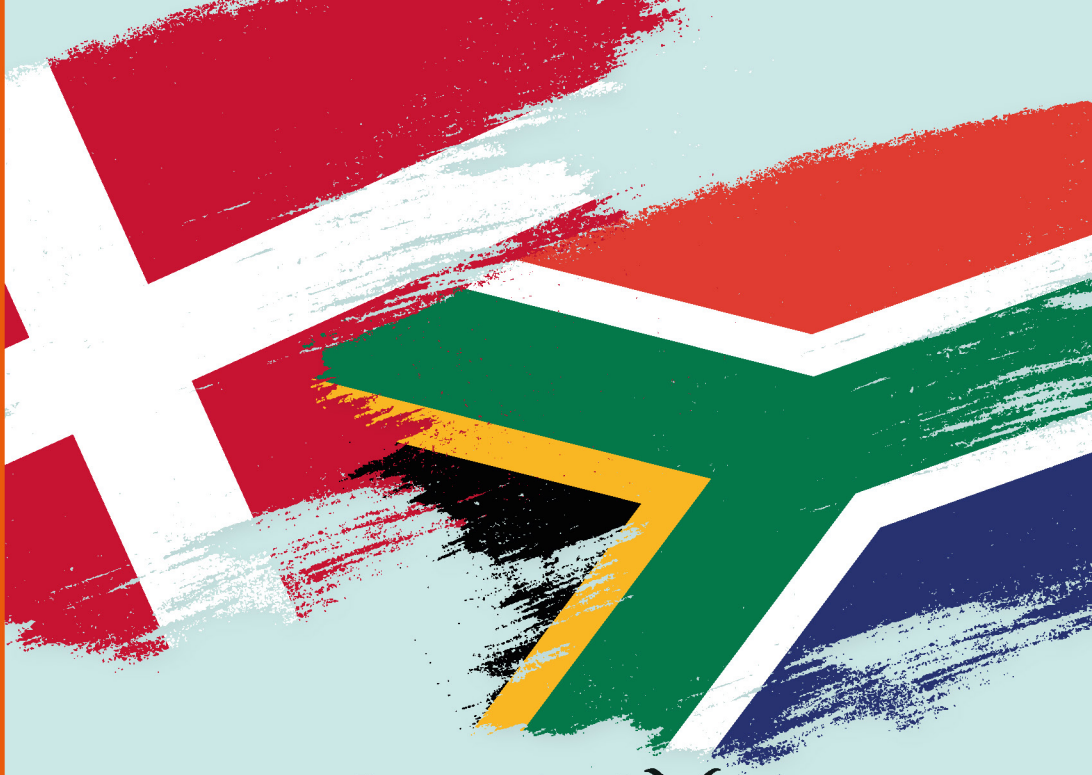

DIPLOMACY ON TIME: DENMARK IN SOUTH AFRICA'S NEGOTIATED REVOLUTION

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Diplomacy on Time

Denmark in South Africa's Negotiated Revolution

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UJ Press

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Published by UJ Press
University of Johannesburg
Library
Auckland Park Kingsway Campus
PO Box 524
Auckland Park
2006
https://ujpress.uj.ac.za/

First published in Denmark 2021 by the Danish Foreign Polish Society.

https://doi.org/10.64449/9780906785508
978-0-906785-49-2 (Paperback)
978-0-906785-50-8 (PDF)
978-0-906785-51-5 (EPUB)
978-0-906785-52-2 (XML)

Proofreading: Yumna Moosa
Cover design: Hester Roets, UJ Graphic Design Studio
Typeset in 9/13pt Merriweather Light

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To my wife Buller

"We must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures."
William Shakespeare
'Julius Caesar' (1599) act 4, sc. 3, l. 215

Series Foreword

Sven Botha

University of Pretoria
Co-Series Editor: African Political Science and International Relations in Focus

At the time of this foreword being written, the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Denmark share an ardent and mutually beneficial bilateral relationship consisting of 39 bilateral and multilateral agreements (the most out of all the Nordic states who maintain an embassy in Pretoria) spanning development cooperation, implementation of the recommendations of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the development of legislation in the area of biodiversity, education, science and technology, agriculture, climate change and most recently sustainable futures.[1] The wealth and depth of the South Africa-Denmark partnership stem from Denmark's support for South Africa's Liberation Struggle and democratic transition, which solidified a special relationship between the two countries. Indeed, former South African President Nelson Mandela reflected fondly on Danish contributions to the Liberation Struggle when he addressed the Danish Parliament on 16 March 1999, when he remarked, "Denmark was in the forefront of that legion."[2] One day earlier, while being hosted by Queen Margrethe of Denmark for a State Banquet in his honour, Mandela would elaborate how this support has continued in the wake of the democratic dispensation when he remarked:

> ...Danish co-operation and support has brought the sweet taste of clean running water to many a child in South Africa.

1 This conclusion is derived following consultation of the public database made available by the Treaty Section of South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation. The database was last consulted in September 2025.

2 All quotes attributed to Nelson Mandela have been taken from the online archive maintained by the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory. See: https://archive.nelsonmandela.org/

> You have made it possible for many children to learn to read and write. [Although] Denmark is a small country, it has played a major role in the building of the new South Africa, and continues to do so.[3]

During the same address, Mandela also reflected on the respect shown by Denmark for how the Liberation Struggle and subsequent post-Apartheid governance were conducted, when he noted with appreciation:

> Above all, you have always respected our right to choose the path towards our goals. You never questioned our right to decide how our freedom should be attained. And today as we address the legacy of apartheid with your co-operation, we continue to enjoy your respect for our decisions.[4]

As Denmark's Ambassador to South Africa from 1990-1994, Peter Brückner had a front row seat to historical milestones in South Africa's political development. The significance of Brückner's book is threefold. Firstly, an insider's account of how to intensify diplomatic ties by establishing an embassy is provided. Diplomatic routine stipulates that diplomats rotate postings every three to five years. This revolving process encompasses a transfer of contacts, projects, and premises. However, this was not the case with then-Ambassador Brückner and his team when they landed in Johannesburg in August 1990, who would go on to lay the foundations for Danish diplomatic presence and practice in South Africa, from which immediate cooperation and successive Danish diplomats have benefited. The insider's account provided by Brückner illustrates the intricacies of starting from scratch, which included the rental of a room in the absence of a diplomatic residence and the need to establish an all-inclusive rolodex to enhance diplomatic efforts and achieve goals. Secondly, this book goes beyond the Liberation Struggle, unpacking Danish efforts in the lead-up to South Africa's final transition to a comprehensive democracy in April 1994, which included coverage of key events

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.

and individuals from both sides of the leading negotiations. Thirdly, Brückner's book offers a unique opportunity to diversify the coverage of Nordic support for South Africa's democratic transition while serving as an ideal resource for students and researchers studying the bilateral relationship between South Africa and Denmark. The historical narrative of the book harnesses and preserves institutional memory, which can be used by students and researchers alike to further the study of South Africa-Denmark relations and (South) Africa-Nordic relations more broadly, with an eye for contemporary contexts, settings, and actors.

On behalf of the Series Editors, I would like to thank the Danish Foreign Policy Society, particularly its director Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, for agreeing to partner with us on the publication of the South African edition of Peter Brückner's memoirs. I would also like to thank the Danish Embassy in Pretoria, which initially connected the author to the editors of the book series. Our sincere thanks go to Elsebeth Søndergaard Krone (Denmark's Ambassador to South Africa from September 2023 until May 2025), Tina Lund Lodahl, Mathias Christensen, Mikkeline Lysberg Bernbom, and Simone Astrup. Our collective efforts have helped to bring this account to South African readers.

Foreword

> *"Denmark has demonstrated once again – and history will show when it is written – that our efforts here have also been far, far greater than our geographical extent and our population numbers would suggest ... a good story from which much could be learned when seen in perspective."*

So said Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen after returning from his visit to South Africa in May 1994. The occasion was the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as leader of South Africa's first democratically elected government.

Why this book?

The purpose of this memoir is not to write the whole story from Nelson Mandela's release in 1990 to the first democratic elections in 1994. That has already been done. My aim is merely to describe the Danish efforts during the negotiation process in the four years that culminated in the adoption of South Africa's first democratic constitution and the installation of Mandela as president.

Can the Danish effort really live up to Poul Nyrup's laudatory assessment?

I'm sure there are many opinions on that. Here I am simply trying to tell the story of Denmark's role during those four years from the perspective of the Danish Embassy in Pretoria and Cape Town, which I had the privilege of setting up and running from 1990-94.

Before my departure for South Africa in August 1990, I had the opportunity during a brief meeting with then Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen to ask which of the many diplomatic tasks of the new embassy he attached particular importance to. The answer was brief: contacts.

Denmark's interests in relation to South Africa.

But what was Denmark's interest in establishing a diplomatic representation in South Africa as early as the first half of 1990?

By this time Mandela had been released and a first meeting between the government of then President Frederik Willem de Klerk and the African National Congress (ANC)[5] had taken place, but it was highly uncertain what the future would bring. Behind the decision was, firstly, a values-based interest, which in turn was closely linked to concrete - and particularly economic - interests. [6]

Denmark's traditionally strong commitment to human rights made it natural to support the fight against apartheid in South Africa, one of the most brutal, openly human rights-abusing regimes in the world. Initially, in the 1960s, with financial support for victims of the apartheid regime, and later also by other means.

One of the most powerful tools in this struggle was the imposition of economic and diplomatic sanctions against the apartheid regime. Among the Western countries, Denmark was one of those that imposed the toughest, most far-reaching sanctions, including the recall of expatriate diplomats from the Consulate General in Johannesburg, a move even the other Nordic countries shied away from.

The abolition of apartheid was an essential precondition for the lifting of sanctions and thus for the re-establishment of economic relations, in particular trade and investment with South Africa. Danish industry had a considerable interest in developing

5 The African National Congress (ANC) is a political party in South Africa. It is a socialist and left-wing party founded in 1912 as a political movement to fight for freedom and equal rights for blacks and whites alike.

6 Keywords on the basis of Danish foreign policy taken from Per Hækkerup's book Dansk Udenrigspolitik (1965): to pursue concrete Danish interests - political, economic and cultural - both for the country as a whole and for individual citizens or groups of citizens, and to influence international developments on the basis of our principles, judgements and attitudes, which derive from our democratic system.

these relations as soon as conditions permitted. It was, therefore, important to be able to follow developments closely, not least in order to provide the Government with the best possible basis for deciding when the conditions for lifting sanctions might be met.

Contacts and Embassy support for the democratisation process.

In this context, it was crucial to establish and cultivate contacts with key actors not only on the government side and in the ANC, but in all camps that were progressively involved in the democratisation process.

Very quickly it became clear that the embassy did not have to "just" report on developments, but that from the Danish side we could respond to local wishes and support the process more actively - alongside traditional assistance to the victims of apartheid.

Together with other like-minded countries, Denmark gradually became more involved in the negotiations which, despite numerous setbacks, mainly due to the rising tide of violence, were concluded with elections in April 1994. The embassy proposed a wide range of projects to support this process.

One of the Embassy's more radical proposals was initially raised in an informal telephone conversation with the Danish Foreign Ministry. We suggested that support should be given to the South African police. Now was that a good idea? After all, South Africa's police force was traditionally and rightly seen as a brutal spearhead of the apartheid system. Our argument was very simple: the increasing violence threatened to sabotage the whole process, both a future election campaign and the elections themselves. Countering this threat required an effective police force. The existing police force was far from perfect, but it was all there was. The time was not right to establish a new one. Sensible alternatives were lacking. Denmark and like-minded countries should therefore help its leaders to make the police force better suited to the new tasks. The Foreign Ministry was convinced and actively supported the proposal.

The other EU countries took up the idea, and this joint effort was perhaps one of the most effective contributions to the success of the spring 1994 elections. At least one of the more spectacular efforts.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Uffe Ellemann-Jensen has the floor.

I interviewed Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, who was foreign minister during the period, in November 2016. He told me the following about the process and the establishment of the embassy in South Africa:

> *"The decision to establish an embassy in South Africa was taken at Asiatisk Plads in the spring of 1990 after Nelson Mandela's release in February of that year. It was a question of defending hard-line Danish interests, including business interests. From the Danish side, we therefore had an interest in establishing contact with the new powers that could be expected to emerge during the democratisation process that had now been set in motion. This was the primary purpose of a Danish embassy.*
>
> *Already during the meeting of the Nordic Foreign Ministers with Mandela in the spring of 1990 in Stockholm, I had the opportunity to tell him about the Danish support for the ANC, which - unlike the direct Swedish support - went through private organisations. But we would like to consider establishing direct relations, and it would be important for Denmark to know whether the ANC would renounce the possibility of using armed struggle to achieve its objectives.*
>
> *The lifting of sanctions against South Africa, both Danish and EU sanctions, was high on the agenda. Denmark should not be the last country to lift sanctions against South Africa. It was to be a long slog; a majority in Parliament - the Social Democrats, the Socialist People's Party (SF) and the Social Liberals - were long opposed. In the spring of 1991, they had forced the government to make reservations in the EU about a proposal for limited easing of EU sanctions to encourage the negotiating*

process in South Africa. They felt it was still too early to react positively to a process that could still go wrong.

On 17 March 1992, a significant majority of white voters voted in a referendum in favour of continuing the democratisation process, based on the conclusions of the Conference on Democratic South Africa (CODESA). At the time, Denmark was the only EU country to maintain full sanctions against South Africa. I had been in telephone contact with Mandela and told him that the government would lift sanctions if the referendum result was positive. Mandela made no secret of the fact that the ANC would be very sorry if we lifted the sanctions now. I said that from the Danish side, we had held out for a long time; but we could not be the last to maintain the sanctions. It was my impression that Mandela understood our position. The Social Democrats (S), the Socialists (SF) and the Social Liberals were still hesitant; I had said in advance that the government would lift the sanctions after a positive vote and that this would be done by royal decree, as there was no need for new legislation. A lifting of the sanctions could therefore only be prevented by a real vote of no confidence, and the three parties did not think that this was a viable option.

The government had gone through a long and tedious period of footnote politics on defence in the 1980s and was now tired of the prospect of having to drag itself through a similar process on sanctions against South Africa. At the same time, it was important not to antagonise the various political interest groups too much. There had been no real pressure from Danish business, which knew the government's political terms. They were used to us being cowed by the majority in Parliament. There were moods that moved; there were compulsory exercises that you had to go through with the various stakeholders; all the groups concerned had to be able to say at the end that they had done what they could, in the circumstances, to defend the interests of that group.

I thought it was important to give that support to the de Klerk government as well. During a personal meeting some months later at his holiday home near Cape Town, I got the clear

impression that de Klerk wanted to appear as a credible political leader. He was determined to take the process forward based on the mandate he had received in the referendum. Already in 1991, de Klerk's government had sent the first non-white ambassador, Conrad Sidego, to Copenhagen; this appointment had not caused any problems with the ANC, and Ambassador Sidego was allowed to remain in his post for over a year after Mandela took over as president in 1994.

It was easier to conduct foreign policy then. Some might say that our initiative in South Africa was characterised by a certain hubris. Overall, it was a matter of looking after Danish interests, including establishing contacts with the expected new rulers. The fact that we could also contribute to democratic development was an additional benefit. As a small country, Denmark has the advantage that we can often fly under the radar and - combined with great flexibility in our decision-making processes - take initiatives that larger countries, often burdened by a heavy past, are not able to. We had done something similar, for example, in relation to Czechoslovakia, where the embassy was already well on the way to establishing contacts with key representatives of the expected new rulers well before the fall of the Wall in November 1989."

1 December 2016

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While working on this book, I discovered that my memory was insufficient as a source for an accurate description of the Embassy's efforts. I therefore sought archival access from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to check my recollections, particularly the reports we sent home during the period 1990 to 1994. I received the permission in the summer of 2019 and would like to thank especially the head of the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lars G. Karlsson for his invaluable help in finding the relevant files. Without his efforts and those of his colleagues, this memoir would not have been possible.

Unfortunately, the coronavirus crisis in the spring of 2020 imposed several restrictions that made it impossible to carry out planned checks of certain files in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In places, I have chosen a drama-documentary form; I reconstruct conversations and events based on our reports, the letters I sent home at the time, and personal notes and speeches at various events. I have tried as far as possible to follow a principle of *show, don't tell*, to give voice to as many of the actors as possible, to show it was a team effort. The bulk of this relies on the research I was allowed to do in the archive material of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support my memory.

2 December 2021

Peter Brückner

Born on 6 July 1940. Master of Laws from Copenhagen University in 1965. Employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1965-2006. Legal adviser to the Council of Ministers of the European Communities 1973-78. Head of Danish delegation to UN Conference on the Law of the Sea 1980-81. Deputy Head of Danish UN Mission, New York 1985-90. Ambassador to South Africa 1990-94. Head of DANIDA Multilateral Development Assistance 1994-97. Ambassador Danish Delegation to OECD and UNESCO 2001-2006. University lecturer in international law and author of books on the EC's external relations, articles on the UN, the EU, the Law of the Sea and Antarctica and, with Uffe Stormgaard, of the novel "I Danmark er jeg født.

Focus on the story, not the narrator. Inspired by D.H. Lawrence:

"The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it."

PART 1

Pioneers in the Ruins of Apartheid

In the wake of Nelson Mandela's release, Denmark was one of the first countries to send an ambassador to South Africa with a clear mandate to make as many new contacts as possible. In a country with a voracious appetite for international cooperation after years of isolation, this gave me unique access. But it was also a time of difficult balancing acts and many sceptics. Were the burgeoning upheavals real or just an attempt by the white regime to buy time? We tried to leverage presence and insight for maximum courage in Denmark's responses.

Chapter I

Arrival

"Fasten seatbelts". The approach to Jan Smuts Airport at Johannesburg had begun; we were descending through the clouds, I had been given a window seat and was looking down on the yellowed landscape. August 1990, it was still winter in the southern hemisphere. Over 13 hours of flying, but no jetlag, only an hour's time difference between Denmark and South Africa.

Soon strange patterns appeared, large scars in the landscape, excavations, angular mounds - it had to be the gold mines that had helped create Johannesburg. The silhouettes of the city loomed in the distance, not very different from larger cities in Europe.

Jan Smuts Airport seemed relatively deserted - like an oversized Danish provincial airport. I got through passport control quickly and was greeted by the South African foreign ministry's head of protocol and one of his colleagues. I arrived alone. My wife Anna Else, called Buller, and the embassy's two staff members, Rosa Haugedal and Dorte Mikkelsen, would join me later. Our two children, Camilla, 24, and Helena, 21, were studying in Copenhagen and had to make do with occasional visits.

Together with the South African diplomats, I left the airport that 4 years later would be the object of a terrible car bomb explosion, a last desperate, but fortunately futile, attempt to sabotage South Africa's first fully democratic elections.

After an hour's drive north through the yellowed landscape I had seen from the air, we reached Pretoria, South Africa's government city. We drove through a beautiful avenue of jacaranda trees in budding purple blossom to a house on the outskirts of the city, where I would stay for the first time in a rented room with a kitchenette.

