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## **The Road to Democracy in South Africa,** Volume 3, International Solidarity, Part I

Part 2:

### **Austria and South Africa during apartheid**

*By Walter Sauer*

Austria is a small, mountainous land-locked country in the centre of Europe. Historically (until 1918) it was the politically dominant part of a huge empire, ruled for centuries by the aristocratic Habsburg family: an empire that included Hungary, the Czech and Slovak lands, as well as parts of Poland, the Ukraine, Romania, the Western Balkans and Italy. Habsburg territorial expansionism was directed mainly towards eastern and south-eastern Europe and participation in formal European colonialism in Africa or elsewhere was limited. There were some colonial attempts, such as the establishment of a trading post in Mozambique in the 1780s and a strong political and religious presence in the Sudan in the 1850s.

Apart from these projects, however, the Austro-Hungarian Empire hardly took part in the European 'scramble for Africa': albeit more because of economic weakness than anti-colonial principles.<sup>13</sup> Political and trade links developed more strongly with South Africa than with other regions in Africa. Whereas at the beginning of the twentieth century, during the South African War, the imperial government in Vienna supported Britain, most of the German-speaking population was won over by the propaganda of the Boer republics. This, apart from anti-communism and racism, was one of the ideological traditions that could effectively be utilised after 1948 by the National Party government to secure some Austrian support.

### *The set-up of bilateral relations, 1955–1976*

Diplomatic relations between the two countries were re-established after World War II. In 1945, Austria had been liberated from Nazi rule by the troops of the four allied powers (US, Britain, France and the Soviet Union) and for the next ten years remained under allied political control. It regained full sovereignty by the State Treaty of Vienna in 1955. In autumn 1955, Austria voluntarily declared itself permanently neutral, a step beyond the cold war logic of the time, and joined the United Nations (UN). In the early 1950s, diplomatic representation between Austria and South Africa was re-established, but remained at consular level, because the Vienna government at that stage did not want to be seen to be too closely associated with the National Party's apartheid policies.

Even in the domestic field, a number of South African initiatives met with public resistance, including the recruitment of high-skilled unemployed workers. After the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960, left-wing youth organisations staged a protest against the banning of the liberation movements and the declaration of the state of emergency in South Africa. Based on an appeal by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), also in 1960, some trade union and political circles in Austria called for a consumer boycott of South African products. However, the 'normalisation' in South Africa after the crisis of 1960 led to the normalisation of relations between Austria and South Africa. In

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<sup>13</sup> Austro-Hungary's complex involvement in European imperialism is extensively dealt with by Walter Sauer (ed.), *K.u.k. Kolonial: Habsburgermonarchie und Europäische Herrschaft in Afrika* (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Bohlau Verlag, 2002).  
Road to democracy Vol3 P1\_5-8.indd 630 31/03/2008 7:36:31

1962, diplomatic offices in Pretoria and Vienna were upgraded to fully fledged embassies. While the Austrian side was primarily concerned with export and cultural marketing, as well as reaching out to Austrian emigrants (quite a few of them former Nazi sympathisers who had gone to South Africa after 1945), South Africa used its strengthened presence in Vienna more effectively to advance its political interests. Gradually, a network of like-minded politicians, journalists and business people was established that facilitated access to top decision makers.<sup>14</sup> Prominent (white) South Africans, including opera singer Mimi Coertse (who for many years was under contract to the Vienna *Staatsoper*), participated actively in such operations, as did others less openly. In some regions, the embassy was able to establish front organisations (NGOs) for propaganda and other purposes.

For apartheid South Africa, Austria served as a convenient platform for a number of reasons. Given the absence of any major colonial history, the spotlight of international attention was less focused on it than on the former colonial powers. The presence of multilateral agencies<sup>15</sup> provided important contacts as well as jobs and intelligence-gathering opportunities for many white South Africans. In addition, Austria's status of permanent neutrality provided access to the Socialist countries in Eastern Europe, which eventually resulted in some political, trade and tourism collaboration in the 1980s, in contravention of sanctions.

Finally, probably also owing to the absence of colonial activities in the past, the general population's interest in international, let alone southern African affairs was very low and could easily be manipulated. All these opportunities were used not only to advance South Africa's own political, economic and ideological interests, but to justify its continuing occupation of South West Africa, which had been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice in 1971, and its support of the white minority regime in Southern Rhodesia, whose Unilateral Declaration of Independence had been rejected internationally in 1965.

