intense and positive, and came to include both the government and its critics, like the extra-parliamentary left. This was, to a large degree, because its president, Amílcar Cabral, had a great measure of diplomatic talent, but he was murdered in January 1973. A number of journalists, writers and politicians visited the liberated areas in Guinea Bissau, and these contacts eventually led to an important breakthrough on the principle of direct humanitarian support to liberation movements.

In September 1964 Frelimo started its armed struggle in northern Mozambique and a year later was able to establish “semi-liberated areas” there. As with PAIGC, they could set up their own administration with schools, clinics and trade. At the same time – and more so after the meeting of the International Socialists held in Stockholm in 1966 – they tried to improve their contacts with the Swedish Social Democrats, without having to jettison their good contacts with the Liberal Party. The interest was mutual.

During 1968–70, there was a deep crisis in Frelimo as it had to deal with an internal revolt with racist overtones. Its president Eduardo Mondlane was murdered in February 1969, while Portugal escalated its military activity, and held half the population in the most northerly provinces behind barbed wire. The internal crisis was first overcome with the election of Samora Machel as president and Marcelino dos Santos as vice-president in May 1970.

If official Sweden hesitated to support Frelimo during the difficult years, university students and school pupils did not waver in their support. Janet Mondlane was Eduardo Mondlane’s widow and principal of the Mozambique Institute, Frelimo’s

school in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Inspired by her, SECO (Swedish Pupils’ Central Organisation) collected over 2 million kronor in 1969 (about 15 million today) for the Institute through Operation a Day’s Work (*Operation Dagsverke*). At the same time many Swedes got to know Frelimo.

The Central African Federation was dissolved in 1963. In 1962 the editors-in-chief of all the major newspapers in Stockholm (except for conservative *Svenska Dagbladet*) together with other leading liberals and social democrats backed Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia and his party UNIP (United National Independence Party), to the irritation of Swedish business interests. On his visit to Sweden in 1963 he was given a warm reception and strong support prior to negotiations with Great Britain. In 1964 Malawi and Zambia gained their independence.

An important effect of the media campaign was that the Centre and Liberal Parties later began to support liberation movements in southern Africa. Rhodesia’s white minority regime banned both ZANU and ZAPU in 1964. By chance, ZANU’s former general secretary Robert Mugabe was adopted as a political prisoner by Amnesty Group No. 34, led by journalist, Eva Moberg.

In November 1965 Rhodesia declared Unilateral Independence (UDI). It was not accepted internationally. In November the Security Council recommended that member countries introduce a complete prohibition on trade, which Sweden immediately implemented. Further, Great Britain was exhorted to act to achieve majority rule, which the Labour government did not do. Sweden vainly tried to get the Security Council to introduce mandatory sanctions. As a front line state, Zambia was forced to pay the price for the Western powers’ passivity.

Together with 2 000 political prisoners, the lea-



Woman Frelimo soldier under training.

ders of the liberation movements in Zimbabwe were kept in prison, generally for about ten years. They and their families received support from Sida through the Church of Sweden (Lutheran), The World Council of Churches and – on the ground – from Christian Care.

Representatives of ZAPU maintain that they be-

gan the armed struggle in 1965. It is, however, more common to regard the Battle of Sinoia on the 28th April 1966 between ZANU and the regime's security forces as the start of the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. At the same time representatives for both ZAPU and the more militant ZANU came to Sweden, in part to address May 1st rallies and take part

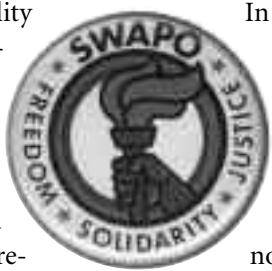
in the Socialist International's meeting in Stockholm. The latter led them and other liberation movements to a harsh confrontation with British Labour, which, in turn, contributed to the beginning of a more independent attitude by Swedish social democracy. Inga Thorsson, president of the Social Democratic Women's League, had in 1962 already condemned British and French party members as "supporters of a conservative order".

After years of fruitless appeals for UN action, the first armed clashes occurred between SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) and South African security forces in Ovamboland, northern Namibia in August 1966. Two months later the UN General Assembly decided to revoke the mandate from South Africa and formally – though without practical effect – make Namibia the direct responsibility of the UN. In 1969 the Security Council declared that South Africa's continued presence in Namibia was illegal. This was confirmed in 1971 by the International Court of Justice in the Hague, but the superpowers refused to take any action. Instead the regime in Pretoria could focus on combating SWAPO militarily,

seeking to create internal support in Namibia for an internationally acceptable solution, and, through diplomacy, play for time and block negotiations. They succeeded with this strategy up to 1988, when South Africa suffered a major military defeat in Angola.

Years earlier, strong ties had developed between Namibia and Sweden, partly through the Lutheran World Federation and the Swedish Church (80–90% of Namibians are Christian, mostly Lutheran), and partly through Namibian bursary students in Sweden who, alongside their studies, were politically very active. *Aftonbladet* and *Arbetet* (social democratic papers) had already in 1966 run a campaign to collect money for the liberation struggle in Namibia. In line with the Security Council's resolution in August 1969 for all states to "increase their moral and material assistance to the people of Namibia in their struggle against foreign occupation", Sweden gave economic assistance for legal defence at political trials and to the families of prisoners.

In 1972 *Aftonbladet* published an open letter from Bishop Leonard Auala and Reverend Peter Gowaseb of Namibia to Prime Minister Vorster, in which they, with some sarcasm, asserted that South Africa "has failed to become informed on Human Rights ... in respect of the non-white population".





The old Portuguese pirate has his foothold in the colonies. Cover from Southern Africa Information Bulletin 1974. Published by the Africa Groups of Sweden.

3.
1965–1970
FOCUS ON
PORTUGAL'S
COLONIES

11. Late 1960s – public opinion fragmented

In the early 1960s in Sweden the media, politicians and organisations generally rallied round demands for radical political changes in southern Africa. SSAK, (Swedish South Africa Committee) was formed in 1961 and had considerable political support. SUL's fund raising for South Africa and its consumer boycott, beginning in March 1963, had a great impact. Pressure on the government and parliament increased to get them to decide on economic sanctions, which they consistently refused on the grounds that it was a task for the UN Security Council.

In the mid-1960s the campaign began to wane, even though certain gains could be noted: Swedish rock artist Little Gerhard cancelled his appearance in South Africa, many counties and municipalities decided not to buy South African goods (Wrong, said the Swedish Supreme Administrative Court in 1969; they may not pursue foreign policies), and South Africa banned the troubadour Cornelis Vreeswijk for having donated his fees to SSAK. The organisations backing the SSAK and SUL campaign returned to their day-to-day work. Only the activists remained. In 1966 for example a folder of work by artists and writers was produced including *inter alia* Gert Aspelin, Jörgen Fogelquist and Lage

Lindell as well as Peter Weiss and Sara Lidman. 200 folders were sold for 300 kronor each to support the campaign. It was used to print the previously cyclo-styled *Southern Africa Information Bulletin* (Södra Afrika Informationsbulletin). Among its regular contributors was the journalist Rolf Gustafsson, later foreign correspondent for TV2 and *Svenska Dagbladet* (conservative).

Nevertheless, the pattern was clear: in 1963, 225 editorials on South Africa were published in the 13 largest newspapers, in 1966 they were nearly halved to 119, while by 1969 they had fallen to 21! Outside the media, fewer than before were involved in shaping public opinion. Two events broke this pattern, namely stopping Rhodesian tennis players in the Davies Cup match in Båstad in 1968, and the campaign that forced Sweden's ASEA to withdraw from the building of the Cabora Bassa Dam in Mozambique in 1968-69. These spectacular actions created great media interest, reflected in both news and public opinion.

Two processes complicated the solidarity work – the liberation movements' armed struggle and the Vietnam movement. It was not a result of a strong pacifist current in Sweden. There was none: on the contrary, in many places there was a romantic view of guerrilla struggle. Those who raised the Buddhists' non-violent opposition in Vietnam tended to be thought of as disloyal, as not showing enough



solidarity with the Vietnamese people and FNL (NLF, National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam).

Several groups sympathised with the liberation movements' goals, but had difficulty in backing their change of strategy. The government, with 85% of parliamentarians behind it, supported majority rule in all these countries but preferred peaceful solutions. It was politically inconceivable that Swedish arms could be donated or sold to liberation movements. To a varying degree – in public at least – the liberation movements were critical of this, since they thus came to be militarily dependent on the Eastern bloc.

When did African countries gain their independence?

Malawi	6.7 1964
Zambia	24.10 1964
Botswana	30.9 1966
Lesotho	4.10 1966
Mauritius	12.3 1968
Swaziland	6.9 1968
Guinea Bissau	10.9 1974
Moçambique	25.6 1975
Cape Verde	5.7 1975
São Tomé and Príncipe	12.7 1975
Angola	11.11 1975
Namibia	21.3 1990
South Africa	10.5 1994*

* Nelson Mandela sworn in as president; the day chosen to symbolise the "new" South Africa. Formally South Africa stopped being a British colony 31.5 1910



The flags from the three liberation movements that both the government and the Africa Groups supported. From a poster exhibition by the Stockholm Africa Group in 1974.

In February 1966 SSAK declared its support of the armed struggle, but many activists in the anti-apartheid movement had already left or were on their way to FNL-groups. Organisations in Sweden

coordinated their criticism of the USA's war in Vietnam through the Swedish Vietnam Committee, but the Vietnam movement was dominated by the DFFG (The United FNL-Groups) and their thousands of activists. The movement had Maoist leaders and anti-imperialism as the mode of interpretation. According to its "focal point theory" the struggle ought to focus on the weakest point of the enemy – USA's imperialism – and that was seen to be Indochina. One was regarded as a sell-out if one con-



Hillevi Nilsson from the Stockholm Africa Group interviewing President Agostinho Neto in Dar es Salaam in connection with her second trip to the by MPLA liberated territory in Angola.

tinued to work with southern Africa.

For others, opposition to Portugal's colonial empire was central. The visits to Sweden of PAIGC's president Amílcar Cabral and Frelimo's president Eduardo Mondlane contributed to this, as they made a good impression on both activists and the Swedish establishment. The movements' representatives in Sweden also played an important role in this context: Onésimo Silveira, PAIGC, and Lourenço Mutacá, Frelimo.

In 1970, MPLA's president Agostinho Neto and its vice-president Daniel Chipenda visited Sweden. Their meeting with, amongst others, the Social Democrats' international secretary Pierre Schori contributed to MPLA being allowed to open an office in Stockholm, which it shared with the Stockholm Africa Group. In the same year the first Portuguese deserters arrived. They were given political asylum and participated actively in imparting information on fascist Portugal. An important factor underlying support to the three above-mentioned liberation movements was that many Swedish leaders of public opinion visited liberated areas during the years around 1970 and could give eye-witness accounts of the movements' work.

The DN journalist Anders Johansson went into northern Mozambique with Frelimo; the Africa Groups' Rolf Gustavsson and Bertil Malmström, writer Göran Palm, photographers Knut Andreasen and Jean Hermansson, social democratic politicians Birgitta Dahl and Gunnar Hofring as well as political scientist Lars Rudebeck all visited Guinea Bissau with PAIGC, while journalists Elisabeth Hedborg and Hillevi Nilsson went in to eastern Angola with MPLA. In addition, the liberal party's Olle Wästberg visited Angola together with FNLA.

At roughly the same time as the Africa Groups

were formed, similar solidarity organisations were started in other Western European countries and in North America. By and large they regarded welfare in the West as being largely built on colonial plunder, that the liberation struggles in southern Africa were, in the final analysis, directed at the USA's world hegemony, and that one should only support anti-imperialist liberation movements.

In Angola this meant the MPLA, but not FNLA nor UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). In Mozambique, Frelimo met the criteria, but not Coremo (Mozambique Revolutionary Committee). In South Africa it meant the ANC, but not PAC. It was significant that the US had friendly relations with the PAC, which, unlike the ANC, depicted whites as the enemy rather than racism, but which repudiated ANC links to communism.

Dick Urban Vestbro, for years a driving force in the Swedish Africa Groups, says:

During my stay in Tanzania in 1968-69, before the Africa Groups were formed, I had made contact with a number of people in the solidarity movement. Among them I met Prexy Nesbitt with roots in Christian and radical black groups in USA (later employed by the World Council of Churches' international campaign against racism); the Canadian political scientist John Saul, who later started the Toronto-based solidarity group TCLSAC; the Italian political scientist Giovanni Arrighi, who had contact with left groups in Italy; Peter Meyns, who came to participate in the West German solidarity movement; as well as Mikko Lohikoski and Börje Mattsson, who worked with Finnish peace activists and the World Peace Council.

During my time in Tanzania I had regular con-

"At roughly the same time as the Africa Groups were formed, similar solidarity organisations were started in other Western European countries and in North America. By and large they regarded welfare in the West as being largely built on colonial plunder."

tact with the liberation movements Frelimo, MPLA, ANC, SWAPO and ZAPU, all of which had offices in Dar es Salaam. I also established contact with the radical student movement at the University of Dar es Salaam.

The Angola Comité in the Netherlands invited the new solidarity groups to the first joint conference over Easter 1970 in Driebergen. Seven from Sweden attended, including Dick Urban Vestbro. An international network thus became feasible, and they took the decision to exchange material. The Dutch were publishing the fortnightly *Facts and Reports*, a bulletin of press clippings, an invaluable source of information on developments in southern Africa. The second conference was held in Valkenburg, Holland over Easter 1971, and Mai Palmberg led the Africa Groups' delegation. Unlike many other solidarity groups, the Angola Comité had good contacts with churches and other established organisations. Dick Urban Vestbro:

I regarded this with a certain scepticism, but at the same time was forced to realise that they succeeded in affecting public opinion in Holland while we remained within the student left.

Prior to the UN's Conference on the Human Envi-



The press cutting bulletin Facts and Reports from the Nederland was an important source of information. It was partly funded from Sweden via Sida.

ronment held in Stockholm in June 1972 the Africa Groups were one of the organisers of the Alternative Environment Conference. One of its main topics was environmental degradation due to the USA's war in Vietnam. In line with this topic, Stockholm's Africa Group compiled a publication on the use of napalm and herbicides in Angola and Mozambique. By using the UN's definition of genocide one wanted to show that similar things were happening in Portugal's colonies.

Most of those who participated in these joint solidarity conferences belonged to the new left and were critical of the Soviet system. There were, however, some who were more kindly disposed to the Soviet Union, like the French Committee against Racism and Colonialism, a Belgian South Africa

Committee and Finnish activists in contact with the World Peace Council's office in Helsinki. Even in the new left it was tempting not to be too critical of the Soviet system, since the liberation movements received crucial support from the Eastern bloc. When China broke with the Soviet Union, pro-Chinese groups in the West wanted the solidarity movement to support movements in Africa favoured by China. They were few and weak, and these demands did not seriously threaten the unity of the solidarity movements.

12. No tennis in Båstad

1968 was the year of youth revolt: Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, Tokyo, Cape Town, yes, even Stockholm, which felt it was a part through a pseudo-re-

volutionary occupation of the student union. The Prague spring blossomed; there was hope for the future and new political energy.

In January Sweden was drawn to play tennis against Rhodesia in the Davis Cup. In March the Smith regime executed three freedom fighters, despite international protests. In Sweden the government strongly condemned this. In parliament, Liberal Party leader Sven Wedén maintained that to play the game against Rhodesia would conflict with “the

views of a very broad Swedish public”. The Social Democratic government did not plan to prevent the match, though Sweden had broken with the regime in Salisbury. They maintained that it was up to those close to the sponsor Enskilda Banken – the Swedish Tennis Association and its spokesman, Mats Hasselqvist – to take a stand.

In different ways ZAPU and ZANU declared their resolute opposition to the match. The South Africa Committee in Lund took the initiative to



Big variation in the views by different newspapers. "Eggs, oil on the court in Båstad." "Oil bombs stopped the match." "Top secret new venue." "The police did the right thing." "The Battle of Båstad." "Demonstrating nun ashamed of her generation." "The Battle of Båstad." "We saw police beat young girls."

start “a temporary anti-fascist, anti-imperialist united front of individuals”, who saw it as their task to stop the match. In southern Sweden they mobilised, did reconnaissance in Båstad, planned the tactics, and kept contact with the mass media and with other demonstrators like the youth leagues of the Liberal, Centre and Social Democratic youth (FPU, CUF and SSU). Although the profile was lower in Uppsala and Stockholm, mobilisation was similar. On 3rd May 1968 everything was in place, the police and the 500 – 1 000 demonstrators, mainly students. The demonstrations were successful. The match was stopped, before it had even begun.

Reactions were strong. “Double fault in Båstad” wrote Liberal Party politician Hadar Cars in *Dagens Nyheter*. Almost without exception excited journa-

lists and politicians accused activists of introducing violence into the political arena. This hardly corresponded with what actually happened. When several of the political youth organisations later expressed their support for the demonstrators, public opinion began to swing

towards a greater understanding of the “heated commitment” of the youth.

Prime Minister Tage Erlander said that if the Swedish Tennis Association had simply asked the government for advice, they would have been advised against playing the match. Instead he invited the youth organisations to a discussion on 14th May. Six ministers with Erlander in the lead had a five-hour session with representatives of 59 youth orga-

nisations from the whole political spectrum and from other sectors. Zimbabwe was hardly mentioned in the debate, as it instead focused on the right to demonstrate, the rules of the game in a democratic society, and the Vietnam War.

Both FPU and SSU gave economic support to ZAPU after Båstad, while the government increased its humanitarian support to Zimbabwe.

13. Drama at the water gate

Why was media reporting from Båstad so exaggerated and misleading? One reason was their never-ending need for dramatic, saleable news. To some extent it was also due to a simple misunderstanding. The main troop of journalists had first gathered at the southern gate. All was calm there, but when they got to the northern one, they arrived in the midst of chaotic events. Bertil Malmström, a leading activist from Uppsala, explains:

Shouting the slogans, “Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe” and “Stop the match! Stop the match!” we arrived at the narrow street leading to the northern entrance of the tennis stadium. There no one seemed to know what to do. A few people shook the gates that slid upwards and outwards. At first only three or four police stood in front of us, but then several rushed forward to close the opening. Turmoil arose when those of us in the front did not back away and police began to hit us with their batons. I could not just remain faceless in the crowd. I managed to get the people at the back to sit down, forced myself further forward and soon virtually all were sitting down in front of the police. But the police wanted to close the gate, while some were sitting in the way and they came at us with a new baton attack.

”Six ministers with Erlander in the lead had a five-hour session with representatives of 59 youth organisations from the whole political spectrum and from other sectors.”



The police tries to close the gate. Bertil Malmström to the right.

I came face to face with a policeman. We each pulled at either side of the gate while a woman was being squashed as she was lying on the ground in front of him. There was only a decimetre or so between our faces when I bel-
lowed: “Let go! Stop! You’re hurting her!” I can still feel the anger inside me when I yelled. The woman was freed without serious injury. Only at this point did photographers and journalists arrive. They saw a violent confrontation at the opening of the gate and interpreted it as though we were trying to attack, “storm in”.

That would have been an idiotic tactic. We only wanted to block the entrance.

Suddenly there was water! Never before had water been used against demonstrators in Sweden. Riot police in Berlin or Paris used water cannons. Here the fire brigade in Båstad sprayed us to drive us away. The pressure drove back those of us who were sitting at the front and the right side of the gate was closed again. Suddenly the stream of water stopped. Klas Hellborg from Lund was part of a group of activists who had gone in early with tickets and sat

on the stands. He sprang down and cut off the fire hose. Yet the water returned and soon the police even began to use teargas. This was another novelty in controlling Swedish demonstrations. The teargas spread further with the stream of water and the whole of our drenched crowd gave way. Their eyes burning, most ran away but after a while we gathered in a compact group again in front of the gate that was now completely closed.

Although the gate was now locked, the fire brigade continued to shower us for another fifteen minutes. Those with placards used them as shields, others angrily tore down the barbed wire and net fence to the right of the entrance and upturned a ticket box... in the tumult and struggle we had been welded into a dynamic collective. This expressed itself in slogans:

“Do you smell the stink from the Enskilda Bank?”, “Hasselqvist is racist” (they rhymed so well and there was some basis for the charge in the clumsy statements he made). “Warm yourselves, comrades” someone began to chant and soon all 300 of us were hopping up and down. We sang “The Red Flag” and the Vietnamese liberation song “Liberate the South” and we cried, with laughter and self-irony: “Nothing can stop the people’s tidal wave!”

At the other gate a peaceful and dry sit-in blockaded the entrance. At a legal distance the political youth leagues watched from a hill. Nothing dramatic. Bertil Malmström:

From the loudspeakers in the stadium we heard the message that the match was cancelled. We were sceptical ... On the other hand, I realised that it was essential not to allow any of

the power we had just created to slip away from us. I waited a while, then I hopped up onto the stone wall and yelled: “Comrades we have won! We have won here and now!” It might have seemed as though I had new and my own information, but I didn’t. I took a chance.

We broke the blockade and, orderly, more or less four to each row, wet and shivering, we filed back to the place where we’d met, where comrades from the “dry” gate applauded us. Afterwards many newspapers tried to portray this as a “sad retreat”, but in his book *Fallet Båstad* (The Båstad Case) Bo Lindholm wrote that there was a fantastic atmosphere:

“They were jubilantly happy, laughing and singing youths (a few were middle-aged), who returned from the tennis stadium. That is what one sees in all the pictures, that was what we ourselves saw when we went to Båstad.”

The entire action had taken no more than two hours.

14. Cabora Bassa – political dynamite

Did Båstad have an impact? As a youthful revolt it was soon overshadowed in the media by the occupation of the student union house in Stockholm at the end of May 1968. A week after Båstad, activists faced a new tactical question: Rolf Gustavsson in *Southern Africa Information Bulletin* and Anders Johansson in *DN* raised the alarm about plans to build a hydro-electric power dam at Cabora Bassa in Mozambique.

The idea was to produce enough electricity to supply nearly all of southern Africa. A huge dam – the fifth largest in world – and a power station would be built on the Zambezi river by ZAMCO

(Zambezi Development Scheme Consortium). It would supply South Africa's mining and manufacturing industries with electricity through 1 420 km long lines. Sweden's ASEA (now ABB) joined ZAMCO, which consisted of companies from 15 countries with South Africa's Anglo-American at the helm. ASEA's share of the order was only 10 per cent but still was one of the largest orders ever placed. ASEA was a world leader in its area and thus an attractive partner.

Frelimo was very negative towards the project; both Portugal and the white minority regimes would gain economically. At this time half of Portugal's budget went to the military. Membership of EFTA (European Free Trade Association) led to greater foreign, even Swedish, investments, and the tourist industry was growing. Pierre Schori (s) had in the social democratic journal *Tiden* (1967) written that "last year 12 500 Swedish tourists contributed to financing the war". A stronger Portuguese economy would protract the war. Eduardo Mondlane had cultivated close contact with the social democrats. That did not prevent him from criticising the Swedish government for its refusal to subject Portugal to economic sanctions. He had personal relations with DN's editor-in-chief, Olof Lagercrantz, and had contact with liberals like David Wirmark. In an interview published in *Liberal Debate* (Liberal Debate) in 1966, Mondlane pointed out:

You are too neutral in Sweden at present ... If Sweden's words about solidarity with us are to be taken seriously, it is logical that we can expect Sweden to put pressure on Portugal.

Expulsion from EFTA and economic boycott were Mondlane's demands, and they were supported by liberals like Per Ahlmark and by VPK (Left Party



Cabora Bassa is the theme in Uppsala 1979 of a Teach-In, a mobilising method of several short lectures developed by radical movements in USA.



Fake headline poster by the Uppsala South Africa committee. "Genocide in Mozambique. ASEA profits. The government silent" This triggered the real one "The coup against the headline poster of Expressen a political flash action"

Communists, Vänsterpartiet kommunisterna). In March 1967 the First Chamber heard an unusually tough debate between Per Ahlmark and the Minister of Trade, Gunnar Lange, where the latter propounded the thesis of industrial development as a lever for democracy. The news about ASEA, ZAMCO and Cabora Bassa triggered the same debate within the social democratic party a year later.

In a series of *DN* articles in April 1968, Anders Johansson was the first international journalist to report from liberated areas in Mozambique, thereby undermining Portugal's credibility. A few months later he could show how Rhodesia was also involved in the Cabora Bassa project. Among leading activists on the left, like Dick Urban Vestbro, there was considerable scepticism towards Frelimo for quite a

while, which he later self-critically admitted:

We in the South Africa committees ... believed that our work against imperialism and capitalism was as important as Frelimo's, if not more so... We saw ourselves as true revolutionaries (and) had criticised Frelimo for being officially represented by an American middle-class woman (*Eduardo Mondlane's wife, Janet*) ... a housewife from Chicago.

SSU Stockholm was one of the first to demand that the government should stop ASEA's participation in the project. SSU was backed by *Aftonbladet*. On the other side stood the government and LO and its member Metall, the union that organised the metal workers at ASEA in Västerås. For them the issue concerned 300 jobs over three years.

The government was certainly critical of Swedish investments in Mozambique, Lange argued, but ASEA was not an investor, only a seller. In addition, a trade war was not the right way to oppose South Africa and Portugal. As previously, only the Security Council was seen as having the mandate to take binding resolutions about sanctions. The government chose to ignore information in mid-1968 that Rhodesian companies would be among the suppliers to the ZAMCO project. In the South Africa Committee in Uppsala this was taken as evidence that, for the social democrats, "class cooperation leads to ... structural fascism".

As the government continued to defend ASEA's role in ZAMCO, the UN General Assembly (November 1968) passed a resolution regretting the economic interests that operated in the Portuguese colonies. They "stand in the way ... of self-determination, freedom and independence and ... strengthen Portugal's military efforts". This was in line

with the arguments of Swedish critics.

Ten days later, Foreign Minister Torsten Nilsson declared that the government had contact with a number of African liberation movements and was “prepared to help ... with humanitarian support” which would make it easier for their members “to continue the struggle for the liberation of their people”. A few weeks earlier PAIGC’s president Amílcar Cabral visited Sweden for the first time to seek Swedish support. Before Christmas the Foreign Ministry began to explore how the government in Guinea-Conakry, where PAIGC had its external base, would interpret such support. The reply was positive.

In May 1969 parliament’s Standing Committee on Finance declared that support to African liberation movements was consistent with international law, since the UN had taken a clear stand against the oppression of people who strive for national freedom. It also approved the support to PAIGC, if only the practical questions could be resolved. Thereby Sweden became the first country in West to give direct official humanitarian assistance to liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies and in southern Africa.

Economic support was thus okay, but not economic sanctions – not even against Portugal.

Government policies were contradictory, which was pointed out by representatives of Frelimo and ZANU. Possibly it reflected internal contradictions. In any case, the Social Democratic Party was deeply split. At a party meeting in Stockholm in early 1969, which Tage Erlander addressed, a resolution was unanimously adopted that accused the party leadership of double moral standards. This initiative was taken by parliamentarian Oskar Lindqvist.

In late 1969 ASEA withdrew from the project, af-

ter parliament in May ratified UN sanctions against Rhodesia. Through this the government would have been able to stop ASEA. Now the law was never tested, since the company dropped out of its own accord.

Parliamentary debate on the Rhodesia law nevertheless gave an indication of the line the Social Democrats would follow with Olof Palme as party leader. Several members – both social democrats like Jan Bergqvist and liberals like Per Ahlmark and Ola Ulls-

ten – advocated increased control of private investments abroad. Birgitta Dahl (s) appealed for the coordination of trade, international development cooperation and foreign policy to foster international solidarity. Therefore development assistance policies ought to be aimed at progressive countries and support should be given to social liberation movements.

15. Sweden’s two faces

Since the 1920s and the League of Nations, international law has been the foundation on which Swe-



“ASEA pulls out from Cabora Bassa. The government relieved.” September 3 1969 ASEA give up. At the same time the poster declare the death of Ho Chi Min in Vietnam.

Hunted politicians and embarrassed generals

“It was dramatic,” Birgitta Dahl described her visit in 1970 to areas in Guinea Bissau liberated by PAIGC. Then she was a new member of parliament (s) and the first democratically elected parliamentarian to pay such a visit:

The Portuguese undertook a major attack while we were there. We walked at night between the villages, since they were pursuing us. We waded to our waists in dirty water, and active vaccines against all the risk factors did not exist. So I was affected by lice and diarrhoea.

We visited hospitals and schools and slept in ordinary huts on wooden bunks. We interviewed people and saw how it worked. Conversations and discussions sometimes had to be interpreted in three or four steps: Portuguese, French while in the villages they only spoke their local languages.