It was not only my first visit to South Africa, but my first encounter at all with Africa. What caught my eye in Pretoria

was a setting that I thought I had seen similar in Europe or North America.

Neat, tidy residential areas, paved streets, a slightly sleepy city centre with a few high-rise buildings - like a major Danish provincial town in the 1960s. And yet, while the cityscape was dominated by white people, black South Africans were occasionally seen moving humbly, often creeping along the walls of houses. It was not like the cities of the United States I had just left after five years as deputy chief of the Danish UN mission in New York. It took some time before I recognised the mark apartheid had made on South African society. Black South Africans did not live in Pretoria at all, but in so-called "townships"[7] outside the city.

I have been periodically dealing with apartheid since I first encountered the subject when my mother suggested I write an essay about it in 1954. As a university lecturer in international law - a side job in my early years in the Foreign Office - I wrote an article in 1967 on one of the very first decisions of the UN Security Council binding under international law, on economic sanctions against then Southern Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) and in that context on apartheid as a threat to international peace and security. Most recently, during my five years from 1985-90 as Deputy Head of the Danish UN Mission in New York, I had the opportunity to deal with the South African government's policy of racial segregation.

Apartheid was an annual item at the UN General Assembly. During its meeting in the autumn of 1989, we had registered the beginnings of movements in the rigid South African system.

President Pieter Willem Botha had resigned and was replaced by Frederik Willem de Klerk. Walter Sisulu and five other ANC leaders had been released in October. On 2 February 1990, de Klerk made a speech in the South African parliament in which he

7 Townships are ghetto-like slums in South Africa created during the apartheid period as part of the regime's divide-and-rule policy. Townships were usually located away from towns and adjacent to industrial areas where residents were expected to work.

rejected apartheid, announced the release of political prisoners and legalised a large number of political organisations, including the ANC and the socialist Pan Africanist Congress. On 11 February, Nelson Mandela and several other political prisoners were released, and a process of political democratisation was launched, with Mandela and de Klerk as the two key players. It was like witnessing an African version of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Could it really mean the end of apartheid? Yet it was a surprise to me when, in the spring of 1990, Otto Møller, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called me in New York to ask if I would be Denmark's first ambassador to South Africa. Was the time really ripe? Would the Rubicon finally be crossed? [8]

South Africa's apartheid legislation

Racial discrimination, as we know, occurs in many parts of the world. However, it was the official and ideological nature of the apartheid system that made relations in South Africa unique. The cornerstone of South Africa's apartheid policy was the system of racial classification introduced in 1950 (the Population Registration Act). Through this system, the population was divided into different categories. It was thus a person's racial classification that essentially determined what rights and future that person had.

Extensive legislation was introduced to restrict the rights of the non-white population. This had a particularly negative impact on school policy and the effects of so-called 'Bantu education' have plagued and will continue to plague the new South Africa for a long time. Since 1948, the white government has systematically tried to implement its plans to create the greatest possible physical distance between the races. This policy, officially known as "separate

8 Caesar's words (*jacta est alea* - the die is cast), as he crossed the Rubicon River in northern Italy in 49 BC, are also used to describe the Rubicon speech delivered by South African President P.W. Botha on 15 August 1985 in Durban. The whole world expected him to announce sweeping reforms, including the abolition of apartheid and the release of Nelson Mandela. However, the speech did not include any of this.

development", aimed to divide South Africa into one land area reserved mainly for the white population and 10 areas reserved for the black population.

These areas were created on an ethnic basis and were called "homelands" (bantustans), see Glossary and map sketch after Chap. XIX. The white community, which then constituted about 15% of the total population of South Africa, was to have control over 86% of the total territory of the country, including all the main industrial centres and large areas of the best agricultural land. The "homelands" allocated to the black population covered only 14% of South Africa's land area. In practice, these "homelands" were intended as working reservations for the white economy, although official ideology was careful to explain that "separate development" would allow the black population to enjoy normal political, economic and social rights in the areas allocated to them. The main instruments of this policy were the Land Acts of 1913, 1936, 1954 and 1955 and the Group Areas Act of 1955, which determined where people should live according to certain racial criteria, as well as the so-called "Influx Control" legislation, including the hated passport laws

Chapter II

In Place in Two Capitals

The first period was spent setting up offices in the premises rented in the Sanlam building, roughly in the centre of the city, getting a telephone and fax connection and acquiring a car telephone. All with the help of Lise Skouboe at the now honorary Danish Consulate General in Johannesburg. For the first few months, we sat on cardboard boxes in the still empty office space. It soon became clear that I would have to spend a lot of time in the car, especially on the way to and from Johannesburg, where the ANC headquarters were located. This was before the era of mobile phones, so a car phone consisted of a classic telephone tube wired to a larger battery weighing several kilos.

We also needed housing. The house chosen by the Foreign Office as the best site was in Pretoria's most conservative Boer neighbourhood; it would have been unthinkable to have representatives of the ANC and other opposition movements there. Finding alternative accommodation took time that we had otherwise expected to spend on other things, not least exploring the country, which was quite new and unfamiliar to us. When we finally managed to find suitable accommodation, the house had to be furnished. Without the help of my wife, Buller, settling into the new surroundings would not have been possible.

And then it turned out that this whole exercise had to be repeated in Cape Town. South Africa has two, in fact, three, capitals: the capital of government, Pretoria; the capital of parliament, Cape Town; and the capital of the judiciary, the Supreme Court, Bloemfontein. [9]

9 These three capitals, which correspond to Montesquieu's three-division of power into the executive, the legislative and the judiciary respectively, are located in different provinces: the Transvaal, the Cape Province and the Free State. This division was a condition for the merger of these three provinces and the fourth province of Natal into the Republic of South Africa in 1912.

The South African constitutional system was majority parliamentary rule, with the government answerable to parliament. In other words, a democratic system of government as we know it, is only reserved for the country's white minority, which in 1990 numbered some 5 million white compared with some 35 million non-whites. Whenever Parliament was in session, the government had to travel to Cape Town.

Members of the diplomatic corps are registered ("accredited") with the government in Pretoria. It had therefore become a tradition for the diplomatic corps to move to Cape Town with the government when it travelled there. Each December Buller and I packed our bags, furniture and other fixtures, and headed for the parliamentary capital, where we remained until the end of the session in June of the following year. During our four years in South Africa, we had to rent three different homes in Cape Town, gradually furnished with local furniture that Buller acquired along the way to avoid the expensive moves. Smaller offices for myself and Dorthe were rented in the centrally located building where our Scandinavian colleagues were based.

So, in addition to making the necessary contacts, a lot of work was needed to get our infrastructure in place during a long transition period.

Natal had simply demanded free access for the province's sugar to the other three provinces as a condition of its joining.

Chapter III

Contacts?

In Copenhagen, the main initial interest was in obtaining information on the progress of the negotiating process: when was it so far advanced, so profound and irreversible, that it would be possible to move towards lifting the Danish sanctions? It soon became clear that there was no consensus among the parties in Parliament on how these criteria should be understood, as then Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen described in the foreword to this book.

The Embassy's reports were of course an important contribution to the assessment in Copenhagen of developments in South Africa. For the purpose of this information, the co-operation among the representations of the Nordic countries and especially the EC cooperation was of inestimable importance as a source for us. In these circles, there was a continuous opportunity to compare information and impressions on developments in South Africa, not least concerning the negotiations on a new constitution.

Until the establishment of the embassy, local sources of information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been limited; however, excellent reports were occasionally received from the Norwegian Consul General, Bjarne Lindstrøm. Now, as the only Nordic EC country represented, we could do a little something in return by informing our Nordic colleagues in confidence about the deliberations in the EC circle.

When I arrived in Pretoria in 1990, there were only about 25 diplomatic missions with a resident head. I recall my first meeting with a large part of the diplomatic corps at a dinner hosted by the Canadian Dean - the senior ambassador, who is the spokesman for the corps' common interests vis-à-vis the country of residence. It was a collection of sad, elderly diplomats; most seemed somewhat sceptical to say the least: was there a genuine change of heart in

the South African regime? I was the first of a new generation of ambassadors. The replacement of my distressed colleagues came to pass rather quickly as the process of negotiating the transition to democracy and the abolition of apartheid developed.[10]

As we became established in South Africa, Danish politicians began to visit the country. Shortly after I arrived in Pretoria in August 1990, to my great surprise, I met by chance a delegation of parliamentarians from two Danish political parties, the Conservatives and the Left, who were also having dinner at the Burgers Park Hotel. It turned out that the head of the South African embassy in Copenhagen, Consul General Anton Loubser, [11] had invited Per Stig Møller, Helge Adam Møller, Viggo Fischer from the Conservatives and Inge Dahl-Sørensen and Jens Skrumsager-Skau from the Left to visit South Africa. I had not heard anything about the visit, which in the view of some Danish opposition politicians was hardly formally compatible with the official Danish line on sanctions still in force. But I thought it was all right, now that a Danish ambassador had been sent to South Africa; it was commendable that they wanted to see for themselves the exciting new developments in the country. The politicians were kind enough to invite me on a trip to Soweto, where a meeting had been arranged with leading representatives of the more extreme socialist Pan African Congress.

I arranged for Per Stig Møller to meet the ANC, as I recall, including Thabo Mbeki, who, among his first duties at the new ANC headquarters in Johannesburg, acted as a kind of foreign minister for the movement. I had been helped into contact with him by a Nordic colleague. The embassy counsellor at the Swedish mission[12] had told me shortly beforehand that Mbeki had just returned from his 28-year exile, mostly in Lusaka, Zambia,

10 A little over two years later, I had become the doyen of the diplomatic corps, which by the end of 1993 had grown to over 80 diplomatic missions.

11 Known for his attempts to get Denmark to take a more proactive interest in developments in South Africa.

12 Sweden had long frozen the status of its diplomatic representation to the now very old-fashioned gesandtschaft or legation. Legations and legations are headed by a chief of a lower rank than an ambassador.

where the ANC had its headquarters during the apartheid period. [13] The embassy counsellor wanted to help me establish contact with Mbeki, which was to prove useful as he was later to become deputy president in Mandela's first government and then his successor as president. I remember my first meetings with this sharp but charming leader, who already during the negotiation phase laid the foundations for the debate on the economic policy of democratic South Africa. He became one of the very close contacts the embassy made in the ANC.

This parliamentary visit was the first in a long series of study visits by parliamentarians, business people, NGO representatives, journalists, etc., in connection with the lifting of Danish sanctions, primarily visa sanctions.

13 After the arrest of Mandela and other ANC leaders in 1962, the ANC asked Thabo Mbeki to flee South Africa so that he could complete his degree in economics at the University of Sussex and then work for ANC cadres in exile

Chapter IV

Danish Anti-Apartheid Policy

The fact that a Danish Embassy in South Africa was not established until 1990 did not mean that Denmark had been complacent about the apartheid regime. On the contrary. Since I joined the Foreign Service in 1965, I remember how Foreign Ministers Per Hækkerup and later K.B. Andersen formulated an increasingly muscular Danish anti-apartheid policy, which we sought to strengthen through cooperation first with the other Nordic countries and, after 1973, also in the EC circle. I had seen this development from the front row, as I had been involved in the Foreign Ministry's political department in drafting the Danish position on the expected resolutions against the apartheid regime at the UN's annual general assemblies in 1966 and 1967. That year I was a young secretary in the Danish delegation to the autumn session in New York.[14]

In addition to the verbal political statements in UN resolutions and declarations from Nordic and EC foreign ministers' meetings, Denmark was an active player in efforts to take more tangible. measures against the regime in South Africa. These took the form of so-called "negative measures" against the apartheid regime in the form of various sanctions, and "positive measures" in favour of the discriminated population groups.

Denmark's sanctions policy against South Africa

As early as 1962, more than a year after the Sharpeville massacre,[15] the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning South

14 See Christopher Bramsen's book "South Africa - Struggle or Dialogue" Chapter 15 ff and Lotte R.Bennedsgaard Olsen's writing "The Nordic Region in the UN, 1956-65" Chapter 8.

15 A bloody clash on March 21, 1960 in the black township of Sharpeville near Vereeniging, where police fired live rounds into a gathering of black people. 250 people were killed or injured. One of the first and most violent demonstrations against apartheid in South Africa.

Africa's racist apartheid policy and calling on all member states to end their economic and military relations with South Africa.

The Danish side agreed with the condemnation, but did not believe that a legally non-binding resolution in the UN General Assembly was sufficient to impose a ban on trade etc. In the view of Denmark and the other Nordic countries, it was not the task of the UN General Assembly to decide on sanctions; that would fall to the UN Security Council. Most Western countries agreed with this position.

The first Danish sanctions came in the form of a ban on trade in arms when the Danish Parliament supported the arms embargo adopted by the UN Security Council in 1978. A majority in Parliament did not want Denmark to lead further sanctions unless they were based on a binding decision of the UN Security Council under international law, such as the 1967 resolution on far-reaching sanctions against the Smith regime in Southern Rhodesia.[16]

When a parliamentary government took power in 1982, anti-apartheid movements in Denmark - in cooperation with several Social Democrats - managed to create the basis for bans on Danish investment, coal imports, transport of oil to and from South Africa on Danish ships, general trade and import and export of services. These sanctions were on the edge of the applicable EC rules, as the economic sanctions could be seen as a trade policy measure and thus covered by the exclusive competence of the EC. The Danish government chose to interpret it as a foreign policy measure and thus subject to the competence of the Member State.[17]

The then Danish government, which was under strong political pressure from the opposition, had thus accepted that Denmark had not only gone further than the other 11 EC countries on the sanctions issue but also further than the

16 See my article on the UN and Southern Rhodesia in Nordisk Tidsskrift for International Ret 1967 Vol.37 p.239

17 See Le Droit de la Communauté économique européenne : Relations Extérieures, Vol. 12, Série J.Mégret by Jean- Victor Louis and Peter Brückner. Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1980

other Nordic countries. By the end of the 1980s, Denmark had become the Western country with the most comprehensive sanctions legislation.

The fact that a right-of-centre Danish government had overtaken social democratic Sweden on this issue was said to have caused great annoyance to Swedish Prime Minister Palme, who considered himself to be one of the ANC's closest supporters [18]

Danish aid for victims of apartheid

In terms of positive steps, Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen said in 1994:

> *"... Since 1965 we have provided almost DKK 1 billion through the so-called anti-apartheid allocation, and in many different ways - often through difficult channels - we supported the victims of the odious apartheid regime. We paid for education and books for young black South Africans, and we paid for legal aid for blacks who were dragged before the courts or unjustly detained. It was moving to meet several of the beneficiaries, who today hold significant positions in the new South Africa, and as Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: "Denmark is my second home".*[19]

Since the 1970s, millions had been channelled through Danish organisations to anti-apartheid groups through the so-called "apartheid grant". Unlike some other countries, for example Sweden, we did not directly support the ANC but operated through NGOs that received funding for projects in South Africa that

18 In the years 1985-86, all the Nordic countries introduced a series of tightened South Africa sanctions in relation to the 1978 Nordic Programme of Action. In the field of trade, Denmark took the lead in 1986 with a law banning trade with South Africa and Namibia. Similar laws were introduced by Norway, Sweden and Finland in 1987. However, none of the three countries went as far as Denmark, which even withdrew its expatriate diplomats from South Africa in the mid-1980s, see Christopher Bramsen's book "South Africa - Fight or Dialogue" Chapter 16 ff.

19 See the Prime Minister's reply of 11 May 1994 to the traditional question in Parliament on his assessment of the foreign and domestic policy situation

supported anti-apartheid groups, notably the Danish Catholic Relief Services, IBIS, Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke and the Trade Union Secretariat for the U- lands, which passed the funds on to the final beneficiaries and their projects.[20]

The establishment of a Danish Embassy in Pretoria/Cape Town meant that a new player had entered the field in South Africa itself, from which Danish NGOs had hitherto been excluded.

I interpreted the Embassy's main task of establishing contacts broadly; it should also include personal relations with civil society organisations with which the Danish NGOs cooperated and the new peace process bodies. Initially, this included, in particular, the head of the Goldstone Commission, Supreme Court Justice Richard Goldstone, as well as the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa, best known as IDASA and its director Alex Boraine, former partner Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and close associate Ivor Jenkins. They all came to play a crucial role in the embassy and Danish efforts to prevent the rising violence in South Africa, especially in the Danish protection of death squad witnesses, see Chapter XXIII.

In addition, Lawyers for Human Rights by Brian Currin and the Human Rights Commission by Max and Audrey Coleman helped me, for example, to make contact with communities that had suffered violent attacks.

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) and its General Secretary Frank Chikane, the tireless anti-apartheid activist Beyers Naudé and the non-violent, liberal, white women's organisation Black Sash under Jennifer de Tolly and others were among those that Denmark supported with DANIDA funds and who were now also able to tell us in personal meetings at the new

20 The 1992 allocation of DKK 80 million was increased to DKK 100 million in 1993. Denmark has also consistently supported South Africa's anti-apartheid neighbours, the so-called frontline states. Ulrik Federspiel, who visited South Africa in January 1993 to give seminars and speeches to the South African Foreign Service and central administration on how to set up a democratic civil service system, has recounted in his recent book A Diplomatic Life how, as Embassy Secretary in London in the 1980s, he secretly administered transfers from the Danish apartheid grant to organisations supporting victims of apartheid policies.

embassy about their roles in the fight against apartheid. These personal contacts with some of the most crucial individuals and civil society organisations in the transition from apartheid to democracy gave Denmark, as it turned out, unique access to the future frontrunners of the new South Africa. They helped us to understand the situation and thus to be able to help and support the fragile process towards democracy with due diligence.

IDASA

The Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) was set up in 1986 by former opposition leaders in the South African Parliament - Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and Alex Boraine - with the aim of establishing a forum that could contribute, through debate and other activities, to the creation of real democracy in South Africa. IDASA thus initiated the first meeting in 1987 in Senegal between prominent South Africans and ANC leaders in exile.

Under the leadership of Alex Boraine, IDASA played a key role in the transition from apartheid to democracy, promoting dialogue between the various actors in sensitive areas and disseminating the concept of democratisation in its broadest sense. The organisation was one of the initiators of the establishment of an independent voter education forum comprising more than 30 private organisations.

IDASA was one of Denmark's close partners in South Africa. For several years it received support from the apartheid grant through the Danish National Council for Relief and Development. In addition, Denmark provided direct support from the violence and democracy account for several projects through IDASA, including a visit to Denmark in 1992 by representatives of the South African police and various community leaders. The visit, the first of its kind, helped to strengthen contacts between the South African police and local communities on community policing and also provided a model for similar visits in other countries.

We also contributed to the visit of representatives from various factions of the South African armed forces to

Denmark and the Conference Security Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Vienna. The purpose of the visit to Denmark was twofold: to forge links between the various armed factions, thereby promoting integration into the new South African military, and to give the participants an insight into how defence in a democratic society is subject to democratic control. The participants expressed great satisfaction with the visit to Denmark, which also helped to promote dialogue and trust between the participants.