Largely unopposed, this strategy yielded considerable results. By the mid 1970s bilateral trade had not only increased in volume, but had changed in composition. The emphasis was no longer on consumer goods of interest mainly to South Africans of Austrian or German cultural background, but on high-tech investment products for strategically important industries such as power stations, railways and telecommunications. Apart from a number of medium-sized companies that had invested in South Africa, the giant iron and steel conglomerate Voest Alpine – an Austrian parastatal involved in the import of minerals from South Africa and in the export of high-tech goods and know-how to South Africa – became one of the most powerful lobbies in Pretoria's favour.

On the political side, gaining recognition for its Bantustan policy was one of South Africa's priorities in which some success could be recorded. In 1976 for example a group of Austrian parliamentarians took part in the 'independence' celebrations of the Transkei. In Southern Rhodesia, sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council in 1965 were only partially implemented by the government in Vienna and largely circumvented by Austrian companies, as was revealed by the UN in 1978. In violation of the Austrian constitution, a number of mercenaries fought in the ranks of the Rhodesian army against the liberation movements of Zimbabwe without being prosecuted.

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<sup>14</sup> Good insight is provided in the autobiography of a South African diplomat who served in the embassy in Vienna in the 1960s. Donald Bell Sole, *This Above all. Reminiscences of a South African Diplomat* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> 15 Such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), established in Vienna in 1957 and 1966 respectively.

### *Early activities of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1976–1983*

But changes in Austria's attitude towards South Africa began to appear in this period. The demise of post-war Conservative dominance after the election victory of the Socialist Party in 1970 initiated a new period in the country's history. In terms of foreign policy, the new prime minister (in Austria traditionally called 'federal chancellor'), Bruno Kreisky, put strong emphasis on the UN and steered the country into closer co-operation with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), focusing on the Middle East question.<sup>16</sup> In 1975 he openly confronted the nationalised steel industry, which was planning to invest massively in the Saldanha mill project in the Cape Province. Kreisky's demand that Voest Alpine withdraw from the project resulted in heated controversies in parliament and open resistance from parastatal as well as private managers, many of whom had close personal links with the business community in South Africa. Years later, the project was silently postponed. For the first time since 1960, however, Austria's relationship with South Africa had come under public scrutiny, and some actions against the draft project had been undertaken by a group of people who later were to form the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM).

Participation in third world (anti-colonial, anti-imperialist) solidarity activities was not based on a great deal of tradition in Austria's post-war history (and even less before that). In the late 1960s significant protest had risen against the continuing US-led war in Vietnam, and a broad solidarity movement with Chile had been established after the military coup on 11 September 1973. In both instances – to a certain extent an innovative element in Austria's political culture, traditionally divided between 'black' (Conservative) and 'red' (Socialist) camps, with little space for other political tendencies – the joint participation of individuals or organisations from different political, ideological or religious backgrounds was significant.

The brutal repression of the Soweto student revolt from 16 June 1976, reported by the Austrian media, created a rallying point for a wide range of people who were shocked by the attitude of the Pretoria government. Only a few had been involved in solidarity activities with South Africa, either in the framework of the Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches (WCC) or in activities organised by the Austrian Peace Council.<sup>17</sup> Others came from Social Democratic, Catholic and Liberal backgrounds. In October 1976, the well-known journalist Adalbert Krims registered the AAM in Austria with the authorities, and a few months later, in May 1977, the first annual general meeting took place in Vienna.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, some African students (whose number in Vienna at that time was rather limited) participated in AAM's activities, including Thandi Malepe from South Africa, Peter Julian Jjumba from Uganda, Sintayehu Tsehay from Ethiopia and Joe Kojo Taylor from Ghana. Contacts with the African National Congress (ANC) were immediately established.

Despite good beginnings, it proved difficult for the newly created platform to maintain the debate on apartheid on the Austrian political agenda. After the much-reported meeting between South Africa's prime minister John Balthazar Vorster and US vicepresident Walter Mondale in Vienna in May 1977 – marked by the first demonstration by the young organisation – post-Soweto media interest faded away, and even likeminded political parties did not concentrate much on solidarity activities. South Africa's propaganda machinery remained dominant, and the first public meeting of the AAM – a lecture by Anthony Mongalo

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<sup>16</sup> See Gerald Hödl, *Österreich und die Dritte Welt. Außen- und Entwicklungspolitik der Zweiten Republik bis zum EU-Beitritt 1995* (Wien: Promedia, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> An affiliate of the World Peace Council, which operated independently of, but in close co-operation with the Austrian Communist Party.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Fleissner was elected first chair. The leadership included Ingrid Gaisrucker, Margit Niederhuber, Elfriede Pekny, Helmuth Rheindorf, Walter Stach, Ulrich Trinks, Klaus Wiesmüller and others – all with different political orientations and professional experience.

from the ANC at the University of Vienna – was almost disrupted by a group of right-wing, pro-Rhodesian students.