I met PAIGC-president Amílcar Cabral and he became my friend for life, as did others who I met there. In 1972 Cabral was the guest speaker at the party congress – just half a year before he was murdered. He was one of the greatest ideologists of the twentieth century, with a clearly thought-out ideology on how society should be constructed with respect for human rights and the country’s culture. He broke with the traditional view of women’s position.

In 1975 two generals came from the arena of the war in Guinea Bissau to Sweden as representatives



Brigitta Dahl visiting PAIGC in Guinea Bissau.

of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) – the Portuguese government. Birgitta Dahl was asked by Olof Palme to host to them for a day.

I was a young woman in a floral outfit, and they flirted shamelessly with me in a very male chauvinist way. We stood on the lawn at Harpsund and waited for Olof Palme, and then I thought that I must put an end to it, so I said: “Do you know that we have something in common?” – Oh, yes, they thought and believed something else. “We have all been in Guinea Bissau,” said I. Then they blushed, from their toes upwards.

One had been commander-in-chief and the other head of security, and responsible for attempts to capture me dead or alive. Now they realised that I was the same person and stood before them. In the end one of them succeeded in stammering: “Is it true, Madame, that you wore uniform?” “Yes”, I replied, “we were naïve enough to think you would respect international law.”

dish foreign policy has rested. It was defined as “non-interference in the internal affairs of independent states”. The most prominent advocate of this attitude was Östen Undén (Foreign Minister 1924–26 and 1945–62), who combined it with a cautious policy of strict neutrality to the power blocs. The UN Security Council was regarded as the guarantor of peace and security – even for small countries – which in turn should maintain a modest international profile.

This line was broken in December 1959, when Sweden was the first Western country to vote for Algeria’s right to self-determination. The Undén plan that aimed to stop nuclear proliferation (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1961) was another step in the same direction.

International law continued to be the basis of Swedish foreign policy, but its interpretation became increasingly activist. The world drew closer. Foreign policy ought thus not simply to respect international law but foster “peoples’ right to self-determination”. Thus, from being an argument for non-policies, international law became a reason for an active foreign policy. Several factors interacted to move Swedish foreign policy in this direction:

- The role of the Swede Dag Hammarskjöld – and not least his death in a plane over the Congo – while General Secretary of the UN, (1953–61);
- The 6 300 Swedish UN peace-keeping troops in Congo (1960–64), of whom 18 were killed;
- The dramatic decolonisation of Africa and southern Africa’s struggle for liberation;
- Swedish – particularly social democratic – politicians close relations to leaders of the Front Line States and liberation movements in southern Africa from the mid-1960s;
- The Vietnam war;



The engagement for Africa by the Swede Dag Hammarskjöld as the UN Secretary General had a great influence on the role of the Swedish government.

- A new generation of social democratic politicians gradually taking over, and Olof Palme being elected party chairman in 1969.

In 1965, Palme held an epoch-making foreign policy speech at the Christian Social Democrats Congress held in Gävle, where he spoke about an “explosive force of unbelievable strength... a tidal wave” posed by nationalism in Asia and Africa. “These strivings for liberation... We must learn to live *with* them and perhaps also for them.” At the same time he highlighted the catalogue of sins of the old colonial powers:

While proclaiming ideals of freedom for the citizens of one’s own country, one practised quite different policies in the foreign countries, exercising power over people that became increasingly oppressive... There is an illusory belief that one can meet demands for social justice with violence and military force.

In Gävle, Palme did not use the term human rights, but it was implicitly there, as a given condition for people’s right to freedom and self-determination:



Olof Palme and the trade union leader Arne Geijer meets the president of Tanzania Julius Nyerere 1969.

The basic values of democratic socialism oblige us ... to stand on the side of the oppressed against the oppressors, on the side of the miserable and the poor against those who exploit them and their masters.

It was perhaps an anti-imperialist speech, with the USA as the primary target (without letting the Soviet Union off the hook), and with consequences for relevant policies on both Vietnam and southern Africa.

Two articles in the journal *Tiden* can be said to stand for the state's two faces, and similarly for the old and new faces of social democracy. The parliamentarian Kaj Björk (s) maintained in *Sydafrika och vi* (1965, South Africa and us), written at the request of the board of the party, that support to liberation movements conducting an armed struggle contradicted the principle of non-involvement in the international law of nations. This argument did not reduce the criticism of the government. In 1968 Pierre Schori, then social democratic international secretary, wrote *Befrielseströrelserna och vi* (Liberation movements and us). His main message was the reverse; that the movements ought to get support on their own conditions. The same argument was later pursued by Foreign Minister Torsten Nilsson in a historic speech in December 1968. The cautious line of the old guard had lost – in principle.

While this created conditions for a political dialogue with radical younger groups in Sweden, it strengthened the ties to the liberation movements and thus also the opportunities of influencing them in a democratic direction. Perhaps it also, as diplomat Mats Bergquist pointed out, had:

“... a positive side-effect on security policies, when, through this, one gave a country a clear international profile. The country became visible, as a result of which the threshold for external political pressure was raised and the likelihood of international support actually increased.”

In 1965 Palme had been heavily criticised by the opposition for his speech in Gävle, but early in 1969 there was another mood. In a liberal party report, *Stöd åt Motståndsrörelser* (Support for Liberation movements) it said that “our feelings of sympathy ought not to be linked to some kind of diplomatic caution nor take cognizance of trade relations”. In its view of the liberation movements' violence it was close to the Lusaka Manifesto (see below) and was criticised for this from both the right and the left. In practice the principle “no military support but direct humanitarian support to the movements” became the guidelines not only for the liberal party. All members of parliament – except the moderates – wanted to regard themselves as friends of the liberation movements in southern Africa (on the question of Vietnam public opinion was very different, which may be linked to the USA being an actor there while it did not appear to be in southern Africa).

Contradictions remaining regarding economic sanctions against the Portuguese and southern African regimes nonetheless showed that Sweden had not yet come to terms with its two faces.



Portugal did not manage to crush the liberation movements despite the backing from NATO.

4.

1970–1975

PORTUGAL

PHASES OUT

ITS EMPIRE

16. From Khartoum to Lusaka

In January 1969 an international solidarity conference was organised in Khartoum. With strong support from the Eastern bloc, over 200 delegates from 50 countries participated. The majority were communists, but there were others like the British Labour Party and the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF). On behalf of the liberation movements Eduardo Mondlane explained that the “liberation movements believe that the shortest and only path to freedom is to be cleared by fire” – a declaration fitting the times.

It was of greater political significance that the decision was made to exclusively recognise MPLA, PAIGC, Frelimo, ANC, SWAPO and ZAPU. The last-named in time led to considerable problems, since ZANU revealed itself to be the stronger movement. Sweden’s government never formally took a position on the “Khartoum Alliance” but – irrespective of the political majority in parliament – in practice supported them, with the addition of ZANU. This attitude also came to be reflected in popular support to liberation movements.

Three months after Khartoum the representatives of thirteen independent states in East and Central Africa attended a meeting where Zambia’s Kenneth Kaunda presided and Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere had a leading part. It resulted in the Lusaka Manifesto on southern Africa, in which the tone differed. Based on the principle of human equality,



The presidents Kaunda (left) and Nyerere played a big role in supporting the liberation movements.

they explained that they had always preferred to achieve liberation without physical violence, and that they did not advocate violence, but an end to the violence ... perpetrated by the oppressors of Africa:

A divine South Africa committee?

In March 1970 Senegal's president Leopold Sédar Senghor blocked transport routes for PAIGC at Guinea-Conakry's northern border and closed their hospitals on Senegalese soil – a major setback for the movement. In April he landed in Sweden on a tour of Scandinavia. He was expected to pay an official visit in Uppsala on 6th May and lecture at the university on "African Socialism". This was a situation that called for action, the South Africa committee thought. In the words of activist Bertil Malmström:

When president Senghor arrived his first stop was at the University library, Carolina Redeviva. At the foot of the stairs the president was met not only by the vice-chancellor of the university and the head librarian, but also by innocently resting students who suddenly became demonstrators, spread out a banner and raised posters. A film team on site was actually our own. Inside, in the quiet of the reading room, people also silently raised signs with French text.

The main action took place at the public meeting at the university that evening. When Senghor and his companions walked into Hall IX, I walked past the chairperson of the Association of International Affairs, climbed onto the podium before him and told him: "I'll just say a few words". From the other side Pelle Jacobsson and Bert Fridlund came. We had all changed our usual casual jerseys for jackets and ties. I opened the meeting and introduced Pelle and it took a while before everyone grasped that we did not represent the association nor the respected Senghor.

Krister and Stefan, both large men, had joined us and were standing on either side of us. They were to act as gentle bodyguards, stand in the way, and talk calmly to anyone who wanted to interfere.

The association's chairperson tried to switch off the microphone and the Vice-Chancellor walked up to me below the stage and with a red face he cried, "Stop this nonsense!" but the audience showed their support and called out "Let him speak" and answered "Yes" to the question of whether we should have a discussion instead of a lecture. We naturally did not know what would happen at the meeting, we were prepared to have a debate, but it seemed as likely that we would be arrested. Surprisingly quickly, Senghor, his escorts and hosts decided to leave the hall, the audience applauded and our people opened out their hidden banners. According to police dressed in civilian clothes, who stood right at the back of the hall, it was all over in three minutes.

The reaction of the *Upsala Nya Tidning* (Uppsala New Paper) is expressed in the headline: *Does the Uppsala South Africa Committee believe it is divine?*

When president Senghor left the meeting the banners were unfolded.



A screen-printed poster seen everywhere where president Senghor came.



If peaceful progress to emancipation were possible (now) or ... in the future, we would urge our brothers in the liberation movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at a cost of some compromise in the timing of the change. But while peaceful progress is blocked by actions of those at present in power..., we have no choice but to give to the peoples of those territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggles against their oppressors.

Even if the manifesto was not exactly what the liberation movements desired, it later gained support from both the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN General Assembly. In March 1970 Foreign Minister Torsten Nilsson praised the African leaders for their high principles “to the great provocation by the white oppressor regimes” and called the manifesto “a Magna Carta for all who live in southern Africa”.

17. Swedish sardines confound the Portuguese military

In May 1969 parliament had approved direct humanitarian support to the liberation movements. In June, Curt Ström at Sida could report on his meeting in Conakry with Amílcar Cabral, “a cheerful young agronomist, elegant, intellectual [and] with a quick and lively way of talking. No pathetic appeals or solemn declarations”. The need for support was immeasurable, but PAIGC did not ask for arms, military resources or stipends from Sweden. Instead they requested food, material, blankets, pots and pans, crockery and cutlery, and resources for health care, education, etc. “within and outside the areas of

“The need for support was immeasurable, but PAIGC did not ask for arms, military resources or stipends from Sweden. Instead they requested food, material, blankets, pots and pans, crockery and cutlery, and resources for health care, education, etc.”

fighting”. Most of it ended up in Guinea Bissau, and once it was there the clinics and food supplies benefited both villagers and freedom fighters.

During Cabral’s visit to the Social Democratic Party Congress, the first delivery left on 29th September. This paved the way for support to several liberation movements, but PAIGC continued to be favoured until Guinea Bissau was free in 1974. In the liberated areas 80% of the population was illiterate, children, in particular, suffered from malnutrition, the whole health sector was problematic, and the supply of necessities was under constant threat of Portuguese bombings. For PAIGC – in practice with government responsibility for these areas – Sweden’s assistance not only filled a humanitarian but also a political function. “With schools and hospitals we can win the war,” declared Cabral.

For activists in the Africa Groups this was not enough. In 1972, when no military assistance was given, it was taken as evidence of paternalism and of government attempts to “achieve a neo-colonial solution” in the Portuguese colonies. In practice, humanitarian assistance acquired a fairly broad definition, as civilian or non-military. So Sida delivered two large trucks furnished with mobile radio transmitters and studio equipment to support PAIGC’S



The leader of PAIGC, Amílcar Cabral, pulled large crowds to his speech in the university hall in Uppsala October 3 1969.

educational programme, as well as hundreds of radio receivers. With them one could start broadcasting in September 1972 – and reach the whole of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde – naturally also with political propaganda.

It turned out that even a non-military commodity like Swedish sardines in tomato sauce could be utilised in psychological warfare. Stig Lövgren mentions that Sida once bought 400 000 tins (about 100 tons of tinned fish) from a Swedish factory that asked if they should print a special label. Lövgren contacted Onésimo Silveira, PAIGC'S representative in Sweden, who was very enthusiastic:

It was not until later that I realised why he became ecstatic. He decided on a label with the PAIGC flag and with the text, "From the libe-

rated areas of Guinea Bissau". Years after I was told that [PAIGC] had arranged for these tins to appear in different places where the Portuguese still held power. They even distributed some of the tins in Bissau, the capital. You can imagine what an effective psychological weapon this was.

18. Early support but late recognition

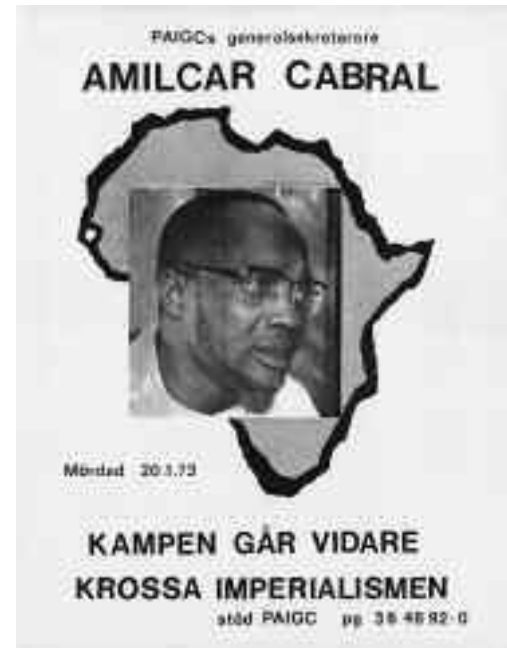
In April 1972 a group – sent by the UN Special Committee on Decolonization of which Sweden was the only West European member – visited the liberated areas in Guinea Bissau. The assignment, conducted in an "underground" way, led to strong Portuguese protests and intensified bombing of the liberated areas. Folke Löfgren, a Swedish diplomat

at the UN and one of the three in the group, later remarked, “We were naive enough to believe that it was not possible for Portugal to treat the UN in that manner”.

The UN delegation was “impressed by the enthusiastic and whole-hearted cooperation that PAIGC gets from the population in the liberated areas and of the extent to which they participate in the administration that the liberation movement has set up”. Their conclusion was that PAIGC effectively controlled the liberated areas. Though they recommended recognition of an independent Guinea Bissau, the Decolonization Committee contented itself with rapidly recognising PAIGC as the “territory’s sole and genuine representative”.

For the first time in the history of the UN, in this period, the liberation movements were invited to appear in the UN General Assembly. The idea was for Amílcar Cabral to have been given that honour, but Swedish and Nordic objections of a legalistic type frustrated this. In consideration to them he declined: “Look, the Nordic countries are our friends. They have supported us through thick and thin, and we do not wish to embarrass them.” Cabral’s pragmatic diplomacy was, however, badly rewarded by the Swedish government, which acted judicially rather than politically.

After elections in the liberated areas, Guinea Bissau was declared a sovereign republic on 24th September 1973 with Luís Cabral as president. The event was portrayed in a unique documentary for TV, *En nations födelse* (Birth of a nation), by the film team of Lennart Malmer and Ingela Romare, who later filmed a number of programmes on Guinea Bissau. After only a few weeks the new state had been recognised by over 60 governments, and on 19th November 1973 the republic of Guinea Bissau



“Amílcar Cabral murdered 20.1.73. The struggle continues. Crush imperialism, support FRELIMO.” Poster from the Uppsala Africa Group.

was recognised by the OAU, though not by a doubting Sweden. The reason: PAIGC did not control the entire territory of Guinea Bissau.

The social democratic government was severely criticised for this position not only by the Africa Groups and the Left Party Communists but also by party members like Birgitta Dahl. The political dilemma was resolved through the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974 by MFA (Armed Forces Movement). It paved the way for democracy and a declaration in July on national independence for the colonies in Africa. On 9th August 1974 the Swedish government recognised the Republic of Guinea Bissau. A month later the republic was formally

declared independent and Guinea Bissau became a member of the UN.

Cape Verde's declaration of independence was delayed until July 1975, and in January 1981 the islands left the union with Guinea Bissau.

19. Success for Frelimo

At its most, Portugal had 70 000 troops in Mozambique. It meant an unbelievable amount of suffering for the local population. SSU (Swedish Social Democratic Youth) thus had strong arguments in its information campaign "Portugal out of southern Africa" and for its collection for the liberation movements PAIGC, MPLA and Frelimo. On the Sunday in 1970 when the Christmas decorations were set up, demonstrations were held throughout Sweden.

Frelimo had come to grips with its internal crisis, relations to Tanzania were resolved, and the Mozambique Institute had reopened at a new site. In November 1970 Joaquim Chissano, one of leaders and a future president of Mozambique, was in a delegation visiting Sweden to meet the Foreign Ministry, Emmaus Björkå, the social democrats, the Africa Groups and others. Discussions with Sida led to a formal application for support. Particular emphasis was placed on needs in relation to education and health care and for "people's shops" in the liberated areas.

Anders Forsse, Vice-General Director of Sida, met Marcelino dos Santos, Frelimo's Vice-President, in Dar es Salaam in February 1971, but Forsse was not impressed. In a report to the Board for Humanitarian Assistance – where decisions on support to liberation movements were taken – he maintained that the movement had developed "from Danton to Robespierre", that Janet Mondlane was "a

cooing ornament", and that dos Santos was rumoured "recently to have received a high Soviet decoration". His conclusion was that Frelimo's interest in "material support from us is strikingly weaker than our explicit interest in giving such support".

The Board, which was started in the 1960s, was made up of people from various parts of Swedish society; popular movements, organisations and knowledgeable individuals there in their personal capacity. As vice-chairperson, Forsse and his report should have weighed heavily. Despite this, it was recommended that support of 750 000 kronor should be disbursed through the Mozambique Institute to Frelimo – in line with Chissano's intentions. A determining factor was probably that Per Wästberg did not share Forsse's view. He wrote in DN: "It is a liberation to cross the border", a conclusion he drew from a visit to the area at the beginning of the year. Support to Frelimo grew rapidly but never reached the levels of that to PAIGC. Initially it was material support, but – after trucks shipped by boat were "hijacked" in Beira by the Portuguese security police – cash support became a growing part of the assistance.

More than any other liberation movement, Frelimo wanted military support, in vain. For this the government was criticised by the Africa Groups and – a surprising echo – by Maji Maji, the organ of the Tanganyika African National Union Youth League, which wrote about "Swedish imperialism". More important to the Swedish public was that Lennart Malmer and Ingela Romare in November 1971 accompanied Joaquim Chissano for three weeks in the Cabo Delgado province. Their TV documentary *I vårt land börjar kulorna blomma* (When bullets begin to flower) was broadcasted in early 1972.

1973 was the year of Frelimo's breakthrough in

Sweden and the Nordic countries as a whole. In April a major conference was held in Oslo on colonialism and apartheid, organised by the UN and OAU. The result was a victory, Marcelino dos Santos maintained on his visit to the Foreign Ministry afterwards. The liberation movements participated on the same terms as government representatives. Representatives of eight liberation movements came to Stockholm from Oslo. There was a good showing by the media, an official reception at the Foreign Ministry and diverse meetings with popular movements. In addition there was a special working lunch with Foreign Minister Krister Wickman and dos Santos as well as MPLA's president Agostinho Neto and Lucette Andrade Cabral, PAIGC.

In July the world press was rocked by dramatic news from Mozambique. To coincide with the visit to London of the Portuguese Premier Caetano, the British priest Adrian Hastings published eyewitness testimony from Spanish missionaries of a massacre in Wiriyamu, a village south of the provincial capital Tete. A year earlier Portuguese paratroopers had slaughtered 400 villagers there.

Four days later Wickman launched an appeal in *Aftonbladet* to "initiate broad political action against Portugal's colonial wars in Africa". At the same time he criticised private companies' investments in Por-

tugal and described them as repulsive and a result of "suspect and short-term speculation".

Strong reactions also came from the liberal party.

Most biting was Per Ahlmark, who in an open letter in *Expressen* said to the executive directors of Swedish companies with significant economic interests in Portugal:

You contribute to prolonging the bloodbaths in three areas in Africa. In practice, you economically assist the Caetano regime to commit genocide.

News of the massacre fired political public opinion against Portugal, which was described by the Swedish government in the UN as "a tottering and tumbledown empire". Sweden also reiterated that the future of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau must be determined by their people.

"1973 was the year of Frelimo's breakthrough in Sweden and the Nordic countries as a whole. In April a major conference was held in Oslo on colonialism and apartheid, organised by the UN and OAU. The result was a victory, Marcelino dos Santos maintained on his visit to the Foreign Ministry afterwards. The liberation movements participated on the same terms as government representatives."

20. Divisions in and about Angola

Divide and rule – the classical doctrine of domination – seems to have lived a life of its own in Angola. Portugal did not need help, but got it anyway. From the first there were two movements that claimed to have started the armed struggle in 1961: MPLA, with Agostinho Neto as president and FNLA, with Holden Roberto as the leader. For a short time Angola gained a great deal of attention in Sweden, but the struggle against apartheid soon absorbed most of the interest.



Marcelino dos Santos with Sören Lindh (left) and Hans Persson from ARO (The Africa Gorups) 1982.

Five years later Angola came into focus again:

Lund's South Africa Committee and its information bulletin *South and South West Africa* supported MPLA and laid down guidelines for the Africa Groups' understanding of the conflict. With their help the writer Peter Weiss later wrote the drama *Sången om Skrâpuken* (Song of the Scarecrow), which deals with Portuguese colonialism and Western accomplices and had its premiere at Stockholm's Stadsteater in January 1967.

In 1966 a third liberation movement appeared; UNITA, headed by Jonas Savimbi. Initially it had good contacts with the Social Democratic Party. The party later developed contacts with MPLA,

uniquely close for a Western country, probably under the influence of Amílcar Cabral and Eduardo Mondlane. Both UNITA and FNLA regarded that as Olof Palme's fault: all he wanted was to counteract the USA influence.

Savimbi was previously close to Holden Roberto, but growing ethnic tensions ruined their cooperation. While Roberto had his base among the baCongo people in northern Angola, Savimbi was part of the Ovimbundu in southern and central Angola. The break with FNLA, according to close colleagues, resulted from Roberto "becoming far too dependent on the Americans and in addition not appearing inside Angola".



A demonstration organised by the Stockholm Africa Group in support of PAIGC, MPLA and FRELIMO 1974.

David Wirmark (fp) got to know Roberto earlier. In the early 1970s together with Olle Wästberg he made strong appeals for Swedish support to FNLA, perhaps because of anti-communism; MPLA had

good contacts with the East. In parliament the Centre and Liberal parties vainly advocated support to both MPLA and FNLA using the argument that both were recognised by the OAU.

Divisions among the opposition also led to split support from the neighbouring states. Congo-Kinshasa under Mobutu (Zaire 1971-97, afterwards the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC) stood close to FNLA and did not want to give space for an MPLA base in the country. After UNITA attacked the Angolan section of the Benguela railway – essential for Zambian exports – several times in 1967, Zambia once again only gave support to MPLA. Nor did the OAU recognise UNITA.

In the Swedish debate UNITA was marginalised. As late as the end of 1970, the journal *Tiden* published an article which described MPLA as communist-oriented and described UNITA positively. According to Lund's South Africa Committee this was a manifestation of "political ignorance" in the editorial board or elsewhere. By that time Agostinho Neto had already visited in Sweden as the Social Democratic Party's guest. Subsequently UNITA only gained support from small Maoist groups.

Relations between the three movements were tense the entire time. Occasionally the friction spilled over into direct armed conflict. In March 1967 twenty MPLA members, who were returning from northern Angola to Congo-Kinshasa, were arrested. They were transported to FNLA's base at Kinkuzu – "Africa's Buchenwald" – and executed.

When Olle Wästberg visited the camp a few years later, his impression was positive. Three Portuguese prisoners were "humanely" treated. Roberto's closest colleague and chief of security, José Manuel Peterson, was "baptised and brought up by Swedish missionaries" (according to others he was hardly characterised by Christian ethics, but instead

known for ruthlessly getting rid of political opponents).

According to Wästberg, Roberto himself often maintained: "Struggle unites Angola. A people who gain freedom through armed struggle will not later devote themselves to egoism and tribalism". In addition to having liberated sparsely populated parts of northern Angola, FNLA established itself as a "government" for about half a million Angolan refugees in Congo-Kinshasa.

Since MPLA at the same time claimed control over the same liberated area, there were many – among them Africa expert Basil Davidson – who questioned the veracity of Wästberg's portrayal. Agostinho Neto maintained that he had only been marched round in the Lower Congo and had not set foot in An-

gola. A decade later Anders Ehnmark published a satirical novel, *Ögonvittnet*, inspired by this incident.

Olle Wästberg's reports had a negligible influence on political decisions in Sweden. A motion in parliament in January 1971 by Birgitta Dahl and Lena Hjelm-Wallén (s) paved the way for a decision to give direct humanitarian support to MPLA, but it remained modest (of the 10 million kronor allocated between 1971–75 not even a quarter was paid out – mainly because of MPLA). Political support appears to have been more important for the leadership of the movement, and this was strong from both the Social Democrats and the Africa Groups.

The latter – together with the socialist monthly *Kommentar*, founded by intellectuals in Stockholm – presented political analyses of the situation in Angola. Their conclusion: Support MPLA! Emmaus Björkå supplied MPLA with 60 tons of clothes



Sticker "Support MPLA".

The brothers who disagreed

In the debate on southern Africa and its liberation movements the Wästberg brothers were prominent. Both became editors-in-chief – the older, the writer Per (1933-), for Dagens Nyheter (1976-82), and the younger, journalist and liberal party politician Olle (1945-), for Expressen (1994-95). Their basic views differed considerably.

With early personal experiences in Rhodesia (deported in 1959 and 1971), South Africa and Mozambique – depicted in books like *Förbjudet område* (Forbidden area) and *På svarta listan* (Blacklisted) – Per saw the conflicts from a South perspective. Like the broad solidarity movement, he thus identified largely with the “genuine” liberation movements and supported them both openly and through secret channels.

Active from an early stage within the Liberal Party Youth (FPU) Olle viewed the conflicts in

southern Africa more from an anti-communist East-West perspective. This was noticeable above all in his attitude towards the liberation movements in Angola. After covering an imposing 1 500 kilometres in 39 days during his visit to an FNLA area in northern Angola in 1969 he pleaded in articles, in the book *Angola*, and with the help of fellow party members in parliament for FNLA to receive official Swedish support.

Olle presented FNLA's president Holden Roberto as a sympathetic, “almost modest” man of simple habits, a non-smoker and teetotaler, reared by British missionaries. Whereas to Per, Roberto was untrustworthy: “I immediately thought this was a person with whom one could not have a deep relationship.” A man marked by tribalism, he and his comrades were “often dressed in smart clothes”.

worth 1,1 million kronor. The voluntary sector collected about 1,7 million kronor (today over 10 million) for MPLA in 1972. As Alberto Ribeiro (“Kabulu”) from MPLA later testified:

The support always began through the people, students, workers and trade unionists. ... In the socialist countries, the support came directly from the governments and from parties in one-party states. In the case of the Nordic countries, it first came through contacts from people to people. It was the civil society that was in touch with us. It made a big difference.

In addition to information and lobbying for MPLA, the Africa Groups supported radio and telecommu-

nications inside Angola and thereby also MPLA's military work. This included both procurement of equipment and handbooks in breaking codes. Official support soon came to include means of transport, trucks and motorcycles, as well as four-wheel drive ambulances.

21. MPLA's deep crisis and new start

The split between the three liberation movements in Angola muddled the opportunities for giving assistance. In 1973 Zambia suddenly brought UNITA into the picture again, Tanzania invited Roberto to deliberations, and the Soviet Union began to support a breakaway group within MPLA. In practice it became more complex to give assistance.

A military coup in Lisbon in April 1974 deposed the Caetano regime and created a new situation. One motive for the coup was the colonial wars, but the junta were no angels of peace. It was most difficult to give up Angola – the jewel of the Portuguese empire. Oil was there and strong international economic interests. In January 1975 nevertheless the three liberation movements and Portugal agreed on a transitional government to prepare for Angola's independence on 11th November 1975. It collapsed in mid-1975.