It was also IDASA that played a key role in brokering the contact between the embassy and the defector Q of the death squad in March 1994, which is described in more detail in Chapter XXIII.

During his visit to Denmark in March 1994, Alex Boraine obtained support in principle for his proposal for Danish support for a conference on the establishment of a truth commission, the later Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is discussed further at the end of Chapter XVI.

I did not want to get in the way of the Danish NGOs and be seen as a third wheel in their relations with the South African partners in the aid projects financed by the apartheid grant. The embassy therefore concentrated on contacts with organisations concerned with the acute new challenges posed by the opening of negotiations on a new constitution: the increase in violence and preparations for the forthcoming elections, including voter education.

Even during our first stay in Cape Town during the 1991 session of Parliament, I was approached by journalist and anti-apartheid activist Barry Streek, whom I had met while covering, among other things, the Parliamentary session. Barry Streek founded the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT) in the mid-1980s, a charity that assisted poor communities in rural areas. He asked whether Denmark could support a conference he was organising on preparing new voters for the forthcoming elections.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepted my request and, after a few similar requests for support for various similar events in South Africa, it was decided to grant the embassy a so-called "local grant authority", i.e. the right for the embassy - at its discretion and without prior approval from the Ministry - to finance small projects in support of the negotiation process within a framework of DKK 300,000 per year.

This instrument proved to be crucial in our ability to provide timely support to projects that the embassy felt could help strengthen the positive forces of the democratisation process. Of course, the local use of these funds had to be reported to Asia Square and accounted for afterwards, but it never met with criticism. Throughout the period, the Foreign Office showed us a high degree of confidence in our use of the local grant.

I recall with pleasure the envy this tool aroused in EU circles and among the other Nordic countries. My British colleague was, in fact, jealous of the ability of the newly created Danish Embassy to act quickly and effectively on needs to assist the democratisation process. As he said: *"You are lucky that you are not burdened like us by decades of archives and heavy and time-consuming workflows."* The British Embassy, like the vast majority of embassies, had to obtain approval in the capital before it could fund projects, and in the current situation this often proved so time-consuming as to be directly counterproductive, because speed of action was essential to provide the right support for the negotiating process. In addition, the British Embassy had a wide range of other traditional diplomatic tasks to perform: helping businesses and the substantial British population. Finally, the British position on the democratisation process itself was perhaps not quite as clear-cut and unambiguous as the Danish. As a former colonial power in South Africa, Britain had a host of very different interests, economic, cultural, social and not least security. There was probably some scepticism in many quarters in Britain as to what the transition to a democratic regime, probably dominated by the ANC, would mean for the continued defence of British

interests. Britain was, for example, a principled opponent of economic sanctions against South Africa.[21]

It soon became clear that the tasks which the embassy gradually came to face as the negotiation process developed far exceeded our capacity. Rosa and Dorthe worked flat out to manage the administrative tasks and communication locally and with Copenhagen. In January 1992, the embassy received a major resource boost in the form of embassy counsellor Peter Lysholt Hansen, who came directly from a posting in New Delhi. His experience in the field of aid proved invaluable in the forward-looking activities in support of the democratisation process which increasingly confronted the embassy. His wife Karin was very soon employed locally as a valuable administrative staff member at the embassy.

In Copenhagen, consideration also began to be given to adjusting Danish aid to South Africa. Initially, Danish funds for humanitarian and educational support to the victims of apartheid were distributed by the so-called Apartheid Committee. For many years, the entire apartheid allocation of some DKK 80 million was used in full for these purposes. However, in light of developments in South Africa, a separate amount was earmarked from 1991 for co-operation with the ANC and from 1992 for support in combating violence and promoting the democratisation process.

The Apartheid Grant

Unfortunately, towards the end of 1992, the expectation that it would be possible to convert the support hitherto provided through the apartheid grant into transitional assistance was not realised following the breakdown of the constitutional negotiations of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) (see end of Chapter XI). At the same time uncertainty arose about the establishment of a genuine transitional arrangement. The Foreign Minister therefore decided on a temporary continuation of the apartheid grant.

21 See work on the EEC's external relations in Note 13.

It was increased to DKK 100 million, of which DKK 20 million was allocated as a new item to a special account to be used for activities that would help to reduce the increasing violence and promote democratisation. This was not managed through the Apartheid Committee, but implemented directly by Danida in cooperation with the embassy. This placed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danida more prominently in relation to the Danish NGOs. This seemed natural in the context of the impending reallocation of the apartheid grant to transitional assistance, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would have a more central role in the assistance work.

After taking office in 1993, Minister for Development Aid Helle Degn went to the Finance Committee with a piece of legislation and obtained the full backing of the Folketing for an extended local appropriation authority of up to DKK 800,000. This meant that we could act quickly in situations where assistance was needed, for example for smaller projects that would not otherwise have been eligible for Danish support, such as employment and training activities in various townships, including Alexandra outside Johannesburg.[22]

In addition to an additional DKK 2 million for the Embassy's local competence for anti-violence and democracy projects, the embassy had its general grant competence increased to DKK 3 million, with a ceiling in both cases of DKK 300,000 per project.

Finally, DKK 12 million was allocated to the continuation of the newly established direct cooperation with the ANC.

22 Embassy assistance of 10.000 - 30.000 DKK. per project ranged from grants for conferences on the future of South African education, the new South African Foreign Service, affirmative action for women, grants for film festivals, publishing of children's books, contributions to small projects including training of black women in sewing and weaving, improvement of a township school, counselling for the unemployed, assistance to homeless children, training of black teachers, promotion of black business in townships and support for press freedom and human rights projects.

During 1993, DKK 32 million was used to finance 36 projects to combat political violence and promote the democratization process in South Africa.

From the Danish side, we were on the way not only to providing support for the victims of apartheid policy, but to providing support for much broader, forward-looking purposes and, first and foremost, to supporting democratisation with a longer-term view of a democratically governed South Africa.

Denmark's Special Programme in support of programmes through the ANC

Following Mandela's release, the suspension of armed struggle and inter alia, the lifting of the ban on the ANC, the Danish government decided in 1991 to establish a special programme to support projects through the ANC which had previously been channelled through various NGOs. The agreement with the ANC was negotiated during the visit of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Henrik Wøhlk, to South Africa in March 1991.

This was a time-limited programme, the purpose of which was mainly political, namely, to underline on the Danish side the Danish promise and commitment to assist the negotiation process and to establish direct contact with the ANC in order to support the movement. As stated in the subsequent evaluation of the programme,[23] it helped to give the impression of the ANC as an organisation capable of establishing development projects that could address the problems faced by an apartheid-ridden South Africa. The 17 concrete projects ranged from agricultural training, community development, teacher training and activities related to the democratisation process and the empowerment of women in South African society. What was unique about the programme was that its policy objectives were not directly linked to the development objectives of the projects. The programme ended when the ANC as a political party contested

23 Evaluation carried out by Nordic Consulting Group DAC Sector 50.2 ref.nr. 6.U.566/17.a.

the 1994 elections. The most successful project, according to the evaluation, was the Access Course Project, which provided adult education and training assistance at a university level. Among other things, this project proved particularly suitable for long-term continuation.

With this programme, the Embassy's role changed from that of a mere observer to that of an active participant in the deliberations of the programme in conjunction with Denmark's development cooperation with DANIDA - somewhat to the annoyance of Danish NGOs, including IBIS, who felt that the embassy was encroaching on their territory. After all, funds from the Apartheid grant had so far been channelled to beneficiaries via Danish (and South African) NGOs for political reasons. As these justifications fell away with the dismantling of the apartheid system, it was natural for the Embassy, as representative of the Danish treasury, to enter the scene more actively. Nor do I believe that any NGO challenged the professional competence of the Embassy's expert Peter Lysholt in this area. Former IBIS Secretary General Finn Skadkær Pedersen, as head of Interfund, a consortium of NGOs, was responsible for the management of the programme in Johannesburg.

Chapter V

First Meeting with Nelson Mandela

Many of the personal contacts the embassy made through its work on the various projects became not only recipients and managers of the positive Danish assistance, but also valuable sources of information and assessment of developments in the political process: when had the process of dismantling apartheid reached the point where it could be described as profound and irreversible?

One of the most important of these sources was, of course, the real leader of the ANC, Nelson Mandela. Although the ANC's vice-president at the time, he was in fact the movement's leader when President Oliver Tambo was seriously ill after a stroke.

On Thursday 27 September 1990, I had my first meeting with Nelson Mandela. The following is based mainly on my report from the following day. Buller, who was present at the visit, helped to recall the proceedings.

The meeting took place at the ANC headquarters in a modern high-rise building near the centre of Johannesburg. On my previous visits, the atmosphere had mostly resembled that which must prevail during the election campaign in an American party's headquarters. Phones rang incessantly, people passed back and forth between each other, tables overflowed with stacks of paper, meetings were called, around the corridors small groups eagerly discussed, and out in the reception area a growing line of visitors waited.

This day was no exception. My earlier impressions were confirmed: considerable pressure on a still small ANC leadership faced with a rapidly growing set of problems. The ANC had only recently been legalised and the movement needed to find its feet and establish an inner organisational structure. At the same time, they had to take care of members released from captivity and provide for members returning from exile abroad.

Last but not least, the ANC had to prepare for the forthcoming negotiations on a new constitution, draft its own proposals and take a position on the government's and other parties' proposals. Finally - together with the government – it had to decide how to deal with the increasing violence in the country. Violence had posed a serious threat to the negotiations. There was more than enough to do.

In this light, it was surprising to meet a very relaxed Nelson Mandela when we entered his modest office. I will never forget the firm handshake we received from his big grab accompanied by a warm smile. It was as if he had been looking forward to meeting us that very day. It certainly eased the initial nervousness I inevitably felt at this first meeting with the world's most famous freedom fighter and convict. We sat down around Mandela's small round meeting table. There were just the three of us in the room, he gave me the floor and I got straight down to business:

> *"The Danish side had welcomed the fact that the ANC had found it possible in the Groote Schuur Agreement[24] to agree to suspend the use of armed struggle. It was further commendable that the ANC had not succumbed to the temptation, in the ensuing waves of violence, to take up arms again. This self-restraint would undoubtedly help to strengthen the ANC's general image, especially among those who might still have doubts about whether the ANC was seriously committed to the negotiating process."*

I asked about Nelson Mandela's views on the further course of the negotiations and the prospects for preventing new waves of violence.

> *"Thank you for your words of appreciation. But first of all, I would like to express my warm thanks to Denmark for the unique Danish support in the fight against apartheid politics in South Africa. I was therefore pleased with the two visits I had*

24 The Groote Schuur Agreement of 4 May 1990 between the government and the ANC dealt, inter alia, with the treatment of political prisoners, the definition of political crimes, the right of return of exiled ANC members, etc.

the opportunity to make to Stockholm this year, where I met with your Foreign Minister, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, and the other Nordic Foreign Ministers. I have made sure that a visit to Denmark is part of my future travel plans."

Mandela spoke calmly and deliberately, with no superfluous words, like a father talking to his half-grown children. A style I had witnessed during TV broadcasts after his release in February.

Mandela had put his big hands on the table and looked alternately at both of us.

"The ANC is bound to find a negotiated solution. At the same time, we must recognise that the negotiation process is under threat, continued violence could derail it. We are very concerned about the role of the police in the violence. Let me give you a concrete example from recent months: the ANC had provided documented information to three different police agencies in good time about the preparation for acts of violence in a certain "township" near Johannesburg. The police forces had done nothing but passively watch as 30 people were killed and even more injured in a single clash. It is events like these that make me face increasing calls for rearmament within the ANC's own ranks."

Mandela cleared his throat and continued in a more serious voice:

"It is quite clear that President de Klerk does not have control over parts of the security forces. I can understand that - especially in this transitional period. But I am deeply disappointed that, despite my repeated requests, de Klerk has not kept me regularly, and willingly in confidence, informed of these problems and consulted us on solutions. A curfew is imposed, and the police are allowed to use armoured personnel carriers equipped with machine guns, the dreaded "casspiers" of which you have probably seen pictures. The government is pursuing an iron-fist policy. And it is doing so without prior consultation with us."

Mandela was clearly concerned by de Klerk's lack of confidence in him, with whom he had otherwise built up a confidential relationship over the past year through their negotiations. He was also disappointed by the government's position on issues relating to the repatriation of exiled South Africans.

It was clear after that conversation that the negotiating process had not even got off the ground and that it was therefore far too early to talk of the conditions for lifting economic sanctions being met. The most one could say, as Winston Churchill said in November 1942, is: *"Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."*

Buller and I drove thoughtfully home to Pretoria after this brief but intense meeting. We were both touched by Mandela's concern about the rising violence, but at the same time impressed by his composure and self-restraint. Having been a government prisoner for 27 years, 18 of them in the notorious Robben Island prison on a small island off Cape Town, he had reason enough for anger, we thought. Instead, this slender 72-year-old exuded an irrepressible willpower coupled with charisma and vitality. In Buller's view, he also seemed to have got better looking with age.[25]It was after that meeting that the idea of doing something special to assist South African authorities in combating and preferably preventing, destructive violence began to germinate. The violence threatened to sabotage the whole negotiation process. An idea which later found expression in a Danish proposal to offer South Africa concrete European assistance to the South African police authorities in the form of the

25 A few months later, in Cape Town, I met a doctor from the Pan African Congress, who had been following the prisoners on Robben Island. I asked him how Mandela and many of his fellow prisoners had managed to endure their imprisonment on the island and had now returned to society apparently in very good physical shape. He replied - confidentially - that in his view it was probably due to a combination of physical labour in the quarry and the prison's simple fat-free diet, supplemented by the fish they could catch themselves and the vegetables they were allowed to grow in their own kitchen gardens. In his autobiography, Mandela, who himself became an avid gardener during his prison terms, writes: "A garden is one of the few things in prison over which you had control.....It gave a sense of freedom to be able to tend this piece of land".

deployment of police experts from EC Member States and support for judicial reform, which I discuss further in Chapters XII, XV and XVI.

Chapter VI

The Other Side

It soon became clear that "contacts", the keyword in the instructions for the Embassy's work, could not be limited to people from the circles with which the Danish side already had good relations.

Shortly after I arrived in Pretoria, director Henning Carlsen's 1962 film *Dilemma* invariably came to mind. The film is a feature based on Nadine Gordimer's 1958 novel "A World of Strangers". It is about a young Englishman who comes to South Africa to work for a publishing company.[26] Here he makes both white and black friends, but the apartheid system makes it impossible for him to get along with both and he is forced to take a stand. During a meeting with the director around 2010, he reminded me that the film had been shot secretly in South Africa.

Henning Carlsen had an agreement with the big Danish company Danfoss that he could tell the authorities in South Africa and in Denmark that he was producing a film for Danfoss. The footage had to be smuggled out of South Africa.

Without comparison, I also felt in a dilemma, but I could not afford to take a stand. As a diplomat, I was accredited to South Africa - which meant being accredited to a government hitherto based on a party and a policy that Denmark had opposed by the strongest means, short of war. The Danish sympathy and cash support was clearly for all those circles in South Africa who were trying to fight the apartheid policy of the government, especially the broad political freedom movement ANC. The government in Pretoria warmly welcomed the fact that Denmark would now

26 In the 1996 documentary "Reunion with Johannesburg", the director recounts his visit to South Africa, where he meets his co-stars 30 years later. Jørgen E. Petersen has told me that Henning Carlsen, together with Niels Munch Plum and JEP himself, was one of the founders of the Danish Anti-Apartheid Committee in the early 1960s.

open an embassy. Some in the ANC and like-minded circles were concerned that Denmark had sent an ambassador so early in a negotiating process that had barely begun.

However, the only opponent of apartheid in South Africa who expressed such misgivings to me was Archbishop Desmond Tutu,[27] when I first met him in Cape Town in early 1991. I had been greeted with a big smile and open arms by this colourful man of the cloth and unrepentant human rights activist as I drove up to the front door of his official residence.

"Why has Denmark sent an ambassador already? Isn't it a little early for you to be here?" Desmond Tutu asked after we had sat down with a cup of tea. But it only took a few minutes; I told him about the great importance attached by the Danish side to the release of Nelson Mandela, the legalisation of the ANC, among others, and the opening of negotiations with the government. Unlike even our Nordic partners, we had not had diplomats posted in South Africa since the mid-1980s. From the Danish side, there was a need to follow developments as closely as possible and on the spot in order to know how best to support the negotiating process.

The Archbishop nodded, expressing full understanding of this need. And then we could move on to discuss developments in the country and what Denmark could do. I left the Archbishop's residence in high spirits. I got to know Desmond Tutu as an always friendly and unpretentious man, an extremely well-informed and analytically sharp interlocutor, who was also greatly appreciated by visiting Danish politicians. He could often enrich a conversation about developments in South Africa by bringing up alternative and

27 The world-renowned human rights activist Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu (born 7 October 1931 in Klerksdorp, Transvaal) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his non-violent opposition to Apartheid. In 1986 he was appointed South Africa's first black archbishop and thus head of South Africa's Anglican denomination. Together with Nelson Mandela, he founded the Truth and Reconciliation Commission after the 1994 elections, see end of Chapter XVI. The reason why Desmond Tutu in particular raised questions about the advisability of sending a Danish ambassador at this time was probably that it was the archbishop who in 1988 had made an appeal to all Western countries to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa altogether.

more controversial points of view. But above all, he was a warm and cheerful person, whom you wanted to hug when you said goodbye after a meeting with him. I felt that way every time I met him since.[28]

Danish South Africa policy had entered a new phase, and it was no longer appropriate to support the victims of apartheid policy and oppose the government in Pretoria alone. It was now a question of supporting a negotiation process and thus of having contact with all the parties in that process.

A negotiating process whose success was not only crucial to the lifting of sanctions, but above all crucial to South Africa's future as a democratic nation.

It was therefore now also necessary to talk to the other party in the negotiating process, the hitherto international pariah: representatives of the South African government.

28 It is only in connection with the work on this book that I see, by delving into the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that the opening of a Danish embassy had met with criticism from several circles, including the UN's anti- apartheid committee. In retrospect, I am very relieved that the Foreign Ministry, which otherwise kept me informed of everything relevant to the embassy's work, did not inform me of this criticism. It would only have created a sense of insecurity for us, who were now establishing a contact point in South Africa.

Chapter VII

The First Meeting with President Frederik Willem de Klerk

An ambassador is accredited to the head of state of the recipient state. In South Africa, President Frederik Willem de Klerk was both head of state and head of government. Official contact is established once the Ambassador has presented his credentials to the Head of State. [29]

With Christian VII's appointment on 25 March 1781 of Henrico de Wet as Danish consul in Cape Town, Denmark became the first country in the world to establish a representation in South Africa. With the dispatch of its first ever ambassador to South Africa, Denmark also became the country which, in response to the release of Nelson Mandela, sent the first representative of the "new" generation of ambassadors. [30]

The ceremony itself on 6 November 1990 was very short and informal. Buller was present because, as a novelty, President de Klerk had also invited the Ambassador's spouse to take part in the conversation that followed, together with Mrs Marike de Klerk. The ceremony and conversation took place at the President's official residence on the outskirts of Pretoria. The four of us were joined by the South African Foreign Ministry's top official, Director-General Neil van Heerden.