Efforts to make the Austrian public aware of the situation in South Africa, of the progress made by the liberation movements, and of the ongoing collaboration with apartheid and colonialism in southern Africa were therefore a priority. Apart from a number of information meetings, a symposium on economic collaboration and racist propaganda was organised jointly with the Austrian UNESCO Commission, and addressed by representatives of the UN and the liberation movements of Zimbabwe and South Africa. Also in 1977, the anti-apartheid movement published an information bulletin, which later developed into a respected magazine on southern Africa and continues to appear under the new name of *Indaba*. After some lobbying, an official ordinance by the Ministry of Education and Arts was secured that rejected the regular sending of South African propaganda material to schools and its use in educational activities: a first success against Pretoria's information dominance. Obtaining accurate information on developments in South Africa remained difficult, given the lack of interest by most of the media. Furthermore, South Africans in Austria mostly came from the apartheid camp. Practically no Austrians in South Africa were able or willing to provide meaningful information, and even academic research was largely influenced by official South African publications. Personal exchanges with representatives of the liberation movements were rarely possible.<sup>19</sup> The UN and its efficient information service in Vienna provided some background information. Important support in terms of information and publications came from the fraternal British and Dutch anti-apartheid organisations, with which close links were established. In addition, wide-ranging co-operation developed with the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) in London, led by Canon John Collins and later by Horst Kleinschmidt, a South African exile who was one of the first speakers in AAM meetings and later facilitated communication with the ANC.<sup>20</sup> At the time, the liberation movements had not fully established an office network in Europe. In the late 1970s, the nearest ANC office to Austria was located in London and the nearest SWAPO contact in Oslo. Only some years later were both organisations able to establish offices in Bonn. In 1981, at a meeting with ANC president Oliver Tambo, the Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky invited the ANC to open an office in Vienna similar to the one operated by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).<sup>21</sup> The invitation was not taken up.

The AAM's first fund-raising campaign was started in December 1979, in support of the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Mazimbu, Tanzania, after a request by the ANC leadership. Over the years, it was possible to raise support from a number of trade union, church and women's organisations. In 1985 the Austrian AAM was able to finance the purchase of cattle in order to secure Mazimbu's supply of dairy products. At the same time, the AAM mobilised official funds for Mazimbu, amounting to about 10m Austrian shillings (ATS) (close to €730 000 in today's currency). Also in the mid 1980s, government funding for a similar cattle scheme at SWAPO's Namayami farm in Zambia was secured, amounting to another ATS2 m. Given the tough resistance continuously displayed by Conservative circles against government support to 'terrorist movements', both projects were remarkable achievements. Increasingly, the issue of South African and Namibian political prisoners became prominent in the activities of the AAM. In 1977 the regime in Pretoria had crushed

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<sup>19</sup> Meetings were held, however, with Albie Sachs, Thomas Nkobi and Tony Seedat of the ANC, and Hadino Hishongwa, Nghidimondjila Shoombe and Sam Nujoma of SWAPO.

<sup>20</sup> For the role of IDAF, see Denis Herbstein, *White Lies: Canon Collins and the Secret War Against Apartheid* (Cape Town and Oxford: Zed Books, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> This was suggested earlier by Konrad Ginther, *Überlegungen zur Anerkennungsproblematik im Südlichen Afrika*, in: *Jahrbuch für Internationales Recht* 23, Berlin, 1980, 323-352.

the organisations of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), and on 12 September Steve Biko was brutally murdered in prison. A petition calling for the release of all political prisoners in South Africa was circulated by the AAM and submitted to the Austrian government, as well as to the UN Special Committee against Apartheid by the Austrian ambassador to the UN, Peter Jankowitsch. Joint activities took place with Amnesty International (Austrian Section) and the Young Catholic Workers, who campaigned for the release of detained activists of the Christian Workers Youth Movement in South Africa. In 1980, following similar activities in South Africa, a nationwide signature campaign was started, calling for the release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela – then still on Robben Island.