Late in 1975 the Africa Groups published a booklet *För ett fritt Angola! En studie av MPLA, FNLA och UNITA* (For a free Angola! A study of MPLA, FNLA and UNITA). The writer was anonymous but she turned out to be Hillevi Nilsson, who at the time of publication was already in Luanda working for MPLA. It was virtually a collection of arguments why only MPLA could be regarded as a genuine liberation movement, an attitude many embraced in the broad solidarity movement, though for varying reasons:

Only MPLA was national and revolutionary and could mobilise the people. Clearly its leaders were not without problems, but the movement had “built up a democratic social structure with conscientised members and functioning contacts between the different levels”. In contrast, FNLA and UNITA were ethnically based – the baCongo and the Ovimbundu – autocratically ruled and dependent on Zaire/USA and/or South Africa.

In October 1975 a force of 3 000 men from South Africa/UNITA/FNLA and a breakaway group from MPLA invaded Angola from the south, moving along the coast and up towards Luanda, at the same time as a joint Zaire and FNLA force attacked from Zaire. According to the CIA plan, the aim was to

prevent MPLA from taking over Luanda. In this situation MPLA asked Cuba for help, and these troops landed on 10th November; in addition MPLA again received support from the Soviet Union.

When Agostinho Neto on 11th November 1975 proclaimed the People's Republic of Angola, representatives of the Africa Groups in Sweden were also at the celebrations, an expression of the close relationship. In February 1976 in an important article in DN, Olof Palme propounded the principle that the “war in Angola does not stand between *the free world* and *communism*... It is fundamentally a continuation of the long liberation struggle that began a decade and a half ago.” Thus all foreign intervention was an abomination.

This basic attitude was confirmed in a speech by Foreign Minister Karin Söder (c) in late 1978, when



Agostinho Neto.

she pointed out that the “West must treat Africa as a continent in its own right... not as an object for superpower politics”. Nevertheless, USA and South Africa continued to assist UNITA militarily, with intermittent war as a result, first up to 1990 and then after 1992, when UNITA refused to accept the results of the presidential and parliamentary elections. The war only ended with the death of Savimbi in 2002.

In March 1976 South Africa was temporarily forced to withdraw to Namibia, but Angola remained one of the bloodiest theatres of the Cold War and thus is more devastated than any other country in southern Africa. The number and the proportion of people mangled by landmines is perhaps the greatest in the world. These hidden killers still continue to wreak sacrifices.

22. Silk, satin, rags, junk – for solidarity

The most popular man in France died in 2007 – the priest of the poor, Abbé Pierre, 94, who in 1949 founded the Emmaus movement, now spread in 50 countries. The name refers to a village on the West Bank where, according to the Bible, Jesus gave new hope to his disciples after the resurrection. Since the expulsion of 2 000 Palestinian villagers during the 1967 occupation the village became a recreational area for Israelis and is now called Canada Park.

Inga and Stellan Sandberg were among those who formed the first Emmaus group in Sweden in Lund in 1960 in the spirit of Abbé Pierre. The idea spread and in the early 1970s there were about ten groups, of which four came to focus mainly on support to liberation movements: Björkå (EB) outside Åseda, Fnysinge outside Enköping, Emmaus in Stockholm and Bread and Fishes (BoF) in Västerås. EB was the largest, followed by BoF.

In the 1960s the Emmaus groups were characterised by the movement’s original ideas: that one should not turn away a stranger, that one should not quiz him on who he is, where he is going or whence he comes, and that one share what one has. Believers added: “Never turn a stranger away, it could be a travelling angel.”

The fundamental idea was that the best kind of help to give is to give him/her something to live *for* and not merely something to live *off*. To stretch out a helping hand is great, but to give a needy person the opportunity to in turn stretch out his/her hand to another person in need is greater. This applies to both individuals and groups.

In the 1970s the first three Emmaus groups had their main sources of inspiration in the left movement and Marxist theory, while Bread and Fishes was largely inspired by radical Latin American liberation theologians. Common to all four groups was the conviction that support can only be meaningful if the basic cause of the injustices is attacked. Support was thus directed to movements and people who were working to change their situation and the unjust structures. This meant a transfer of resources in the form of clothes, material and money, resources collected in Sweden through the widespread collection of the affluent society’s discarded but fully functional products. Recycling was the key to practical solidarity.

Its day-to-day activities were often all but glamorous work in a dusty and dirty environment; the organisations were and are dependent on a living commitment to be able to continue to develop their work. The practical efforts were combined with active participation in the work of shaping public opinion for the liberation movements and against colonialism and apartheid.



Emma Björkå.

From 1973 EB drifted in the direction of KFML(r) (*Kommunistiska Förbundet Marxist-Leninsterna/revolutionärerna*; Communist League Marxist-Leninists /the revolutionaries/), which made cooperation with other left groups more difficult. It also kept some sympathisers at bay, among them Gunnar Björberg (who worked first at Emmaus Gothenburg, later at Björkå, 1965–70):

People with a less dogmatic view of life, among

whom I counted myself, were ideologically frightened off by the aggression that was revealed vis-à-vis society and its institutions ... Even if I was more or less born a socialist and was a little amused and fascinated by the rhetoric of tribute/homage, in time it became, so to say, “too much of a good thing”.

In 1969 the first clothing from EB and Emmaus



*Abbé Pierre at a
visit to Emmaus
Stockholm 1971.*

Stockholm was sent to FNLA. In 1970 clothes were sent to PAIGC. In 1971 clothes were sent to as many as seven liberation movements but most went to Frelimo. After consultation with the Africa Groups, it was decided only to send clothes to MPLA in the future; thus, in this case, the evaluation of the liberation movements in Angola coincided with the government's.

The liberation movements' priorities varied over the years, and this also applied to material support (hospital equipment, school material, kitchen equipment, spectacles, etc). In the 1990s huge volumes of about 1 400 tons of clothing/year were sent to southern Africa. A major problem was the cost of shipping, but from 1972 Sida contributed to freight costs. EB showed it was capable of great expansion. From 15 people in 1965, by 1993-94 as many as 66 people worked there. The total turnover was over 21 million kronor, of which Sida contributed one third.

In 1972 the initiative to start BoF was taken by Bernt Kviberg, a youth instructor in the Baptist church, and Lennart Bendix, a practical visionary, employed by the cathedral in Västerås. A painting on glass in the latter's flat inspired the name. It represented the miracle in the New Testament where Jesus managed to feed thousands from five loaves of bread and two fishes.

Bernt Kviberg was inspired by *Ny gemenskap* (New Community), just formed in Stockholm. It was an organisation linked to the church and directed at social drop-outs. Among their other activities it organised *Alternativ Jul* (Alternative Xmas). On two occasions he also attended Emmaus international summer camps in France and Switzerland and was inspired by Latin America. Subsequently he worked

for a year at Emmaus Fny-singe.

The first *Ekumeniska u-veckan* (Ecumenical Development Week) was held in 1973 and was followed by several others up to the 1990s (see below). They were organised all over the country and became a source of inspiration and knowledge for BoF, specially during the 1970s, when the topics of the weeks were close to BoF's support for liberation movements in southern Africa. Behind the development

weeks were SEN (Swedish Ecumenical Council), SMR (Swedish Mission Council) and SKU (Swedish Christian Youth Council). Bertil Högberg, later very active in the Africa Groups among other organisations, was organiser of studies for the Free Church Study Association (*Frikyrkliga Studieförbundet*) and charged with rooting the development week in the counties of Västmanland and Dalarna. He came into contact with BoF through this job and over time worked more and more with them.

In 1975 BoF defined itself as an anti-imperialistic organisation, but its source of inspiration was still "the Christian message of love and justice between people". BoF had an open character and put priority on cooperation with other organisations. A major crisis in 1977-78 led to the basic Christian ideas being relinquished. There was a high personnel turnover and, faced with the threat of closure, former



Emmaus Stockholm collecting clothes for the refugee settlements of ZANU.



Sorting at Emmaus Björkå in the early 70-s. Marion Sobeck left.



Bertil Högberg and Eva Strimling (Tänneryd) on the mountain of unsorted clothes at the Bread and Fishes 1980.

staff members like Bertil Högberg and Eva Strimling took over various tasks to save the organisation.

During the 1970s BoF started cooperating with a number of local Africa Groups, and shipped medical and dental equipment to Mozambique and to SWAPO, amongst large consignments of other materials. Things like baby kits (starter packs for the newborn) were produced together with the Västerås diocese of the Church of Sweden, a project with a large mobilising effect (they are still being produced today). It was part of the important work of influencing public opinion. With regard to clothing support, the most BoF collected was 1 000 tons. In the early 1990s there were 25 full-time jobs, and turnover was almost 9 million kronor, just over one third of which was contributed by Sida.



A wooden container with hospital beds and other medical equipment, is opened by SWAPO in Angola. The containers are then assembled as houses.

Income from sales among the organisations increased in time, but the most efficient venture to earn their own income and streamline their work first came during the 1990s, as a result of substantially reduced allocations from Sida. The ability to adapt was what was crucial and still determines the size of solidarity support and thus the organisations' right to exist.

In 1989 the national organisation *Praktisk Solidaritet* (Practical Solidarity) was formed. At the time Emmaus Björkå and Emmaus Stockholm advocated a fusion of the organisations. Bread and Fishes together with Emmaus Sundsvall (Fnysinge's heir) pleaded for independence but close cooperation. The latter line prevailed.



The noose is tightening around Ian Smith and the white minority regime in Rhodesia.

5.

1975–1980

**WHITE ON BLACK
– RENEWED
STRUGGLE**

23. The country that disappeared beyond the horizon

After Båstad all was quiet on Rhodesia. The country disappeared from sight in the Swedish debate. Perhaps – and paradoxically – it was because of the comprehensive sanctions Sweden introduced against Rhodesia in 1969 after the 1968 Security Council decision. The question was no longer a controversial political issue, neither between the government and opposition nor between the government and the Africa Groups. Sanctions also entailed that there was no longer a Swedish embassy in Salisbury (now Harare). The only Swedes who could fol-



Tore Bergman, missionary in Rhodesia and later Africa secretary at Church of Sweden Mission. Here with a student during a chemistry experiment in Chegato 1957.

low developments on site were missionaries, but there was no Gunnar Helander among them.

Most missionaries sent by SKM came from disciples of the eighteenth century Swedish priest Schartau, whose doctrines had a great influence on the west coast of Sweden. As a result they were conservative, and some were clearly racists. They had two arguments for not becoming involved in Rhodesian politics:

- They did not have the British background of the Rhodesian whites.
- Theologically they embraced the doctrine of two spheres – the division into a worldly rule and a spiritual realm; citizens should obey authority, which is appointed by God (Rom 13). “One must obey God more than people” according to the apostle Peter (Acts 5:29) and thus to defend the principle of all people’s equal worth before God was not a sufficiently important motive for them to become involved.

The Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, independent in 1963, in 1964 became a member of the newly formed Zimbabwe Christian Council, which had close relations to the World Council of Churches. Together with the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Lutheran Church developed increasingly severe criticism of the Smith regime, particularly on the question of its land and educational policies. Very little of this emerged in what was being discussed in Sweden.

In 1966, SKM’s Africa Secretary Holger Benetts-son published the book *Problemet Rhodesia* (The Rhodesian Problem) through NAI (Nordic Africa

Institute, formerly SIAS, Scandinavian Institute for African Studies). He maintained that the problem was rooted in white contempt for Africans, at the same time as he regretted the split between ZANU and ZAPU. This clear break with previous missionary reports confirmed that progressive Swedish missionaries who sympathised with the struggle for liberation did exist. Their influence on public opinion in Rhodesia and in Sweden was, however, limited.

The Catholic Church in Rhodesia was most outspoken and paid a high price. A bishop, 23 foreign missionaries and a local priest were killed by the regime's forces and by guerrillas. A bishop and 18 missionaries were deported and over 60 mission stations, schools and hospitals were closed. In the 1960s and 1970s the Catholic Church had a modest following in Sweden, and news of its Rhodesian sister church's great problems never reached the Swedish public.

It was not much better in the media in the early 1970s. With the exception of the odd series of articles on the cultural pages, very little attention was paid to Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front. Like South Africa, it subsequently evolved increasingly racist policies, even if they were not as far-reaching, judicially.

The situation in Rhodesia was absurd. 240 000 whites ruled over 5 million blacks through "just discrimination", which was seen to mean "to recognise the differences that exist among people" and to administer them "so that harmonic relationships and growing welfare is assured for all". In reality blacks were subjected to continual humiliation and economic difficulties.

Great Britain was hesitant, despite being charged by the UN to deal with the regime. For Smith the

"This clear break with previous missionary reports confirmed that progressive Swedish missionaries who sympathised with the struggle for liberation did exist. Their influence on public opinion in Rhodesia and in Sweden was, however, limited."

Catholic Church was a problem; it did not sound really credible to call it communist. It was easier to do this with The World Council of Churches. When they decided in 1970 to support the liberation movements, some protestant churches in Rhodesia became anxious and toned down their criticism of the regime's school policies. In turn, this reduced the inclination of the mother churches in the North to sound the alarm. There were, however, exceptions. At a Nordic Conference of church leaders in Oslo in January 1972 on the Africans' struggle in Namibia and Rhodesia, the Finnish theologian Fredrik Cleve declared:

The church's fear of polarisation has in practice meant that it easily ended up on the side of the oppressors. Polarisation as an instrument for integration and justice was disregarded. Racism is a class problem; discrimination is a way of crucifying Christ anew.

He gained support for this interpretation, and the churches criticised Western industrial investments in southern Africa "because of their general tendency (to function) to the detriment of the African population".

24. Black division complicates the picture

As the first of the liberation movements in southern Africa, ZANU received direct support from Sweden as early as 1969; whereas ZAPU received support not until 1973. The black opposition to the white regime was split by repeated internal conflicts. Some of these had ethnic roots: Shona ($\pm 80\%$ of the population) dominated ZANU, and Ndebele ($\pm 10\%$) dominated ZAPU. Internal power struggles were one cause, another was historical outrages between the ethnic groups. In addition the conflicts may have been stronger because ZANU leaders like Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe as well as ZAPU's Joshua Nkomo were imprisoned between 1964 and 1974.

In December 1971 – with the Methodist ministers Abel Muzorewa and Canaan Banana as its leaders – the African National Council (ANC) was formed to unite opposition to the proposed Anglo-Rhodesian settlement. The Swedish government saw the proposal as “a hard blow” to those who worked for equality between the races.

From the end of 1972 Sweden had contact with both ZANU and ZAPU. This gave Sweden a unique relationship compared to both the Western powers and the Eastern bloc. An expression of this was that Herbert Chitepo – ZANU's leader in exile and seen by some as Zimbabwe's Mandela – in October 1972 told Pierre Schori of the Foreign Ministry and Anders Möllander of Sida that – in agreement with Frelimo – it was decided to move the armed struggle eastwards before the end of the year with resultant new waves of refugees to take care of.



The button from the Africa Groups did not mention the names of the organisations.

The tension between ZANU and ZAPU continued, which may partly explain why the Africa Groups expressed a relatively absent-minded interest to the Smith-regime. The book *Afrika: Imperialism och Befrielsekamp* (1972, *Africa: Imperialism and the Liberation Struggle*) did not even discuss Zimbabwe. Then there was the notion of the absolute primacy of the armed struggle, while political mobilisation of the population was not accorded the same importance. Only in 1976 did the Africa Groups start a Zimbabwe campaign, to benefit the “guerrilla war”.

The change of government in Sweden in 1976 did not affect the size and principal direction of assistance. Because of the Liberal Party's anti-communist attitude on other questions, one might have expected that support to ZAPU would be called into question because of its good relations with the Eastern bloc. Instead the Liberal Party was ZAPU's strongest advocate in Sweden. Among the front line states Tanzania was closer to ZANU and Zambia closer to ZAPU, which may also have played a role. Zimbabwe was the only country where two liberation movements received state support from Sweden.

25. Détente with hindsight

During a visit to Sweden in November 1974, Herbert Chitepo was received like a head-of-state. He met the Prime Minister, the Foreign and Development Cooperation Ministers as well as Sida's General Director. TV2 recorded a programme with him and in general he attracted media attention. The re-

ason was that the previous week the Front Line States' presidents – Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Seretse Khama of Botswana and Samora Machel of Mozambique – had met leaders of the liberation movements in Zimbabwe.

Among them were the imprisoned Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo and Nbadaningi Sithole. They had been temporarily released, surprisingly, a result of negotiations between Kaunda and South Africa's Premier John Vorster. He had assured Kaunda that Smith was now prepared to accept majority rule. The aim of the meeting would be to discuss how a peaceful transition could be achieved. Chitepo was sceptical and believed that the will to negotiate was due rather to the liberation movements' military successes and that Smith wanted to gain time and undermine ZANU's position. The impending risk was a puppet government.

On 7th December 1974 a common manifesto, the *Lusaka Unity Accord*, was signed. It implied that all would assemble under the ANC's umbrella under the leadership of Bishop Abel Muzorewa. The structures would be rapidly coordinated with a joint congress in sight four months later. At the same time "the inevitability" of continued armed struggle was recognised as were all other forms of struggle until Zimbabwe was liberated.

It looked good on paper. Reality was different. There never was a united Zimbabwean liberation movement, on the contrary. Leadership struggles within ZANU between Sithole and Mugabe, among others, already existed when Chitepo was killed by a car bomb in Lusaka in March 1975. Irrespective of who did the deed – Smith or a ZANU rival – it led to the banning of ZANU and 1 660 ZANU supporters were arrested in Zambia, some of whom were tortured.

For the Smith regime this was the best thing that could have happened. On the surface, détente, but underneath the strongest opponent was disarmed. The Rhodesian position did not deteriorate when a few months later Sithole gave his support to the arrests. For the majority in ZANU's revolutionary council this meant that he had betrayed the revolution, and that Mugabe must take over the leadership. A minority left ZANU with Sithole.

Anders Björner, then at the Swedish embassy in Lusaka, made a strong plea for Sweden to support the relatives of the prisoners economically and to give the accused legal help, a politically sensitive matter in the light of Sweden's good relationship to Zambia. Through Swedish Amnesty Sweden gave the required support to the accused, which in the end – after 19 months – led to the release of the main accused, ZANU's head of defence, in October 1976.

Internal conflicts within liberation movements and their strained relationships to the Front Line States led to official Swedish support ending during 1975–77. Sida nevertheless continued to support Emmaus Björkä's and Bread and Fishes' freight transports to ZANU.

26. After détente

Détente in southern Africa died with the South African invasion in Angola in October 1975. ZAPU resumed its guerrilla actions from Zambia and Botswana, and ZANU stepped up its military activity from Mozambique. To crush this threat the infamous Selous Scouts undertook a raid over the border and brutally shot down over 1 000 refugees in the Nyadzonia massacre.

Before the Geneva Conference in December 1976 the ANC was reorganised and became the United



*The Africa
Bulletin reveals
Mozurewa
behind
the mask.*

ANC, while the more radical Canaan Banana (later Zimbabwe's first president) joined ZANU. It hardly came as a surprise that the negotiations led nowhere. Smith soon returned home and he hadn't given any promises. The end result was a certain coopera-

tion between ZANU and ZAPU, a pragmatic marriage in the form of the Patriotic Front.

After the collapse of the Geneva Conference, the Front Line States agreed in January 1977 to give political support to the Patriotic Front. This made it

easier for Thorbjörn Fälldin's government to give increased support to ZANU and ZAPU despite the Moderates' critical attitude. To what extent the Moderate party's ideological organ *Svensk Tidskrift* reflected the views of the party leaders is unclear, but it did not mince matters regarding Development Cooperation Minister, Ola Ullsten (fp): Of the country's "quarrelling groups" he had:

opted for [the one] qualified to kill most whites in Rhodesia... The most communist supported [group], the so-called Patriotic Front, is to receive Swedish financial assistance... It is unbelievable how much the concept of neutrality can cover... Palme's government introduced support to revolutionary movements from the aid budget. The idea might have been raised in Moscow. Those who took up arms for socialism... were supported... Mr Ullsten innocently continues along Mr Palme's road.

Because of their scepticism towards both ZANU and ZAPU the Africa Groups had never actively pursued the issue of state support to them. However, Emmaus Björkå, Emmaus Stockholm and Bread and Fishes had long had a close relationship with ZANU. EB even had two "comrades" from ZANU placed with them in 1974–75 both for practical work and to work with information. In a letter between ZANU and EB not only practical questions were discussed, but also policies, in a tone of mutuality. They regarded each other as comrades in the struggle. Nevertheless the split was a problem.

Mai Palmberg recounts the following from a conference in Lisbon in April 1977, organised by the Soviet supported Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization. The issue of ZAPU's and ZANU's unity was at the top of the agenda, and the Nordic delega-



Robert Mugabe from ZANU has a limited interest in the meeting about unity with Joshua Nkomo at Easter time 1979 in Lusaka.

tes were able to meet ZAPU's president Joshua Nkomo and ZANU's president Robert Mugabe:

First Nkomo came. He was the picture of a father of his country. He sat there... in our midst, but said nothing worth quoting. Empty phrases. Then Mugabe came. Don't bother about the Patriotic Front, he said, give all support to us. He made a few sarcastic comments about ZAPU and Nkomo. After these interviews we had a meeting to discuss how we should relate to this. The best we can do for Zimbabwe's people is not to write anything at all, I suggested, and this was accepted as our line of action. We supported virtually all strivings for unity within the Patriotic Front. Censorship? Perhaps, but we did not want to join a game that might contribute to further divisions.



Första besöket i Sverige för den afrikanska ledaren Robert Mugabe där första-
tag han mötte gruppen "Brödet och fiskarna" i Västerås och som premiärminister
fick han i mötet på fredag på TV.

Fall för l... för M...

Robert Mugabe
här i Sverige
med sin hustru
Annetta Mugabe
och en svensk
kvinnor som
de varit med
på besök i Sverige.

Robert Mugabe
och sin hustru
Annetta Mugabe
sitter i den
sittsalen som
Sveriges och Fins
Mugabe har
alltid varit
med på besök i Sverige.

På besök i Sverige
har Robert Mugabe
och sin hustru
Annetta Mugabe
med sig en svensk
kvinnor som
de varit med
på besök i Sverige.

Mugabe mötte regeringen, hustrun Afrikagrupperna

Picture from the visit by Mugabe to the Bread and Fishes in 1979. Then published in an editorial by Anders Mellbourn. Now in a rerun when he came as the prime minister.

When Mugabe came to Sweden in September 1977 he first went to BoF in Västerås to discuss the collection of clothes and delivery of goods, and continued to Sida, the Foreign Ministry and Ola Ullsten. He also visited *Kyrkans Hus*, home of the Church of Sweden, in Uppsala.

Under the influence of the Emmaus groups, the Africa Groups – like the government – began to support the Patriotic Front from their congress in 1977. In the light of this, AGIS board in November 1978 found it “unfortunate” that BoF had decided only to support ZANU. Bertil Högborg was charged with resolving the issue. In the end, those Africa Groups (among them Gothenburg) that wanted to,

could sort and pack clothes for ZAPU in BoF’s premises.

27. The Church of Sweden Mission and the liberation movements

Interestingly, the state established its support before the Africa Groups. To a great extent this was a result of the Church of Sweden Mission (SKM) on the basis of its work in Rhodesia developing direct contacts with the liberation movements (ZANU in 1976 and ZAPU in 1977). SKM’s relations to Sida and the Foreign Ministry were also close, through the Board for Humanitarian Assistance. During a



Liberation movement soldiers at the Church of Sweden Missions station Masase in southern Zimbabwe.

visit to Southern Rhodesia in November 1975, Tore Bergman, at the time Africa Secretary in SKM, noted that some of the “exiled youths in Mozambique are members of the Lutheran Church or come from that area”.

Because of external criticism of Church of Sweden support to The World Council of Churches’ *Programme to Combat Racism* (see below) Bergman acted “in his personal capacity”, for instance when he wrote to Mugabe in April 1976 and asked for more information to be able to mobilise support from Sweden if possible. At the same time he wrote to Jonas Shiri, Lutheran bishop in Bulawayo, that in Sweden people were bound to question whether:

the assistance [proposed] is not, de facto, indirectly, assistance for arms and soldiers. Can a church and a mission organisation involve it-

self in this? The reply... is not so easy. Are we not already as whites involved against the blacks? Who started the fighting – the strong man show – in Rhodesia? If we remain passive, are we not already taking sides, even militarily?

Bergman was rapidly answered by both Mugabe and Edgar Tekere, who described the great need among the 20 000 refugees in the camps: education for the younger ones (1 400 aged 7–15 years) and agricultural projects for self-support. Contacts with ZANU were controversial, especially within the Swedish church, but Bergman was soon supported by the board of SKM.

Through the newly formed Mozambican Christian Council and the Lutheran World Federation’s office in Maputo, SKM could soon channel

support to refugee children in the camps. In September 1976 ZANU sent a delegation to Sweden that included Didymus Mutasa, one of the founders of Cold Comfort Farm in Rhodesia (banned in 1971), and Ruvimbika Tekere, Edgar Tekere's wife and responsible for work with women at ZANU's London office. They visited SKM, Sida and Emmaus Björkå.

During a visit to SKM the previous year Robert Mugabe said of the armed struggle:

We do not say that you necessarily have to support [it], but the churches are duty bound to support the cause of justice. They must, at the very least, loudly denounce the regime.

He commended the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Christian Council and Christian Care, but stated:

The Swedish mission has not distinguished itself by denouncing the regime... it is true that we receive support from the government and Sida, but we appreciate the assistance even more, when it comes from people like yourselves. A government is a government. We would like to have our cause as deeply rooted in the hearts of the [Swedish] people as possible.

At this stage both ministers and members of the Lutheran church in Zimbabwe had been sent to prisons and to camps because of their political activities. The missionary Hugo Söderström reported that some of them might be released if they were permitted to go to Sweden. SKM took the economic responsibility, among others for pastor Arote Vellah, who became active in the Africa Group in Uppsala.

The Manama Exodus in January 1977 triggered SKM's close contact with ZAPU. The year before,

the liberation struggle reached SKM's mission area in southern Matabeleland, and many youths were travelling either to ZANU in Mozambique or to ZAPU in Zambia. Now over 300 youths, seven teachers, three nurses and a Lutheran minister left Manama Secondary School, 40 km from the Botswana border. Teacher Paulos Matjaka narrates:

We left in the evening of the first Sunday of the first term of the academic year. Some children ... were less than 13 years old. After travelling through the bush in pitch darkness throughout the night, sunrise found us crossing the Shashi River into Botswana en route to Zambia. We called it "going to Geneva"... We had two armed guerrillas in our company.

The school was founded early in the 1960s by Tore Bergman. Tord Harlin later became school principal. After Bergman returned home to Sweden he worked for SKM and Church of Sweden Aid. Several of the liberation movements' future leaders were educated in SKM schools, among them Edward Ndlovu, who in the late 1970s led most ZAPU delegations in their negotiations with Sida.

In March 1977 Tord Harlin went to Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia to find out what had happened to the Manama youth. In Lusaka, among others, he met ZAPU's leaders, who presented an educational project "New Manama". Later the project was estimated to cost about 10 million kronor for buildings, equipment etc. After having weighed the pros and cons of support to an armed liberation movement like ZAPU, Harlin observed that because of the actual situation there was no alternative way of helping and that SKM probably was "the first organisation that received a request of this kind".

The cost was assessed as being unreasonably

high. After much discussion back and forth SKM allocated 80 000 kronor in May to alleviate the most acute needs of 6 000 children. At the same time it tried to mobilise further support from Sida and through the Lutheran World Federation. A month later official state support to ZANU and ZAPU was reinstated.

28. South Africa returns – through the churches

While attention was on the wars in Vietnam and the Portuguese colonies, the issue of apartheid and white racism in South Africa had almost disappeared from the agenda. Its return largely depended on what happened within the churches, first internationally and then in Sweden.

At The World Council of Churches General Assembly in Uppsala in 1968 the churches of developing countries played a more prominent role than previously. In a strongly worded declaration the churches were exhorted to run a forceful campaign against racism and for full citizenship rights for its victims. Institutionalised racism as it appeared “in refined form” in many churches was declared scandalous. Instead the churches should withdraw their economic support from institutions that kept racism alive.

The issue of racism was closely linked to questions of economic justice and human rights. A Third World perspective dominated. It was also expressed in resolutions at a meeting of non-state churches in Örebro (March 1969). There, among other things, they declared their solidarity with Frelimo. By their “actions” Christians ought to try to



Nkomo is discussing building projects with a Yugoslav engineer. Left Ronald Henrysson that were with the CSM Africa secretary Tore Bergman and Tord Harling at this visit at the ZAPU "Victory Camp" 1977.

prevent the Cabora Bassa project and its support of white racism. They also expressed solidarity with the 30 or so priests and theologians accused of having organised a prayer service in Lund's cathedral in protest against the churches' indulgence towards a representative of the apartheid regime.