I remember we were a bit uneasy when we got out of the car that had pulled up in front of the entrance. We'd never been in

29 Letters of credence refer to the letter of authority issued by the Head of State of the sending State, which an Ambassador hands over to the Head of State of the receiving State upon arrival. The letter contains a recommendation of the ambassador and a request to provide him with assistance in carrying out the task of ambassador.

30 Until 1986 Denmark had been represented by diplomats of the highest rank, but like Norway "alone" with the rank of Consul-General stationed in Johannesburg. Sweden had locked itself into an old, now discontinued diplomatic rank of "envoy".

anything like this before, because it was my first ambassadorship, and in a country whose racist policies we'd actively opposed for so many years. And we were to meet the man who had replaced P.W. Botha the year before. Botha, also known as the "Great Crocodile" for his stubborn insistence on apartheid until his death in 2006.[31] At the opening of the South African Parliament on 2 February 1990, President de Klerk made a speech announcing, among other things, the release of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, and the lifting of the ban on the ANC and other anti-apartheid organisations. Was this the Rubicon speech that his predecessor had refused to deliver in 1985? Was it a genuine change of heart?

After some friendly introductory remarks, de Klerk moved on to mention the trade and financial embargo: *"In my best judgment, the economic sanctions are now working against their intention. South Africa's economy needs all the support it can get right now. To reject the call for lifting sanctions in the present situation would be to support the right. I am not thinking so much of the Conservative Party, but of right-wing forces within my own National Party."*

The President went on to point out that there had already been criticism that he had made too many concessions without getting any real quid pro quo. He needed to be able to show concrete results at this stage. He therefore looked forward to the European decisions in December.

According to the President, Denmark was in a special situation, with one leg in the EC and the other in the Nordic countries. He had now visited 10 EC countries, but not yet Denmark. He hoped that Denmark would help to make the right decisions.

I noted that the Danish government was of course following developments in South Africa very closely. It should not be

31 Although P.W Botha, as the first South African head of government, had softened apartheid policy somewhat and entered into informal talks with Nelson Mandela as early as 1985, he refused to cross the Rubicon: release him and abolish the apartheid system. On the contrary, the system became more brutal in practice in the last half of the 1980s.

forgotten that apartheid was an international issue which had always preoccupied not only the parties in Parliament but also the Danish electorate. It took a lot to change deeply rooted attitudes.

The South African Consul General Loubser in Copenhagen had probably kept the government regularly informed of the Danish position on the issue, important to de Klerk, of the rapid lifting of economic sanctions. It was important for me to explain why a majority in Parliament was still sceptical as to whether the process which now seemed to be underway was sufficiently profound and irreversible. Previous attempts to abolish apartheid had, after all, failed,

Asked about the prospects for the negotiating process, especially after the ANC conference had been postponed for six months, de Klerk replied that he was ready to negotiate at any time.

However, he had doubts about the readiness of the ANC and was generally concerned about the ANC's negotiating capacity. He did not agree with my assessment and that of other Western colleagues that a postponement would give Mandela a freer hand to negotiate for another six months. The government had repeatedly had difficulty in getting the ANC to respond to the government's proposals.

It was unlikely that substantive negotiations would begin until the ANC had put its organisation in order and formulated a negotiating mandate.

And then the tone sharpened. With a clear address to Denmark, de Klerk expressed his astonishment that an organisation like the ANC, so closely allied, indeed in the league, with South Africa's Marxist Communist Party, could be supported, especially at a time when Communist Parties throughout the world were in decline. Moreover, the ANC would sit at the negotiating table and not allow others to join it. In de Klerk's view, it was important to involve all parties and representative movements, including Inkatha, in the negotiating process.

Without commenting on his statement, I went on to ask about the issues which the President thought would pose the

greatest difficulties in the further process. De Klerk found that the most difficult of all problems was the ANC's demand for a Constituent Assembly. South Africa was not comparable to Namibia in this respect.[28] The government in Pretoria had been legally elected in accordance with the existing constitution. Its legitimacy and functioning could not be challenged. This would be the consequence if a Constituent Assembly was established.

Among other difficult issues, the President highlighted the question of whether South Africa should be a unitary state or a kind of federal state. There was also the question of the protection of minorities and the question of checks and balances, including the ability of the courts to control the executive and legislature. De Klerk already seemed to envisage a future democratic South Africa in which the former ruling class, the 5 million whites, would in future be a minority under a non-white majority. At the same time, it perhaps revealed that he still envisioned a democratic South Africa where the population remained politically divided by skin colour.

I would very much have liked to have discussed the violence that was increasingly undermining the negotiating process. The widespread violence could become a decisive threat to the abolition of apartheid and to a peaceful transition to democratic rule. It would also prove to be an area where we in Denmark, particularly together with other EU countries, could help stem the tide of violence. Unfortunately, that was not possible in this case.

During a social event that evening, I had the opportunity to express my surprise at the President's negative comments about the ANC's alliance with the Communist Party in a conversation with Director-General Neil van Heerden. It seemed to me that the President had discredited the government's main negotiating partner. Van Heerden admitted that he himself had been greatly puzzled by the President's presentation.[32]

32 During the First World War, Namibia, then known as a German colony under the name South West Africa, was conquered by South Africa, then part of the British Empire. After the end of the World War in 1918, the League of Nations handed over the administration of this German colony to South Africa as a mandated territory under the League of Nations' guardianship system. After the end

One possible explanation was that de Klerk wanted to highlight the values he himself - and other Western leaders - stood for, in contrast to the outdated values the South African Communist Party maintained, even though virtually all other Communist parties had abandoned them or were on the way to doing so.

I added that both Thabo Mbeki, the ANC's Foreign Minister, and Jay Naidoo, COSATU's[33] Secretary-General, had confirmed to me that the ANC movement faced an inevitable separation from the Communist Party, an inevitable organisational separation as the ANC became a proper political party.

It was not acceptable to take notes during conversations with the President, let alone on a more solemn occasion such as this. From Danish colleagues in other capitals, I had the impression that the accreditation conversation with the Head of State was usually limited to an exchange of pleasantries, culminating in mutual affirmation of the traditionally good relations between Denmark and the country in question. For obvious reasons, this recipe was not entirely applicable to South Africa. On the other hand, President de Klerk had not hesitated to take the opportunity to express his views on political developments, not least the negotiating process that was about to get underway. This also

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of the Second World War, the successor to the League of Nations, the United Nations (UN), refused to accept a proposal from South Africa for permission to annex South West Africa. The South African government refused to recognise the authority of the UN and continued to administer South West Africa directly from Pretoria, including the imposition of apartheid in the country. In 1966, the so-called South African Border War broke out between the South African military and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) , which wanted independence for the South West African people. SWAPO enjoyed great international political sympathy and received military support from Angola and Cuba. In 1969, the UN Security Council declared South Africa's occupation of South West Africa illegal. However, the war lasted until March 1990, when South Africa gained independence under the name Namibia, with UN assistance.

33 COSATU, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, was and is South Africa's equivalent of the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). COSATU, together with the Communist Party, still form two of the three wings of the ANC, although the metalworkers' major union NUMSA left COSATU in 2013 to form a separate socialist party.

indicated that he considered Denmark's support to be important in the further process of abolishing apartheid.

Fortunately, afterwards Buller was able to help me recall details of the conversation for use in reporting to the Foreign Office.

It proved immensely helpful to me as a newly arrived diplomat with no predecessors in office that President de Klerk had departed from ceremonial tradition and allowed me to gain this substantial insight into the government's attitudes and thinking - straight from the horse's mouth. At the same time, I had the opportunity to explain the Danish position more sensitively. It was the first time in living memory that there had been direct, official Danish contact with the South African Head of State and Government.

I got the impression of President de Klerk as a very serious and sincere man. He came across as a realistic and far-sighted statesman who showed extraordinary courage in launching a revolutionary negotiating process with his Rubicon speech on 2 February 1990. At the same time, he was a party leader with the thankless task of telling his present electorate that the National Party would not win government in a forthcoming democratic election. That was the price of saving South Africa from the morass of decades of apartheid politics.

Chapter VIII

Meetings with Foreign Minister Pik Botha and Deputy Foreign Minister Leon Wessels

Two days later, during my first official meeting with the President's closest adviser, Foreign Minister Roelof Frederik, also known as Pik Botha,[34] I had the opportunity to ask him the same questions I had asked de Klerk. He was, of course, in line with his boss, but elaborated on the Government's positions in several areas.

Mr Botha was quite firm in his assessment of the outcome of the negotiations on the Constitution. There was no doubt that the result would be one that could also win Danish support.

The constitution would be inspired by recognised democratic constitutions, including those of Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and the United States. This was particularly true of the rules in these constitutions on the protection of linguistic and cultural minorities. The government was clear that South Africa's new constitution could not give rise to reasonable international accusations that the government had sneaked apartheid back through the back door. The National Party had "demonstrated its good will" by opening the party to all persons regardless of race.

Mr Botha took the opportunity to say that he had just attended a successful meeting of African leaders in Lusaka. There he had confirmed a clear impression of a growing African understanding that the process in South Africa was irreversible and that apartheid was on its way out.

I remember that we also talked about a recent by-election in Randburg, a suburb of Johannesburg, where the ruling

34 The somewhat unusual nickname by Danish standards is an abbreviation of 'pikkewyn', which means penguin in Afrikaans.

National Party had a secure constituency. The National Party had won clearly, but the Conservative Party had also increased its vote - albeit from a low base. In Botha's view, the extra votes could have come from National Party voters alone, expressing some dissatisfaction with the ruling party's line. Translated into national elections, the result could indicate a significant mandate gain for the Conservative Party - reason to be wary if the government and the National Party were to keep control of the process set in motion by President de Klerk.

But as Botha said with his usual wry smile, there would be no question of another white national election. There would only be a referendum on the draft new constitution. The President had promised to bring the outcome of the constitutional negotiations back to his electorate, and he would keep that promise.

On this point, Botha's prediction was correct, albeit much later than expected in November 1990, as discussed further in Chapter XII.

Conversation with my Swedish colleague.

The same day I met my Swedish colleague, Envoy Ingemar Stjernberg, who had presented his credentials the same day as me, and then had a meeting with the Foreign Minister. Our impressions of our interlocutors were broadly similar.

Botha had endeavoured to create the impression that the National Party government needed international support to counter criticism from the party's own sceptics. De Klerk had told Stjernberg that he would not ask Sweden to lift its embargo, but he had stressed his need to receive positive signals from the outside world.

It was not the trade embargo either, but rather the financial and banking sanctions that were being felt in South Africa, according to Botha. The same view was expressed by the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank, Christian Lodewyk Stals, when I met him a few weeks later.[35]

35 We wondered if the government could care less when trade sanctions were lifted. But on the one hand, this was probably not

Pik Botha had expressed to Ingemar Stjernberg his appreciation of the Swedish seminar held with representatives of the South African negotiating parties: "Economic Policy, Democracy and Social Welfare: the Swedish option", including in particular the Swedish defence of a market economy. I remember hearing that this seminar, together with a Canadian seminar on the same theme had made a considerable impression on, among others, Thabo Mbeki, who had hitherto advocated a more socialist, "dirigiste"[36] economic policy. De Klerk had also admitted to my Swedish colleague that he had probably underestimated the difficulties of getting the reform process underway. In particular, the modalities of the suspension of armed struggle posed difficult problems. The negotiating process would probably not be completed until the last minute before the end of de Klerk's term in 1994.

This assessment proved to be correct. Only in April 1994 could the first democratic elections be held.

The meeting with the Deputy Foreign Minister

Already in September, I had had a meeting with the young Deputy Foreign Minister Leon Wessels, who clearly represented a new generation of nationalist politicians.[37]

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the full truth - Danish coal imports alone had amounted to several hundred million kroner a year - and on the other, the government was mainly interested in the pat on the back, the positive political signal, that lifting the trade sanctions would send.

36 Dirigism is an economic doctrine in which the state plays a strong, controlling role as opposed to a merely regulatory or non-interventionist role in a capitalist market economy. Dirigist policies often include directional planning, state-directed investment, and the use of market instruments (taxes and subsidies) to incentivize market entities to meet state economic goals.

37 Leon Wessels belonged to the liberal wing of the National Party. His views and assessments proved to be accurate. In 1992 he became Minister of Housing and Labour. He did not, however, play any particular role in the negotiating process itself, but was undoubtedly a driving force on the internal lines of the ruling party in its efforts to make his colleagues and fellow party members realise not only the political but also the moral necessity of condemning apartheid. In 1999 he became a member of the new South African Human Rights Commission.

He was particularly known for offering a more profound apology for the crimes of the apartheid system. He had done so, among other things, at a recent conference in Oslo on the anatomy of hate.

According to Leon Wessels, a new integrated South Africa could not be created without understanding and dealing with the sins of the past. To the surprise of many, he had won very broad support for this view in his constituency, which was not otherwise known for progressive views. Leon Wessels felt convinced that a very significant majority of the white population was also committed to radical change. He was convinced that a peaceful negotiated settlement was possible, although it would take many years to overcome the effects of the apartheid system.

Later, during the hearings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission into the actions of the country's security forces under apartheid, Wessels admitted - "I don't think the common defence of 'I didn't know what was going on' can be used by me in this context, because in many respects I don't think I wanted to know."

Chapter IX

Reflections

After these initial meetings with some of the key players in the negotiating process, I asked myself why President de Klerk had taken the radical steps he did in February 1990. What did it imply and what were the driving forces influencing the development of the process it set in motion? What were the challenges and difficulties faced by the parties along the way in the not always mapped out process? Not only in relation to each other, but also on the internal lines, particularly within the government/National Party and the ANC?

An analysis of this was necessary in order for us from the embassy to give Copenhagen an accurate picture of a development which, from a narrow and more short-term Danish point of view, was of decisive importance for when the sanctions could be lifted, and in a longer and broader perspective determined Denmark's and all other countries' future cooperation with South Africa - hopefully under democratic rule.

At the time, I wrote down some personal notes based on conversations with various South Africans, which I first had the opportunity to compile for use in a lecture in Denmark in February 1995. My assessment from that time still stands, in my view:

> *"After President P.W. Botha had refused to cross the Rubicon in August 1985, it became clear to certain circles in the ruling National Party that not only was there no light at the end of the tunnel, but there appeared to be no tunnel. The authorities had been unable to put an end to the violence. Progressives in the National Party recognised that the government would probably have to bite the bullet and get into a negotiating position with the ANC. President Botha had already had secret contacts with the imprisoned Nelson Mandela.*
>
> *What many tend to overlook is that the reform process did not start with de Klerk. It had begun much earlier under*

President P.W. Botha, who began to dismantle so-called "petty apartheid", the ban on mixed marriages, racial segregation in buses and park benches. But Botha, the old crocodile, did not dare to go all the way when he delivered his Rubicon speech in 1985.

Even before that, it had been recognised right inside the National Party's think-tank, Broederbond, that apartheid was failing politically, socially and economically. Financial rather than trade sanctions were beginning to work. By the 1990s, the South African economy was slipping into its longest recession since the Boer War (1899-1902). International loans were becoming increasingly difficult to obtain.[38]

In addition, the ANC had succeeded in its international political campaign, an essential element in uniting international opposition to the apartheid regime.

A key event was the Perestroika process and finally the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The head of the South African Institute of Race Relations once said in 1991: "If Brezhnev had still been in power in Moscow, Mandela would still be in prison on Robben Island".

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact meant that the National Party government could no longer legitimise all its draconian measures against the alleged "total onslaught" from the communist world in general and from the communist-backed regimes in South Africa's neighbouring countries in particular.

An often overlooked but no less important factor regarding the timing of de Klerk's behaviour has been the age of Mandela and his close comrades-in-arms Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo. Initial confidential contacts with Mandela in the late 1980s had left senior government officials with the

38 In 1989, South Africa had a balance of payments deficit of USD 20 billion. Foreign exchange reserves were not large enough to play a role as a buffer and the deficit could not be covered by international borrowing. The door to the IMF was closed. South Africa was aiming for a Rand 5 billion surplus to finance expected capital exports.

impression of a principled but not dogmatic, indeed for some a surprisingly pragmatic ANC leader. A look at his age and that of his comrades-in-arms, and at the average age of the as yet unknown ANC cadres, could give Pretoria no other impression than that the alternative to Mandela was a succession of younger but far more radical ANC leaders. It was therefore a matter of exploiting the almost rational Mandela, who had come to be known while he was still in power.

It was therefore urgent to establish a negotiating position with Mandela…"[39]

A second main question increasingly emerged, demanding an answer that could also be understood by outsiders: why was it so difficult to get negotiations on a democratic South Africa underway and to establish a permanent negotiating scene?

Again, I resort to my analysis written down for my own use on my departure in September 1994:

"Both main actors, de Klerk and Mandela, found themselves in different kinds of dilemmas.

Mandela could not enter into real negotiations until the conditions laid down in various UN resolutions and Organisation of African Unity and Frontline documents had been met. One of the conditions that proved most difficult to meet was the release of political prisoners. On the other hand, he had to produce concrete results within a certain limited period, and these could only be achieved through negotiations.

One of the questions for Mandela was how to negotiate with a counterpart who was both a player and a judge. In the longer term, how would he deal with the issue of the armed struggle and the pressure from the left if no results were achieved? And the longer it dragged on, the stronger the pressure for results became. This was one of the main reasons why, when the Conference on a Democratic South Africa (CODESA II) (the second session of the negotiating forum that started as the Conference on a Democratic South Africa (CODESA I) on 20

39 Notes from a Rotary Lecture in February 1995.

December 1991) had broken down in the early summer of 1992, Mandela pressed de Klerk to agree on an election date of 27 April 1994.

For de Klerk, the dilemma was primarily that, for a long transitional period, he needed constant confirmation of the legitimacy, from the National Party's point of view, of negotiating with what had hitherto been regarded as a terrorist organisation.

Since he could not be sure that the rest of the National Party's electorate, let alone those even further to the right, were convinced of the need to negotiate with a so-called terrorist organisation like the ANC, it was necessary to act with great caution. De Klerk knew that for the National Party, the only possible outcome was a negotiated outcome that would in any case be worse than the status quo.

The main problem for de Klerk was that he had very little prospect of explaining the government's negotiating mandate, which in reality could only mean a reduction in the National Party's existing position of power. De Klerk was therefore very careful never to talk of surrender or relinquishment, but only of power-sharing. De Klerk's strategy, in any case, had to involve not just a dilemma but a paradox: he was forced to follow a course of negotiation which was in effect to dissolve the constitution and the regime which were the basis of the National Party's power. What organisation would be prepared to negotiate its own demise? Especially when, like de Klerk, it was clear that the majority of the National Party's electorate was unaware of how bad things were. For it was by an almost Münchhausian technique that it had been agreed, under the amending provisions of the existing constitution, to adopt a new transitional constitution which would in any event reduce the National Party from a majority party to one of several minority parties.