### **The sanction controversy, 1983-1990**

The need to stop collaboration between Austrian political and business elites and the apartheid regime in South Africa became increasingly obvious. Much of this collaboration became known only through research published by the AAM in 1984.<sup>22</sup>

Again it became clear that Austria was primarily serving South Africa as a springboard into Western as well as Eastern Europe. Also, owing to limited international attention, South Africa had been able to exploit Austrian contacts in order to undermine its growing international isolation. Certain issues were now brought into public debate:

- The inadequate implementation of the mandatory arms embargo, imposed against South Africa by the UN Security Council in 1977, still allowed for export and transit of certain categories of arms as well as military and nuclear technologies to South Africa (for example, to improve South Africa's G5 howitzer system).
- The widespread sales opportunities provided by Austrian tax laws for Krugerrand made Austria one of the major markets with a share of more than 20 per cent of worldwide sales. In the early 1980s, huge quantities of Krugerrand were transported by trucks into the neighbouring Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and Italy, where buying was more expensive.
- The non-official, but de facto recognition of the Transkei as an independent political entity, which was allowed to open an 'office' in Vienna, financed by an Austrian parastatal company (and regarded as an embassy by the Transkei administration). In addition, extensive technical assistance and trade links were established, including the sale of several thousand Austrian Steyr tractors for agricultural 'betterment schemes' and financed by a special levy imposed on Transkeian peasants. When the authorities in Umtata shut down the office in 1990, several young Transkeians in Austria were left in a vulnerable situation.

In 1983 the AAM started a nationwide campaign against fruit imports from South Africa. This touched on an important part of Austrian imports and provided an opportunity to link the somehow abstract issue of economic sanctions more closely with everyday consumer behaviour. Representatives of this campaign negotiated with fruit import companies, who were asked to stop imports from South Africa and increase trade links with the frontline states. To advance the fruit boycott campaign and set it in the wider context of the European (and worldwide) sanctions campaign, a lot of information activities were undertaken by the AAM. This work became easier with the increase of the resistance in South Africa, particularly with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and its campaign against the tricameral constitution.

In June 1984, South Africa's prime minister P. W. Botha came to Vienna on a trip through Western Europe. Thousands of people gathered in front of the government seat on

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<sup>22</sup> Walter Sauer and Theresia Zeschin, *Die Apartheid-Connection: Österreichs Bedeutung für Südafrika* (Wien: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1984); invaluable support for this publication was given by IDAF's research department.

Ballhausplatz to protest against the racist regime – making Botha's visit a far cry from the triumphant tour originally planned by Pretoria.<sup>23</sup> Public condemnation of the visit was followed by rising interest in anti-apartheid activities, and the mobilising and lobbying possibilities of the movement expanded. In the same year, the AAM managed to cancel a business mission to South Africa by the minister of trade and industry. In spring 1985 another breakthrough was achieved when activists in Salzburg (close to the German border) were able to persuade the leading local bank to stop selling Krugerrand.

In these early years the AAM in Austria considerably extended its operations beyond the borders of Vienna. Local groups had first been established in Salzburg and then in Linz, a city dominated by the powerful Voest Alpine company. Via the fruit boycott, lasting co-operation developed with the Austrian Information Service for Development Policy, sponsored by the government, which had extensive access to networks of local third world and environmentalist groupings. From then on, annual nationwide South Africa Boycott Weeks were organised, focusing on various subjects and sending ANC, SWAPO or anti-apartheid experts from different countries on tour.

The structures of the organisation had to adapt, and in early 1984 a new leadership was elected.<sup>24</sup> In addition to information activities and mobilisation in public, the political lobbying of government departments and even ministers in favour of economic sanctions became standard practice.

In June 1985, the white minority regime in South Africa imposed a state of emergency on parts of the country where resistance had developed enormously. Pretoria was no longer able to keep control of the situation without resorting to the security forces. Demands for economic sanctions by the AAM were supported by a wide range of organisations, prominent writers and actors, most political parties (even some parts of the Conservatives), the influential Austrian Trade Union Federation and the Co-ordination Office of the Catholic Bishops Conference.

In September 1985 the biggest demonstration ever organised by the AAM took place in Vienna, and on 24 September the government imposed partial economic sanctions against the regime in South Africa. Public and parastatal investments were prohibited, imports of Krugerrand and all other South African coins were stopped, sport and scholarship relations restricted, official guarantees for export loans terminated, and the participation of public enterprises in South African nuclear tenders as well as exports of computers to South African security forces were banned. These measures were announced by Leopold Gratz, then Austrian minister of foreign affairs, at the UN General Assembly in New York. In addition, on 8 October 1985 the government issued an ordinance which stopped the export of so-called civilian arms and ammunition to South Africa. And almost one year later the Austrian government, on the initiative of the new foreign minister Peter Jankowitsch, extended the scope of sanctions by voluntarily taking on board all measures decided upon by the EEC (of which Austria was not yet a member).