In 1969 the central committee of the World Council of Churches decided to launch the *Programme to Combat Racism* (PCR), linked to a fund from which it was later possible to give contributions to liberation movements for education, health care, legal aid. Conservative groups within and outside the churches saw this as evidence of communism in the World Council of Churches. They saw

their view being further confirmed by the World Council's 1972 decision to sell their own stocks and shares in companies working in countries ruled by Portugal and white racist regimes. At the same time, WCC encouraged member churches and individual Christians to use their influence, for example, at general meetings of shareholders.

In 1972 the Swedish Ecumenical Council (SEN) published a small but in principle important



The Africa group member Bertil Malmström was a resource person when the churches involved themselves in the liberation of southern Africa in a campaign week 1973.

brochure entitled *Kampen mot rasismen* (The struggle against racism). The Church of Sweden decided to donate a national collection to PCR, and both the Swedish Covenant Mission Church and Sida made donations to the same end. In Sida's case it was increased to a half million kronor in 1977 (today about 2 million) and from then it continued to grow. During the years 1986–91 more than 8 million kronor was donated to PCR through SEN, most of which came from Sida. The motivation was the need to combat racism both ideologically and practically and PCR was a good weapon in the struggle.

A large Christian National Meeting in Gothenburg in 1972 raised the issue of international justice. The decision was taken to hold an annual ecumenical development week to alert public opinion and create a Programme of Action. In 1973 the Development Week started with the topic *Rättvisan kan inte vänta* (Justice cannot wait), followed in 1974 by *Frihet åt förtryckta* (Freedom for the oppressed) with ambitious conceptual study books. In the latter, one of SEN's statements is reproduced, based on a major investigation undertaken on Swedish economic involvement in southern Africa. Churches and individuals were encouraged to review their shares in companies involved in South Africa, and it was suggested that the World Council of Churches cooperate with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) on actions against racial oppression in southern Africa. The Swedish companies working in South Africa were given two years to improve, but this did not help.

29. Kick out the priest!

SEN found that Swedish companies in South Africa were no better than other foreign firms on the question of pay differentials between whites and blacks.

At the suggestion of peace researcher Peter Walensteen, SEN decided that on the strength of having at least one share, it would be possible to take part in the shareholders' meetings of large companies.

The appearance of Lutheran Archbishop Olof Sundby and the leader of the Swedish Covenant Mission Church, Gösta Hedberg, at ASEA's shareholders' meeting on 14th March and Volvo's on 14th May 1975 attracted considerable attention in the press, radio and TV. They based their questions on observations made by Lester Wikström, secretary of SEN's international committee that visited South Africa at the beginning of the year. As requested, ASEA received the questions ahead of time. Wikström relates:

When we arrived at the shareholders meeting in Västerås we were informed the Archbishop would appear after the meeting and that ASEA had already answered the questions and would hand out both the questions and the answers after the shareholders' meeting. I explained that the Archbishop had prepared a number of further questions depending on the answers. In this way there would be a little dialogue. In addition we were there as shareholders with the right to put questions. Coverage by the mass media was very large.

A courteous atmosphere prevailed at ASEA's shareholders' meeting. One cannot say the same of Volvo's shareholders meeting. There the leader of the Swedish Covenant Mission Church, Gösta Hedberg addressed the board and put questions to them. After a relatively calm introduction one began to hear booing. Someone cried: "Throw out the priest!"

I also attended the Electrolux shareholders



"Throw out the priest – invest in South Africa" The shareholders of Volvo did not like it when the Swedish Ecumenical Council put forward questions by the church leader Gösta Hedberg.

meeting in Stockholm on 31st May 1976. In their answers to our written questions the company hid the cleaning services they ran in South Africa. They paid wages under the poverty line. At the shareholders meeting the company acknowledged the existence of the cleaning services and promised to review pay. I

still remember the company's advertisements in South Africa: "We keep South Africa clean".

The debate on sanctions against South Africa had moments when it was very heated. For my personal stand a statement in 1976 by the Christian Institute and its director Beyers Naudé was crucial: "Investments in South Africa are investments in apartheid and thus immoral, unjust and exploitative."

In its 1977 Programme of Action the SEN board gave its support to:

- an arms embargo against South Africa;
- efforts to ban new investments in South Africa through the UN;
- an increase in Swedish assistance to anti-apartheid organisations in southern Africa;
- a committee of enquiry tasked with investigating:
- the possibilities of changing Swedish currency laws so that new investments in South Africa could be stopped; and
- the preconditions for a gradual disinvestment of Sweden's economic relationships to South Africa.

SEN kept itself in the forefront of the debate and creation of public opinion in Sweden in regard to southern Africa during 1973–78. Focus lay on South Africa, but its international committee also followed and commented on developments in the other countries.

Lester Wikström later became deputy secretary in the South Africa commission of enquiry that the government appointed in 1977. The main secretary was Åke Magnusson. The following year its report, entitled *Förbud mot investeringar i Sydafrika* (SOU 1978:53, Prohibition on investments in South Afri-

ca) was published. The commission chose to define certain Volvo- and ASEA-controlled companies as outside the ambit of the proposal. This was later criticised by Claes Brundenius, Kenneth Hermele and Mai Palmberg in the book *Gränslösa affärer* (1980, Borderless business).

30. Massacre in Soweto

The relative calm in the early 1970s in South Africa was deceptive. The ANC had been forced into exile during the 1960s. With roots in the black churches, a new black awareness evolved through the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) with its base primarily among students in the South African Students Organization (SASO). Liberation was not seen as a purely political question; it also concerned liberating blacks from experiencing themselves as inferior to whites and required reconquering their cultural identity. To interpret this – as sometimes happens – as an expression of reverse racism and in contradiction to the ANC'S line is a false interpretation. Nothing indicated that the BCM leaders held such a view.

In 1972 an opinion poll among youths in Soweto showed that 98% did not want to be taught in the "oppressors' language" Afrikaans but preferred English. A decree in 1974 that Afrikaans must be used for the more theoretical subjects thus led to strong protests among pupils in Soweto. On 16th June 1976 several thousand students gathered for a peaceful protest march. The result was devastating with several hundred killed.

With the massacre in Soweto, international public opinion against apartheid was aroused again. It was further fuelled when in detention the young BCM leader Steve Biko was tortured to death by the police in 1977. He died. This brutal crime against

human rights made Biko a martyr in the eyes of the world; shortly afterwards the UN declared a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.

31. Political majority for sanctions

One of the first in Sweden to become involved in the question of apartheid was the Liberal Party's David Wirmark, who, in the late 1940s as a young politician in the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) came across the apartheid issue. In April 1960 he met Oliver Tambo in Tunis, and they became life-long friends. Around 1960 the liberals were in the vanguard of the first political debates on humanitarian assistance and apartheid.

Thorbjörn Fälldin's Centre Party had for years advocated sanctions against apartheid, as had the Left Party Communists. The Moderates, however, were consistently against all kinds of sanctions. For a long time the Social Democrats were indifferent to sanctions as a method, and it was primarily the trade union movement that acted as a brake. A certain UN fundamentalism – that only the Security Council ought to decide on sanctions – may also have played a role.

The government's critics did not keep silent. Their arguments had strong international backing from the World Council of Churches central committee in Utrecht in August 1972 and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) conference in Geneva in June 1973. The latter was a meeting against apartheid of 200 trade union organisations from the three trade union internationals; the Catholic World Confederation of Labour (WCL), the West-oriented ICFTU to which LO and TCO belong, and the East-oriented World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) to which the ANC's ally, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)



The southern Africa week of 1978 organised by the Africa Groups was advertised with Sam Nzima's picture of Hector Pietersen, the first victim of the SWETO uprising.

was affiliated.

Both assemblies supported the idea of isolating the apartheid regime. While waiting for mandatory sanctions to be declared by the UN, they paved the way for a dialogue with foreign companies in South Africa on accepting black and non-racially based trade unions. The choice was isolation or involvement. Despite objections from the ANC and SACTU, both the churches and the unions in Sweden chose the latter alternative – initially – in LO/TCO's case after a controversial trip to South Africa in ear-



Palme at the meeting of the movement of Christian Social Democrats 1976.

ly 1975. Nevertheless the government could not hide behind these alternatives. Without a doubt Per Wästberg had the broad anti-apartheid movement behind him when, in mid-1974, he asked in *Dagens Nyheter*:

How long can Sweden support armed liberation movements and severely condemn apartheid without cutting off economic relationships to South Africa?

The massacres that began in Soweto increased the pressure on the Swedish government. As in 1965, when Olof Palme in Gävle announced a new and more critical attitude to the USA on the question of Vietnam, he chose the 1976 congress of the Christian Social Democrats to launch a more positive line on economic sanctions against South Africa.

In a six point programme for European Social Democracy Palme summarised a strategy against apartheid:

- A mandatory UN arms embargo;
- Support to liberation movements;
- No recognition of Bantustans;
- More extensive UN sanctions;
- An independent Namibia;
- Study the issue of foreign companies and new investments in South Africa.

Although the Social Democrats lost the elections in 1976, from 1977 there was a majority in Parliament in favour of economic sanctions against South Africa. On 1st July 1979 new investments and the export of capital to South Africa and Namibia were prohibited, in accordance with the proposals put by the commission of enquiry on South Africa.

32. The Africa Groups gird their loins

Writer Adam Hochschild, best known for the book *King Leopold's Ghost* claimed, in another book, *Bury the Chains!*, that since the British campaign against the slave trade, solidarity movements have been united by two things:

- The motive force of solidarity is human compassion, not self-interest;
- The belief that information on injustices can lead to popular mobilisation to end them.

The Africa Groups in Sweden (AGIS) can thus be seen as one in a series of these solidarity movements, where the requisite conditions are strong convictions and great tenacity. The road to the formal formation of the organisation in 1975 was long.

In the background were SUL's boycott campaign and the South Africa Committees of the 1960s. Under the pressure of the broad Vietnam involvement the groups took a back seat and the few that survived – mostly in the major University towns – came to direct their support primarily towards the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. In 1970 the activists from Lund, Uppsala and Stockholm agreed on this; they did not see any guerrilla war in South Africa and Zimbabwe and were therefore sceptical towards the movements there. In addition, they started calling themselves the Africa Groups with reference to both Guinea Bissau and other possible countries like Congo and Kenya. Only in November 1974 did they recognise the ANC as the leading liberation movement in South Africa.

In the 1970s the criteria for membership was to attend a minimum number of activities, which made it difficult to recruit new members and increased the risk of sectarianism. Categorical criticism of the Social Democratic government made it more dif-



The Africa Bulletin is sold and money collected to MPLA by Hasse Eriksson at Forumtorget in Uppsala 1975. The daily activist work.



"In the 1970s the criteria for membership was to attend a minimum number of activities, which made it difficult to recruit new members and increased the risk of sectarianism."

difficult to work with the trade unions and SSU. The attempt in 1973 to form a common national organisation based on a broad platform against South Africa's racism, Portugal's colonialism and USA's imperialism broke down. Not until June 1976 did the Africa Groups finally succeed in uniting on a common programme.

Although they were marginalised for a long time, the Africa Groups played an important role in forming public opinion, not least on the local level – with *Afrikabulletinen* as an important instrument. Through it one could spread information from Namibia and South Africa that was otherwise difficult to get. It was often written under a pseudonym or



anonymously, partly to protect sources and writers, and partly to emphasise collective responsibility. By the late 1970s the print-order was 5 000 copies. In the 1980s the *Africa Bulletin* became increasingly professional and in 1994 it changed its name to *Södra Afrika* (southern Africa). At its height AGIS had 30 local groups and over time a total of 50 groups as well as 20 contact people.

In certain groups conspiracy theories flourished. The fear of infiltration by the Swedish secret police, SÄPO, was perhaps particularly strong in Gothenburg Africa Group (GAG). There was considerable disagreement on Angola's liberation movements, just as among the parliamentary parties. Superpower politics and Swedish sympathisers loyal to various acronyms led to long discussions, also on Rhodesia. Despite this, GAG cooperated with many other organisations. Activists Gert Klaiber and Hans Tollin recall:

GAG also cooperated with CUF, the Liberal Youth, SSU, trade unions, church organisations and other organisations. There were only two groups that we never cooperated with: the ex-

treme right, which is self-explanatory, and the Moderates and their organisations, for reasons that are more difficult to explain. Perhaps they hoped that market forces would liberate Africa's oppressed people? The Moderate Youth League (MUF, Moderata Ungdomsförbundet) was always invited to our manifestations but refused each time with the argument that they did not work cross-politically.

The question of South Africa was also hotly discussed because of political differences.

Some members maintained that the ANC did not represent the broad masses of the people and that we ought to support other groups and movements. In the end, we decided to support the ANC to the hilt. One important reason was that we were not sure about what kind of freedom the other movements wanted. We fought against colonialism and did not wish for any form of neo-colonialism in liberated countries, nor in a majority ruled South Africa. Special to South Africa was that there were active trade

"Although they were marginalised for a long time, the Africa Groups played an important role in forming public opinion, not least on the local level – with Afrikabulletinen as an important instrument. Through it one could spread information from Namibia and South Africa."

unions that we could contact. We helped arrange meetings between SACTU and the trade unions at SKF, Volvo and the ship-building yard Götaverken.

Formally GAG was a democratic organisation with free debate, but in concrete work a handful of people took the decisions. The reason was partly the sectarian left-wing discussing climate:

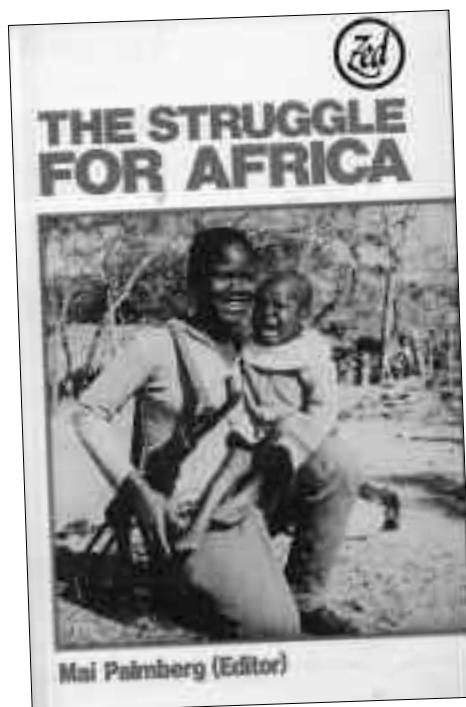
We weren't armchair leftists; we wanted to achieve results. Thus it was important to become united within the group of leaders and then get going. We were forced to rely on one another. When we went round at night to paste up posters we were going beyond the bounds of the law. If someone was caught, we others could rely on her or him keeping quiet about any accomplices. We shared fines in solidarity. When we crept around in supermarkets and pasted small stickers with the text "Don't buy South African goods", we were not really legal either.

Our work bore the influence of the mood

after German terrorist attacks in Stockholm (hostage drama at the West German embassy in 1975, and in 1977 a foiled kidnap attempt of a cabinet minister, Anna-Greta Leijon). The government relinquished all democratic rules and threw people out, non-Swedish citizens, without giving a reason. Supervision of workplaces was also dramatically heightened. Revelations of a "hospital spy" employed to register left-wingers at Sahlgrenska Hospital in Gothenburg in 1975 produced shock waves. Certain liberation movements in Africa were still regarded as terrorists, and the ANC's status was ambiguous. Some of us were afraid that, as an activist in the Africa Groups, one might be accused of consorting with terrorists.

It was important for Africa Groups' campaigns to be based on both feelings and knowledge, and at times the demands made on members were draining. They were expected not only to be committed but also to share a common view of the conflicts. The publication and study of qualified study books was one way of reaching that goal. *Afrika: Imperialism och befrielsekamp* (Africa: Imperialism and liberation struggle) from 1972 was based on a Marxist analysis. *Befrielsekampen i Afrika* (The liberation struggle in Africa) edited by Mai Palmberg was published in 1977 (revised in 1980 and 1982) and was published in English in 1983 as *The Struggle for Africa* (Zed Press). 1990 saw the publication of *Södra Afrika: kamp för befrielse och utveckling* (Southern Africa: the struggle for liberation and development) written by Kenneth Hermele and Mai Palmberg.

For AGIS, 1978 marked the beginning of much greater influence than in the past. In May the organisation undertook a dramatic revision of its views



"The Liberation Struggle in Africa" the study book that created a financial base to start a national office. The book was later translated also published in English by ZED press.



on LO, TCO and the Social Democrats by both welcoming LO's campaign for the people in southern Africa and by revoking their own "earlier oversimplified statements about these organisations". With this they also cleared the way for the creation of ISAK (Isolate South Africa Committee).

Sales of the new study book *The liberation struggle in Africa* netted a surplus, and the Africa Groups opened an office. The Stockholm Africa Group rented out a part of its premises at Humlegårdsgatan on Östermalm. Bertil Högberg, Georg Dreifaldt and Lena Johansson were the first employees. Towards the end of 1982 AGIS moved to Solidaritetshuset, a

building of cultural and historic interest at Barnängen on the island of Södermalm, where a number of solidarity groups have their headquarters.

As a leftist organisation with roots in the anti-authoritarian revolt of 1968, AGIS avoided hierarchic structures. No one should stand above another. In practice Dick Urban Vestbro functioned as chairman. When Vestbro left the board in 1978 it became difficult to manage the work of the board, and in 1981 Bertil Högberg was secretly elected as chairperson. When, after a year away from the board, he was again elected to that post in 1983, he became the first official chairperson of the Africa Groups.



DEMONSTRATION

TOTAL BOJKOTT AV SYDAFRIKA!

**SAMLING 10.30 I HUMLEGÅRDEN
LÖRDAGEN DEN 11 OKTOBER**

Vi går till Sergels Torg där demonstrationen avslutas med ett möte kl. 12.00.

TALARE:
Eskop Kister Sandahl
Lindwe Mabasa, ANC
Nkomo Tlopeti, SWAPO
Lennart Renckstam, SAK



6.

1978-1983

**STAND UP FOR
SOUTHERN
AFRICA**

33. Rhodesia becomes Zimbabwe

By the late 1970s Sweden had become the most important donor in regard to non-military support to both ZANU and ZAPU, especially when it came to food and vehicles. Emmaus Björkå and Bread and Fishes continued donating clothes, and from old emergency stores 20 000 pairs of pants were sent to the movements. There was a great demand for medical support, and a complete field hospital was put at ZAPU's disposal in Zambia. The extent of the support did not eliminate certain internal tensions. There was even rivalry between the two movements about assistance.

Over the years support to ZANU came to be of an increasingly political kind, with support for the creation of civil institutions (they claimed to operate in 75% of Zimbabwe), while ZAPU support remained more humanitarian. The difference could, among other things, have had to do with the movements' own long-term strategies. The support was, however, not uncritical. Both ZAPU and ZANU were criticised in Sweden, the latter for death threats against "black traitors" like Muzorewa and Sithole in November 1978. Mugabe admitted that the statement "was perhaps formulated rather drastically".

By the end of the 1970s, 30 000 had been killed in war, and the regime – now formally ruled by a coalition under Muzorewa – was well on the way to collapse. The British government under Margaret

Thatcher was forced, at the Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka in August 1979, to begin negotiating with the Patriotic Front on independence. The Lancaster House Agreement of 21st December 1979 entailed that Great Britain for a time resumed the role of colonial power with a single task: to organise free elections to a parliament with a black majority of 80 seats. For a decade the remaining 20 seats were divided among whites, coloureds and Asians, who thus had heavy overrepresentation.

During the pre-election period Sweden continued to give humanitarian support not only to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) but also to ZANU and ZAPU for repatriation of refugees from Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia. The British government said this was giving an unfair advantage to the Patriotic Front's parties. They also received 200 000 kronor each from the Social Democrats.

In January 1980 the Africa Groups initiated a broad *ad hoc* committee, Friends of the Patriotic Front (*Patriotiska Frontens Vänner*), followed by an appeal in *Dagens Nyheter* signed by 50 Swedes, including parliamentarians from both blocks, among them CH Hermansson (vpk), Birgitta Dahl (s), Pär Granstedt (c) and Olle Wästberg (fp). The appeal was followed by a demonstration at the British embassy with the demand that the Thatcher government should see to it that the Lancaster House



Independence celebration in Zimbabwe 1980.



The ZANU print shop in Maputo. The Africa Groups, Bread and Fishes and Emmaus Björkå send a chartered aircraft with supplementary equipment to Salisbury that were seized.

Agreement was implemented.

In the appeal it was noted that South African troops remained in Rhodesia, that thousands of people were still in prison, that Muzorewa's private army terrorised people in the rural areas and that Rhodesian military and police were harassing the Patriotic Front. It concluded that the British governor, Lord Soames, was obviously permitting infringements of the Lancaster House Agreement. The British ambassador Jeffrey Petersen made an

indignant protest to the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

The strong tensions in Rhodesia created a lot of apprehension in Sweden that the elections on 27–29 February would not be held, an apprehension expressed by both Olof Palme and Ola Ullsten. The British were still hoping for a large coalition in Salisbury and on Swedish support for this. In a letter to the Swedish Foreign Ministry they explained:

There is no obligation on the [British] Governor to invite the leader of the largest party to form the government, unless that party has an absolute majority... We hope that the Swedish government will take every opportunity to explain to African governments that even if Mr Mugabe's party wins the most seats, it will not necessarily enter the government, perhaps referring to the fact that the largest single party in Sweden is in opposition.

To the overwhelming surprise of the British government – but not Swedish politicians – ZANU-PF won an absolute majority – 57 seats – while PF-ZAPU won 20 seats, Muzorewa's UANC 3 and Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front 20. ZANU-PF was dominated by the Shona – ±80% of the population – which may have contributed to the result.

On the 18th April 1980 the independent state of Zimbabwe was proclaimed. Popular mobilisation in Sweden could now focus on South Africa and Namibia.

34. The many faces of the trade unions

At ILO's major conference on apartheid in 1973, SACTU was recognised as a legitimate trade union representative for South Africa, while TUCSA (Trade Union Council of South Africa) was not permitted to participate in the conference as it was seen as

being too close to the regime. This was an international breakthrough for SACTU, which advocated and gained a hearing for the isolation of the South African regime. At the same time the importance of “economic, moral and material support to South African workers and people through their genuine trade unions and political organisations” was emphasised.

As has been previously mentioned, LO and TCO chose – together with their Nordic sister organisations and under the ICFTU umbrella –, the line of support rather than sanctions. SACTU’s affiliation to the East-oriented WFTU was for them not only a political but also a psychological obstacle to cooperation. This led to a paradoxical result:

While all the Swedish opponents to apartheid, including the labour movement, rallied to the support of the ANC, LO and TCO refused to cooperate with the ANC’s trade union ally. Nevertheless, one TCO-member, the Swedish Union of Clerical and Technical Employees in Industry (SIF), did give economic support to SACTU. At the same time SACTU – as the only non-liberation movement – received official Swedish support from 1977/78, and from 1983/84 was included in the support given to the ANC. Still, the strategic lines did cross one another.

While LO and TCO pleaded for a reformist line and for support to the emerging black trade unions in South Africa, they emphasised at the same time that Swedish investments in southern Africa entailed a support to the white and colonial regimes. The duty to stop them was, however, the government’s. Jan Olsson, international secretary of the Metal Workers’ Union (Metall) and one of the six members of LO/TCO’s delegation to South Africa in 1975:



SACTU was for a long time the only trade union that rejected racial division.

We saw that revolution would come rolling over the country in a number of years and asked ourselves: What should our policies as a trade union movement be up to this point? We saw that this revolution would not come from those who were outside the country, nor from those who sat on Robben Island, but from people in the townships. So we said: How shall we



Two trade union leaders at SKF in the beginning of the the 80-s, Göran Johansson from Gothenburg and Daniel Dube from Uitenhage.

deal with this? We decided that we wanted to support free union rights in South Africa. That was what we knew [we could do]. Let politicians fix what they are good at, we will look after the people – and the trade union movements.

SACTU's main line was isolation, at the same time as recognising a need to develop contacts with and support to the internal unions. As an exile organisation SACTU had some problems organising unions in South Africa; thus the political struggle tended to become more important than the trade union struggle.

LO's largest union, Metall, did not agree with

unilateral Swedish sanctions but supported sanctions declared by the UN. It said its South African partners agreed with this line. One of those who advocated "hibernation" and union organisation was Göran Johansson, then the chairman of Metall at SKF in Gothenburg and now a senior s-councillor in Gothenburg:

We demanded that the black workers ought to be treated as all the others. Fairly soon we felt that the greatest resistance to change did not come from management in the Swedish companies, but from the white foremen on the factory floor. It was very difficult to get at them and break down the barriers. Company mana-

gement did not know what was happening on the floor; there might be a white foreman who had a “black book”, in which he kept track of those he favoured and set his own pay levels.

What we learnt from the work in South Africa was how unbelievably important it was to get to know and understand the culture in different contexts. When I see South Africa today, what worries me most is that the “blacks have become so black”, people are sacked from – or do not get jobs – because they are not black enough. They are losing the strength they might have gained, because of these splits.

Within the Swedish Mine Workers Union (Gruv) and the Municipal Workers’ Union (Kommunal) the picture of South Africa differed, and they had a more positive view on sanctions. Anders Stendalen was chairman of Gruv:

The guidance I received from our comrades in South Africa was very important to me. We realised that an efficient weapon in the struggle against apartheid was to refuse companies to make new investments. Some thought this was a militant attitude, but we stood by our line. Mandela also said that one does not put out the fire just before the water boils.

Through direct adult education in South Africa, among other inputs, Gruv played a major role in building up the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Johan Peanberg, then Kommunal’s international secretary, said that even if the question of sanctions did not split the trade union movement it damaged its reputation as an anti-apartheid force. Kommunal supported sanctions and boycotts:

Metall’s divergent voice set the tone within the



Tormod Nasset left. With the American musician Little Steven, as a booster for the ISAK child campaign.

trade union movement, because export industries were leading. From previously having a common view, those of us who were positive to sanctions lost influence and the trade union movement followed a softer line. Still, after a while public opinion changed, and the view on sanctions and boycotts became tougher again.

Out in the country the conflicts at union headquarters were less noticeable. Most of the time everyone against apartheid cooperated without difficulties. In Oskarshamn, for example, Tormod Nasset was active in both Metall and the Social Democrats and was a member of the board of the local ISAK (see below). This contact came through a tip from LO. He and some friends one day decided that they wanted to do something against apartheid. They phoned LO and were told about ISAK:

ISAK had a simple constitution and all could join. We did not want to make it a party organisation. Anyway, everyone in Oskarshamn knew who we were. Each of us worked in our



Cyril Ramaphosa and the NUM leadership meets Olof Palme and Anders Stendalen.

respective organisations and initiated interest and support. There were several political parties and organisations, from Metall's Chapter 32 to Döderhults nature conservation society and Emmaus Björkå. ISAK accepted all who wanted to join and when we were involved in large campaigns like "Ungdom mot apartheid" (Youth against apartheid) everyone joined, the municipality, commerce and industry, social

democratic organisations and the trade unions.

In early 1977 Kristina Persson – later county governor and Deputy Director of the Bank of Sweden – visited South Africa at the behest of LO/TCO to review trade union activity and organisations. International contacts were still unusual:

I travelled round alone – to Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban. When I ca-

me to Durban, Alec Erwin from the Metal Workers Union was waiting for me at the airport.

“Kristina, you are not alone,” said Alec. After this I had about 10 guys shadowing me, three cars, a massive following, all the time. Thus I only met people who were openly union organisers formally and clearly. On one occasion when we wanted to talk about slightly more sensitive matters like how our support ought to be organised, Alec Erwin and I took a walk along the beach in Durban and talked about how we could transfer money, whether we should do it openly and bilaterally, through the trade union internationals, or the churches.

During the six weeks she spent in South Africa, Kristina Persson laid the basis for cooperation that acquired great importance for both the Swedish and the new South African trade union movement. It was cooperation based on trust, but it also involved the psychology of opposition to apartheid that created strong ties and a sense of community between people:

The struggle brought people together in a fascinating way. After only a few weeks I was clearly a part of the South African liberation struggle. I identified myself with those I met and they showed me they had very great confidence in me. It was the 1970s even in South Africa, and there were youths who identified with the left. To work with the unions was a way of strengthening the political opposition. I met young academics, Alec Erwin was one of them, Bernie Fanaroff another, who worked in exactly the same way as I did, because of ideals.