He began by launching the idea - too much criticism from his own side - that it was all about sharing power with the other communities.

He would go down in history as the statesman who actually gave up power in favour of the new democratically elected majority. So far, though, in a nifty national coalition government model.

There was another dilemma for de Klerk: Buthelezi, the leader of the Zulu-dominated Inkatha party, was the third, key player in the negotiating process.

Buthelezi initially occupied a highly advantageous position in the process. A position which he gradually researched. Buthelezi did not want a final, new constitution to be negotiated by a democratically elected constitutional assembly. He knew in advance that he would only constitute a small minority in a national election, but that he would have something close to a veto in an unofficial negotiating forum like the Conference on a Democratic South Africa CODESA."

And then there was another dilemma related to a burning issue in the South African debate: the question of guilt and legacy of apartheid. A dilemma that concerned not only white South Africa but also my diplomatic work in the country. The following example serves to illustrate it:

My Canadian colleague, Ambassador Christopher "Chris" Westdal, was invited in the summer of 1992 to give the keynote address at the graduation ceremony of a higher education institution in Port Elizabeth. In the speech he addressed the issue of responsibility for apartheid, the fact that not all white South Africans were guilty of this sin, and the need for a judicial settlement. The speech, which was reported in the press, prompted immediate sharp protest from the South African Embassy in Ottawa: the Canadian Ambassador's remarks could damage efforts to find a future solution and were unduly inflammatory and inappropriate for a diplomatic representative.

The Canadian Ambassador thought he had his authorities behind him, but was clearly told by Ottawa that Canada had no policy in this area and "the system would not tolerate repetition". Chris admitted to me that he might have used some strong

language.[40] He regretted if he had offended any groups in South Africa: "As an envoy of your country, you like to be liked by all those who were part of your circle, including the 'Afrikaners'[41]. But how can one avoid getting into the question of guilt and legacy of apartheid?"

I thought Chris had been brave and honest. I would not have dared to do what he did at that time; at least the timing would not have been the best. And could I be sure of support from Copenhagen? That he was eventually proved right was documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up after the 1994 elections, which I discuss in Chapter XVI.

Later, when I wrote to the head of the South Africa office, Torben Brylle, about this incident in connection with other dilemmas, I reminded him that we had also had experience in Copenhagen of the South African government being extremely approachable on this issue. The South African Consul-General, Mr Loubser, had complained in 1991 about a Danish newspaper commentary which had compared the apartheid system to the persecution of Jews under Nazism, an image which Mandela had used repeatedly in recent times. The Danish government deflected the complaint by referring to the freedom of the press in Denmark. The South African side did not pursue the matter further.

In my view, the Pretoria government's counter-reaction was not just a spontaneous Afrikaner reaction, but a deliberate policy. The Pretoria government was aware that by giving up of the legal apartheid system had entered a very vulnerable phase where it was necessary to limit the "warfare" to as few fronts as possible. Recognition of apartheid as a sin was another town in Russia, at least for de Klerk. All attempts to equate apartheid

40 "The sins of the father are indeed visited upon the sons. They will not soon be forgotten – certainly not in your lifetime – although they may be forgiven. Yet South Africans will live through a period in which you must sort out who should be punished, and how, for the sins of apartheid (...) Save those who put their lives on the line in the struggle against it, all South Africans were complicit to an extent in the apartheid system".

41 Afrikaanere er hvide indbyggere i Den Sydafrikanske Republik og de taler sproget afrikaans,et vestgermansk sprog udviklet fra det nederlandske, der blev talt af bønder i 1600-tallets Nederland.

with Nazism had to be cracked down on in the hope that Western countries would be content to draw the line here. I continued in my letter to Torben Brylle:

"The only government member who has so far asked for forgiveness is Minister of Labour Leon Wessels, among others in connection with the conference on "The Anatomy of Hate" in Oslo in 1990. It is reported that Wessels, when explaining his position to the President, was met with the following reaction from de Klerk, who is otherwise a very active member of a very serious branch of the Dutch Reformed Church called the "doppers": "My father would never have asked for forgiveness for apartheid, nor would my grandfather. So don't expect me to do it."

I thought at the time that the President was scared to death to make any admission that apartheid was a sin[42]. He would thereby risk undermining the legitimacy of his government, especially at that stage when, after all, he had gained the ANC's understanding to respect a constitutional continuity: that the changes would have to be made formally under the existing constitutional provisions.

42 The word "sin" was often used instead of, for example, "crime", probably because the strongly religious Afrikaners saw it in a religious, historical context. In 1982, the Dutch Reformed Church, which supported apartheid, was expelled by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, which declared apartheid to be a sin. The Afrikaners probably took this more seriously than the 1973 UN General Assembly resolution approving the text of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (ICSPA): "As such, apartheid had to be declared a crime against humanity…". In 1974, South Africa was suspended from the UN General Assembly.

PART 2

The Birth of Dialogue – A Long Haul

In the turbulent waters between Nelson Mandela's release and the start of negotiations on a new South Africa, the international community tried to push the process with both a stick and a carrot. It soon became clear to me that one of our most important tools was to ensure comprehensive dialogue with the many invited guests from Denmark, as well as South African re-visits by Nelson Mandela and others. In supporting the process, we were well assisted by unique access to local support for initiatives large and small that would remove any sticking points in the process.

It was during this period that the ANC, through dialogue with the outside world, moved in earnest from a freedom movement rooted in socialism to a future governing party.

Chapter X

EC Negative and Positive Measures towards South Africa

In 1985, EC Foreign Ministers adopted a series of negative and positive measures against South Africa. The negative or restrictive measures concerned the export and import of arms and para-military equipment and the cessation of exports of oil and sensitive equipment to South Africa. In addition, there were several bans on military cooperation, calls for an end to cultural and scientific cooperation, a freeze on sporting contacts, security cooperation and nuclear cooperation.

Implementation of these largely political measures required only national implementation by Member States, no formal Community acts were necessary.

In addition, the EC Council of Ministers decided in 1986 to introduce a ban on imports into the EC of certain iron and steel products, gold coins (Kruger Rands) and, in particular, a ban on new investments (FDI - Foreign Direct Investments). The European Council decided on 15 December 1990 to lift these restrictions as soon as the South African government had repealed two important apartheid laws: the Group Areas Act and the Land Acts.

In April 1991, the European Commission proposed the lifting of these import bans, as the conditions should now have been met.

On the Danish side, however, a majority in Parliament forced the Government to place a hold on the adoption of this proposal. The majority, led by the Radicals, did not consider that the democratisation process was sufficiently advanced to be irreversible. The proposal required agreement in the EC Council of Ministers and such a Danish reservation therefore meant that the Council could not adopt it.

In November 1991, the Danish Foreign Ministry informed the embassy that it had received a letter from the British Embassy in Copenhagen claiming that the Danish reservation had the direct consequence of making black African workers in the iron and steel industry redundant. I had not heard of this from any other quarter. I was under the impression that Foreign Minister Botha always made a big fuss about the fact that trade sanctions had had no effect at all on the country's economy.

I raised the issue at an EC lunch on 4 December 1991, attended by the chief executive of the large conglomerate Anglo-Americans, Ogilvie Thompson. He said, almost casually in an aside, that some of the company's steelworks had had to cut jobs because of the Danes. He could not give any figures and when I asked if he had taken up the matter with the ANC - it was crucial, after all, to convince Mandela of the negative effects of continued sanctions - he had no answer.

During my earlier visit to one of South Africa's largest steel mills, ISCOR, I got the clear impression that the lifting of EC sanctions would not lead to the immediate sale of ISCOR's steel plate products on the European market. Prices on the world market were too low for that. It also emerged that ISCOR could well manage with a smaller workforce, but management did not dare to resort to large-scale redundancies in the present situation. It was not, therefore, economic sanctions that determined ISCOR's recruitment and redundancy policy.

It was only after the ANC and the de Klerk government had agreed in December 1991 to convene a multi-party conference to negotiate a democratic constitution that the Danish minority government obtained the necessary support to lift the waiting period. This happened on 10 January 1992. On 23 January, the EC lifted the import bans.

Both the UN Anti-Apartheid Committee and the ANC criticised this premature step: the negotiating process had not yet reached a stage where it could be called irreversible. In their view, this process could continue to be shipwrecked. However, in its critical statement of 13 February 1992, the ANC expressed great appreciation and sympathy for the Danish reservation:

"...We take this opportunity to place on record our appreciation for the position adopted by the Danish Parliament in ensuring the maintenance of these sanctions during 1991. They played a positive role in creating the conditions for the convening of CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa)"

The negative political measures had been gradually lifted in line with political developments in South Africa, initially the ban on cooperation in the cultural and, in particular, sports field. I will never forget the day when, after a long period of exclusion from international sporting events, a South African team played its first cricket match against Australia in early 1992. The Australian Ambassador had invited a large number of colleagues from the diplomatic corps and South African friends to watch the match on TV. I am not a big cricket fan, but that match was watched with excitement by everyone, including visitors from countries where cricket is not so widely played. South Africa surprised and won. That victory was celebrated with Australian beer by my smiling Australian colleague who, despite the defeat, was delighted that Australia had been able to welcome the prodigal South African son back into the good cricketing society in this way. The victory gave a very positive boost to the mood throughout South Africa, not least among many white voters who otherwise viewed de Klerk's reform process with great scepticism, even among circles not particularly interested in cricket. Cricket, like rugby, was still a predominantly white sport. The victory over Australia helped to convince sceptics that the process could lead to something good after all. The match marked the beginning of South Africa's return to international sport after the EU and Commonwealth countries lifted sanctions in the second half of 1991.

In his address to the UN Anti-Apartheid Committee on 24 September 1993 in New York, Mandela referred to the fact that the multi-party negotiating process at Kempton Park had led to a decision to establish a Transitional Executive Council and that he was therefore in a position to call for the lifting of all remaining economic sanctions against South Africa and to invite all countries concerned to open diplomatic missions so that they

could better assist the South African people in achieving their common goals.

On 19 October 1993, EC Ambassadors in South Africa agreed that the ban on new civil nuclear cooperation could be lifted without further delay and that the ban on military cooperation could also be lifted if, as the Danish side had insisted, cooperation would serve to further the democratisation process. The ban on exports of sensitive equipment for police purposes should only be lifted after the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council and the military arms embargo after the election of a democratic regime.

The EC Council of Ministers followed the recommendation and also decided to launch work on a so-called "Joint Action" on future relations with South Africa (including trade and aid) as well as a rapid implementation of EC assistance to the elections to be held on 27 April 1994.

EC positive measures for South Africa

In 1985, EC Foreign Ministers agreed to launch an EC assistance programme for the victims of apartheid and to counter human rights abuses by the South African government.

These positive measures came to include assistance programmes for non-violent anti-apartheid organisations, support for the education of the non-white population and the intensification of contacts in the political, cultural, scientific, trade union, business and sporting sectors. This programme fitted in very well with the mandate given to me by the Danish Foreign Minister. The embassy quickly established a close working relationship, in particular with the local representative of the European Commission during the first years, the sympathetic and dynamic Tim Sheehy.

Over the years, the Commission placed increasing emphasis on development-oriented efforts, an alignment that was also reflected in the Danish apartheid allocation for transitional assistance. By 1992, aid had been concentrated on education and training and agricultural development, and the budget was

increased from ECU 35 million (then euros) in 1986 to ECU 70 million in 1992 and ECU 90 million in 1993.

The EC programme - like the Danish one - was channelled through NGOs, in particular the South African umbrella organisation Kagiso Trust. The Trust was known to be ANC-oriented, and the heavy concentration of EC funds had been criticised by other black organisations, such as the Pan Africanist Congress, the Azanian People's Organisation and the Inkatha Freedom Party, which felt they were not receiving equivalent support.

In 1992, steps were taken to reorganise the division of labour between EC country representatives in Brussels and those in Pretoria. The Brussels group was to concentrate on the guidelines for planning the programme, leaving the detailed assessment of individual proposals to the Pretoria group. The Danish side had worked to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the Member States and the Commission in this area, and Peter Lysholt, with his extensive experience of assistance, was to play a central role in the further work.

These efforts were reinforced after the Commission's first major visit to South Africa in early 1993 to plan the programme for future cooperation with South Africa. The delegation was led by my old colleagues from my time as Legal Adviser to the General Secretariat of the EC Council of Ministers in the 1970s, the Italian Gianluigi Giola and the Danish Head of Unit in the European Commission, Steffen Stenberg.

The recently adopted Maastricht Treaty brought the Community closer to the purely foreign policy, informal cooperation between the EC countries (European Political Cooperation - EPC). This cooperation operated on the classic intergovernmental model and had so far been completely excluded from the special Community model, in which the Commission plays a central role by virtue of its exclusive right to submit proposals to the Council of Ministers.[43] The forthcoming

43 Until the Maastricht Treaty, EPS meetings were held in the headquarters of the six-monthly rotating Presidencies, while Community meetings were held in Brussels. Some may recall

"Joint Action for South Africa" was one of the first of its kind and required close cooperation between the two branches, the importance of which we had stressed on the Embassy's side.

In this respect, it was a radical innovation in the overall cooperation between the Community countries, marked, among other things, by the new name: The European Union, formally from the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty on 1 November 1993.

The "Joint Action for South Africa" thus became a first test case for the new EU rules on concluding agreements with third countries. These rules made it possible to better integrate and coordinate the many different interests which would naturally form part of a future partnership between the EU and a country as important as South Africa. And it was a test case in which we in Denmark had a unique opportunity to shape the content.

Because of our long-standing engagement with and contacts in South Africa, Denmark played a key role in the formulation of the paper on "Joint Action for South Africa within the EU's new Common Foreign and Security Policy" presented by the EC Presidency, which was held by Denmark in the first half of 1993. The first bullets had been cast by Tim Sheehy and Peter Lysholt in close collaboration with colleagues in the Danish Foreign Ministry. This also made it possible to ensure harmony between the EU's future cooperation with South Africa and the plans we had from the Danish side for future transitional assistance to a democratic South Africa.

After discussions with Peter Lysholt and myself, Steffen Stenberg gradually overcame his misgivings about the risk of the Commission losing influence in relation to European Political Cooperation, and on 10 March 1993 the first joint meeting between the Brussels Working Group on Development Aid and the European Political Cooperation EPS was held.

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how, under Danish EC Presidencies, EC Foreign Ministers first met in Copenhagen to discuss foreign policy issues, including common positions on apartheid and Middle East issues, but flew to Brussels as soon as they reached the Community issues on the agenda, even if they were related, e.g. EC assistance to victims of apartheid policy.

The programme, adopted at the EC Development Council on 25 May 1993, had as its main objectives:

- to support peace structures and peace initiatives,
- to support democracy, including support for voter education and other preparations for the first democratic elections to mark the end of successful negotiations, i.e. the elections held on 26-28 April 1994.
- to support institutional and capacity-building and policy-formulation to promote consensus on development objectives and strengthen capacity to implement social programmes,
- to initiate longer-term development tasks in a few selected sectors of particular importance to vulnerable sections of the population rural areas, housing, infrastructure, gender equality, environmental protection, sustainable development, micro-enterprises and job creation.

From 1993-95, another Dane, the former Secretary General of the Danish NGO Ibis (now Oxfam Ibis), Finn Skadkær Pedersen, served as Head of the European Commission's Special Programme for South Africa during a particularly important period in the establishment of the new relationship with South Africa.

In my view, Denmark had a disproportionate influence on the formulation of the framework and content of the EU's future cooperation with South Africa, particularly because there were able Danes in important positions both in South Africa, in Brussels and in Copenhagen.

The work on the EC aid programme took place at the same time as preparations were being made by Denmark to extend our national aid and to establish a special transitional programme in agreement directly with the ANC, as described in Chapters IV and XX.

Chapter XI

Visits by Danish Parliamentarians and the Multi-Party Conference

From Copenhagen we knew at the embassy that there were continuing difficulties in obtaining the necessary agreement in Parliament on a road map setting out the modalities for lifting sanctions. The goal was agreed: the process towards the abolition of apartheid policy had to be profound and irreversible. But what would this mean in practice?

One of our main tasks was to report regularly from the embassy on developments in the democratisation process in South Africa.

The ANC had wanted the sanctions and had expressed wishes as to how long they should remain in force in order to maintain pressure on the government. Their original wish was for the sanctions to remain in place until a transitional government was established, but what would that mean? And the wishes changed somewhat as time went on, without getting much closer to a transitional government. And no Western country had said that it would defer exclusively to the ANC on that issue.

The ANC was also in a dilemma. On the one hand they wanted sanctions and pressure to be maintained, but on the other the leadership could also see that the economy would not get up to speed and end the recession until economic sanctions in particular were lifted.

I was therefore not surprised to hear from Copenhagen that a delegation of representatives of the main parties wished to visit South Africa to see for themselves how things were developing. I did not see this as a disavowal of the Embassy's work, but rather as an important contribution to the political deliberations in Copenhagen and as a welcome expression of the seriousness with

which the Danish side took the issue of the timing of the lifting of sanctions.

From 20 to 28 September 1991, a Danish parliamentary delegation consisting of Helle Degn (Social Democratic party S), Jørgen Estrup (Social Liberal party RV), Agnete Laustsen (Conservative party KF), Ebba Strange (Socialist party SF) and Jørgen Winther (Liberal party V) visited South Africa. For all of them, it was a first visit, and one of the first by parliamentarians from a Western country[44]. It was a crucial visit in many ways, and demonstrated the benefits of good interaction between the political level and the Foreign Ministry, especially during critical periods of transition locally. It sent a signal that South Africa was in focus also at the political level in Denmark. In South Africa, it also provided an opportunity to have high-level meetings and thus gain direct insight into the political deliberations on the way forward among the key political players. Meetings were successfully held with a delegation of ANC leaders, including ANC President-elect Nelson Mandela, ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa and Thabo Mbeki, as well as meetings with Foreign Minister Pik Botha, President F.W de Klerk and a wide range of civil society organisations.

Nelson Mandela was elected President of the ANC during the ANC National Conference in July, replacing the ageing and ailing Oliver Tambo.

We had arranged meetings with a wide circle of representatives of the various parties to the negotiating process, in particular the ANC and the government.

The timing turned out not to be so bad. Barely a week before, on 14 September, a National Peace Accord had been reached between the ANC, the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party. The Pan Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's

44 Jørgen Estrup has stated that the year before a Danish parliamentary delegation had visited the Danish UN contingent in Namibia, but had been in transit in South Africa. Here, official contacts with the South African authorities were carefully avoided - in accordance with Danish sanctions rules - even though great efforts were made by South African officials on the return journey at Jo-burg airport.

Organisation sympathised, but did not sign it. The agreement provided for the establishment of regional and local peace committees and the so-called Goldstone Commission, headed by Judge Goldstone, to investigate the causes of the violence (see box in Chapter XVI).