Indeed, this development could be viewed by the AAM and its hundreds of activists as a breakthrough. Even with hindsight, it was one of the rare cases in Austrian history that comprehensive NGO efforts, undertaken in national as well as international cooperation, had changed foreign political and economic policies substantially. But the decisions made by the government at best were a first step. Comprehensive sanctions were far from implemented: the so-called transit of certain categories of arms via Austrian territory was still

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<sup>23</sup> From the perspective of one of Botha's accompanying journalists see the report by John Scott, *Venture to the Exterior: Through Europe with P. W. Botha* (Port Elizabeth: Acme, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> Ingrid Gaisrucker served as the organisation's second chairperson, with Eva Enichlmayr, Walter Sauer, Godwin Schuster, Gabriele Stöger and others in the executive.

permitted (a technicality which for example was used by the Czechoslovak arms industry); landing rights for South African Airways (SAA) at Vienna airport were continuously in place; and the existence of the over-staffed South African embassy in the Austrian capital was never in question.

These loopholes were pointed out by the AAM when campaigning to strengthen Austrian sanctions. This proved increasingly difficult. Parliamentary elections in 1986 had led to the formation of a Social Democratic-Conservative coalition government and to subsequent changes in foreign policy. South Africa's allies in media and business circles, as well as in certain political parties (the conservative People's Party, and the radicalised right-wing Freedom Party, led by Jörg Haider) became increasingly active. So, when the AAM reached an agreement with the minister of transport and infrastructure Ferdinand Lacina to withdraw SAA landing rights, this was prematurely leaked to the public and prevented. While the fruit boycott became very popular, Austrian imports of fresh and canned fruit increased owing to huge state orders, for example by the federal army. In 1988, the new (Conservative) foreign minister, Alois Mock paved the way for KwaZulu homeland leader Gatsha Buthelezi to address a high-level business forum in Alpbach, Tyrol, presenting the Inkatha movement as a non-violent political alternative to the ANC. Protests against his lecture by the AAM eventually resulted in the first demonstration ever held in this alpine village, and in a government invitation to the ANC to address a similarly prominent forum. This invitation was not accepted.

The AAM had again undergone some restructuring.<sup>25</sup> It was well established in almost all provinces and politically respected by all major political groupings, the churches, and the trade union movement. First, efforts were made to tighten Austrian regulations for the full implementation of the mandatory UN arms embargo, undertaken jointly with the World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa, led by Abdul S. Minty.<sup>26</sup> An important workshop on this subject was held in November 1989, together with the Austrian Justice and Peace Commission, led by the Catholic bishop Florian Kuntner. Second, a draft law was prepared with like-minded members of parliament (Albrecht Konecny and Waltraud Schütz<sup>27</sup>) to create a legal basis for the comprehensive implementation of UN sanctions. However, such a law was passed only in the early 1990s to be used against Iraq and Yugoslavia. Third, political and economic relations with SADCC were promoted as an alternative to links with South Africa. Together with the Solidarity Committee for Mozambique and the EZA Fair Trade organisation, the AAM participated in the European Campaign against South African Aggression on Mozambique and Angola (ECASAAMA) in late 1988. And fourth, increasing attention was given to the decolonisation of Namibia. After the final agreement between the UN, Cuba, Angola and South Africa, which paved the way for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 435, a nationwide campaign started to support the return of SWAPO's leadership from exile and to raise funds for the liberation movement's election campaign.

### *Final years, 1990–1993*

Early in 1990, owing to internal resistance and external pressure arising from sanctions, South Africa's new state president, F. W. de Klerk unbanned political parties and announced the release from prison of Nelson Mandela. A complex negotiation process

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<sup>25</sup> From 1988 it had been chaired by the author, with Wolfgang Gasser, Hans Gattringer, Ulrike Gomelsky, Anna Mayer and others in the nationwide executive.

<sup>26</sup> Under Abdul Minty's guidance, the Austrian AAM also lobbied (without success) to get apartheid South Africa's membership with the International Atomic Energy Agency suspended.