In a meeting with union organisers from Port Elizabeth and Durban she discovered that the unions were split and suspicious of each other:

I took up a discussion about whether they could not find a way of cooperating – it would also simplify contacts in the future; instead of the Swedish trade union movement they could distribute the funds themselves. They agreed with this. When I had been home for a couple of weeks, they contacted me and said: Now we have discussed this and we shall call a meeting of all the organisations and suggest that we form a confederation of South African trade unions.

It took time, but in 1979 FOSATU, the Federation of South African Trade Unions was formed, to be succeeded in 1985 by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). It chose not to join either of the trade union internationals. From the left Kristina Persson was accused of being a CIA-agent, and from the right she was seen as working for the KGB:

The presence of American interests and the American trade union movement was very clear in southern Africa, while there were Russian interests too. A Cold War and a struggle for souls were underway. There I stood with my social democratic message and was viewed with great suspicion in both camps. I interpreted it as though we'd found the middle ground.

35. LO's campaign for southern Africa

As part of their 80 year old celebration in May 1978 LO decided to start a big information and collection campaign for the liberation movements in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, starting in Sep-

tember. The largest international campaign in LO's history coincided with UN's International Anti-Apartheid year and was also supported by TCO and the Africa Groups.

The LO-campaign was a major adult education project for international solidarity. Exhibitions of South African art were arranged together with Riksställningar (Swedish Traveling Exhibitions), Sida, TCO, TBV and the Labour movement community centres. The recording company A-disc produced a record against apartheid and the film *Apartheid* was distributed to organisations by Föreningsfilmo. Swedish primary and secondary schools were invited to describe both the oppression and the liberation struggle in southern Africa in their own words and illustrations.

Ulf-Göran Widquist at Brevskolan (a correspondence college and publisher) was given the task of producing the material for LO's study circles. He travelled to Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and South Africa to meet representatives of different liberation movements and gather material:

I was careful, but we had good contacts, often through churches. Sweden had a good reputation in southern Africa, we did many good things, we gave support and money. The labour movement has never been as strong internationally as it was then, in all ways; conscious, knowledgeable when it concerned feelings for a major, important and good cause. This feeling permeated the whole movement. It was a question alongside pension issues and no one wondered why it took so much space on the agenda.



LO and TCO in a joint campaign year. "Support your comrade in South Africa".

The campaign culminated with 1st May celebrations in 1979 and collected 3,3 million kronor (today ±10,5 million).

When the trade union movement began to cooperate and support the unions in South Africa and Namibia, they needed more money and better organisation to be able to handle the work. In 1977 LO and TCO formed a joint aid organ. LO chairman Arne Geiger always maintained that the unions should not use state funds for solidarity, because the

state should never get involved in union work. Union solidarity was a question for the organisations themselves.

LO and TCO agreed, however, to hand on state assistance, if Sida in turn would not ask how LO and TCO would pay their own contributions, since they already contributed so much through their international union organisations. For LO/TCO it was an important principle to work multilaterally, and Sweden was strong in the international trade union movement.

In 1978 workers in the food industry (Livs), factory workers (Fabriks), and the Swedish Union of Foremen and Supervisors (SALF) got involved in an international sympathy strike for the right of employees at South African Unilever to organise themselves. The South African Food and Allied Workers Union led the strike. In Sweden it was the first sympathy strike of this kind and was supported by LO. In Nyköping, 700 workers at Sunlight went on strike. Local clerical and service workers (SIF) branches decided not to join in, for which SIF centrally expressed regrets in public. After the Unilever strike several individual trade unions became involved in conflicts at companies in South Africa in different ways, but not by striking.

36. Art, dance and music

The study books and the *Africa Bulletin* (under various names) were important to enrich members' knowledge, but to strengthen feelings, art and music were needed. This was true in the refugee camps as well, where common experiences and hopes needed to be interpreted and expressed through art, dance and music. To transfer this to Swedish solidarity work was natural.

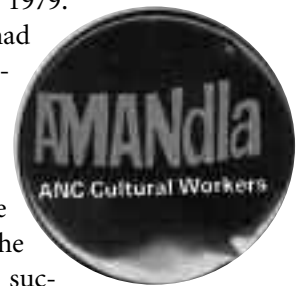
In 1976 the ANC, together with the Support

Group for South Africa's People (SSF, *Stödgruppen för Sydafrikas folk*), organised a tour with the ANC's cultural group *Mayibuye* whose members came from London and East Berlin. Three years later the Africa Groups organised a second tour with the ANC's *Mayibuye* group. At their first concert in Stockholm a woman suddenly hopped up onto the stage and joined in the songs, but the group was not fazed, on the contrary. Later the audience realised that this was Lindiwe Mabuza, ANC'S new representative in Stockholm, a recognised poet and writer. She was intensely involved in the role of culture as a factor for mobilisation and it became a great asset to solidarity work in Sweden.

On her suggestion the cultural group *Amandla* was invited to do a big tour. They lived in ANC housing in Luanda, Angola and were trained by a professional, South African composer and trombonist, Jonas Gwangwa. No fewer than 30 musicians, singers and dancers plus a few tour leaders and contacts for the mass media and organisations came to Gothenburg in late October 1979.

Unfortunately Gwangwa had broken his leg a few days before departure and was unable to join the group on its first visit.

Five weeks of work with the tour began, day and night. The very first performance was a success. The music, story, songs and dances were extremely skilful, and the group played to full houses all over Sweden, Finland, Norway, Germany and Holland. A record was cut and large numbers were sold. In late 1983 a similarly successful tour was organised in the same countries as well as Belgium. Swedish TV2 taped the show in Gothenburg, and a new





ANC cultural group Amandla performs the gum boot dance in Gothenburg.

record was made. The interchange was mutually constructive. Young people were able to show off their skills, their self-confidence rose, they were visible and could see the world, they were able to meet other young people and talk about music or singing, they got a taste of what normal societies can be, they acquired status in their own organisation.

Jan Henningsson from the Swedish Christian Youth Council (SKU) said:

In Sweden choir singing was a handle on the inner life of oppressed groups, their culture. There was no sense of being the victim, no em-

phasis on feeling sorry for others. Here they had something to give us, namely attractive, beautiful, easily learned choir music. We also had the musical group Fjedur, who in an act of brilliance popularised the Amandla songs, the we-shall-win-songs. People were singing them everywhere, not least in churches and chapels. They were even included in the new ecumenical psalm book. In a unique way songs in Zulu entered the treasury of sacral songs. If one started singing one of these hymns in a church in the countryside in the 1980s at least half the congregation joined in! They were incredibly

important in building a broad public opinion so that people could identify themselves with those who are oppressed and with whom they felt solidarity.

Choirs with South African repertoires in and outside the Africa Groups contributed to strengthening commitment among many of ISAK's member organisations. The group *Fjedur* with its Christian roots and with Anders Nyberg as leader acquired something of an icon status in its manner of uniting Swedish folk ballads and South African liberation songs. Their music was even played in other countries. *Falu Fredskör* in Falun, *Motvals* in Linköping and *Vred Fred* in Uppsala were some of the choirs that utilised this repertoire.

Culture came into the anti-apartheid work in many ways. In 1983, Artists against apartheid (*Konstnärer mot apartheid*) started. Lindiwe Mabuza was again the motor, and the chairperson was a working artist, Ursula Schütz. There were art exhibitions in Stockholm and Gothenburg, to which many known artists donated their work to benefit the ANC. *Artists against apartheid* continues today as *Artists for Africa*.

In 1985 the 29 November Committee organised two ANC galas called Rock against Apartheid (*Rock mot Apartheid*). Here widely differing artists like Björn Afzelius and Mikael Wiehe on the one hand and Tomas Ledin on the other cooperated. It was a huge success. With the on-going sales of records the total made may have reached over 10 million kronor. As well as providing economic support to the

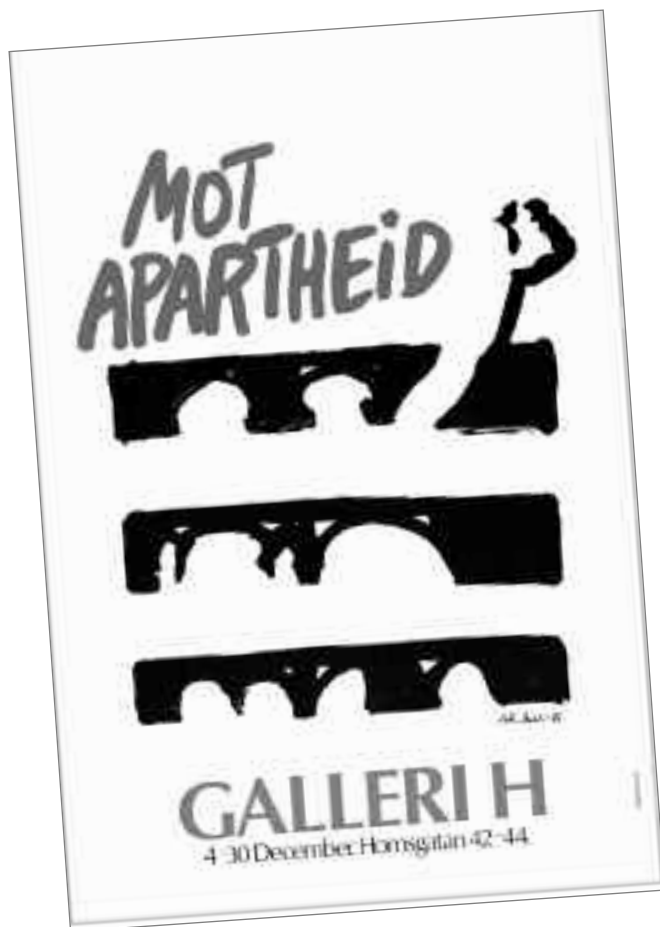


The song group *Fjedur* with its leader Anders Nyberg left, preforms at a rally by Gothenburg Africa Group at "Kopparmärra".

ANC, the concerts made an important contribution to rooting the anti-apartheid movement among a younger generation.

Tommy Hansson, writing in the moderate *Svensk Tidskrift*, claimed that the galas made "it possible for ANC to murder and mutilate still more innocent South Africans, black, white and coloured". For the majority, however, the reverse held. When Nadine Gordimer was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1991, ISAK organised a gala at Stadsteatern, where artists like Monika Zetterlund, Allan Edvall and Arja Saijonmaa paid tribute to the anti-apartheid author. The climax was a speech by writer Sara Lidman for the prize winner, a personal friend for many years.

Various kinds of cultural expression also played



an important role among activists in South Africa, who needed economic support from outside. Swedish assistance was channelled through SEN and later *Riksställningar* to projects like the Community Arts Project in Cape Town, where drama, dance, painting, sculpture and other work became modes of expression for people's protest against apartheid. The art school in Eshiyane, best known as Rorke's Drift and for many years supported by SKM, is another example of art and culture as a basis for self-respect and development.

37. South Africa's fifth province?

In 1884 Namibia became a German colony, known as German South West Africa. The administration was brutal and this led to many attempts at revolt. After the First World War, at the Peace of Versailles in 1919, Germany lost all its colonies. In 1920 the area was given to South Africa to administer through a mandate from the League of Nations. According to the mandate, South Africa ought to support the development of the area towards independence, but in practice it treated South West Africa as a fifth province.

In 1966 the UN General Assembly decided to get to grips with the situation and formally place the area under direct UN administration. In 1968 the UN gave this very sparsely populated area the name Namibia, in 1969 the Security Council declared the South African presence in Namibia illegal, and in 1971 the International Court of Justice in the Hague confirmed this.

Since Western powers refused to implement any economic measures, based on a triple strategy, South Africa could strengthen its grip on Namibia without fear of punishment:

- Combat SWAPO by military means with the aim of reducing its domestic and international credibility and legitimacy;
- Attempt to create support in Namibia for a domestic solution;
- Continue a diplomatic dialogue with external parties with the aim of buying time and preventing negotiations.

Through a series of "terror trials" from 1968 and onwards – foreign observers called them "travesties of justice" – South Africa tried to destroy its oppo-



SWAPO soldiers in a canoe from the film "The Liberation Struggle in Namibia" by Per Sandén.

nents. Long sentences – sometimes life terms – handed out to Namibian leaders like Andimba Toivo ya Toivo did not help. South Africa managed to buy time but not legitimacy. Instead, the UN recognised SWAPO as a genuine liberation movement in 1973, and as “the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people” in 1976.

Western powers negotiated a solution to the Namibian question (Resolution 435), which was accepted by SWAPO and South Africa in September 1978. In December 1978, in defiance of the agreement, South Africa decided to go it alone and hold elections in Namibia to guarantee continued South African rule. SWAPO and several other parties boycotted the elections.

From early on there was a strong commitment to

Namibia in Sweden, not least because of a positive interest on the part of the media. For instance, the news programme Rapport on TV2 in 1974 showed extracts from a film, *Frihetskampen* in Namibia (The liberation struggle in Namibia) by Per Sandén and Rudi Spee, distributed by *Filmcentrum*. It documented a massacre in the Caprivi Strip committed by the South African army in September 1973. The South African Defence Minister dismissed the charges as nonsense, and its Foreign Minister invited Swedish Television to participate in an “investigation” of the situation. On the advice of SWAPO, TV2 agreed, on condition that Sandén, Spee and the UN Namibia Commissioner were included – a condition that not surprisingly was not accepted.

An important motive for Sweden to support

SWAPO against South Africa was the issue of the UN's authority. As long as South Africa continued to defy the UN, any decision on UN administration of Namibia was dead in the water. Because of weak support from the Africa Groups, it was natural for SWAPO to seek to develop a relationship with the United Nations Association of Sweden (*Svenska FN-förbundet*). There was, however, a troublesome factor to deal with: the collaboration between SWAPO's military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and UNITA. It may be possible to describe it as geo-ethnically motivated. Utilising the

close relationship between the Ovambos in northern Namibia and UNITA's primary base among the Ovimbundus in central Angola was arguably a geographic necessity for PLAN's attacks in Namibia.

When the MPLA took power in Luanda in 1975 the situation changed. South Africa began to collaborate with UNITA, which in turn made it necessary for SWAPO to re-evaluate its policies and draw closer to Angola's new government. In 1976 this resulted in promises of bases in Angola and in direct cooperation between PLAN and the Angolan army.



Within the project "Medical Aid to SWAPO" material, medicine and equipment for more than 10 million SEK was sent and up to four doctors and nurses worked through the whole 1980-s in the refugee settlement in Kwanza Sul, Angola. Here the District nurse Magdalena Bjerneld.

On 4th May 1978 airborne South African forces attacked Casinga. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which had visited this SWAPO centre 250 km from the Namibian border three weeks previously, it was a rapidly growing but impressive and well-organised refugee camp. The massacre left about 600 dead, nearly half of whom were children and more than a quarter of whom were women. A further 600 were maimed and more were traumatised and injured by gas. Militarily it was a success but politically it turned out to be a catastrophe for South Africa. Per Sandén soon made a new film, *Här är Namibia* (Here is Namibia), which was widely disseminated through the Africa Groups and local audio-visual centres.

Within Sida there was some doubt as to SWAPO's administrative capacity – both initially and later. Emmaus Björkå and Bread and Fishes, however, did not share such doubts. The latter in particular developed very close relations with SWAPO. BoF's support to SWAPO came to exceed the sum of their support to all the other liberation movements. Shoes and clothes alone had, up to the time of Namibia's independence in 1990, reached almost 1 000 tons. To this should be added the Africa Groups' extensive collection of medicines and medical equipment. In cooperation with the local Africa Group and five schools in Västerås, BoF took part in *Operation Dagsverke*, which financed two Land Rover ambulances to SWAPO and at the same time increased public knowledge about Namibia.

One of the leaders of BoF – and also active in AGIS – was Bertil Högborg, who later (1977–79) worked as an employee at SWAPO's office in Stockholm. For a long time there was a great deal of doubt about SWAPO in the Africa Groups, since one could not point to any liberated areas. Through

its International Fund, the Social Democrats consistently supported the movement without hesitation. In time support from Sweden grew; the non-socialist government continued to increase official assistance to SWAPO and was backed in this by the Social Democrats and by that time also by the Africa Groups. (During 1969–91 SWAPO received a total of about 670 million kronor in current prices.) When the Africa Groups finally decided to support SWAPO in 1976, they came to exaggerate SWAPO's military successes during subsequent years.

In December 1979 BoF, AGIS and SWAPO agreed to apply to Sida for support for a major health care project, which, as a first step, allocated 1,4 million kronor in 1980 (today over 4 million). This confirmed the rapprochement that occurred between public authorities and voluntary organisations in their views of support to southern Africa. This was reinforced on a personal plane when Sida employees became active in the Africa Groups and its members were recruited by Sida as processing officers.

38. Isolate South Africa!

Towards the end of 1978 AGIS invited a large number of organisations to cooperate together against the white regime in South Africa. An earlier attempt, with human rights lawyer Hans-Göran Franck (s) as a draw card, had failed. AGIS had been allocated funds to reach the youth, and Lennart Renöfält, with his background in the Swedish Covenant Church Youth League (SMU, Svenska Missionsförbundets Ungdom), had responsibility for South African issues on the Africa Groups' board. Bertil Högborg from AGIS, later a ISAK chairperson, says:

He was cut out for the task. He became a part-

The union man who sold bibles

The LO-TCO Secretariat for International Trade Union Development Cooperation had initially a modest amount of work – about 15 projects, nearly all in South Africa, but also had partners in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia. In 1978 LO/TCO started a project to support the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). Palle Carlsson from LO visited them:

All we knew was the name of the chairman, Max Gerson, who was a priest in a church in Windhoek. I arrived there and found him. Then he revealed that no trade union existed. Max and I travelled round the country to mines and other workplaces. We were allowed in since he was a priest. I accompanied him and sold bibles, and afterwards I talked about the union and Max translated to Ovambo. The reason that he in particular started a union organisation was that like so many Namibians he'd been with missionaries to Finland. There were radical leaders within the church who were against apartheid.

On one occasion we visited a place where there was a Methodist church and one of the ministers came to look for us. "We have heard that you are a professor from the Methodist church in Sweden and that you are travelling round to meet ministers." I kept a straight face and was invited to the church, and thought that now things will be difficult. What would we talk about? The minister was friendly and suddenly suggested, "Should we not say The Lord's Prayer together?" The Lord's Prayer, I thought and all I could remember was that I'd read the name in a crossword puzzle. But I went along to the altar and there we stood. He began reciting it and I recognised it as Fader Vår (Our Father) so then I could pray with him – in Swedish, of course.



The Lutheran minister Max gerson that worked among the contract workers from northern Namibia was strongly involved I starting a trade union.

Palle Carlsson was in Namibia on a tourist visa and was forced to leave the country from time to time. The Swedish authorities had given him several passports, which meant that he only needed to leave for a short period. It appeared that SWAPO was not aware that NUNW did not have an organisation. However, soon 600 members signed up for training. The material was hand-produced by Palle and the co-workers he employed at the little office in Windhoek, next door to the security police:

To transfer our methods of study didn't work; people became angry if I asked them a question. "You are the expert, you must tell us", they said. Their most important union issue was to get a funeral policy, so their families could afford to return their bodies to their homes, if they died in the mines or at other workplaces.

The security police grew more and more interested, and at the end of 1979 deported Palle Carlsson from Namibia. NUNW developed rapidly and like most newly started trade unions received support and help with negotiations from lawyers on the spot. The well-known anti-apartheid advocate Anton Lubowski in Windhoek worked for the unions with support from LO/TCO. He was one of the first whites to become a member of SWAPO and was murdered in 1989 by South African security police.

time employee in our youth campaign, but his task shifted to building up ISAK with him as its first chairperson. Not exactly what we'd been given the money for, but it was important that ISAK had a proper start, and I believe history has forgiven us. The political party youth leagues of course did not want another party's youth league to have the chair, so only the Christians were left. With only two exceptions ISAK's chair came from the churches the rest of the time. The first was I myself, who had to hop in twice because there was no other candidate, although I represented AGIS.

21 organisations plus Hans-Göran Franck came to the constituent meeting in January 1979. In addition to AGIS, umbrella organisations like SKU and SUL wanted to join. Together they covered nearly all youth organisations. A number of political, Christian and other voluntary organisations also joined. During 1979 they agreed on a constitution and on a campaign:

- Do not buy South African goods!
- Withdraw Swedish investments from South Africa!
- No trade with South Africa!
- No cultural, academic, sporting or scientific exchange with representatives of apartheid!
- Free all political prisoners!
- Support the liberation struggle! Support the ANC!
- South Africa out of Namibia! Support SWAPO!

There was a great deal of enthusiasm among all who were there, confirmed Maria Leissner, then in the leadership of the Liberal Party Youth. Stephen Lind-



Early ISAK campaign in Västerås 1980. Don't buy South African fruit.

holm in the Communist Youth League strikes a similar tone:

It was great to get the young liberals, the Centre Party Youth and others who one normally didn't see in this type of work. It was not only true of the political side; I thought that we got quite a few of the Christian youth leagues, like the young Catholics. They were fairly middle-class, but joined in a good way on this issue. The SMU members shouldered a huge burden. The only ones absent were the young moderates.



Don't buy South African Products. The red sticker campaigners applied on products in the shops.



The board of the Moderate Party had taken a decision on the principle of never taking part in organisations working across party lines. Even the youth and student leagues respected this. ISAK nevertheless continued gaining large and growing support.

Several political women's leagues were members. Cooperation with individual trade unions and branches was good, even if it was a little stiff with LO and TCO centrally. The consumer boycott and ban on new investments might affect employment levels. With such large sections of Sweden's popular movements linked together, ISAK might have collapsed either because of ideological contradictions or because of the danger that when all are with you, no one is with you, at least no one who in practice is really involved. This did not happen. Jan Henningsson from SKU:

The humanitarian issue was so conspicuous, and with the unbelievably clear symbolic events like Sharpeville and Soweto like tragic baggage, it was not the correct place to discuss the party colours of the liberation movements. It became increasingly obvious that we were dealing with a humanitarian catastrophe also entailing a moral collapse for the white world.



Karl-Gunnar Norén – who was a campaign secretary in ISAK – points to several factors to account for the spirit of good fellowship:

- Nelson Mandela, a charismatic leader, had something in common with many ideologies: he was a Christian and unjustly

imprisoned freedom fighter;

- Many South Africans are Christian; thus there are common cultural expressions and values that made it easy to communicate with Swedes, such as through South African choral music;
- Among the ANC there was a desire for adult education that many Swedes could identify with;
- The absurdity of the apartheid system had for several decades sunk in among broad circles; thus there was both fertile soil and endurance for anti-apartheid work;
- The armed struggles of the ANC and SWAPO were clearly in defence of basic human rights and were conducted in forms that were experienced as not too brutal.



39. Campaigns begin to take shape

ISAK was formed in January 1979 for a trial period, but the results led to a continuation. A decision was taken on a consumer boycott beginning in April 1980. It was one way of influencing public opinion to put pressure

on the government for stronger laws. Through having built up a great deal of knowledge on southern Africa over many years, the Africa Groups had a great deal of influence over the work, and their demands on the whole became ISAK's joint demands.

In the early 1980s ISAK had to rely on the sale of material, in the form of stickers, posters, booklets, badges and other campaign material, that local groups and individuals could order, now with

ISAK's own logo. These sales were important for ISAK's finances, which were very weak in the beginning. In addition, with limited capacity it was often fairly difficult to implement all the projects, but ISAK also had friends outside the organisational and political contexts. Advertising campaigns initiated in the morning and evening press roused many individuals, and some companies continually supported their work. At the beginning contributions from Sida came solely from allocations for information, and only towards the late 1980s did Sida's humanitarian working committee open its purse, although it had for years supported quite a few international anti-apartheid projects.

ISAK combined different ways of working. One was purely influencing public opinion and political lobbying; here ISAK argued for generally recognised ethical norms. Another was for ISAK's member organisations to examine reality. If AGIS had not in 1980 already dug up the *National Key Points Act*, ISAK would probably not have known that the Swedish companies in South Africa actually participated in South Africa's military strategy. Now it was possible to inform the general public in Sweden about this – a weighty point in the campaign.

Through combining facts and ethics, ISAK's campaigns acquired considerable credibility and they could put pressure on the law-makers. A standing question was how to work to tighten the law. As the circle of lobbyists and friends within the administration and political organs grew and ISAK's own expertise increased, it became easier.

Thus on 13th April 1980 a new consumer boycott period began. ISAK also took part in the preparations for the third international conference of ICOSA, the International Committee against Apartheid, Racism and Colonialism, which was held in Södertälje



Don't buy South African products. Don't let your money support the oppressors buying of weapons.

in April 1980. This put ISAK on the international arena. There were now 28 member organisations, which with the participating umbrella organisations' own member organisations meant that practically all organised youths in Sweden supported the demands of the platform, as well as many adults.

40. ISAK presses the politicians

The tripartite non-socialist government fell apart

over the issue of nuclear power nearly two years after it won the elections in 1976. After that a Liberal Party minority government ruled Sweden from 1978-79, which was accepted by the Social Democrats. After having in vain tried to get commerce and industry to stop investments voluntarily, the government put forward a proposal for a stop to new investments, which became law in 1979. It would still be possible to upgrade and modernise machinery, if the company did not increase production. In practice it was impossible to check whether the law was being followed, and applications for exemptions were normally approved – and often classified secret – by the National Board of Trade (*Kommerskollegium*). When ISAK tried to review these documents, most of the text was censored with black ink. No public insight was possible at a time when the right of the public to have access to official documents was entrenched in Sweden. The prohibition on new investments was a paper tiger. More force, or rather more political will, was required to stop Swedish companies from supporting the apartheid regime.

Africa Group veteran Sören Lindh explains:

Even those who disliked us admitted that we knew what we were saying. Our breadth, expertise and commitment were the three important factors in this context. More and more people who had facts at their fingertips became involved, and it was not possible to deceive ISAK, in any case one would have to try very hard. We generally knew as much as the civil servants in the government departments. And we were always so fast off the mark that our force could compensate for the little we did not know.

One example of this is that ISAK managed to combine the debate on GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) with a Swedish trade embargo against South Africa. It appeared that the general free trade agreement had certain exceptions. Sören Lindh:

We skipped over the main body of text ... and looked among the exceptions. There we discovered that the import of goods produced by prisoners could be stopped. This had nothing to do with humanity, no. The basis of the argument was instead that prisoners could produce goods more cheaply, and thus have an impermissible competitive advantage. The Africa Groups and ISAK directed the debate to this exception and asked: Who knows if this orange was picked by a free man or by a prisoner?"

ISAK's strategy was intended to link the Swedish companies in South Africa to the regime, for instance, SKF, Sandvik and Atlas-Copco that worked with the mining industry. Through the National Key Points Act of 1980 strategically important companies like these were forced to set up and arm their own industrial civil defence units against uprisings.

An earlier law – the National Procurement Act – meant that the regime could compel a company to ... pay employees who were serving in the security forces and the army, and there was no information on companies refusing to do this.

Thus the Swedish companies in South Africa actually took part and paid their employees who, on their compulsory military service, for example, harried people in the townships or went to war in Angola. At the beginning this obligation was swept under the carpet, but af-

ter a while the issue became more sensitive, and in reality it remained in force till the end of sanctions.

In the second half of 1980 we wrote a letter to the Foreign Ministry and asked how Sweden would act in this new situation. There the letter caused some consternation and confusion, since the report from South Africa did not arrive as quickly as our question. For a long time after this we enjoyed a solidly established reputation at the ministry for being well informed.

It was not possible to place ISAK in a particular box, because ISAK had people from different camps and with real knowledge of different areas of expertise. The result? ISAK pushed the law-makers ahead of it, mildly but determinedly. An expert group could in 1981 note that there had not been any significant fall in investments since the prohibition on new investments became law, and that the value of production of both SKF and Sandvik had increased by about 50% between 1979 and 1981. The work of the expert group identified loopholes in the South Africa law that led to the appointment of a special South Africa Committee with Ambassador Sverker Åström as chairperson. Its official report in 1984 included several proposals to tighten loopholes like leasing equipment, transfer of patents etc. There were further limitations on the possibility of seeking exemptions. The new South Africa law came into force in 1985.