The agreement, which at the time of the visit had not yet been put into practice, was considered by the diplomatic corps to be a useful peace and confidence-building measure. Like the agreement with the UN refugee agency UNHCR, it could be seen as an attempt to break with the government's principle of full sovereignty of state authorities[45]. The government initially believed that the state authorities could handle all the tasks themselves, but soon realised that it was necessary to engage local resources to prevent violence from undermining the peace process and an international organisation to assist with the reintegration of South Africans in exile.

On 23 September, the Danish delegation, accompanied by Christian Balslev Olesen from DanChurchAid and Barry Smith from Interfund, met with Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Cyril Ramaphosa, as well as ANC Central Committee and National Executive Committee member Sydney Mufamadi. I still remember the warm welcome the delegation received at ANC headquarters.

During the almost two-hour meeting, the floor was mainly held by Thabo Mbeki. He opened with the words:

> *"The position of the Danish Parliament on the sanctions issue is very much appreciated by the ANC. After talks with the Luxembourg President of the EC Council of Ministers in Brussels last spring, I had the impression that the decision to lift EC economic sanctions could be postponed. Unfortunately, this had not proved possible. That is why the ANC has appreciated so much the position of the Danish Parliament."*

45 After long and difficult negotiations, the South African government had reached an agreement with the UNHCR on 2 September 1991. The agreement provided for the establishment of an office in South Africa to assist and facilitate the process of voluntary repatriation and reintegration of South African refugees and political exiles who choose to return as civilians.

He went on to stress that it was still the ANC's objective to reach a negotiated settlement. It was therefore necessary to create a good climate for negotiations. In this respect, it was necessary to remove parts of the existing security legislation. Another crucial demand was the release of political prisoners; there were still political prisoners in South African jails and in Bophuthatswana. Of the 7000 exiles who had applied for amnesty, only 50 applications remained to be granted.

Political prisoners

In the Pretoria Agreement of 6 August 1990, the South African Government and the ANC had based themselves on the so-called Nørgaard principles, which should be used as criteria for determining whether a given prisoner was a political prisoner. The Danish professor Carl Aage Nørgaard had been instrumental in solving the political prisoner problem at the time of Namibia's independence in 1990.

According to the principles he had devised, the determination of whether a person was a political offender should take into account:

- the motive of the offender (personal or political),
- the circumstances in which the crime was committed,
- the political purpose of the act (such as rebellion against a government), and the crime and
- its object, i.e. whether it was directed against a government representative, public property or private citizens and their property,
- the relationship between the crime and the political objective.

The disagreement between the South African government and the ANC was over the practical application of these principles and, consequently, over the counting of political prisoners, which varied from a few hundred up to several thousand.

By June 1991, more than 1000 political prisoners had been released and, under the agreement of 30 July 1991, the government and the ANC agreed to leave any remaining cases of doubt to be decided by working parties set up for the purpose. At the same time the ANC announced that the issue of the release of the political prisoners was no longer considered by the ANC as an obstacle to participation in the negotiation process. By December 1991, the ANC considered that virtually all remaining cases of political prisoners had been resolved.

The Danish side had offered to allow Professor Nørgaard to act as an impartial referee in deciding which prisoners are political. However, this did not happen until the parties themselves had resolved the problem.

Professor Nørgaard was, however, invited to assist in the similar process of defining and applying criteria for political crimes initiated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1994, see Chapter XVI.

The South African government claimed that some of the political prisoners had murder on their consciences. This precluded the person from being considered a political prisoner, and thus also precluded the prisoner from receiving amnesty. Mandela interjected that the government was not consistent: among the 50,000 prisoners released in its general pardon of non-political prisoners were several murderers.

The Nørgaard Principles (see Block on Political Prisoners above), which had been successfully applied during the Namibian peace process and which the government and the ANC had agreed to use, did not *a priori* preclude a killing from being considered a political crime eligible for amnesty. I am convinced that Mandela was thereby trying to motivate the Danish delegation to raise the issue during the meeting with government representatives that he knew the delegation would have later in the visit. I mentioned this after that meeting to the members of the delegation, who agreed that it was appropriate to raise it in Pretoria.

Another significant problem was the large number of exiles who were now returning home. The UNHCR could only be expected to become operational towards the end of the year and it would therefore be a major logistical challenge to help them get home.

Speaking about the violence, Mbeki said it was clear that the violence was state-sponsored. At least in the sense that state authorities could have prevented the violence from spreading. Getting the violence under control was crucial to creating a climate conducive to negotiations.

After the Guardian, among others, had documented in July 1991 how the South African security forces secretly provided financial support to Inkatha ("Inkatha-Gate"), the ANC Executive Committee had to conclude that only a transitional national government would be able to effectively control the violence.

It was quite clear to me that Mbeki wanted to give the Danish parliamentarians a more realistic picture of the situation than the impression they could get from the South African or international press. Mbeki's statements reinforced my conviction that the embassy should pursue the idea of providing international support to South Africa to bring the violence under control.

On sanctions, Mbeki was a little more blunt.

To understand Mbeki's position on the issue of sanctions, it is necessary to look at the ANC's general foreign policy. This can be found in the box below.

ANC foreign policy: the sanctions issue

Mbeki himself had advocated a phased lifting of sanctions at the ANC Consultative Conference in December 1990, but had been voted down by a majority of the ANC leadership.

The ensuing period, however, demonstrated the need to adopt a more pragmatic stance on the sanctions issue.

In the spring of 1991, the EC had sought to lift certain sanctions despite Mandela's threats to "turn South Africa

upside down",[46] i.e. to resume the armed struggle. By the summer of 1991, the US and Finland had lifted their sanctions. International support for maintaining economic sanctions was crumbling.

At the ANC's first formal conference in July 1991, a resolution was passed on the ANC's foreign policy. Its first section stressed the need to use sanctions as a form of pressure against the National Party government. The ANC recognised the need to discuss with its foreign allies how sanctions could best be applied in a changed international environment.

The international community should be urged to listen to democratic forces and not seek to reward the apartheid regime.[47]

It was therefore quite understandable that Thabo Mbeki no longer used the language of the 1989 Harare Declaration, which had been endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December of that year. It stated that sanctions should be sought to be maintained until a democratic constitution was adopted.

The Harare Declaration was adopted by the Organisation of African Unions (OAU) Sub-Committee on Southern Africa on 21 August 1989 during the OAU Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe. The Declaration called on the regime in South Africa to create a suitable climate for negotiations, to end apartheid and to define a new constitutional order based on democratic principles.

Now, in October, the ANC would discuss a roadmap for lifting sanctions with its partners the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the Communist Party.

46 A decision that was blocked by Denmark. Only in January 1992 did Denmark lift its reservation, and only on 23 January 1992 were EC economic sanctions lifted

47 Behind the material for this resolution and papers on the ANC's nascent foreign policy was Professor Peter Vale of the Centre for Southern African Studies at the University of the Western Cape, who became a close contact and friend.

At the meeting, Thabo Mbeki stressed that the ANC was keen to gain the support of the international community for the 14 September peace agreement. This agreement committed the parties that had signed it. It could in principle be implemented by force, but it was at least as important that the international community was prepared to take a stand against any party or parties that might violate the agreement.

Similarly, the ANC had been given the clear impression that the National Party had now accepted in principle the ANC's proposed agenda for a multi-party conference which would, inter alia, establish a transitional government and address future constitutional principles.

The ANC would of course have preferred all obstacles to be cleared before negotiations began, not least the release of political prisoners and the repatriation of South Africans in exile. However, a multi-party conference was ready to start work, even though some political prisoners remained. The government kept the remaining political prisoners in jail – presumably in the hope that they could be used to push through some concessions. The ANC was well aware that the National Party had its own constituencies to pacify. The ANC hoped that a multi-party conference could be convened before the end of November.

Thabo Mbeki informed the delegation that, in preparation for a new electoral system, the ANC had already begun voter education, including training in the preferred proportional representation method which would result in a multi-party parliamentary democracy similar to the Danish one.[48] Many South Africans had an immediate sympathy for the British single-member majority electoral method and often spent time arguing that other methods – including the Danish version of proportional representation – prevented close contact between voters and their parliamentary candidates. The embassy tried at every opportunity to explain that the Danish version of proportional representation did precisely the opposite. Conversely, the

48 Many of the ANC's leaders, led by Mandela, suffered from a very deep admiration for all things British, including the British "winner takes all" electoral method.

proportional representation method actually seemed best suited to South Africa, as one could expect many political parties, based on the many groupings in the population, based on ethnicity and political affiliation.

Although the ANC believed itself strong enough to win the upcoming elections, Thabo Mbeki had to admit that it suffered from a shortage of people with the necessary skills to fill positions in the state administration. For example, there was not one person of colour in South Africa who knew anything about central banking systems, or people of colour trained in customs. The ANC did know guerrilla warfare, but had no experience in traditional military skills.

On the Danish side, Jørgen Estrup (Social Liberals) was concerned about the issue of political prisoners. He stressed that the release of political prisoners was not only important for all parties in South Africa; it was also a political signal to the outside world. The political prisoners must not be forgotten. In doing so, Mr Estrup signalled that the delegation had taken Mandela's hint earlier in the talks that it would not be unwelcome if the delegation raised the issue in meetings with government representatives. Mbeki therefore informed us that during a recent meeting between Mandela and de Klerk it had been stressed that political prisoners remained a problem. A special working group had now been set up to continue work on this. Thabo Mbeki told me later that the government had acknowledged in confidence that there were a number of difficult individual cases outstanding and that it would take some time to resolve them for the sake of the political hinterland.

Asked by Agnete Laustsen of the Conservative People's Party about monitoring the process, Sydney Mufamadi, an ANC Central Committee member and later Minister for Safety and Security, said the government had proved incapable of playing the role of impartial monitor of the negotiating process. As regards the membership of the future transitional government, there would be participants appointed by the various parties and non-elected representatives; nevertheless, they had to be expected to be relatively representative in reality.

On the decision-making process in a multi-party conference, Mbeki said that the ANC was operating under the concept of "sufficient consensus", which had been used during the negotiations on the peace agreement. On questions of the status of the non-independent homelands, Mufamadi said they did not pose problems of principle; they were part of South Africa. As for the independent homelands, a dual system of government would have to work for some time to come. The ANC had good relations with the Venda and Transkei regions, both of which wanted reintegration into South Africa; the Ciskei region was hostile to the ANC but could be governed. The so-called independent homeland region of Bophuthatswana presented the greatest difficulties; its leader Lucas Mangope tried as far as possible to retain the power he knew he would lose by reintegration into South Africa. (See Blok on apartheid laws in Chapter I)

Jørgen Winther of the Liberal party asked how the ANC would view, for example, Denmark lifting sanctions now and promising in return to reimpose them if developments in the negotiating process so warranted. Mbeki replied that the ANC was committed to trying to restore international consensus on sanctions, probably a phased plan. The ANC had spoken to the US, which had promised to agree to South African loan requests to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) only if the ANC and other players also agreed.

Before leaving the meeting, Nelson Mandela took the floor to again thank Denmark for its efforts as one of the ANC's strongest traditional supporters. Without that help, the ANC could not have survived. He called former ANC President Oliver Tambo to testify to this. In particular, he highlighted the support of the Danish Parliament in opposing the adoption of the EC decision to lift EC economic sanctions, a decision which he claimed had been premature. There was no doubt in my mind that Mandela's participation in the meeting and his statements made a great impression on the Danish delegation. At this, their first meeting with Mandela, the Danish parliamentarians were as impressed by the charismatic freedom fighter as I had been at my first meeting the year before.

Talking to Thabo Mbeki about a multi-party conference and transitional government

After the meeting with the Danish parliamentary delegation, I took part in a discussion with some members of the Danish delegation and Thabo Mbeki on the modalities of a multi-party conference and the formation of a transitional government, an issue which had not yet been discussed with the de Klerk government. According to Mbeki, such a transitional government could be established on the basis of the multiparty conference. It did not therefore need to suspend the current constitution or the tri-chamber system. On the contrary, the existing parliament could be used to adopt, at a given time, the constitutional principles on which a multi-party conference might have agreed. This would create an "interim constitution" and a framework for the functioning of the transitional government.

The ANC did not initially want control of all areas of government, but only the following functions: the security forces (police and military), the electoral authorities, the media and the state budget. The ANC was well aware of what were key functions in a modern democratic society.

Meeting of Danish parliamentarians with Foreign Minister P. Botha

That same afternoon, the delegation managed to arrange a meeting with Foreign Minister Pik Botha. Almost before we had sat down at the meeting table in his office, he set to work in the harshest bulldozer style:

> *"I have noted the reluctance of Danish parliamentarians to fall in line with the rest of the EC. I understand the special relationship that exists between the ANC and the Nordic countries. But - as far as I know - the Danish sanctions were imposed - not to encourage the drafting of a democratic constitution - but solely to get apartheid abolished. I have had the opportunity to study carefully the reports in the Folketing (The Danish Parliament) on this matter. I myself have fought for the abolition of apartheid, and it is a long and painful*

process that has led to my isolation, even in my own party and even in the parents' council of my children's school. Denmark has moved the goalposts in the sanctions case. That was not fair. Denmark favours one side in the process. I have recently asked the Australian Foreign Minister not only to give money to the ANC but also to other organisations. I will ask Denmark to do the same." [49]

Here the Foreign Minister was politely and gently interrupted by Jørgen Estrup, who thanked the Foreign Minister for the reception in his office. After the meeting, Jørgen Estrup said that he had to stop Pik Botha's somewhat aggressive flow of words and get a real conversation going. He also wanted to express his appreciation for the government's efforts. The task was very difficult and the government had been very brave. He particularly appreciated the clear steps that had been taken in June, when parliament had repealed three apartheid laws. They sent a clear message about the peaceful transformation of South African society.

The Danish delegation also raised the issue of political prisoners, including a hunger-striking political prisoner in Bophuthatswana (popularly known as Bop). The prisoner, Johannes Simelane, had chosen to go on hunger strike because, as a political prisoner, he wanted to attract international attention and, hopefully, support for his desire to be released, something Lucas Mangope had so far refused.

The Foreign Minister said that Johannes Simelane's health was satisfactory in Bophuthatswana, which Pretoria regarded as a foreign country on a par with the other independent countries (Ciskei, Transkei and Venda). Botha had tried in various ways to persuade Bop's leader Lucas Mangope to follow Pretoria's line in the negotiation process, but so far only with sporadic success. The government would welcome international support in these efforts, including in getting Bop to sign the peace agreement.

49 Pik Botha probably wanted to signal that there were other needy people in South Africa than those represented by the ANC, for example the Zulus represented by the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Jørgen Winther also asked about rumours heard in the Foreign Ministry in Copenhagen that Danish sanctions had directly increased black unemployment in South Africa. Thankfully, Mr Botha said that the Danish sanctions had had no negative economic effects whatsoever in South Africa. The meeting was then interrupted because President de Klerk had finally agreed to accept the Danish delegation's request for a meeting.

Parliamentarians' meeting with President de Klerk

When De Klerk arrived at the meeting, Botha informed the President that the main issue discussed so far had been political prisoners, an issue which, as far as the Government was concerned, had been resolved by the agreement of 30 June.

De Klerk added that this issue reflected a last-minute effort by the ANC to move the goalposts. For the government, the problem was solved. De Klerk continued:

> *"Denmark did not facilitate the negotiation process by maintaining sanctions. They only contributed to unemployment and slowed down economic growth (Ed.; This was an assessment that did not correspond to the one we had just been told by Botha.) To achieve the necessary 4.5-5% annual growth, South Africa needed foreign investment."*

De Klerk believed that the Danish parliament - regardless of the disagreement between the government parties and the opposition - would agree that it was not a question of making Africa poorer. South Africa was not asking for gifts, but simply for a resumption of normal relations. The ANC's message was "keep up the pressure". But De Klerk did not think he needed pressure. The negotiating process was doing fine without it. Were there then only selfish, political motives on the part of those who wanted to maintain sanctions? De Klerk recommended that the Danish side take a broader view of the situation in South Africa, make its own thoughts and assessments - not to help de Klerk, but to help the South African people.

Helle Degn of the Social Democrats asked the natural question that if the other side of the negotiating table continued to claim that there was a problem with political prisoners, why did the government not seek a solution? And, by the way, what was the timeframe for the negotiations on a constitution?

De Klerk replied that the government was ready for negotiations immediately. The government was in constant contact with the ANC on individual issues, and the government had even released so many political prisoners to meet the ANC that the ordinary prisoners had begun to protest about it, as they remained imprisoned despite the fact that "they had only stolen a little bit".

The President then gave the government's interpretation of the Pretoria and Groote Schuur agreements,[50] which he argued meant that murder excluded a person from being considered a political prisoner. (This interpretation was not shared by the ANC, Lawyers for Human Rights or the Human Rights Commission.) This was why the last 140 or so prisoners, whom the ANC wanted released, had not been released. But the government was prepared to discuss outstanding cases in the forum set up for the purpose.

Agnete Laustsen (Conservative party) asked about the structure of a multi-party conference and the timeframe for its work. This was important to know in order to understand the challenges in the further process and to put them in the right framework. To this, de Klerk replied that it was first and foremost a question of who should invite whom, as well as the design of the decision-making procedure, Presidency and transitional arrangements. De Klerk hoped that a referendum would give him the mandate from his electorate to introduce a new democratic constitution as a result of the negotiations.

50 The Groote Schuur agreement of 4 May 1990 is based on the so-called Nørgaard principles, which should be applied as criteria in determining whether a given prisoner is a political prisoner. Danish Professor Carl Aage Nørgaard was instrumental in solving the prisoner problem at the time of Namibian independence. The Danish side had offered to allow Professor Nørgaard to act as an impartial arbiter in determining which prisoners are political. See Block on Political Prisoners, Chapter XI.

Negotiations could begin before the end of the year. 1992 would then be the year of negotiation, 1993 the year of adoption, and 1994 the election year under the new Constitution. The government was now on better terms with the ANC than they had been for a long time. He referred, among other things, to a TV interview with ANC Secretary General Cyril Ramaphosa, who had predicted that there would be a multi- party conference before the end of the year. In that context, he had referred only to the Patriotic Front meeting, but not to the political prisoners.

Jørgen Estrup and Ebba Strange referred to the land reform problems and briefly recounted their visit to Pfokeng and Ledig in the homeland of Bophuthatswana, where, surprisingly, the message would have been *"We have had enough of Independence."*

De Klerk said that the purpose of the forced removals had been to create many national states like in Europe. Without commenting on the validity of the underlying theory, he continued: *"I have come to the conclusion that the homeland policy simply cannot be implemented."* Four out of ten homelands had come to the conclusion that they wanted independence as national states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei - the so-called "TBVC).

Now anyone could buy property wherever they wished. The past should be left behind, it was done. The government could not accept the idea of returning land that had been "taken over" from the displaced black farming communities. It was true that the state-owned large tracts of land where certain wishes could be accommodated on a case-by-case basis. As an example, he cited a displaced community that now wanted to return to the community's original land, but found that the farmland could no longer support the increased population. In some cases, return might be acceptable, in others not practical. This was a very sensitive issue. The Land Commission now set up had to try to resolve the problems in an orderly manner, without encroaching on private property rights.[51]

51 Through various Land Acts from 1913 to 1955, a process was initiated with the aim of securing approximately 85% of South Africa's land for the white minority. The Restitution of Land Rights Act, passed shortly after the elections which approved the

De Klerk also confirmed that there was no longer any basis for racial discrimination in hospitals.