<sup>27</sup> The AAM also introduced these MPs to AWEPA, the Association of West European Parliamentarians for Action against Apartheid.

started in which the regime tried to incorporate the resistance movement into the constitution, while the ANC and its allies argued for the transfer of power to elected representatives of the whole population on the basis of one person, one vote in an undivided South Africa. In this critical situation, influential Austrian political and business lobbies placed their weight, not behind the ANC, but behind Pretoria's so-called reform policies. The Federal Chamber of Commerce argued strongly for an economic boom between the two countries, and Voest Alpine intensified its cooperation with its traditional South African partner, the parastatal Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR). After a period of abstention, bank loans were again granted to South Africa. Under such pressures, in September 1991 the government suspended the economic elements of Austrian sanctions that had been imposed in 1985 and 1986. Official sympathies were clearly on the side of the Pretoria government, and De Klerk was given an opportunity to address the parliament in Vienna in 1993 without much official protest.

Apart from defending sanctions, activities to support the ANC in this difficult new period became the priority. The AAM called for the immediate release of the large number of remaining political (ANC) prisoners and successfully lobbied for government assistance to the repatriation of political exiles. In the last nationwide fund-raising campaign, requested by ANC treasurer Mendi Msimang, substantial humanitarian support for the victims of Inkatha violence in Natal was mobilised in 1992/93. On another front, a controversy developed around the issue of Austrian development assistance to South Africa. Until 1989, practically no projects inside the country had been financed by the government.<sup>28</sup> Afterwards, South African official and business circles lobbied to obtain Austrian government funding, mainly for small enterprise development programmes realised by 'moderate' organisations. Some of these applications were approved, but it was also possible to raise financial support for the Community and Citizen Education Programme, a massive voter education exercise organised by the Matla Trust in Johannesburg. This programme had been recommended by Nelson Mandela to the visiting president of the Austrian parliament, Heinz Fischer, in 1991. Finally, government support to this project amounted to ATS6 m (approximately €440 000), channelled through an Austrian development organisation.

Given the complex nature of negotiations in South Africa, the lack of adequate information (or rather the increase of inadequate information) and growing domestic problems, it was difficult to sustain enthusiasm among members and activists. The movement continued to emphasise education and information, and several activities were now completed. To replace prohibited propaganda texts in schools, a booklet on apartheid and South Africa was commissioned jointly with the Ministry of Education and Culture, and many thousands of copies were distributed. Parallel with that, the results of academic research were published on the presentation of southern Africa in official Austrian schoolbooks, revealing a shocking amount of texts that were heavily influenced by colonial, apartheid and generally racist perceptions.<sup>29</sup> Based on this study and on some lobbying, in October 1990 the Ministry issued an ordinance against racist and pro-apartheid tendencies in school education (including terminologies to be used), which over the following years led to certain improvements.

After the political crisis in summer 1992 – after the Boipatong massacre, the ANC had suspended negotiations and resorted to rolling mass action – the pace of developments quickened. Contrary to their governments, however, AAMs in Europe did not assess the

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<sup>28</sup> The bulk of official development aid went to the liberation movements; in addition, the prominent Dr Bruno Kreisky Human Rights Award, was repeatedly given to representatives of a democratic southern Africa: 1979 to Nelson Mandela, 1981 to Revd C.F. Beyers Naudé, and 1991 jointly to Horst Kleinschmidt (IDAF), COSATU and the Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement.

<sup>29</sup> 29 Walter Ehmeir, *Das Südliche Afrika in Österreichischen Unterrichtsmaterialien* (Wien: Anti-Apartheid-Bewegung in Österreich, 1990).



process as irreversible as long as no final agreement had been reached. This occurred only after the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), which oversaw the transition process in South Africa, and prepared for the first democratic elections in the country's history, scheduled for April 1994. Shortly after the agreement establishing the TEC, the AAM in Austria, decided that its purpose had been fulfilled and it was dissolved on 27 November 1993 after 17 years of existence. In its final statement, the movement thanked its many friends and sympathisers in parliament, the government, the civil service, the political parties, churches and local organisations. All those, in other words who had supported its endeavours and had made its many achievements possible. At the same time, part of the AAM's leadership, on an initiative by Elfriede Pekny (†2004), established the Southern Africa Documentation and Co-operation Centre in Vienna,<sup>30</sup> which mobilises support for the new democratic South Africa and its people to overcome the many legacies of apartheid. SADOCC also runs the only specialised library and documentation centre in Austria that deals with southern Africa.

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<sup>30</sup> [www.sadocc.at](http://www.sadocc.at)