41. Pockets of resistance in industry

The influx of support from popular movements in Sweden in mobilising against apartheid policies did not strike a chord among management of Swedish companies with interests in South Africa. On the



*Are South African soldiers paid by Swedish companies.
Yes though salaries during military service
Swedish companies have to leave South Africa.*

contrary, in 1983 the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) published a 75-page booklet *Sydafrika och Svenskt Näringsliv* (South Africa and Swedish Commerce), written largely by Åke Magnusson. He had undertaken a long personal journey from in the 1960s being an anti-imperialist student who collected money for Frelimo, to the executive director's post in NIR, and en route working as a consultant and researcher for churches, the trade



The drawing by Karin Södergren in the Africa Bulletin that depicts how Foreign Minister Ola Ullsten and Prime Minister Torbjörn Fälldin, allow the investment law to leak as a sieve.

union movement and the state.

From this new position, Magnusson and NIR's board, led by Peter Wallenberg, a leading industrialist, launched "the new strategy" on "constructive engagement" – an echo of Reagan and Thatcher and a line that the churches and unions (with the exception of Metall) abandoned as unrealistic in the 1970s. Representatives for Alfa-Laval, Atlas Copco, Fagersta, Sandvik, SKF and Transatlantic were on the NIR board. The brochure maintained that "South Africa is not unique" and Swedish compa-

es "must follow the laws of the host country and in all essentials adapt to the applicable local business and work rules". The Swedish government's support to the ANC not only backs up "a confrontational line", but also "further ... isolates us from the Western world" and contributes to undermining the UN's "authority and credibility".

The booklet further argued that through its decision on sanctions Sweden "excluded the many blacks who prefer non-violent methods, economic development and political mobilisation to sabotage,

guerrilla war and perhaps civil war”. Aside from economic sanctions actually being a non-violent method, the credibility of the argument was not strengthened by NIR promoting Inkatha as a *non-violent alternative*. The real reason for this choice seems to have been that its president Gatsha Buthelezi pleaded for foreign investments in the “homelands”.

Peter Wallenberg continued to criticise Sweden’s support to ANC. In March 1992 he said:

I wonder exactly what we would think if someone sat and shovelled in a great deal of cash to the Lapps (the indigenous Sámi people in northern Europe) so that they could make a lot of trouble for the Swedish government ... I suspect that then there would be an incredible amount of shouting.

In September 1994 – in other words after the ANC won the elections – Wallenberg informed the world that the “apartheid system... had certain aspects that were necessary under current conditions” and that South African blacks would absolutely not manage without the whites. “Blacks simply do not have the competence required... they are more or less at the same level of development as we were 100 or 150 years ago”. This remark was made by one of Sweden’s most prominent businessmen.



Alfa Laval milks South Africa. Divest from South Africa!

A mighty wave of solidarity and its sources

What was driving the activists? Sverker Sörlin, now a professor of science and ideas, tries to give an answer. He was one of many in the Umeå Africa Group from 1977 and the decade following, and also did some work on a national level. The activists learnt to keep the minutes of meetings and developed a relatively “puritanical ... Nordic popular movement ethic”, but how did this solidarity come about? Sörlin points to several roots: the trade union movement, the co-op movement, the phenomenon of national insurance, the Christian sphere. Suddenly it all coalesced in time into a mighty wave of solidarity:

In the first place it was concerned with solidarity with developing countries... But on a more general and extended sense solidarity could refer to a great deal. Africa was naturally included. Even those who generally knew nothing about this continent would in some way feel convinced that one ought to show solidarity with it and its people.

This sense of solidarity coincided in time and ought to have guaranteed unity, and the common ecumenical view of solidarity as a core must have meant a good deal for the broad recruitment base of the Africa Groups in Sweden. Here people from different social groups agreed, though there was a certain over-representation of highly educated people. Health care personnel made up a significant category, as did teachers and other professional groups like veterinarians and agronomists, who could all take



part in concrete tasks in Africa's developing countries. The longer time passed, the more clearly one could feel the roots threading back to missionaries and philanthropy, particularly when we be-

gan to send our own personnel to Africa.

Behind the ecumenical facade there was also something else. So, long afterwards I remember one thing that was striking: that this movement of a relatively modest size contained such strong tensions. Solidarity was a uniting factor, but several different solidarities existed. Two poles seem to me to be clearer than others.

The one type of solidarity originated in the Christian sphere. Here was the patient striving and happy struggling, the inner flame of which I didn't understand in the beginning but which sooner or later showed itself. Then it came like a revelation. Between them, I sometimes thought, lay a silent and mutual understanding. One was working for a higher goal, but what could not really be said. Those who knew, knew.

The other was communist. This ideological basis was nothing that was demanded according to the constitution. Thus it was seldom expressed, as little as the religiously oriented desired the non-believers' sympathy for their views. But it was unmistakable, and sometimes declared, in fact somewhat more loudly than the believers'. At one congress one of the



Lennart Renöfält with pram outside the South African Legation. At the request of the Africa Groups he started up ISAK and was the chair for several mandates.

prominent figures wore a red T-shirt with the text “Sure, I’m a Marxist”. A similar confession about the prophets I never saw on anyone’s chest, only discrete crosses here and there.

Those who represented this position in the debate acted with a conviction that I found at least as enigmatic as that of the faithful. They seemed so sure of what was the right thing to do, more assured than what I thought there was a reasonable foundation for. Here there were also those who knew.

Fundamentally this kind of thinking often rests on metaphysics. History has a meaning and a direc-

tion, even in southern Africa. To start with, colonialism and apartheid must be abolished, and then the realisation of socialism will begin. Thus solidarity with the ANC will continue. A few of us were doubtful of how judicious it was for a movement like the Africa Groups to, without further ado, devote itself to a state and its government’s policies, rather than to principles of freedom, democracy and human dignity, and in a while these ambitions were moderated.

They had a positive effect in that the Africa Groups became directly involved in providing assistance in the former Portuguese colonies and later in Zimbabwe. This meant that the organisation began to accept contributions from Sida and that the work got a practical solidarity side. Balancing the accounts, annual reports and staff policies stabilised and set a framework for the most metaphysical hopes.

This does not mean that hope ended, but that the influence of the ideologies on the organisation’s reliability was neutralised. The Africa Groups became a partner in global solidarity work. There were missionaries and Christian groups since earlier, charity organisations, whose new, or for Sweden new, voices were heard, like Oxfam, Doctors without Borders and Greenpeace, that grew dramatically during the 1980s. The organisation increasingly began to take a place in a rainbow human rights and charity panorama. There was still the question of solidarity ... in the light of a later world it always appears to defend the struggle against apartheid and for freedom, democracy and human dignity like the backbone of the organisation... The solidarities were united.

ISAK was the organisational expression of the unified solidarities.



Boycott demonstration in the 80-s. At the front Kaire Mbuende, SWAPO Eddie Funde, ANC Hans Göran Frank and Anna Lindh the Social Democratic Party.

7.

1983–1988

**THE CRUCIAL
YEARS**

42. The third wave of resistance

The years 1983–88 were crucial to the struggle against apartheid. After the ANC and PAC were banned in 1960 the opposition against apartheid inside South Africa was virtually destroyed and it took a decade before a new generation reorganised protests again.

In 1973 extensive spontaneous strikes broke out in Durban and Johannesburg, and in Namibia, where workers protested against the disgusting conditions. The strikes did not lead to any improvements for the workers, but at the universities the strikes did have consequences. The youth gathered round the black consciousness movement, Steve Biko and SASO, the South African Students Organisation. In 1977 Biko was murdered while in detention and SASO was banned. The UN responded with a mandatory arms embargo.

At the same time students and intellectuals started forming what would become a new trade union movement. If trade unions were to be built up and survive in South Africa, they could not be associated with the ANC nor become involved in open political activities. They must be organised at the workplace, not in residential areas. If the president were arrested, there should always be others who could take over.

In addition, citizens' groups were built up, so-called civics. They included tenants' associations, women's organisations, funeral societies and co-operatives – South Africa's blacks had never been so

well organised before. Less spectacularly, but with a very long-term view, people began to build up a civil society as a base both for their own development and for opposition to the regime's policies.

An important condition had thus been created for the third wave of opposition. In the same way as Reagan became the foremost recruitment officer for the American peace movement in the 1980s, President Botha, "the old crocodile", was the one to give the new wave of opposition a lift. He believed that he would be able to split the movement through offering coloureds and Indians – but not blacks – a chamber each in a revamped parliament. This, he believed, would silence their criticism without him having to give up the apartheid system. Botha proclaimed a referendum on the proposal, thus making a strategic mistake.

Up until 1983 citizens' groups worked separately. They were not formally coordinated even if they cooperated with one another. Now suddenly there was need for a united front against apartheid. Close to 600 citizens' groups joined together to form an umbrella organisation, the United Democratic Front (UDF), to run a joint campaign for the boycott of the referendum on the tricameral parliament. The UDF was launched on 20th August at a meeting in Cape Town with 10 000 participants. The main speaker was Pastor Frank Chikane, the General Secretary of the Institute for Contextual Theology.

The regime immediately accused the UDF of be-



The start of UDF.

ing a disguised internal wing of the ANC. This was not true. Even if the ANC in the late 1970s discussed an internal national civil rights movement as a strategy for the liberation struggle, the UDF was independent. In fact, at the beginning there was considerable scepticism within ANC towards the UDF, which on the other hand had great faith in the ANC. They shared the same principles. The problems of relationships and the division of roles was sorted out at a secret meeting between the ANC's

exile leadership and representatives of the UDF held at Bommersvik in Sweden in January 1986.

Only a few weeks after the formation of the UDF, Aurret van Heerden, president of the white student movement NUSAS (National Union of South African Students), landed in Sweden to meet representatives of ISAK, the Africa Groups and the Labour Movement's International Centre (AIC) to discuss how the UDF could get Swedish support. Bengt Sävve-Söderbergh was at the time head of the AIC:



Frank Chikane, Olof Palme and Cassim Saloojee.

There was a feeling of “now or never”. During the year we had received information from various sources, among them the trade union movement, that the formation of the UDF was imminent. This was positive for we had expected that a broad political movement would be formed inside the country. The liberation of a

country must come from within. The ANC also had major problems at this time; South Africa was engaged in war against the neighbouring countries that were independent states, under the pretext that they posed a communist threat.

Only a few months later the newspaper *Arbetet* presented the *Let Live Award* to the UDF, and two of its foremost leaders, Murphy Morobe and Cassim Saloojee, came to Sweden to receive the prize. In January 1987 Frank Chikane, currently head of President Thabo Mbeki's secretariat, came to receive a peace prize from the ecumenical development NGO, Diakonia. Unlike the ANC, which was happy to appear in different political contexts all over the world, the UDF's leaders were doubtful about making international appearances. Each time they returned to Johannesburg they ran the risk of being arrested at the airport, even if they had only fetched a symbolic prize.

The AIC rapidly took the decision to support the UDF with money from its *I-fund*, but much more was needed than the labour movement itself could provide. Sida was initially doubtful. To support the ANC and SWAPO in exile was no problem, but to give assistance to an organisation inside the country was completely new. Formally it could be questioned if this did not conflict with international law. South Africa was an independent state. To send money to the UDF meant that the Swedish state supported the opposition inside the country, which, though it was not declared illegal, did have the aim of deposing the regime.

The UDF's campaign against the referendum was a success. 85% of those entitled to vote boycotted it, but the tricameral parliament was nevertheless introduced in 1984. Not much time passed before the UDF was banned from accepting foreign money.

43. Boycotts and sanctions

The aim of the consumer boycott was primarily to increase ordinary people's knowledge of racial oppression in South Africa and Namibia and thus

also the pressure on politicians to take new measures. South African fruit, wine, preserves and Namibian Swakara furs were targets. Soon stickers with the text "Don't buy South African goods!" (Köp inte Sydafrikanska varor) were spread all over Sweden. When ISAK focused on the procurement by municipalities and county councils, they were often successful.

In early 1985 local ISAK committees did a detailed survey of nearly two hundred shops about supplying South African goods and attitudes to boycott. Not surprisingly it appeared that most private supermarkets and even many members of the cooperative sold them. The exception was Konsum (coop) in greater Stockholm, which still maintained the boycott from the 1960s. More surprising was that three-quarters of the store managers were prepared not to buy South African goods, if there was a common action. Only a few per cent were negative to a boycott.

That political work and influencing public opinion is boring is a myth. Fruit was an important and relevant question to draw in youth in the work. Maria Leissner remembers it clearly:

It was fun, exciting and we had butterflies in our stomachs and were a little nervous, when we went into all these shops to check whether they had KOO marmalade or South African grapes. Then we tried to start a discussion with

»Tre fjärdedelar av butiksföreståndarna var beredda att avstå från sydafrikanska varor, om det skedde i en gemensam aktion. Bara några få procent var avvisande till bojkott.«

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Secret funds – and open transfers

Sida's support to the liberation movements was, in principle, simple. To a great extent it involved the transport of goods. As long as the host country and the liberation movement had a good relationship, there were seldom serious difficulties. Similarly, support went to services like education, health care etc. If there were liberated areas, it

was up to the movements to see to it that goods and services were provided where they were needed. To manage this they were often also given trucks.

South Africa was more difficult. The ANC never tried to liberate any areas. Yet the needs inside South Africa grew ever larger. Support in the form of goods was unthinkable. Assistance must be given in the form of

UDF and 200 million (over 325 million) to COSATU to mention only two recipients. (The ANC received the most, a total of almost 900 million during the period 1969–94 in current prices, including support inside and outside South Africa). It could not be done through the Swedish legation in Pretoria. On the contrary, the fact that the Swedish government tried to contribute economically to overturn the white regime had to be hidden. Thus the decisions on allocations were kept secret, and the funds were passed through Swedish popular movements without informing the movements' members.

There were many ways to move money:

To qualify for a scholarship for tertiary studies one had to have been politically active and have been given a written recommendation by a credible authority. The Ecumenical Advice Bureau in Johannesburg was responsible for selection and student guidance. At most 270 people participated in the programme. To everyone's great surprise it was possible to send the money individually to the recipients. Probably the amounts were too small for the control apparatus to react, but the administrative burden for SEN was great; and this was before wholesale computerisation. Another channel for scholarships was WUS, World University Service.

One method to transfer money was to sign a formal and expensive contract on the purchase of e.g. news and other information on a monthly basis. FOSATU produced a film, which was sold at extremely high prices overseas. Many UDF leaders were lawyers and a South African law firm could send an invoice to a foreign law firm.

Christian Åhlund at *Advokatbyrån Sju advokater* (Seven



Thank you letter from scholarship holder.

money – but how? The white regime tried in all possible ways to choke off international support to the opposition against apartheid. How could one succeed in outwitting the controlling apparatus, based as it was on an increasingly stringent Fund Raising Act?

Sweden was probably the country that transferred the most money to the liberation struggle inside South Africa: 100 million kronor (today closer to 175 million) to

Advocates) was an important secret link between AIC and UDF. Money was sent through him. He was also on the board of the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) in London, which is estimated to have been involved in 25 000 trials. IDAF and AIC used “the radio” to cover acute transactions to UDF. On the telephone a radio interview was discussed, and the time mentioned was the sum to be transferred. The route the funds took had been worked out previously.

In South Africa, both jokingly and seriously, it was said that many advocates survived the apartheid years on Swedish assistance. When the unions were newly formed, they often turned to lawyers for help in conflicts and negotiations. Certain lawyers, opponents of apartheid, charged a significantly lower fee for union work, R120 per hour, while ordinary lawyers took R500. The Legal Resources Centre, with six regional offices, filled two tasks: free legal assistance to poor blacks and practice for newly qualified black lawyers.

Another way was to exchange money. Swedish money was deposited in an account somewhere in Europe. It was then withdrawn by a person or organisation in South Africa with money in a bank account in South Africa that could not be transferred out of the country, while the UDF could withdraw the corresponding amount in rand.

It could, however, also be considerably more complicated than this. During the major miners strike in 1986, when 360 000 workers downed tools, Swedish miners and other organisations within the labour movement collected over 3 million kronor (today over 5 million) to save NUM, the National Union of Mineworkers. The unions were prohibited from accepting foreign support, so the money had to be smuggled in. Peter Jansson was in Tanzania working for the Swedish Municipal Workers Union to

train union leaders, but he also had another task:

The Swedish money came to the union in Tanzania, where it was withdrawn in dollars. I received the money, fetched it in brown paper bags and then I took the train to Lake Malawi. It was trying; a 23-hour long trip on a train that only had simple bunks. In first class there are four bunks in a compartment. I couldn't leave the compartment, the money

was in a cloth bag so that it should not draw attention. I slept with the bag as a pillow. When I arrived a person met me, took the money and took the boat over to Malawi, where it was simple to exchange it to rand.

It was like an old black-and-white espionage film. We used code words. I was told that the contact “would wear horizontally striped clothes” and use passwords: “Where is this place?” I’d ask, I think it was a hotel, and he’d reply: “It isn’t in this town”. The second and third times were not so hard; it was the same person. I did three trips.

From Malawi a new courier took over and entered South Africa through the Kruger National Park and Swaziland. It was dangerous, as soldiers chased them. The Kruger Park is full of wild animals and some couriers. The whole chain was dangerous since we handled a great deal of money. A half million kronor



South African Literary Service mediated literature and information between South Africa and the surrounding world.



the

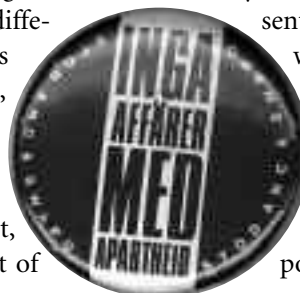


ISAK tried indifferent ways to stop trade with South Africa.

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manager of the shop or the poor girl or boy who stood by the cash register. We took ISAK's campaigns to FPU, the Liberal Party Youth, and ran them like our own campaigns. As youth league secretary I attended different meetings and we nearly always had a public action linked to them, for instance, a raid in shops in the town.

Lobbying at a political level bore fruit, and in June 1985 a ban on the import of agricultural goods came into effect. It also gave municipalities and county



No business with Apartheid.

councils the right to counteract apartheid politics when doing their own procurement. After this ISAK devoted itself to discovering the fruit and not least the juice that trickled in under false certificates of origin. It turned out to be quite a lot. Swaziland, for instance, produced less than half of what was exported in that country's name.

During a follow-up in 1987 ISAK found to its great and positive surprise that 21 of the 26 municipalities asked had utilised the new opportunities to act against apartheid. There was thus widespread public opinion against South Africa's policies, and it was necessary to pass laws to simplify conditions for taking effective measures. Under heavy pressure from public opinion, large sections of their own

party, all the other parliamentary parties except the Moderates, as well as the other Nordic governments, the social democratic government was finally forced to give in and in February 1987 it presented a proposition on the banning of trade with South Africa. The party board had with considerable doubt placed "commitment before principles". Prior to this, Great Britain and USA had once again vetoed sanctions in the Security Council. The Swedish embargo on imports and exports was a step in the right direction, but there were loopholes in the law.

It was also important to block



Young and joyful activists in Gothenburg.

South Africans wherever they appeared in an international context. The aim was to prevent them from moving in and posing as honourable citizens from a nation with no major faults.. They came to Sweden

on tourist visas and in other ways. Scouts, physiotherapists, scientists – everyone should be targeted. The argument, “I am not interested in politics, I do research”, or “We scouts all have the same scout

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The Foreign Ministry's secret agents

During the period 1982-88, while the protest movement took shape, Birgitta Karlström Dorph was working at the Swedish Legation in Pretoria. She had contact with individuals and groups who were building up the opposition inside the country. She looked at and evaluated who should get help and then suggested which Swedish organisations should become partners in such cooperation.

I came from Angola and had received the advice to contact Beyers Naudé who was a white minister, a Boer who had rejected apartheid. He was, after Mandela, the leader of the liberation struggle; people had confidence in him and he knew most of what was happening. The first time I met him he came dressed as an electrician, since he was banned. We met in principle every fortnight during my stay in South Africa and it was through Beyers that I was led into the whole opposition movement.

In townships, churches, cafés and shops Birgitta Karlström Dorph met people who she heard were important, or were busy building up an organisation or were doing some work. Security was rigorous.

It was essential not to make the contacts on the telephone or write letters but to meet. Our greatest fear was that the apartheid government would realise what we were doing and close the legation. It was important for me not to do anything illegal. It was a balancing act all the time.

Everything was unique. Beyers had ideas of what we could do. He also understood our role as a legation. From the start I felt an immediate and complete trust in him. Without him we would never have



Birgitta Karlström-Dorph and Beyers Naudé.

been able to do what we did. After a while – as he got to know me better – my contacts widened and I began to get my own ideas.

If I was doubtful I always went back to Beyers. Then he would check through his contacts. He had a unique contact network. He never talked about who his contacts were. I never talked with him about whom I had spoken to, but we compared notes and he came back and made comments. In South Africa, after Mandela, he was the leader of the opposition. He ought to have been awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

It was necessary to find the right organisations and the right people, to try to assure oneself that the organisation in question was not infiltrated and that it was not an agent of the South African government acting as the counterpart. Birgitta Karlström Dorph was quite alone in using this method of working.

After a while it became clear to me that we had to have a range of organisations: some that were uncontroversial so that we could also have some that were more controversial. We needed the full range. The South African government naturally knew that we met the opposition, but I still believe today – and possibly I’m naïve – that they did not see the scale of what we were doing. In that case we would have been expelled.

Through Birgitta Karlström Dorph and her successor Anders Möllander – today Swedish Ambassador to South Africa – the Legation became a strategic link between South African organisations and Swedish ones like AGIS, AIC and SEN. Möllander worked in the same way as his predecessor and looked for critical references:

Two people who I had great confidence in were Jesse Duarte and the current Vice-President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

He also provided important support to the AIC with contacts that were already established and could follow up less satisfactory economic reports, as on one occasion with UDF:

I was called to a meeting with UDF, which was being pursued and persecuted by the regime in every way. I went to a restaurant in Johannesburg and was shown to a private room. There the entire leadership of the UDF were sitting. They took an enormous risk by gathering in this way, as several were wanted by the police. But they were keen to sort out the problem and so we did it.

On many occasions during the five years I was in South Africa, I knew that what I did made a difference. My wife and I were often invited to disguised political meetings like funerals, church assemblies and so on. They were nervous; the atmosphere at this time was often loaded, there was so much hate that it was tangible.

Often we diplomats had a certain protective function, for example for guests at a funeral. I remember one occasion in Tomahole – AIC supported the civics there – we attended a funeral. Outside the family’s house a Casspir was standing, an armoured military vehicle used by the police. It did not matter, but when the time came for us to leave the house the father of the family asked us to stay, because, “as soon as you have left they will attack us, at least with teargas, and then we can’t eat the food”.

Sometimes it could be difficult to keep the roles apart and one had to set boundaries. Today I am often called “Comrade Ambassador”, which reflects how UDI members thought of me then. But I have never smuggled anything. I didn’t want to be deported, and Sweden was really viewed as an enemy of the apartheid regime and thus they always kept an eye on us.



The Apartheid government not only imprisoned criminals but also political opponents.

teams even if we come from a Bantustan” was dismissed. Those who did not take a stand against the apartheid system contributed to its survival. There was little acceptance of a position in a grey area. Quite literally, lives were at stake, the lives of the children of Soweto and of many more.

The effect of the organised anti-apartheid work was clear. Furthermore there were many eyes, even outside activist circles, that registered attempts at various kinds of exchange. These protests or warning signals compensated for the laws that were not passed. One group that was on the mark was physiotherapists, who early blocked South Africans internationally.

Blacklisting reminded the white population how the rest of the world loathed apartheid, and the regime reacted in various ways to circumvent the boycott. Artists and sportsmen were lured to South Africa with huge fees, and, under cover of the so-called independent homelands concerts and tours were arranged in the amusement metropolis of Sun City in one of South Africa's bantustans. The boycott drew spectacular attention when artists and sportsmen were pilloried in the press for having broken the UN boycott by appearing on stage or playing sport in South Africa. If the sinner then apologised, the media could tell the story once more.

44. Treason trials and reactions

UDF's successes led to yet stronger protests – there was a growing feeling that the system was beginning to crack. The unrest in the townships increased, starting round Johannesburg. School and rent boycotts caused chaos. The anti-apartheid movement's strategy was to make the country ungovernable. Instead of creating calm, the regime's attempt at re-



Organisations took turns to demonstrate outside the South African Legation. Advertisement telling which trade unions were responsible during one week.

form had strengthened the resistance and paved the way for the system being overthrown from below.

In 1985 a state of emergency was introduced, and in all 38 people – most of them active in UDF – were charged with “high treason against the state”. In a series of trials they were accused of instigating violence and unrest in the townships, and for terrorism and murder.

Through several trials of this type the apartheid regime attempted to crush the UDF, which was now seen as a real threat. The regime tried to prove that the UDF was a branch of the banned ANC. Altogether there were around a dozen trials over a four-year period against UDF but the regime did not succeed in proving that the UDF was the ANC. Instead the UDF drew considerable international attention.

Early in 1985 the AIC started a petition to protest against apartheid and in particular the treason trials. 100 000 names were collected on lists to be handed over to South Africa’s legation. Each day for over a month the AIC’s 33 member organisations picketed the South African Legation in Stockholm. One day an entire union congress protested – 400 people from the National Union of Government Workers (SF).

The legation refused to accept the petitions. “You can burn them”, they replied. The petitions, tied together with black mourning tape, were dropped in the legation’s letterbox. The demonstrations ended with the Social Democrats inviting all the other

parliamentary parties to a common manifestation on 11th September; one way of showing that the entire Swedish people stood behind the protests against apartheid. All participated – except the Moderates.

ISAK and SEN produced material for a letter campaign. This was partly for traditional letters addressed to the apartheid regime, and partly the unconventional approach, where Swedes were encouraged to write to “ordinary” white South Africans to draw their attention to what the regime was doing. They were also encouraged to write to the accused to show their support. Further, school

classes were asked to write to school classes in South Africa to stimulate mental processes that in the long term might disturb the regime. A small brochure with facts about the campaign was published in December 1985.

The Swedish Legation in Pretoria followed the treason trials and reported home. Magnus Walan from ISAK also paid visits to South Africa and passed information to and from the accused. In February 1986 the trial in Pietersburg was meant to resume, after charges against twelve of the sixteen accused were withdrawn. SEN’s secretary Rune Forsbeck writes:

We tried to get Swedish lawyers down to follow the trials and in this had strong support from the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. A number of senior jurists were in-

“Early in 1985 the AIC started a petition to protest against apartheid and in particular the treason trials. 100 000 names were collected on lists to be handed over to South Africa’s legation.”

terested in going down, among them Sweden's former Minister of Justice, Lennart Geijer. In the end we decided on Hans-Göran Franck and Staffan Vängby. They applied for visas, and although our opinion was that the regime would be ashamed to deny a qualified delegation visas, that is nevertheless what happened. There was no delegation, and yet something happened.

The regime preferred the shame to more witnesses.

In Alexandra township in Johannesburg, residents succeeded for six days in 1986 in setting up barricades against the police and military, who were prevented from entering the area. Their willingness to protest had had been strengthened through organisations like the Alexandra Arts Centre, the Alexandra Civic Association and the Alexandra Action Committee. This demonstration of strength was an important injection in the liberation struggle.

Leaders were imprisoned, among them the general secretary of the Metal Workers Union, Moses Mayekiso, who was taken by police at the airport, after returning from a visit to the Swedish metal workers. He was accused of high treason; he had organised people in street and residential committees and initiated boycotts. The trial was important for the whole of UDF's future; was it treason when ordinary people protested against apartheid using peaceful means – where was the border?

The trials evoked powerful reactions. South Africa hit the headlines and was often the first news item in the media. The International Metalworkers' Federation started a collection campaign for the defence. Swedish Metal workers contributed 2,6 million kronor (today about 4,5 million). After three years in prison Moses Mayekiso and the other anti-

apartheid leaders were completely exonerated and released.

45. A major breakthrough

To start ISAK, three separate streams united to form a broad river that played an active international role in the coordination of the work against apartheid:

The first stream consisted of the Christian youth organisations in both the Church of Sweden and the free churches. The second was made up of the political youth leagues and other actors who early identified international solidarity as important. The third stream was the Africa Groups, which not only took the initiative but also had both current and far-reaching knowledge about conditions inside South Africa and Namibia.

From around 1984 a media wave came and the issue of South Africa soon widened to become a turbulent river. Media penetration and political explosiveness had already been revealed during the Vietnam war. The cruelty of that war penetrated to TV couches. Now history repeated itself. The brutality of the apartheid system became visible through international TV news and features. At the same time there was an increase in pressure on the press to give place for facts and debate, but most of the media did not have local reporters. The national news agency, TT or *Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå*, had to supplement its sources. Now the joint strength of the ISAK umbrella was revealed, and it had previously undreamt of opportunities of making its voice heard. Both central and local activities were reported, and the discussion pages of the major newspapers were happy to publish contributions from ISAK.