Helle Degn asked whether a return to the international community, including the UN and the Organisation of African Unity, was discussed with the ANC. De Klerk said that during a recent conversation with Mandela he had suggested that the ANC should recommend to the UN that sanctions be lifted before they crumbled anyway. No country would ignore such a recommendation. Sanctions were already being lifted, South African products were gradually appearing on shelves in other countries, but the government would like to see the rest of the sanctions lifted.

De Klerk thought it would be difficult for any country to base its foreign policy on the views of a single organisation. This, he believed, was in fact what Denmark was doing. During his visit to Denmark in the spring, he had heard some say that "we'll wait until the ANC gives the green light". *But of course.... "everybody kisses his wife his own way"*, as he said. At the same time, he had to admit that the ANC was adopting more realistic market-economy views than the planned-economy attitudes that had hitherto characterised ANC economic thinking.

The meetings at the Union Building with de Klerk and Botha were, as journalist Peter Tygesen described in a newspaper article - after talking to some of the participants - an expression of a certain kind of psychological warfare, in which the foreign minister with his political coolness had played the bad cop and the president with his more conciliatory tone, the good cop.

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new democratic constitution in April 1994, opened the way for persons and their descendants who had been deprived of their lands since 1913 to make claims to the new authorities for the restitution of these lands. Subsequently, it has become possible to apply for the restitution of lands confiscated before 1913. This process is still far from complete.

Parliamentarians' assessment of the visit

The parliamentarians had a number of other meetings, including with various representatives of the many civil society organisations in the country, and noted in a final press release:

> *"The information and impressions we have gathered during our visit will be very useful for our further considerations in the Danish Folketing relating to Denmark's policy concerning a gradual lifting of sanctions vis-à-vis South Africa.*
>
> *Upon our return to Denmark, we will engage in a critical and impartial comprehensive assessment of the situation. We leave the country with the good hope that the peace process will soon lead to a new, non- racial democracy in South Africa."*

It was my impression that the visit had not only been a unique experience for all participants in the delegation, but that it had also helped to create a shared, more nuanced impression of the complex situation unfolding on the South African scene in these months and years, and undoubtedly a higher degree of shared understanding of developments that would be useful in further negotiations between the various parties on the appropriate timing for the lifting of the Danish economic sanctions against South Africa.

The visit, in my assessment, exceeded all expectations. We had been able to use our existing network of contacts to plan the programme and had made useful new contacts along the way. The delegation had been received at the highest level in both camps, our interlocutors had devoted ample time and the discussions had been in depth. And a small, purely professional observation: from the point of view of diplomatic protocol, it was not normal for a Head of State to receive a delegation made up of private members of parliament. That not only the Foreign Minister but also President de Klerk had wanted more than a courtesy visit, a substantive meeting with the Danish parliamentarians, I saw as a sign that Denmark was being taken seriously. I believe that the parliamentarians were sincere when they said that the visit had given them food for thought.

CODESA – *the Convention for a Democratic South Africa is established*

Despite continuing violence in the last quarter of 1991, a preparatory meeting in Johannesburg between the main political parties managed to agree on modalities for a multi-party conference. Under the name "Convention for a Democratic South Africa" (CODESA), negotiations began on 20 December between 16 parties and organisations.

As the doyen, or senior ambassador to South Africa, I had the pleasure of welcoming Sadako Ogata, head of the UN refugee agency UNHCR, to South Africa after she accepted an invitation from the UN Secretary-General to attend the opening of CODESA. UNHCR was the first UN agency Mandela had met shortly after his release in 1990. The ANC was initially reluctant to allow the UNHCR to play a role in the repatriation of the many exiled South Africans it believed it could handle on its own, but Mandela approved of the UNHCR's help and a close, personal and warm relationship gradually developed between Mandela and Ogata. The UNHCR was of great assistance in the repatriation process and became the first UN agency to open an office in South Africa (Johannesburg) with the support of the ANC. A good friend and colleague of mine, Søren Jessen Petersen, accompanied Sadako Ogata as her Chief of Staff.

In the diplomatic corps, we were seized by a new optimism when CODESA adopted a Declaration of Intent setting out the main themes of the Convention:

- South Africa must be a united democratic, non-racial society.
- Everyone must have equal citizenship.
- Introduction of universal suffrage based on one-person-one-vote and proportional representation.
- The establishment of an independent judiciary.
- A special effort on human rights.

According to Cyril Ramaphosa, the meeting had shown that national interests took precedence over narrow party interests. South Africa might now be on its last mile in an unstoppable process: *"If there have been discordant moments, they have not been*

so serious as to halt the process now under way towards the realisation of a democratic South Africa."

Sadly, many discordant moments were to follow, caused in particular by the rising tide of violence throughout the country.

I clearly remember that at that time an optimistic mood had spread over the Christmas and New Year days in Pretoria and Johannesburg. This provided a good basis for the preparations for Nelson Mandela's visit to Denmark in early February 1992.

Nelson Mandela met one morning at his hotel in Copenhagen with leading members of the Socialist Party (SF). In front Mandela with Ebba Strange (left) and my wife Buller (right). Behind me (at the very back) Gert Petersen, Søren Riishøj and Holger K. Nielsen. Photo: Henrik Saxgren.

Chapter XII

Nelson Mandela's Visit to Copenhagen

ANC President Nelson Mandela paid a long-awaited working visit to Denmark from 4-6 February 1992. Buller and I accompanied him throughout his stay. There was general agreement among all parties involved that it was a very exciting visit, a unique experience. Also, for Mandela himself. It was especially in meetings and gatherings with the so-called ordinary Danes that he was surprised by the widespread enthusiasm and recognition he experienced everywhere. As we left the Workers' Museum in Rømersgade on a cold and drizzly evening and were about to get into the car, suddenly there was singing from a small group of people sheltering in the cold weather under a streetlamp by the museum.

"Why are they singing?", Mandela asked me.

"They are singing for you," I said. Mandela's eyes went wide, he was clearly moved, and he walked through the rain over to the group and greeted each of the singers.

"What a pleasant surprise. and in this weather," he said as we got into the car.

During the visit, Mandela insisted on having time to go shopping one day. He had promised to bring gifts for his grandchildren. Buller led him to a clothing store at the corner of Kultorvet and Købmagergade. Buller said that there were no other customers in the shop when they came in.

After a while, a young man came in and looked at various items until he realised who he happened to be standing next to. He went out of the shop and before the door closed behind him, he shouted in a suppressed hoarse voice across Kultorvet:

"That's Mandela. that's Mandela standing inside the shop!"

By the time Buller emerged with the ANC president clutching a packet, a larger crowd had gathered. They all wanted to go and greet Mandela.

Every morning Mandela took a brisk walk around Copenhagen accompanied only by a single police officer, Karen Voigt Steffensen. Then he had breakfast alone or with a few of his staff. During a joint breakfast at the hotel with representatives of the SF, we heard tales of Mandela's new favourite breakfast dish: a Danish spiced herring on a slice of rye bread. A historic photo was taken of the meeting with the SFs, which now hangs on the wall in my home.

The meetings with Danes of all ages at Gasværksvejens Skole (Ed: name of a school) and at the party in Falkoner Salen (Ed: a conference centre) were unique experiences, also for Buller and me. It must have been a bit like what happened to the Danish European football champions six months later.

Buller in particular was struck by the empathy and ubiquitous humanity that marked Mandela's journey through Copenhagen. He constantly took time to greet and exchange words with virtually every one of the many people who flocked to meet him everywhere.

During talks with Prime Minister Poul Schlüter and Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, Mandela expressed a fundamental optimism about the negotiating process going forward. There was no stopping it. All parties to the CODESA process, apart from the South African ruling party, had now endorsed the ANC's demand for a transitional government. Mandela spoke highly of de Klerk, but at the same time stated that the government was pursuing a dual strategy, wanting to appear as the party that wanted to speed up the negotiating process, but at the same time placing serious obstacles in its way, for example by delaying the release of political prisoners and tolerating violence that was undermining the process. With this delay, the government hoped to pressure the ANC into further concessions. In doing so, it sought to appear positively interested in the negotiation process and its rapid progress, while at the same time seeking to weaken the ANC and delay the process in various ways.

Mandela made no secret of the growing concern about threats from the white right. He understood de Klerk's predicament and had no interest in pushing him into a situation that risked undermining his position.

The ANC President was also sympathetic to the desire for an immediate lifting of economic sanctions. However, the ANC would not call for a lifting until a transitional government was in place.

During the many breaks and runs from one event to the next, I took the opportunity - at his request and in portions - to tell Mandela in a little more detail about Denmark; about a welfare society "*where few have too much and fewer too little*." About the strange parliamentary situation, we had had since 1972 without a single government that had a solid, real majority behind it. A development which made it necessary for the minority government to negotiate results which would then rest on a relatively broad parliamentary basis and become more durable. Denmark as a market economy with a comprehensive social safety net, a labour market with a degree of security for the unemployed, a labour market model that made it possible to change labour market structures in response to changing circumstances. Without the risk of social upheaval, because the unemployed were guaranteed a decent living until they found a new job. Mandela listened and nodded.

During a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 6 February with representatives of the Danish business community, Mandela had the opportunity to explain in some detail the ANC's economic policy. The ANC had reviewed its policy on nationalisations. In Mandela's view, South Africa's social and economic problems could not be solved without foreign investment. In this context, the ANC recognised the need to create an investment-friendly climate. The ANC president stressed the importance of providing guarantees against expropriation and ensuring the ability of foreign investors to export profits earned.

On leaving Denmark, Mandela again praised Denmark for its unique support in combating apartheid policies. During his imprisonment he had been aware of the Danish support and added:

> *"But since my release I have become even more aware of the struggle that has been waged by the Danish people and the anti-apartheid movement here. We have received unparalleled support from the people of Scandinavia in general and the people of Denmark in particular".*

Before leaving, Buller asked Mandela if he would sign the page in Politiken where the newspaper had printed Sarah Matai Stinu's tribute to the South African freedom fighter under a nice photo of him. He did so with the words "To the Chief Ambassador" and returned the photo to Buller with a smile. Mandela had discovered who had the real influence in our menage.

Developments in the spring of 1992: the lifting of Denmark's economic sanctions

After this highly successful visit, events gathered pace. As Mandela had predicted in Copenhagen, the National Party lost the 19 February by-election in Potchefstroom to the Conservative Party led by Andries Treurnicht. It now became even more relevant for de Klerk to hold the announced referendum among white voters to make sure he had his backing in order.

This development played a crucial role in the Danish debate on lifting economic sanctions.

As mentioned in the preface, Denmark's own immediate interest in promoting the democratisation process was that its success was a crucial precondition for the lifting of Danish sanctions against South Africa, which were the most comprehensive of all OECD countries.

There was broad agreement, both within Denmark and among the Nordic countries, that sanctions should not be lifted until the democratic process had been sufficiently profound and irreversible. But when it came to the interpretation and elaboration of these criteria, there were significant differences of opinion.

Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen had tried to build a broad political consensus on a three- step template for

abolition. But the opposition, led by Jørgen Estrup, and thus the alternative majority in Parliament that had been manifest since 1982, opposed abolition for a long time. It did not consider the negotiating process irreversible: was it sufficient for the de Klerk government to have the various apartheid laws repealed, and that it should therefore be given an encouraging reward, or was the fundamental uncertainty still so great that it was necessary to wait until at least a transitional government had been installed?

This domestic disagreement meant that the Danish side could not agree to the lifting of EC sanctions on imports of certain iron and steel products, Kruger Rands and in particular the ban on new investment, as the rest of the EC countries wanted, and that Denmark came under considerable pressure from the de Klerk government and made the front pages of the South African newspapers.

The political debate on the sanctions was long dominated by the government's argument that it was important to support de Klerk's reform programme by lifting the sanctions, thereby sending a signal to the South African people that they supported the democratisation process. On the other side was the opposition's argument that lifting sanctions now would be disastrous: it would be seen as a stunning victory for white conservative forces. They would be confirmed that if only they manifested themselves strongly, the sanctions would be lifted. Finally, in early 1992, I recall, the idea of linking a lifting of sanctions to a positive outcome of the referendum emerged. After negotiations between the government and the opposition, agreement was reached on a lifting on this basis.

In the referendum of 17 March 1992, de Klerk obtained a substantial majority in favour of his government's policy, and the following day the Danish economic sanctions were lifted by royal decree, as described by Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen in the foreword.

In retrospect, it is my assessment that the ambivalent situation created by the domestic disagreement was not to Denmark's disadvantage, perhaps rather the opposite. In South Africa, those who advocated an early lifting were fully aware of the

Danish government's active but unsuccessful efforts to initiate the lifting of economic sanctions and to get trade, international lending and much else moving. The ANC and like-minded parties and movements, on the other hand, appreciated Denmark's hesitation in recognising the economic sacrifices not only for South African but also for Danish business. There was certainly no doubt in South Africa of Denmark's active commitment to facilitating the negotiation process.

Chapter XIII

First Danish Ministerial Visit to South Africa

Even before my departure for South Africa, I visited Danish companies with an actual or potential interest in South Africa and was fully informed of the general attitude of Danish business towards the sanctions. They were, of course, opposed as a matter of principle.

The Danish business community would of course comply with the trade embargo, but would not be last in line on the day the restrictions were lifted.

During his visit to Copenhagen, Mandela was asked if Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen would be invited to visit South Africa. According to Ritzaus Bureau's account, Mandela replied: *'Let me be clear. Mr Jensen, I invite you to come to South Africa. We are against high-profile visits, that is by heads of state and government. But other foreign ministers have already visited South Africa, and Mr Jensen is welcome."* [52]

No wonder, then, that 18 March was a turning point in Danish-South African relations. No sooner had the Danish economic sanctions been lifted than we were in full swing to finalise preparations for a working visit by Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen at the head of a large business delegation between 12 and 16 April 1992.

It was the first visit by a Danish minister to South Africa, and we had arranged meetings with, among others, President

52 Visits by heads of state or government would, in the ANC's view, imply a form of recognition of the current situation in South Africa, including that of the incumbent National Party government, for which the time was not yet ripe. I don't think Uffe Ellemann-Jensen cared at all whether his visit was seen as high profile or not. Formally, Mandela was right, as he had defined "high profile": a foreign minister is neither head of state nor head of government.

de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, Foreign Minister Pik Botha, Defence Minister Roelof Meyer, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Democratic Party leader Zach de Beer.

The business delegation also had the opportunity to meet South African ministers and prominent representatives of all sectors of South African heritage. During the visit, panel discussions were held on South Africa's economy, the investment climate and general development issues.

One of the biggest impressions for the Danish participants was an excellent five-hour lecture by Director Bob Tucker, combined with video footage and overheads, on strategies for socio-economic and political reform in South Africa. This lecture was based on research carried out by a representative group of domestic and foreign experts, including the credit institute PERM, of which Tucker was the director, and the financial institutions Nedcor and Old Mutual.[53] Once again I was impressed by the expertise represented in South African civil society, not only in the political, democratic, human rights and constitutional fields, but also in the social, economic and financial fields. Resources which had hitherto lain largely dormant and untapped beneath the surface, but which were now beginning to blossom.

Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen's meeting with President de Klerk

Getting a meeting with the President had been a challenge. It was the holiday season, and the embassy was told that de Klerk and his wife Marike were on Easter holiday at their summer house in Hermanus about 100 kilometres from Cape Town. Eventually, a meeting was arranged, albeit for a very limited audience and no press.[54]

53 I have kept a 10-page report of this event.

54 Uffe Ellemann Jensen was accompanied by Mrs Alice Vestergaard, Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry Henrik Wøhlk and me. I had been asked beforehand by one of the Danish press photographers who accompanied the delegation if I would not try to take some photos from the meeting. I agreed and was lent his camera.

We arrived at a relatively small house situated in a neighbourhood of small and medium sized dwellings. We were warmly welcomed by Mr and Mrs de Klerk. There seemed to be no special guard and I couldn't help but have another thought, which came to mind from time to time: what would happen if a radical opponent of the de Klerk project got hold of him? Who would then carry on the process on behalf of the National Party and the government? There seemed to me to be no one of de Klerk's stature to take on the onerous task. In fact, de Klerk was perhaps more indispensable to the process than Mandela.

While Alice Vestergaard had a separate conversation with Marike de Klerk, the foreign minister was seated in the living room with the president. The negotiation process was progressing according to plan, de Klerk said. However, the problem was that the ANC had not transformed itself into a proper political party. The ANC had only suspended armed struggle - a kind of ceasefire - but its military arm, the Umkhonto we Sizwe, had not yet been disbanded, making it difficult to discuss reform of South Africa's military.

uMkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)

In 1961, together with Walter Sisulu and Joe Slovo, later chairman of South Africa's Communist Party, Mandela formed a militant group called uMkhonto we Sizwe, or MK for short. This was just after the Sharpeville massacre, when police had fired into a demonstration of black South Africans, killing or wounding over 250 demonstrators. Mandela became chairman of the MK, which eventually became recognised as the armed wing of the ANC. The MK's strategy was to carry out acts of sabotage that would exert maximum pressure on the government with minimum human casualties, such as bombing military installations, power stations and telephone lines at times when civilians were not present. ,Sabotage was, according to Mandela, the least harmful action, did not involve killing and offered the best hope of subsequent racial reconciliation. He recognised, however, that guerrilla warfare might be necessary if such reconciliation failed.

The ANC's attitude was not always helpful. The movement demanded the disbandment of the South African military and the establishment of a new structure. In de Klerk's view, you could not disband a country's army. A compromise had to be found.

It was de Klerk's assessment that the ANC's avowed foreign minister, Thabo Mbeki, and his like-minded colleagues were fully committed to the negotiating line, while other more radical elements within the ANC were more hesitant.

It became clear during the talks that de Klerk still clung to the National Party's original negotiating line: he still wanted a fair distribution of power to be established, that decisions in government should be taken by consensus, that the presidency should be shared between the major parties, and that a bicameral parliament should be established with a senate that should represent minorities in particular. One type of oppression (a white minority by a non-white majority) should not be replaced by another. The ANC was prepared to discuss the protection of minorities, but certainly not in the form de Klerk presented here.

Agreement on a transitional government could be reached by the end of May and elections could be held 5-6 months after an agreement was reached.

It turned out that this time estimate was far too optimistic and also that along the way the National Party had to give up a large part of the positions still defended by the President during this conversation.

On the way out to the waiting cars, de Klerk asked me whether I thought he had given a fair picture of the situation to Foreign Minister Ellemann-Jensen. I replied that of course the President had to see the situation from his position, but that there were other angles. The President had, in my view, put an enormous amount of emphasis on the need for legal continuity. Others, as you know, also stressed that legal continuity had to be sacrificed precisely in order to make a break with the past. However, it was my assessment that there were now so many elements on the table that a compromise could be reached. The President nodded and said that I was probably right.