**"That the charismatic
archbishop Desmond Tutu
was awarded the Nobel
Peace Prize in December
1984 for his struggle
against apartheid
increased the strength of
the media winds."**

That the charismatic archbishop Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1984 for his struggle against apartheid increased the strength of the media winds. When pupils in Soweto demonstrated in 1976 Tutu had already challenged the international community to boycott South

Africa economically. Since Tutu was general secretary of the South African Council of Churches from 1978 he was well-known internationally, so he had a certain room to manoeuvre and could both publish his writings and travel abroad.

Pastor Lennart Renöfält was ISAK's first chairperson and was re-elected to this position in the mid-1980s, when

the organisation enjoyed a major breakthrough in the media:

From the beginning up to the first part of 1984 one always had to present oneself and explain, but somewhere there it shifted, and one only needed to say ISAK. Afterwards journalists were continuously on the phone, as soon as something happened in South Africa or some Swedish relationship with South Africa defied the boycott. We sometimes didn't even manage to put something out ourselves before we were contacted. But this did not happen out of the blue; it was preceded by a long and unyielding drive to cultivate contacts, and to learn what it was possible to do in relation to public opinion. We were fairly good at this. Another positive approach was our research, where we dug up unique data that we then launched in the

media. It gave us a serious role when we could formulate questions that then waltzed round in the mass media. ISAK acquired a reliable voice in the mass media.

The accelerating developments in South Africa, with increased protest and thereby increased repression by the regime, could now be matched with growing solidarity. More and more organisations applied to join. Despite a strained economy the board decided to invest in an office. With a few employees the board could prepare, visit and lobby ministers, members of parliament and government services.

ISAK's unique breadth was a significant example abroad and also gave it an important role in the coordination of international public opinion. Personal meetings with significant people from the liberation movements contributed to its perseverance in the work. The media and other actors increasingly realised that even if the tempo was high, ISAK had a clear and well-founded strategy. ISAK's relationship to the ANC and SWAPO was not because it slavishly followed some doctrine, but because of an ongoing analysis of the situation.

The UN's Special Committee against Apartheid from time to time invited selected organisations, among them ISAK, which the UN regarded as one of the leading anti-apartheid movements (AA) in the world. Its international secretary Lotta Johnson-Fornarve represented the Nordic anti-apartheid movements on one occasion. The international work started early with a joint Nordic campaign against the Nordic carrier SAS's flights to South Africa:

In Stockholm we organised street theatre with a model of an SAS plane on a wheelbarrow



In connection with receiving the Nobel Peace Price 1984 Desmond Tutu also visted Stockholm. The Secretary general of the Ecumenical Council, Lars B. Stenström interpreted the long talked about sermon he held at the Stockholm Cathedral.



The joint campaign against the Scandinavian Airline, SAS flights to South Africa was one example of the Nordic cooperation.

and representatives of Swedish companies in South Africa in the plane. Parallel with that we played a scene showing how badly black mine workers were treated. When it was performed outside SAS offices on Sveavägen in Stockholm the work stopped and the staff came out to stare in amazement at our “aeroplane”.

The Nordic AA organisations met regularly and kept an eye on, among other things, the Nordic meetings of foreign ministers to ensure that the South African issue always remained on the agenda. When Czechoslovakia, after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, wanted to end sanctions linked to the old regime, ISAK succeeded in helping to prevent this by reference to Swedish AA work.

For a long time ISAK’s activities were run by a small activist office in AGIS premises. Only in 1985 did ISAK get its own 11m2 room in Solidaritetshuset. The following year staff was expanded to four employees, including one doing his national service as a conscientious objector. The local and central activities were now so newsworthy that ISAK had to stop subscribing to a press clippings service so that its finances would not break down.

46. Forming public opinion in South Africa

A growing plethora of organisations and traditional oral communication were naturally central elements in the formation of domestic public opinion against apartheid policies. Other media were also needed, and required resources – both in terms of personnel and financial. The former had to be available on site, but the latter could possibly come from outside, which is what happened in various ways.

The ANC's *Radio Freedom* was broadcast from five African countries, but to listen to it could lead to five years in prison. Nevertheless people listened to the messages and challenges, to liberation songs and news that were censored in the radio, TV and press inside South Africa. Radio Freedom required many kinds of support: money and help to procure expensive transmission and reception equipment but also simple things like ordinary cassette tapes. Don Ngubeni of the editorial staff in Lusaka put it this way when he visited Sweden in 1988:



For us a cassette is an important part of our work. Sound is what radio deals with. We broadcast the recorded voice, not a written speech a piece of paper. The living voices of ANC's leaders are personal, and people listen. You can form your own opinion: What kind of person is this? We send our cassettes to people in South Africa. They are listened to. They are copied onto other cassettes and spread. They play a big role in the struggle against apartheid.

Some cassettes were sent in empty, or with the donor's old music remaining to appear innocent. Once in the country they were kept for upcoming transmissions. On some, one kept the old contents for 5–10 minutes before recording banned information. About 20–50 blacks would gather round each cassette to hear the latest about the struggle. This meant that old cassettes that were simply lying around could help provide thousands with the very message they needed to understand the situation and participate in the struggle. Tormod Nesset ex-



*5 years in prison for listening to Radio...
Campaign for economic support to ANC Radio Freedom.*

plains how ISAK in Oskarshamn collected cassettes:

It was great fun! At some of the municipality's youth centres boxes were made in the shape of huge piggy banks with a slit where visitors could drop the tapes. We talked with the youth about the aim, and asked them not to turn the piggy banks into rubbish bins for diverse junk, to be serious. Very little junk was thrown in. We trained some young people from each centre, and they talked about the struggle and



Weekly Mail was very effective in exposing the Apartheid regime.

guarded the boxes till the centre closed. They did a great job. Masses of tapes were collected and in the process we mobilised a youth group for ISAK.

The original initiative was taken in Holland, and the idea was taken over by the local branch of SIF, the Swedish Union of Clerical and Service Workers at Swedish Radio. Kristian Romare on the radio con-

tacted ISAK in early 1985 and wanted to broaden the campaign by cooperating with the collection of cassette tapes. The public response was so overwhelming that ISAK had to stop the collection!

Bush Radio in Cape Town never got a broadcasting licence but nevertheless sent programmes. They were stopped and the equipment was confiscated. The alternative ether media was too popular to be permitted. Thus most of the support Sida channelled through the Africa Groups was directed to the written media, which had the only opportunity of publishing information critical of apartheid. In time a number of text media which were critical of the regime, and were often community-based, appeared in South Africa. They had both financial and political problems. Several editors spent more time in court than at the paper. Their investigative journalism was very embarrassing to the government and it was probably among the most skilled and courageous in the world at this time.

When the *Weekly Mail* (now *Mail & Guardian*) was suspended for a month in late 1988, AGIS, with the help of Sida, was able to finance staff training to keep it together, until the paper could start publishing again. This was the beginning of AGIS support to journalist training that continued for over a decade. On a previous occasion the Stockholm chapter of the Swedish Union of Journalists sent money they had collected for journalist training that helped the *Weekly Mail* survive during a three-month suspension. This training suited the times; there were only a few black journalists, and even the large dailies needed to have reporters in the black townships. Another alternative paper in Johannesburg was the fortnightly *Indicator*. Each edition of about 30 000 copies (1990) was largely free-of-charge and mainly advertisement financed.

Support to Afrikaans language alternative media, like *Saamstaan* in Oudtshoorn and *Namaquanius* in Springbok, was of extra value. The most successful was *Vrye Weekblad*. Even here the support was related to training. The paper became famous for its revelations of the police's clandestine methods and it was the first Afrikaans paper against apartheid. It was edited by Max du Preez, later a TV commentator (but suspended in 1999), a genuine Boer if more radical than most. He loved his Volk and represented a positive Afrikanerdom without racist ideas. In and around Cape Town there was media training at grassroots level producing simply laid out newssheets, filled with explosive material. They wrote about and for farm workers, who were strictly controlled but could be reached on the occasions they were permitted to leave their workplaces.

To shape internal opinion, access to books was also required. Through SEN resources were channelled to several publishers:

Ravan Press was founded in 1972 by Beyers Naudé and others linked to the Christian Institute, in the first hand to publish studies on the effects of race policies. Their books were also used in shaping Swedish public opinion. *Staffrider* was launched after Soweto in 1976 as a forum for mainly black writers. Many of their publications were banned.

Skotaville Publishers aimed to give blacks a chance of making their voices heard and through very low prices reach as many as possible. Non-fiction dominated their publications, including a series on African Theology. In May 1986



The Unquestionable Right to Be Free was banned. *Essays in Black Theology*, and the State of Emergency of the same year led bookshops to remove Skotaville's books from their shelves so that they would not be penalised.

When André Brink's novel *Kennis van die sand* was banned in 1974, Taurus Publishers distributed the book as a pure protest action by a few university lecturers. This publisher became one of the few that writers threatened by censorship could turn to. They included Breyten Breytenbach, Nadine Gordimer, John Miles, Wilma Stockenström and Lettie Viljoen. Most of the practical work was voluntarily done without pay by the owners themselves in their spare time. They were opposed to state interference in publishing and never negotiated with the Censorship Board. For the same reason they never appealed against the banning of a book.

There were several attempts to start some kind of news agency, *inter alia* Africa Press News and Information Agency with Zwelakhe Sisulu in the vanguard. The idea was to compile information and produce articles on detained, killed and missing people, for both internal and international consumers. Through SEN, Sida granted support but Sisulu was imprisoned in June 1986, and the project did not get off the ground. A similar fate affected the support that was intended for *The Press Trust of South Africa*, an independent news agency with its main office in Durban.

47. No business with apartheid

From the beginning ISAK's work was strategically focused on the annual and increasingly professional campaign week held to commemorate Sharpeville in March. In 1984 the topic was "Nordic action against apartheid", and the local work highlighted

parliament's review of the ban on new investments, the consumer boycott, the release of political prisoners and support to ANC and SWAPO. Shortly before the campaign week *Toivo ya Toivo*, one of SWAPO's founders, was released from Robben Island.

The topic in 1985 was "Youth against apartheid" and the campaign was held in 60 towns and villages. In cooperation with the Africa Groups and the School Student Organisation of Sweden, SECO, the office helped to organise ten seminars and offered to send speakers to the local groups. Fruit pickets and demonstrations were part of the arsenal.

"For a free Namibia – isolate South Africa!" was the topic in 1986. Now for the first time Namibia was in focus, and actions against Swakara furs were held in many places. As South Africa's military presence increased, protests grew. Over 100 places took part in the week.

In 1987 the topic "No business with apartheid" largely summarised the core of ISAK's work. Shortly before the campaign week, information was released on a Swedish trade embargo from 1st July. Even if media interest had begun to cool, ISAK now had to trace the companies that sought loopholes in the law. 160 sites were now involved in the campaign week.

1988 featured the twin topics: "Children against apartheid – No business with South Africa". As the previous year the campaign paper came out as a tabloid, which made it both cheaper to print and easier to read. It was also less pretentious. Through a child's perspective one could reach new groups, above all schools. On the business side, with the book *Morality for sale: Apartheid business on new routes* by "Henrik Adolfsson" alias the journalist Lasse Herneklint, one could follow up a previous publica-

tion, *Apartheid*. After a visit to a goldmine he wrote: testing room was shown, a large gymnastic hall of concrete with some kind of solid benches set in the floor. Here the so-called migrant workers from The Front Line States round South Africa were brought, and the temperature and humidity were raised to the conditions prevailing under ground. Then the workers had to climb up and down concrete blocks for hours. Those who passed the test were employed, the rest were returned. The better one did on the test, the further down the mine one was assigned. In Sweden one cannot even do this to cattle without being reported to the authorities.

The Swedish companies that did not withdraw from South Africa also sat on the International Council of Swedish Industry. Internationalism apparently had a somewhat limited focus. Aside from PR gains to South Africa, their presence was technologically valuable, in certain respects crucial. Atlas Copco and the other mine suppliers were at the pinnacle of international mining operations. Without them it would be difficult to fetch the gold from the kilometre deep shafts. ABB's optical fibre cables and advanced power transfer were important technological advances. SKF's ball bearings were not technically pioneering, but without them it would not be possible to keep armoured vehicles rolling in the hunt for school children in the townships. The Africa Groups' slogan *SKF keeps South Africa rolling* was a reality, and company taxes went straight to the national budget, which at that time allocated 40% to the military.

ISAK was successful in its work towards legal sanctions, and from an international perspective



The campaign Youth Against Apartheid was very successful around the country.



SKF Keeps South Africa Rolling. Poster in a series produced by the Gothenburg Africa Group.



Picket outside the SKF headquarter in Gothenburg.

Sweden was far ahead, but the loopholes meant Swedish legislation leaked like a sieve.

48. Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid

Inspired by the Swedish People's Parliament for Disarmament in 1983, ISAK, together with the Swedish UN Association, among many others, organised the *Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid* on 21–23 February, 1986. It was a mighty manifestation of the commitment of Sweden's popular movements on the issue: 1 000 delegates from 700 organisations dealt with motions in six committees:

South Africa as a threat to world peace, support to the liberation struggle in South Africa and to Na-

mbia's route to independence, but also the plunder of Namibia's natural resources, development cooperation to the Front Line States, as well as ISAK's core issues like economic sanctions and the UN's blacklisting of sport and cultural exchange.

The resolutions of the People's Parliament were taken in plenary sessions after discussion on the statements of the committees.

Prime Minister Olof Palme held what would become his last speech in public at the People's Parliament, and a historic photo of ANC President Oliver Tambo and Olof Palme next to each other was taken here. A week later Olof Palme was shot dead on a street in Stockholm. Lotta Johnsson-Fornarve, then a member of the ISAK board, recalls the drudgery before the age of the personal computer:



The peoples Parliament against Apartheid gathered many organisations also outside ISAK.

Everything had to be typewritten and all changes had to be cut and pasted in. Several hundred functionaries of all kinds had to be organised to do everything from guarding the doors to typewriting. The People's Parliament was a huge lift for the issues of apartheid and sanctions, and contributed to making South Africa the greatest international issue of the time. Absolutely everyone joined, even the Moderate Youth League, which on principle opposed everything. This was excellent, since it created a polarisation that was easy to relate to, and the effect was unifying for the other delegates.

It was the largest and broadest assembly on the issue, and could with its organisation take

important political decisions that were very significant in future opinion work, since one could refer to them. It also gave an enormous lift to the work throughout the country. Many sport clubs and recreation organisations, trade unions and other local organisations that normally did not bother about social issues were present. Tremendous!

49. Shell campaign – success or failure?

For over 15 years, in violation of the UN oil boycott, Shell supplied Rhodesia with oil, roughly 50% of its needs, and in the same way it supplied South Africa. In 1986 ISAK began to boycott Shell. A combination of poor union conditions at Shell installations in South Africa and Shell's strategic importance to

the apartheid regime triggered an international boycott. When the company fired 80 miners at a coalmine in Rietspruit in 1985, the ICFTU objected. In less than two years the boycott had support from unions throughout the world. The time had come for the most powerful action thus far against one of the many companies that supported the apartheid state.

Already in 1984 at a UN conference in Paris the ANC had recommended a boycott of Shell, and in May 1985 the World Council of Churches discussed an international boycott of Shell. That both trade unions and the church were involved at an early stage meant a lot for its subsequent breadth. Jonas Idestrom, doing VTP weapons-free service at ISAK, began to work on the campaign in 1986:

I had long had a burning interest in Africa, and came right into the Shell campaign. In the circles in which I moved, the Church of Sweden Youth, the boycott of Shell was obvious, in the same way obvious to boycott Nestlé. I'm aware that I still never fill up at Shell, and I know others who say the same thing. It drew a lot of attention.

In Sweden, Shell's fuel and heating oil were not sold only by its own outlets but mainly by private businesses with leasing agreements. Shortly before the middle of the year ISAK urged companies, institutions, buildings and other major consumers not to procure oil from Shell, and the public to boycott Shell's filling stations.

The Swedish Shell traders' association, whose members ran Shell filling stations, made contact with ISAK and offered to try to get Shell to withdraw from South Africa. In return ISAK postponed



the boycott of these garages to mid-August. The boycott of Shell's own outlets and other products continued. August came and went, but it was no surprise that Shell did not leave South Africa. ISAK judged that as long as the traders cooperated with ISAK it might hurt Shell, and thus found it difficult to argue for a boycott of the traders. Thus ISAK put two demands that the traders' association agreed to:

- To send a joint delegation to Shell's international headquarters;
- To distribute a joint statement on Shell's com-

mitments in South Africa that would be available in Shell filling stations.

Shell pretended it was unaffected by the boycott, but hired the consultants Pagan International, which specialised in counteracting boycott campaigns. It had practised on Union Carbide's blackout of the gas leak catastrophe in Bhopal in India as well as on Nestlé's substitute for mothers' milk that was killing babies in developing countries. Among other measures Pagan recommended a "meaningful dialogue" with churches and unions through intermediaries. These were exactly the same tactics used by the Shell traders. When they did not live up to the conditions in an honourable way, the boycott was also extended to them. In the meantime a dilemma arose in the campaign, exactly what the Pagan strategy intended.

Although Swedish Shell tried to pretend it was unaffected by the campaign the oil company's activities indicated the reverse. When the international company held a shareholders meeting in the Hague in 1990 there was a 36 % drop in profits. This plunge openly disturbed the shareholders. The board did not give the reason for the deterioration, but kept a straight face.

Holger Sandelin also did VTP service at ISAK's office:

Before the Shell campaign it was simple, but now suddenly ambivalence arose among our members. When Swedish Shell showed individual garage owners, problems arose. When it came to acquaintances in one's neighbourhood

who might go bankrupt, the great public support for a boycott of South Africa was inadequate. It was a educational conundrum to boycott Shell and - at the same time - except those Shell garages owned by local businessmen.

Problems mounted and vandalism of Shell garages by militant groups outside ISAK were a clearly a blow to the campaign. The members with a commitment in international questions had great confidence in ISAK; there the campaign was not so controversial. Theoretically the campaign was not a problem, but in practice it became difficult because of the sabotage of garages, rather like breathing out with flour in ones mouth.

Suddenly ISAK found itself in a similar position as the Shell traders' association that claimed: "We have done what we could and asked Shell to leave South Africa, but they ignore this." Now ISAK said: "We have challenged these activists not to vandalise, but they ignore this."

When the assaults continued despite this, the campaign was in difficulties from two sides. The militants thought that ISAK was taking too much consideration, was too cowardly. It was not too difficult to ride this. What was worse was that doubt arose within ISAK, mainly among the liberal organisations. FPU left ISAK, and the Liberal Party Women were also critical but remained. The Church of Sweden was a rock and there the campaign was sanctioned at the highest level in the AGM in 1987. The hitherto youngest delegate wrote the motion on the Shell boycott that

"Shell pretended it was unaffected by the boycott, but hired the consultants Pagan International, which specialised in counteracting boycott campaigns."



To cut credit cards became part of the campaign.

was adopted without debate or reservation. His name was Holger Sandelin.

Together with the campaigns on business and Children against Apartheid, the Shell campaign became a kind of flagship for ISAK. When connec-

ting social commitment with concrete action it was a simple way of doing something. Since ordinary people do not usually buy very many drilling rigs or mining equipment, it was difficult for consumers to boycott Atlas-Copco. The Shell campaign was more

tangible, since it was not a particularly great sacrifice find another filling station.

ISAK's former organisation secretary Peter Göransson sees advantages to the campaign:

It was good to gather people around this issue since the trade embargo had removed South African goods from the shelves. The campaign meant that Shell's trademark was blemished. Had Shell been untouched, they would not have bothered to contact us. Unfortunately it was mainly the attacks on Shell filling stations that were seen by those who read the evening news. Locally as in Dalarna and Oskarshamn it was different with the peaceful actions that were the aim of the campaign. Incidentally I almost got a new job. The information secretary at Shell asked me: "Peter, what are your qualifications? We need people like you at Swedish Shell."



Church of Sweden marched in front of the Shell campaign.

NELSON MANDELA



To the People of Sweden:

The path to people's victory is
illuminated by your solidarity
Solidarity

Nelson Mandela

4. 7. 90

NELSON MANDELA STOCKHOLM SVERIGE MARS 1990

The message from Mandela on his visit to Sweden in March 1990: To the people of Sweden: The path towards peoples' victory is illuminated by your unselfish solidarity.

8.

1988–1994

**TIME TO BRING
THE HARVEST IN**

50. Namibia is liberated

In 1982 under the leadership of Martti Ahtisaari, the fifth UN Commissioner on Namibia, the Western powers, SWAPO and the Front Line States united on the constitutional principles for Namibia, at a time when the prospects appeared dim. In 1981 France, Great Britain and USA had vetoed sanctions against South Africa, and the USA refused to condemn South Africa's latest military invasion in Angola. Instead it demanded that Cuban troops should leave Angola so that South African troops would withdraw from Namibia. That the former were there on the invitation of Angola's government and that the latter were there illegally did not matter. It was more important for USA to reduce the influence of the Soviet Union and Cuba than to give Namibia freedom. SWAPO's response was to intensify the armed struggle and prepare for a lengthier exile.

When its president, Sam Nujoma, came to Sweden in May 1983, he was received like a head of state. In addition to meetings with Palme and the



President Sam Nujoma presenting the Namibian flag.

Foreign Minister Lennart Bodström, he met the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and all the party leaders. Official assistance was increasingly allocated to development projects, and from 1982–83 Sida and the Foreign Ministry treated SWAPO as if it were a government. This put completely new demands on planning and transparency. Adult education at Sandöskolan in administration and economy thus became a strategically important part of the support. Recognition of the need existed on both sides, which was also a precondition for the growing support. Erik Karlsson, among other things a former deputy director of Sweden's national bank and a director of the central bank in Lesotho, in an extension of this cooperation later became economic advisor to Sam Nujoma and ended up as director of Namibia's central bank.

In 1987 the Swede Bernt Carlsson was appointed the seventh UN Commissioner for Namibia to lead the transition to democracy. He had worked together with Olof Palme on negotiations on peace in the Iran/Iraq conflict, and had been the Social Democratic Party's international secretary and general secretary in the Socialist International as well as the NGO Ambassador at the Foreign Ministry. South Africa had just suffered a humiliating military defeat in Angola. At last the situation looked brighter. In 1988 Bernt Carlsson organised a meeting between SWAPO and white Namibians, and South Africa was on the way to giving up control over Namibia. In September 1988 Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev had agreed that the Cuban troops would go home after the South African troops withdrew to South Africa. Resolution 435 on the independence



The South Africa flag is lowered once and for all in the Namibian capital Windhoek. The photographer Kaleni Hiyalwa was part of a Africa Group project with SWAPO.

of Namibia could now be implemented.

On 20th December Bernt Carlsson was to fly to New York to sign the accord with the other signatories. His plans changed at the request of a South African mining company, de Beers, who wanted to meet him in London for discussions on Namibia's diamonds. It led to his death. He was one of 270 killed when PAN AM 103 was blown up over Lockerbie in Scotland.

Work for Namibia's independence continued – despite certain armed skirmishes – under the leadership of Martti Ahtisaari from neighbouring Finland. Elections were held in November 1989. Although South Africa had supported the election campaigns of seven other parties to the tune of roughly 300 million kronor 1989 (=almost 600 million 2019), the election was convincingly won by SWAPO (57%), while the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, which was close to South Africa, got 29%.

On 21st March 1990 – to the day 30 years after the Sharpeville massacre – Namibia finally was free, and Sam Nujoma installed as the country's first president. In accordance with Resolution 432 from 1978, the enclave of Walvis Bay was also returned to Namibia in 1994.

51. Retreat of the apartheid regime

Developments in Namibia had shown that not even the leading Western powers could, in the long run, prevent the white regime from collapsing. The strategic oil boycott had in the late 1980s begun to affect industry badly. In addition South Africa lost more important trading markets. Prospects of turning the economic crisis around were bleak.

In the meantime, through the UDF and COSATU, civil society's black/non-white majority had gained a strong position, while white youths increa-

singly distanced themselves from the prevailing politics. Within the NP a revolt emerged. The regime had to prepare a soft landing.

Secret discussions started with Nelson Mandela. In late 1989 several imprisoned black leaders were released, but Mandela put political conditions on his own release. On 2nd February 1990 the banning of the ANC and 30 other organisations was lifted, and nine days later Mandela became a free man. His message was clear: Isolate South Africa! Continue with sanctions! There is a long road to a non-racist society. With support of the World Council of Churches, Frank Chikane, then General Secretary of South Africa's Christian Council, emphasised that it would be "a grave mistake if the international pressures against the regime were reduced at this stage", and COSATU's vice-president Chris Dlamini made a similar appeal.

What ought ISAK – and its 63 member organisations and 100 supporting organisations – do? Continue, yes, but how? There was a great need for analytical material. In October 1991 a delegation went to South Africa. The result was a series of publications *På väg mot ett fritt Sydafrika med apartheid i bagaget* (On the road to a free South Africa with apartheid in one's luggage). Questions that were raised included violence, the development of trade unions, the education situation, land questions, the economy, culture etc. Already in April 1990, in the publication *Sanktioner och Sydafrikas mineraler* (Sanctions and South Africa's minerals), Hans Gustafsson, Bertil Odén and Andreas Tegen had shown that the world would manage quite well without South African minerals. The world was new after the fall of the Berlin wall.

The coming elections – it was unclear when – would put great demands on the ANC, and ISAK



The newly released ANC leaders are welcomed to Stockholm in January 1990.

needed to make a decent contribution. Pelle Knutsson took hold of the campaign *Tänd ett ljus – släck apartheid* (Light a candle – extinguish apartheid):

It was a greater sales success than the campaign paper. I do not know how many candles we sold but I remember Patrik standing and loaded cartons of candles onto postal vans. We or-

dered new supplies but before they were all distributed the campaign ebbed out. It had reached the threshold of our distribution network and it took us a long time to get rid of all the candles, since we ordered a whole lot in the second round.

Not everything that ISAK did bear fruit, for instance a campaign *Så ett frö för Sydafrika* (Sow a seed for South Africa), as South African seeds did not grow well in Swedish soil. In the past collections were mostly run locally and by member organisations. Now one had to gear up for a central collection and new means. In late 1991 Patrik Lönn was charged with developing and coordinating these efforts:

My role was to try to collect as much money as possible... even important symbolically. For ANC it was also important that the funds were not taken from the ordinary Sida support. We now began to interleave leaflets about the collection in papers like the Social Democratic Women's League paper among others, and produced a professional wall calendar that many even outside solidarity circles bought, since it was so well done. The year before the elections we collected a million kronor, and both the ANC and ourselves were pleased with that.

In a referendum in March 1992, 68% of the white electorate voted to end apartheid through negotiations. At last they had seen the writing on the wall. For many the chance of renewed international sport was a strong argument. After several years of negotiations in CODESA, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, the parties could present a new draft constitution: equal suffrage for all, two cham-



Buy the ISAK candles.

bers and a united state with federal and regional bodies.

In April 1994 for the first time general elections would be held in South Africa. Who could guarantee that they would be free and fair and thus democratic? Up to the last minute the IFP, Inkatha Freedom Party, tried to sabotage the process and only decided to participate a few days before the elections.

50. Mandela at the Globe

"Don't put out the fire just when the pot is beginning to boil" were Nelson Mandela's words to 12 000 enthusiastic spectators at the solidarity gala held in *Globen*, the Globe, on 16th March 1990, just over a month after his release. Sweden was the first the country outside Africa on his trip abroad, and this was not a coincidence. *The Committee for Nelson Mandela's Release* organised the event. Most of ISAK's member organisations were there, Sida and several trade union organisations, etc. It was a financial gamble, although the artists performed gratis. Sound, rent and pay to around 250 people for other services cost money, but it all worked.

The evening became a world event with artists like Miriam Makeba, Cyndee Peters, Astrid Assefa, Tomas Ledin and others, plus a speech by Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson as well as a large number of choirs, which for the evening formed a giant choir of 700, to sing African songs, ending their appearance with *Nkosi, sikelel' iAfrika!*

Suddenly US presidential candidate Jesse Jackson arrived with a party, without prior warning. Not a chair was to be found on the VIP platform, but the ANC's Alfred Nzo and his wife had excused them-



The Swedish artista Asrid Assefa, Cyndee Peters, Elsie Einarsdotter with Nelson Mandela.

selves, so two places were free. The rest of the company waited in the corridor.

53. Black townships and violence

Apartheid was still alive, weak but not dead. Thus it was important to portray the situation in the country. In 1991 ISAK chose to try and interpret the feeling of the black township through a project cal-

led *Den Svarta Förstaden*, (The Black Township). The idea was to portray both the oppression and the strength in the poverty, the protests. A mobile exhibition of 60m² was created. It had sound and images and a culvert led right into the township and its scenes with a real tin shanty with a bed, wallpapered with posters. The smells and sounds recreated were not appreciated by all the libraries that showed it,

but visitors' empathy was strong. When human rights activist Howard Varney from Legal Resources Centre in Durban saw the exhibition he was amazed:

"How on earth did you manage to do this?" it was all so authentic that he felt as though he was walking into Alexandra! Particularly the images of the police and military who were often in the townships depicted in the form of welded scrap metal sculptures instead of scarecrows.

Even with Mandela free, the democratic process was far from assured. Political violence was real in the black townships. Black-on-black violence was ideal from the regime's perspective, which did all it could to exacerbate existing tension. The IFP, led by Gatsha Buthelezi, lent itself to this, and its warriors received weapons training on secret farms of the South African army.

In September 1991 the National Peace Accord was signed between 26 of the most significant actors. COSATU in Durban had for several years worked out conflict resolution methods and achieved local peace pacts. They were used as guidelines in negotiating the peace accord. The military as well as right and leftwing extremists, however, remained outside the fold.

In 1992 the violence accelerated. In June 46 people in Boipatong were killed in a massacre that led to the ANC walking out of the negotiations. The perpetrators were vigilantes – the regime's minions – not new, already known from the 1980s. The international media was often ill-informed and uncritically disseminated the official police version. IFP-supporters were bussed to hostels in the vicinity of mines and other industries, from whence they went on night time raids in the townships. If there was a direct fire fight between the ANC and IFP, the



Poster for "The Black Township".

police and army chose either to look the other way or to support the IFP.

Many feared that a civil war would break out in the black townships. White fascists like the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) armed themselves. In this situation the need for independent information was great. ISAK thus tried to form a picture of the situation not only from ANC but also from the Legal Resource Centre, the ecumenical organisation Diakonia based in Durban and the Network of Independent Monitors (NIM), which tried to monitor and document the violence in the townships.

An activist reflects

Magnus Walan was one of the activists involved in solidarity work for many years both as a volunteer and professionally:

My journey with the Africa Groups began in secondary school in 1974–75. I was angry because the media placed the liberation movement MPLA in Angola on an equal footing with the armed groups, cooperating with the South African forces. I remember a meeting at the library in Linköping where Sören Lindh was one of the speakers.

I was on the board of the Africa Groups, went on a study trip to Guinea Bissau in 1976–77, did more than ten years work on ISAK's board and was at the independence celebrations in Zimbabwe in 1980. Through my work in the Africa Groups and ISAK I was entrusted by the ANC to visit apartheid South Africa as a representative for the solidarity movement in the West. My South African trips to the ANC underground started in 1984 and continued up to the elections in 1994.

In South Africa I had very strong experiences. I remember the mourning women at a mass funeral in Alexandra who showed me no hate as a white, although their children had recently been killed by white soldiers, how I instead was warmly embraced. How at the post and telephone workers trade union congress I was spontaneously called on to talk about solidarity work in Sweden. Or when we were stopped at a roadblock by soldiers from the Riot Squad and had to pretend that UDF chairperson, Albertina Sisulu, was a domestic worker in our home in Johannesburg and I was only driving her home. What it was like to travel to the forced removal camps in KwaZulu-Natal disguised as a Catholic priest.

South Africa was a political school on various pla-



Magnus Walan represented the Africa Groups at The extra ordinary General assembly of UNESCO in Paris about Namibia in 1980. To he right Ruth Mompoti from ANC.

nes. When friends in human rights work in South Africa asked me for a comment on the news that the ANC in its Angolan camps had used torture, and executed political dissidents and suspected spies, I evaded the issue and said that they were in a difficult situation. Then I was told off in no uncertain terms, correctly, I later realised.

Torture is never acceptable. Loyalty to parties should never be more important than loyalty to basic rights and principles like never accepting torture and to always start from the poor person's perspective and interests. On this point I think the Africa Groups have sometimes been weak because of loyalty to parties and states. This had an influence, for instance, when Swedish pressure persuaded South Africa to buy the JAS Gripen fighter plane.

Yet this does not blemish the whole. Without the Africa Groups, Sweden would have been poorer. And my life would have been very different, very much poorer.

As expected the violence died down soon after the elections in 1994, except in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Buthelezi's home territory, where a power struggle with the ANC continued.

54. New roads to peace

In 1992 the UN decided to send Peace Monitors to South Africa try to reduce the violence and make it possible to hold general elections. In South Africa, fear of the escalating violence was growing. The National Peace Accord was a positive but insufficient contribution. In August 1992 the World Council of Churches launched the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa (EMPSA) so that the churches through an international presence could complement inputs by governments. The international coordinator was Barney Pityana, former BCM member, amongst other things. Beyers Naudé was EMPSA president in South Africa.

Swedish EMPSA was largely integrated into PEMSA, Peace Monitoring in South Africa. Earlier common experiences and new impulses facilitated the project. In all 17 organisations with trade union, Christian, peace and solidarity movement background were involved. 66 peace monitors undertook to do at least six weeks monitoring for five months before, during and after the elections in April 1994.

These points are essential to explain that the broad cooperation around PEMSA was possible.

There were three important pre-requisites for the project:

1. The broad and many years of cooperation in ISAK was not only an important practical experience but also an expression of a common system of values.
2. Early contacts with EMPSA on behalf of the

churches and with NIM in South Africa on behalf of the Olof Palme International Centre (successor to AIC) contributed to insights on both the needs and the possibilities. Their representatives also took part in a meeting in June 1993 to draw up guidelines for the cooperation.

3. Led by the firebrand Margareta Ingelstam, SEN (later the Christian Council of Sweden) had for several years worked on developing non-violent strategies. A result of this was a course in conflict resolution, communication, negotiation methodology and nonviolence, prepared by herself and Joe Seremano, head of the Justice and Reconciliation Department at South African Christian Council. The first course was held in Sigtuna with 15 participants from South Africa and Sweden.

PEMSA required practical assistance in organising, recruiting, educating and debriefing peace monitors, who were at the disposal of voluntary organisations in South Africa. The methods were based on experiences of similar tasks within churches and peace movements but were nevertheless new in terms of form and comprehensiveness. An absolute condition for the project was that Sida financed it. PEMSA was also seen in Sweden as a pilot project to develop a model for peace services, and the methods were later employed by Swedish organisations in connection with tasks for peace and election monitoring elsewhere.

A fact-finding mission to South Africa was part of the preparations, in which Pelle Knutsson and Magnus Walan participated on behalf of ISAK. The former says:

Among my most shattering meetings was when Magnus and I sat in Inkatha's office and

talked with these men who went out and murdered people at night, and we conversed with them about a democratic South Africa. Everyone knew exactly who everyone was, everyone knew what everyone else did, and everyone knew where everyone was sleeping that night. There we sat and had a dialogue that was ice-cold on the surface. I felt that anything could happen in this environment.

A few nights later we drove out of a township near Port Shepstone. There was only one entrance and one exit to be able to control the residents. A SADF military vehicle stopped us, and a pale pimply soldier with shaky hands and armed to the teeth lit up the car with a torch and wanted to know everything before we could leave. The boot was full of ANC jerseys and if he had opened it anything might have happened. I was really scared then.

A few weeks before the elections 21 representatives from ISAK arrived to function as election observers in, among other places, one of the country's largest townships, Mdantsane on the outskirts of East London in the Eastern Cape. They monitored things like the parties' election meetings, public debates, marches and demonstrations. During the elections they observed and reported on how the elections were run in different polling stations, particularly in the countryside, where there were few other international observers.

It was with pride and commitment that the electorate went to the elections. More than 90% voted and, to the surprise of many, the elections proceeded peacefully.



Four Swedes that were part of PEMSA. From the left Martin Misgeld, Robert Eriksson, Bengt Gabrielsson and Åke Forsberg.

55. The route to the elections

The vast majority of those eligible to vote had never voted. How could one get all of them to go to the polling stations? This – and not competition from other parties – was the ANC's main concern. On the advice of the Social Democrats and after a certain hesitation from the ANC a special organisation for voter education was formed – the Voter Education and Election Training Unit (VEETU) – in September 1992. Its strength lay in the breadth of its religious, union, civil and women's organisations, and an approach to adult education that had never been tried in South Africa. Its impartiality made it possible for Sida to support this work.

The VEETU project had a clear goal. All who were eligible should go and vote on election day. To reach over 20 million voters there had to be a snowball effect through training on an industrial scale. From January 1993 to the elections in April 1994



The group of ISAK election observers in Eastern Cape.

(16 months) VEETU held 467 training courses on weekends and during the week, often with accommodation and food, sometimes with more than 1 000 participants. About 77 000 course leaders were trained in this time and one reached 2,2 million voters directly. In one trial election 60 000 people took part.

VEETU's work was documented and evaluated, both in Sweden and in South Africa. It was a unique public education project, not only from a South African perspective. It wrote *Bringing out the Vote: Mass training as an organising tool* – as a handbook for others who wanted to do the same thing.

After the CODESA agreement, the political parties could no longer exert any influence over the

election procedures themselves. The Independent Electoral Commission was responsible. The election would be run in close cooperation with the international community. The UN charged many countries, including Sweden, to appoint a sum total of 250 election observers.

One problem was that white society, with state support, controlled radio and TV, large sections of the press, as well as the election apparatus. In addition, many in the new electorate were illiterate. It was also a problem that white farmers did not want to permit the ANC's election officers onto their farms, while the black workers refused to listen to those of the NP.

ISAK's and Africa Groups' *Fritt Sydafrika* (Free

South Africa) and *Slå på trumman* (Beat the drum) collections got into high gear, where one of the goals was to equip a video vehicle and train the crew and driver. They began by visiting villages in Northern Transvaal with its three homelands of Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu, where the population was among the most disadvantaged. Many single women support large families on small overused plots, while the men work in Johannesburg. The money also went to support the training of election workers from the ANC and its allies, and to printing the ANC's handbook for training election workers.

Solidarity imperialism was a problem. Many international actors wanted to tell South Africans what they ought to do. The National Democratic Institute had both money and staff but wanted to train people for an American electoral system. Beatie Hofmeyr cooperated with Bo Toresson and Birgitta Silén, among others, and wrote South Africa's first election handbook:

I remember a discussion with an Afro-American woman where I questioned their methods. In her broadest American she said, "Honey, you must just trust us, we have done this for more than a hundred years". I could not help replying, "How come fewer than 25 per cent of the Afro-American population actually vote? We hope for at least 80 per cent." That was the end of our cooperation with Americans. Yet they were not the only ones who behaved in this way. Britons, Germans, Italians and the Irish all had similar attitudes.

The Swedes were quite different. I'll never forget the first meeting with Bo Krogvig. We took up all sorts of things and he said: "Everything you do will be assessed on whether you have put the voters in the centre of the activi-



Beatie Hofmeyr and Roshene Singh are planning voter education.

es". This became a guiding light for us. The Swedes had a way of always quickly coming to the point in a very simple manner. We only had a direct partnership with the Swedes. It was the largest assistance and we had most use of it. We appreciated that they gave us input where they were experts, with preparations, planning, and writing handbooks – but also that they let us take the main role.

56. Mission accomplished

ANC won a landslide victory in the elections, garnering nearly 63% and formed – as agreed in the CODESA Accord – a Government of National Uni-

peace have not arrived, the poorest are even poorer. Was all the solidarity work in vain?

No.

It might have been better if some countries had not had natural resources that were so rich that they were tempting boothies to the superpowers and multinationals. Oil and diamonds (Angola), platinum, gold and coal (South Africa), aluminium and hydroelectric power (Mozambique), uranium and diamonds (Namibia), and very fertile soil (Zimbabwe), are examples of their raw materials. The struggle was prolonged and today they are a source of political unrest.

It might have been better if the superpowers had not interfered so much, if they had not so energetically devoted themselves to proxy wars, superpower confrontation through agents, backed up and supported with arms and other military equipment. The worst affected by this phenomenon were Angola and Mozambique, which in 1980–88 were exposed to devastating attacks by South Africa – cheered on by USA and Great Britain in the Cold War. According to UNICEF the excess death toll reached 1,5 million in southern Africa, of whom 100 000 died in the Front Line States, 500 000 in Angola and 900 000 in Mozambique. Nearly two thirds were children under five years. According to a 1989 UN report, South Africa's aggression led to 1,5 million refugees from the above-mentioned countries fleeing to neighbouring states, over 6 million internal refugees, and the economic losses reaching an inconceivable over 100 billion dollars.

It might have been better if the international community had become involved earlier and more firmly, or if the Security Council had earlier maintained:

- *that* the Portuguese colonies must be rapidly wound up in accordance with previous UN resolutions;
- *that* systematic violation of fundamental human rights on the Rhodesian and South African scale was completely unacceptable and therefore had to stop immediately;
- *that* continued refusal to follow these principles would elicit the response of a far-reaching economic, cultural, political and social blockade of these countries.

If all this had been the case, hundreds of thousands of people's lives as well as great economic, cultural and social values would have been saved. This did not happen.

It might have been worse. If there had not been a broad international solidarity movement that squeezed into nooks and crannies and reached into people's hearts through new and old popular movements, then the established economic and political interests would have dominated alone and in practice ruled the agenda of the international world. Who knows if both Portugal's colonial rule and the white minority regimes may have remained in one or other form?

It might have been worse, if the politicians and governments of many countries – particularly in Sweden and in the other Nordic countries – were not forced to listen to and give in to wide-spread public opinion that demanded morally defensible policies towards the liberation movements and the regimes they combated.





South Africa with the support from USA , created death and destruction in major parts of southern Africa. Here a bombed furniture factory in Angola 1979.

It might have been better. It might have been worse. However, a different world became possible. How did this happen? Several interacting factors and perspectives came to direct Sweden's disproportionately large influence on all the areas of the liberation struggle – except the military:

1. **THE EARLY SWEDISH** creators of public opinion were not on the fringe of the political field. On the contrary they had central positions in the liberal press, intellectual and religious leaders made themselves heard, and African voices were published early by Christian publishers.
2. **THE FIRST WAVE'S** organisational base was among

pupil and student organisations, then among the Christian youth organisations, after that within the political youth leagues in the middle and on the left as well as among other, internationally oriented, actors. In the second wave the coordinating Africa Groups came with both commitment and current and deep knowledge from inside Portugal's colonies and on South Africa and Namibia. In a third wave in the mid-1980s the media, which had finally woken up and made serious inputs. The patient work of solidarity had on this point finally borne fruit.

3. **EARLY ON, OLOF PALME** had developed close perso-

nal contacts with the Front Line States' most important presidents, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere and Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda. Therefore, Palme did not see the struggle against Portugal and the white minority regimes in an East-West perspective but from a South perspective. In connection with a small country's own interest in maintaining respect for international law, this entails an almost anti-imperialist understanding of the conflict. Interestingly enough, the same interpretation seemed to characterise the views of leaders of the Centre and Liberal parties.

4. **FURTHERMORE**, the conflict was viewed from a democratic perspective: the right to majority rule and thus self-determination was a condition – but not a guarantee – of human rights and a dignified life.
5. **FINALLY**, there was a Swedish interest in strengthening the non-aligned bloc through trying to prevent the liberation movements becoming over-dependent on one or the other side in the Cold War. Through economic and political support, conditions for a political dialogue were created, although the support was given without ideological ties.

With strong support in popular public opinion it was thus natural for Swedish governments – independently of party colour – to develop close relationships to the liberation movements and their leaders. However, on one point there was, nearly all the time, a conflict between the political establishment and the broad solidarity movement: *the issue of economic sanctions*.

Why did the governments not want to introduce unilateral economic sanctions against Portugal and South Africa? (In the case of Rhodesia there was a



Poster by the artist Chister Temptander that was sold by the Africa groups to benefit ANC.

mandatory decision by the Security Council.) Why – when they did come – was it in such small steps? Two main motives are conceivable:

- **economic**, i.e. concern for Swedish companies in both countries and for Swedish exports and thus the issue of employment in Sweden;
- the fear that a deviation from **international law**

would undermine it to the detriment of a small country like Sweden.

Which of these motives was the stronger is difficult to estimate. While international law on the question of economic support to the liberation movements was seen as an argument for support (if not initially), international law on the question of economic sanctions was seen as a strong argument against action. In the one case political reality took over the judicial principles. On the question of positive support these were seen as more elastic.

In the second case the judicial principles (only the Security Council has the mandate to take resolutions on mandatory sanctions) were for long far more important than the political reality: The Security Council could never be expected to pass any resolutions on economic sanctions; a veto from the Western powers was unavoidable. This also occurred when Sweden sat in the Security Council, and, with strong Nordic backing, put forward a motion on sanctions. Only after this failure did Sweden (after Denmark and Norway) decide to introduce a general embargo on trade with South Africa.

In the end it became politically impossible to withstand public opinion's persistent impatience. This is an important lesson for the future. Another policy became possible.

58. What happened then?

Another world was possible, but how did it turn out? The picture has shades of dark and dawn:

In Mozambique it is estimated that 110 000 were killed in a 15-year war (1977-92) between the government and Renamo (Mozambican National Resistance), the latter supported by Rhodesia, South Africa and USA. In Angola's internal armed con-

flicts from 1975-2002, with and without foreign involvement, an estimated 150 000 people were killed. Guinea Bissau has suffered several military coups, Namibia has had a minor revolt, South Africa has protected both Burma's military junta in the Security Council and its neighbour Mugabe, and Zimbabwe has been badly affected by misrule and violence with catastrophic consequences for the population. All these countries now lie far down on the welfare scale Human Development Index. A contributory cause, in addition to the above problems, is HIV/Aids.

Tragically enough, development is not only or even mainly characterised by justice, peace, democracy, human rights, economic and social blossoming. There are too many scars from too many years of war. Their natural resources have been too tempting for international interests. Power has been too attractive for those who did not win for them to lay down their arms. To "resolve" conflicts with violence easily becomes habitual, also for the victors.

Should the mass international solidarity movement have been more critical of the "genuine" liberation movements? Yes, for their own sakes, and for the sake of the people affected (see above: *An activist reflects*). There is an art to saying, "You have the right to conduct the liberation struggle on your own terms" on the one hand, and on the other hand to caution, "Violence carries the risk of generating more violence; thus minimise the violence and do all you can to break its evil circle". That art is hard. To exchange solidarity with the oppressed for critical reviews of the new power holders after the liberation is an even more difficult art, a different expression of solidarity. The solidarity movement did not manage to live up to this.

On the other hand, Angola and Mozambique



A land reform in South Africa is compensating for forced removals. Dancing an jubilant women in Kaikamahoek, Eastern Cape after the signing of an agreement for compensation is signed by the minister Thoko Didiza. One example where Swedish NGO support has been assisting.

have moved out of the shadow of war and now have strong (if skewed) economic development. Democracy has been introduced in Mozambique.

Namibia has, for African conditions, a robust democracy; its constitution is a democratic model. It has always had a positive economic development even if it is not strong enough to lift the people out of poverty.

South Africa has fairly successfully handled the conflict inherited from apartheid through impressive work of reconciliation. As a regional superpower it has strengthened Africa's place internationally. Furthermore there is now the economic development that makes it possible to reinforce the economic safety net for the weakest and even begin to reduce unemployment.

Zimbabwe under Mugabe remains a sad story until democratically inclined forces take over.

What happened to Swedish solidarity?

After liberation the Africa Groups started sending volunteers to each country and later got involved in projects, but have now left Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau. As to South Africa, the commitment of the broad popular movement led to many small development cooperation and exchange projects by many different organisations. South Africa has become the country with the most NGO projects. The academic boycott has also changed into an intensive exchange. It is the most popular country in the South for Swedish students' field studies and theses.

All the countries discussed have become major

recipients of state assistance, the most going to Mozambique. Now assistance to Namibia and South Africa is being terminated. In Angola termination is already a fact, while support to Zimbabwe is suspended while waiting for a change of government.

59. What is happening now?

In the time of neo-liberal globalisation there is a risk that old divisions between North and South will be cemented and new ones arise. The limited access to natural resources like oil, diamonds and strategic metals leads to a race between both state and private actors with economic interests, in which potential conflicts may be exacerbated and flare up in the form of armed violence. In addition there is a risk for a short-sighted over-exploitation of renewable natural resources, that may have devastating consequences in the long-term.

Against this background there is need of a deeply rooted and broad international solidarity movement larger than anything previously. The worldwide support of the World Social Forum is a sign that this is happening, though in a new form. The main story today deals with a need for global solidarity that must embrace not only rich and poor, industrialised countries and developing countries, but also present and coming generations.

A solidarity existing not only in space but over time – with political consequences already in the present – particularly in the North. To create such a movement many uncomfortable and persistent truth tellers are needed, with no guarantees of success but with peace and environment in focus, and a patient impatience to achieve results and with the conviction that another world is possible.

Country	Population	Proportion living under 2\$ a day	Porportion HIV infected between 15–49 years	Orphans due to AIDS 0–17år	Life expect- ancy men
ANGOLA	15,9 milj	i u	3,7 % (280 000)	160 000	38
BOTSWANA	1,7 milj	50,1	24,1 % (260 000)	120 000	40
MOÇAMBIQUE	19,7	78,4	16,1 % (1,6 milj)	510 000	44
NAMIBIA	2 milj	55,8	19,6 % (210 000)	85 000	52
SYDAFRIKA	47 milj	34,1	18,8 % (5,3milj)	1 200 000	47
TANZANIA	38 milj	59,7	6,5 % (1,3 milj)	1 100 000	47
ZAMBIA	11,7 milj	87,4	17,0 % (1 milj)	710 000	40
ZIMBABWE	13 milj	83	20,1 % (1,5 milj)	1 100 000	37
			11 450 000	4 985 000	
Source: UNAIDS 2006					

HIV/AIDS is the biggest threat against development in southern Africa and despite other positive developments this contributes to the fall in the index for Human development, HDI.

The documentation project "Popular Movements and Swedish Solidarity with Southern Africa"

1994 SOUTH AFRICA BECAME A DEMOCRACY after more than 50 years of Apartheid. The other countries in southern Africa were "liberated" way earlier, but some of them suffered civil war and other difficulties. In Sweden the popular solidarity with the struggle for liberation in the region – from the 60s until 1994 – got a unique width and scope. The existing engagement for the region is largely remaining as an effect of that. In southern Africa there is an interest to have the work of the solidarity movements documented as well as the work of the representatives of the liberation movements stationed here during the struggle. On the requests from archives in southern Africa The Nordic Africa Institute took upon themselves to map relevant archives in the Nordic area that may document these activities. Archival work in southern Africa has also been supported from Sweden. On the homepage www.liberationafrica.se these archives are presented together with interviews with different actors, other stories and some pictures. Here you may also find other material collected by Tor Sellström for his books. The material collected for this project has still to find a place there. The five first books in the project are available as PDF documents there. They are unfortunately only available in Swedish.

This project is an initiative by the organisations that were the main actors in coordinating the popular solidarity work. The project has been coordinated by the Africa Groups of Sweden (Afrikagrupperna) who also took responsibility for the documentation of the Isolate South Africa Committee (ISAK) that no longer exist. A group of individuals

from the ISAK leadership and staff took charge of it.

The practical solidarity work in the form of shipments of clothes and other material has been documented by the organisation "Practical Solidarity". The story of the wider church based work within the then Swedish Ecumenical Council (SEN) and its different member churches has been the responsibility of the Swedish Christian Council. Olof Palme International Center (OPIC) did the book that covered the work of the labour movement. These five books were published between November 2006 and May 2007.

These books supplemented the three books in English about the Swedish relation to the liberation struggle in southern Africa by Tor Sellström "Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa", published by the Nordic Africa Institute. They have more focus on the Swedish state and Government actions in relation to the liberation struggle.

The five books produced within this project and the books by Tor Sellström have subsequently been the basis for this book. The aim of this book is to give a more easily accessible summary of the Swedish support and popular solidarity work. The intention was also to have this book published in English. That never materialized. Only now in 2019 have we been able to have it available in PDF format in English. This thanks to support from Afrikagrupperna, the Olof Palme International Centre and Tommy Andersson Emmaus Stockholm/PS.

Another end product of this project was a concluding seminar held in 2008 with the title "Modern

Solidarity”. Activists from the different organisations as well as guests from southern Africa discussed the experiences and learnings from the past and the meaning of this in the new era.

The project is meant to cover the period from 1960 up to the liberation or democratization and that means to 1994. The various books cover varied time periods depending on when the involvement started. Which country that is covered also varies between the different projects. South

Africa and Namibia are however covered in all five books. Even if it deals mostly with the period up to “liberation” some aspects of what happened with the solidarity afterwards are also present. The focus is on the work done in Sweden but even the work done or supported in southern Africa played a role for the actions at home. In many cases the work supported inside Namibia and South Africa was



unknown to the public because Sida demanded secrecy. The project has not been able to cover all of the very extensive work done but will at least present the main trends and give glimpses of the very varied activities taking place.

BERTIL HÖGBERG
Project Coordinator

Photographers and Illustrators

Some of the photos and illustrations come from the picture archive of the Africa Groups of Sweden. Here under the name *Afrikabild*. Most of it has been used in "Afrikabulletinen / Södra Afrika or I various other publications. Since contributions to the publications for a long time were anonymous, there is often no indication as to who is the photographer.

Page Photographer/ picture source

10 Hernried
12 Bertil Högberg
13 From Södra Afrika kamp för befrielse och utveckling. Afrikagrupperna 1980
14 From Befrielsekampen i Afrika. Afrikagrupperna 1977
15 From När Sverige upptäckte Afrika. Lasse Berg
16 Afrikabild
19 Robben Island Mayibuye Archives
21 Afrikabild
24 Karin Södergren/ Afrikabild
27 Robben Island Mayibuye Archives
34 Frelimo/ Afrikabild
36 Mats Andersson/Afrikabild
40 Hillevi Nilsson ????????
43 Afrikabild
45 Thomas Danielsson/ Afrikabild
47 Christer Hallgren/ Afrikabild
48 Christer Hallgren/ Afrikabild
49 Bertil Högberg
50 Birgitta Dahls arkiv
51 Dag Hammarsköld Fonden
52 Hernried
54 Mats Andersson/ Afrikabild
56 Anders Nilsson AIM/ Afrikabild
57 Sture Lidén/ Afrikabild

Some pictures that have been sourced privately have also been difficult to trace who is the photographer. We regret if some photographers not made it to this list. We thank everyone that has supplied photographs. Posters, stickers and buttons are scanned from the Africa Group archive.

59 Bertil Malmströms arkiv
63 Afrikabild
64 Afrikabild
67 MPLA/ Afrikabild
69 Göran Borden/ Emmaus Björkå
70 Emmaus Stockholm
72 Emmaus Björkå
73a Brödet och Fiskarna
73b Gittan Arwén
74 Karin Södergren
76 Tore Bergmans arkiv
80 Karin Södergren/ Afrikabild
81 Mai Palmberg
83 Tord Harlin
85 Tore Bergmans arkiv
90 Tidningen Broderskap
92 Afrikabild
99 Mats Öhman/ Afrikabild
100 Bertil Högberg
102 Birgitta Silén
103 Oskarshamns södra Afrika kommitté
104 Anders Stendalens arkiv
108 Afrikabild
109 Arne Lindström
111 Per Sandén/ Afrikabild
112 Gittan Arwén
114 Bertil Högberg

115 Bertil Högberg/ Afrikabild
120 Karin Södergren
122 Mai Palmberg
123 Ann-Marie Gustavsson/ Afrikabild
124 Afrikabild
127 Afrikabild
128 AICs Arkiv
132 Bertil Högberg
133 Arne Lindström/Afrikabild
134 Birgitta Karlström-Dorphs arkiv
136 Axel-Ivar Berglund
141 Jim Elfström
148 Arne Lindström
149 Jim Elfström

152 Alf Ralmé/ Afrikabild
153 Krister Hansson/ Afrikabild
156 Erik Roxfelt NAMPA/ Afrikabild
157 Kaleni Haialwa NAMPA/ Afrikabild
159 Irene Pérez/ Afrikabild
161 Afrikabild
163 Bertil Högberg
165 Birgitta Silén
166 Mia Sundsten
167 Birgitta Silén
170 IDAF
171 Christer Temptander/ Afrikagrupperna
173 Bertil Högberg
176 Karin Södergren