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen and Alice Vestergaard met with President F.W. de Klerk and Mrs Marike de Klerk at their summer house in Hermanus, east of Cape Town. Private photo

Meeting with Foreign Minister Pik Botha

In addition to the negotiating situation, a meeting with Foreign Minister Pik Botha provided an opportunity to discuss future closer cooperation between the EC and the countries of southern Africa. Mr Botha reviewed developments in individual countries in the region and concluded that Africa's only chance for economic growth was too free itself from dependence on commodity exports. Stability in commodity prices had to be achieved through long-term agreements and better access for African countries' manufactured products to the European market. Among many African countries, the impression was that European countries were adopting a more, not less, protectionist stance; there was a sense that the colonial powers had never fully let go. Denmark was known as a country with an open attitude. Could Denmark raise the issue of improved cooperation in the EC? Neither Portugal, the country holding the presidency, nor the European Commission had so far responded to South African requests.

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen said that Denmark was very aware of the regional dimension in southern Africa. The Nordic countries had traditionally worked closely with the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).[55] With South African membership of the SADCC, he imagined that cooperation could be given new dynamism and used as a springboard for cooperation with Europe, among others.

The Foreign Minister said that Denmark was ready to provide transitional assistance to South Africa once an interim government had been formed. The aid was intended in particular for the most disadvantaged sections of the population. The Danish side envisaged support for business and employment promotion, for broader development activities such as education, slum renewal and support in the agricultural sector, as well as assistance through private organisations for, among other things, consolidation of the democratisation process.

Mr Botha welcomed the Danish plans and expressed his thanks for these commitments. The Foreign Minister's visit could lay a good foundation for fruitful future cooperation between Denmark and South Africa.

On a private occasion, Mr Botha told the Foreign Minister about the considerable difficulty the Government was having in reintegrating the countries of origin (Ed: the Bantustans), which in many cases had been administered quite irresponsibly. He also stated that South Africa, as a consequence of abandoning its nuclear weapons programme and adhering to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, had also abandoned its missile programme.

It was useful, in my view, to discuss issues other than the negotiating situation and instead to look a little into a future scenario with a democratic South Africa as a new dynamic engine of regional cooperation in Southern Africa. As mentioned in

55 **Southern African Development Coordination Conference** (SADCC), the forerunner of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), was a Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Economic Development signed in Lusaka, Zambia, on 1 April 1980. It was formalised as the Lusaka Declaration ratified by the nine signatory countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe).

Chapter X, Denmark had a significant influence on the blueprint for future cooperation between South Africa and the EC/EU

Meeting Nelson Mandela

The following day, the Foreign Minister had his meeting with Nelson Mandela at Shell House, the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg. Given that he had announced his separation from Winnie Mandela the day before and had been in meetings all morning, he seemed unusually fresh and well-spoken. I noticed that in his office he had the collage that Buller had made for him for his birthday the year before.

Mandela was happy to see the Foreign Minister again after his successful visit to Denmark.

On the state of negotiations, he said the ANC and the government were closer than ever on the issue of setting up a transitional government. The government had argued that it had to be postponed because of the violence, but the ANC had argued that it was necessary to have an interim government in place precisely for that reason. The ANC did not believe that the government was doing enough to stop the violence. Since 1984 a total of 13 000 people had been killed, most by dangerous small arms such as assegai (spears) and similar weapons, used mainly by supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party. The government had to introduce an effective ban on dangerous weapons so that the police could take action against demonstrators. In addition, the government had to fulfil its promise to fence off guest workers' hostels (often called "Zulu hostels").

Zulu hostels

Economic, social and demographic realities meant that apartheid - the separation of the different races - never came to work in practice. Despite apartheid laws, there was an increasing economic integration of the South African economy. And the black influx into what were in theory supposed to be exclusive white urban areas was only growing. The gold and platinum mines around Johannesburg and Kimberley required extensive labour.

Migrant black workers, especially from KwaZulu-Natal, could help. However, they were not allowed to settle in these towns, and were instead relegated to shacks, often called "Zulu hostels", in sharply demarcated and guarded areas, where the male workers lived without their families, with the right to visit their families once a year. A large proportion of the several hundred thousand male workers lived in such "hostels" on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

I remember Uffe Ellemann-Jensen asking if there could be a role for the UN in combating violence. Mandela said he had raised the idea with the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity, who had promised to take it up with the UN Secretary-General. The South African government opposed the proposal, but had already given up its opposition to the UNHCR and the Red Cross operating in South Africa.

The international community had invested a lot in the fight against apartheid and should therefore also play a role in the transition to a democratic South Africa.

Mandela also said that there could be no question of disbanding the ANC's armed wing at this stage. In his view, there was no national army in South Africa, and the uMkhonto we Sizwe was the best bet for an army that could protect ANC supporters. The South African Defence Force was as much a private army as the uMkhonto we Sizwe.

Meeting with Defence Minister Roelf Meyer

During a conversation a few days later with Defence Minister Roelf Meyer, the Foreign Minister heard the same optimistic tones about the development of the negotiation process, but at the same time received a somewhat more realistic analysis of the security policy situation than the one Ellemann-Jensen had received from de Klerk and Pik Botha.

Roelf Meyer was the government representative in the CODESA working group on a transitional arrangement. For the time being, the most important task was to create a level playing field for the upcoming election campaign. In this respect, it was

crucial to bring the armed struggle to an end. He understood the ANC's view that a disintegration of the uMkontho we Sizwe without a simultaneous democratic control of the security forces would create serious political problems for the ANC. His working group was finalising a report with recommendations for an agreement on the disbandment of all private armies on the left and right.

Another key problem was the structure of parliament: a one-chamber solution as proposed by the ANC would be in line with a majority rule, but would not solve the problem in South Africa. Failure to respect minority guarantees would keep the problem open. A solution had to be found to this problem. (A solution was found in the human rights section of the future democratic constitution.)

The Foreign Minister also asked for Roelf Meyer's views on a UN monitoring group or similar to help solve the serious problem of violence.

Political violence in South Africa

The biggest obstacle on the road to a democratic South Africa was political violence. The violence started as early as 1984 but increased sharply after the start of the negotiation process in 1990. The violence was initially concentrated in the Natal province in the form of clashes between supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party and members of the ANC. In 1990 the violence spread mainly to the townships around Johannesburg and Pretoria and again to Natal. The violence manifested itself in many different ways, such as the Boipatong massacre, in which residents of a Zulu hostel attacked the township of Boipatong in June 1992, wars between different taxi groups, assaults on trains near Johannesburg and violence at demonstrations in which the Inkatha Freedom Party insisted on the right of participants to carry traditional weapons, such as assegai spears. There were also attacks by Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging on a conference centre near Johannesburg in 1993 and his involvement in the conflict in Bophuthatswana in 1994.

In September 1991, the main parties to the negotiation process concluded a National Peace Agreement. This included the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into the causes of violence, headed by Supreme Court Justice Richard Goldstone. The Goldstone Commission produced a total of 47 reports with a wealth of recommendations on how violence could be prevented. The Goldstone Commission also investigated the role of the South African police and military and of a so-called third force in the violence (see Chapter XXII on the death squad). The Goldstone Commission was assisted by a number of international experts, including two Danish police officers (see Chapter XVI). At the request of South Africa and on the recommendation of the UN Security Council, the EC, the UN and the Commonwealth also set up a corps of international peace observers to assist the South African security authorities directly in containing the violence.

It is estimated that the waves of political violence up to and including 1994 resulted in up to 15,000 deaths and an unknown number of injuries.

For further details, see inter alia the Goldstone Commission's final report of 24 October 1994. See also Blok on the Goldstone Commission in Chapter XIV.

The Minister of Defence did not reject the idea, but doubted that such an international effort could solve the problems of violence that plagued South Africa. In the township of Alexandra, for example, there was a conflict between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party, with the military supporting the ANC and the police forces the Inkatha Freedom Party. On both sides, it was difficult to make contact with the right leaders. When critics argued that in the old days there had been no difficulty in maintaining law and order, the answer was that in those days you could impose martial law; you could not do that anymore. I remember that the government simply did not dare to do that either; too many forces had been unleashed that could no longer be managed in that way.

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen also asked whether there was a third force which was reportedly responsible for a significant proportion of the violence.[56] Roelf Meyer replied that the existence of organised terrorist elements in the current situation was very likely. There were clearly groups that had no interest in seeing the negotiation process come to an end. They were to be found on the far left as well as on the far right, where small groups undoubtedly came together in a common desire to undermine the whole negotiating process. There was hardly any systematic undermining by the security authorities, but there were undoubtedly "individual elements" within the security forces who opposed the negotiating process. It was, however, very difficult to smoke them out in the present situation.

In the light of the President's reaction to the same question, the Minister of Defence thereby revealed a quite different analysis of the security situation, one which was to prove more in line with the real situation, but only much later.

On the future of the South African military, Roelf Meyer showed a considerably more pragmatic attitude than the President. He felt that the goal should be to establish a defence force that everyone respected as the national army. All groups should be represented in the country's future military system.

56 The issue of political violence was raised during meetings of virtually all Danish actors with the South African parties in the negotiation process and Judge Richard Goldstone. It was a predominant theme in the Embassy's reports to the Foreign Office, in which we had also referred to Goldstone's growing suspicion of the existence of a third force, a suspicion which was finally confirmed, see now Chapter XXII on a third force in the form of a death squad.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu received the Danish Foreign Minister couple at his residence in Cape Town. Private photo.

The conversation with Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The Foreign Minister's subsequent conversation with Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Cape Town was characterised by the serious concern of both about the violence in South Africa and the authorities' unwillingness and/or inability to combat it.

The Archbishop found the government's explanations for the violence unacceptable, given the effectiveness with which the South African security forces had previously kept society in an iron grip. The political dimension of the violence lay solely in the fact that the forces behind it wanted to destabilise society and make the work of black organisations more difficult.

Archbishop Tutu had not changed his position that international pressure against the de Klerk government should be maintained for as long as possible. He therefore felt that the lifting of sanctions should not have taken place until the South African government had demonstrated its willingness to take effective action against the violence. Mr Ellemann-Jensen

explained to the Archbishop the background to the Danish lifting. Prior to the referendum, there had been reason to harbour serious fears about the white right, fears that Nelson Mandela had also expressed during his visit to Copenhagen in February. The Danish side had therefore decided to maintain the sanctions until the referendum. When the referendum was called, the Danish government considered it right to support President de Klerk's wish for a mandate to continue the negotiation process. The Foreign Minister had therefore promised in a letter to his South African counterpart that Danish sanctions would be lifted if the vote was positive.

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen had personally informed Nelson Mandela of this step, which Mandela nevertheless showed understanding for.

Although Desmond Tutu naturally considered the result of the referendum to be positive, he also felt that it had made the Pretoria government appear somewhat more arrogant and had created new difficulties in the negotiating process, in particular by the continuing failure of the security authorities to intervene effectively in the face of increasing political violence.

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen referred to Mandela's appeal to the international community to take an initiative against the violence. Bishop Tutu agreed with this appeal. The UN action in Namibia (UNTAG) was an inspiring, positive precedent. The black population had no confidence in the police. How could it be otherwise when Inkatha people could walk freely in townships with illegal weapons side by side with the police? He was convinced that forces within the security forces were involved.

The Foreign Minister recounted his quite frank conversation with Defence Minister Roelf Meyer. He had pointed out, among other things, that there were now limits to the means the government could use against violence. It was no longer possible, for example, to impose a state of emergency or a curfew. Nor was he as averse as the President to the idea of assistance from the international community to counter the violence.

It was, as always, a pleasure to meet Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Archbishop remained well informed and articulate,

speaking straight from the horse's mouth, so we got aspects that other more official interlocutors could not or would not bring up. And he had an infectious laugh and disarming sense of humour. I was always in a good mood after meetings with Desmond Tutu.

Meeting with the leader of the Democratic Party Zach de Beer

The day before, the foreign minister had a meeting in Johannesburg with the leader of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, Zach de Beer. They shared an optimistic assessment of the work of the CODESA process. He had particularly noted the more compromising changes in the National Party's negotiating position after the elections: the ruling party could now agree to both a transitional parliament with legislative and constitutional functions, as well as an executive council in the first phase of the transition.

The violence was also a source of growing concern for the Democratic Party.

According to Zach de Beer, since 1990 there had been a new type of violence, clearly aimed at destabilising the country and demonstrating that blacks were incapable of governing. The authors of this terrorist activity were probably to be found among reactionary compatriots and elements within the security forces.

The Foreign Minister's proposal for an international monitoring commission deserved further discussion. The mandate of one of CODESA's working groups included the question of the role of the international community, so the issue could not be dismissed out of hand.

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One of the dominant themes during Uffe Ellemann-Jensen's talks had been the rising tide of violence. Various factors had crystallised: the negative impact of violence on the democratisation process and the growing threat to the forthcoming elections, the government's inability to bring

violence under control and the ANC's growing criticism of the government's impotence in this area.

There is no doubt in my mind that these talks with South African leaders were crucial to Uffe Ellemann-Jensen's decision at the EC Foreign Ministers' meeting on 1-2 May 1992 to propose that an EC or UN commission of inquiry be set up to clarify the background to the violence and to make proposals on how it could be combated. The proposal was well received at the EC meeting. The Troika of Foreign Ministers, in which Denmark participated from 1 July 1992, would later visit South Africa to explore the possibilities of support.

The Foreign Minister would also invite Judge Goldstone to Denmark to discuss how the international community could best contribute to the fight against violence.

The optimism that had characterised the spring in South Africa suffered a serious setback with the massacre on 17 June 1992 in Boipatong, a township for those working in Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging near Johannesburg. Men armed with traditional Zulu weapons. assegai spears and clubs (knobkerries), from the Kwamadala Hostel, which supported the Inkatha Freedom Party, attacked the residents of Boipatong and killed 45 people. The ANC accused the police of being behind it and left CODESA II shortly afterwards. This complicity was not proven at the time, but during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, several Inkatha Freedom Party participants admitted that they had been transported to Boipatong in police vehicles. ANC leaders visited Boipatong after the massacre to show their sympathy. President de Klerk also visited the township but was booed by the surviving residents. Mandela expressed his anger, saying: *'We will not forget what de Klerk and the Inkatha Freedom Party have done to our people. I have never seen such cruelty."*

The ANC then announced that they could not negotiate in such circumstances, where "poor people were killed in a state-sponsored wave of violence." The ANC only resumed negotiations after another massacre in Bisho in September 1992, when de Klerk finally made an explicit commitment to control the security forces.

UN Security Council Resolution 772[57]

Shortly before 17 August 1992, the UN Security Council had unanimously adopted Resolution 772, which in its operative paragraphs decided, inter alia:

"……

4. Authorizes the Secretary-General to deploy, as a matter of urgency, United Nations observers in South Africa, in such a manner and in such numbers as he determines necessary to address effectively the areas of concern noted in his report (of 7 august 1992 S/24389), in coordination with the structures set up under the National Peace Accord.

5. Invites the Secretary-General to assist in the strengthening of the structures set up under the National Peace Accord in consultation with the relevant parties.

……

8. Invites international organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth and the European Community to consider deploying their own observers in South Africa in coordination with the United Nations and the structures set up under the National Peace Accord.

Ten days after the Boipatong massacre, my spirits returned a little when I received a flood of calls from South Africans near and far wishing me congratulations on Denmark's European football championship. Denmark had really put itself on the map in South Africa. Denmark's no to the Maastricht Treaty, the European Championship victory in Gothenburg over the German national football team and Uffe Ellemann-Jensen's new David-Goliath slogan: "If you can't join them, beat them" had gone down warmly in countless South African circles on all sides of the political spectrum. I was, of course, delighted by these reactions, but not surprised after I realised how much sport meant in South Africa to all sections of the population.

57 Unofficial translation into Danish:

Mandela too was well aware of the role of sport when, a few years later, against the wishes of the majority of the ANC leadership, he insisted on giving his personal, active support to the South African national rugby team, the Springboks, which was otherwise an extremely white sport.

This was clearly part of his efforts to unite South Africa into one country. The reason was that South Africa had been chosen to host the Rugby World Cup in 1995, the first major sporting event in the country after the abolition of apartheid, and the first World Cup South Africa was allowed to participate in after the International Rugby Union allowed the country to return to international rugby competitions in 1992 - also the first World Cup where all matches were played in one country. South Africa's Springboks won the final over New Zealand's All Blacks (sic!) in the presence of Nelson Mandela, among others, wearing a rugby jersey (with the same number as the white team captain Francois Pienaar) and cap, both in Springbok green and yellow colours.[58]

I myself had the opportunity to experience, through sport, in my case tennis, the life of a people who were perhaps most apprehensive about my nationality: the Afrikaners, the Boers[59]. They made up the majority of players in my local club and initially distanced themselves from me.

This gradually passed and we were able to talk about the future of South Africa at the club. The vast majority saw democratisation and the opening up of the country as a long-cherished wish that was about to be realised.

Of course, the club had no black members - at least not then.

Tennis was also the catalyst for close personal contact with the Canadian Ambassador, Chris Westdahl, as well as the American Ambassador, Princeton Lymann, who lived a little further down our Aries Street and had a private tennis court

58 The whole process is, in my opinion, very well described in Clint Eastwood's film Invictus (2009), where Nelson Mandela is played by Morgan Freeman and the role of Springboks captain Francois Pienaar is played by Matt Damon.

59 Boers, Dutch for "farmers", is the historical name for Africans, descendants of the Dutch colonists who came to South Africa in the late 17th century.

attached to the residence. It was my impression that in the early days after Mandela's release the US was somewhat sceptical about the viability of the democratisation process, probably as a result of pressure from African- American groups who had close links with the ANC. However, the US administration had quickly got into the swing of things and had already lifted most economic sanctions against South Africa by the summer of 1991.

PART 3

Diplomacy on the Border between Violence and Hope

One of the greatest threats to a peaceful transition to democracy was the widespread violence, much of it carried out in murky collaboration between conservative forces in the security forces and various factions of the predominantly black freedom movements. Through bold collaboration with the controversial South African police and investigating judge Richard Goldstone, the embassy came close to the peace effort, which culminated in the escape of a renegade death squad member to Copenhagen. It was also during this period that the value of a long dining table and the opportunity to bring opponents together in informal settings really became apparent.

Chapter XIV

The EC Troika Visit in September 1992

On 2 and 3 September 1992, the EC Foreign Ministers' Troika visited South Africa. This visit was to be of central importance in future cooperation with the country.

The Troika was led by the Foreign Secretary of the Presidency, British Douglas Hurd, and included the Deputy Foreign Minister of the outgoing Portuguese Presidency, J.N. Durao Barroso and the incoming Danish Presidency's Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. The Troika also included the Vice-President of the Commission, Frans Andriessen of the Netherlands.

Despite intense meetings with all the main parties in the negotiation process, the Troika failed to bring the government and the ANC in particular close enough to a mutual understanding to signal a resumption of the stalled negotiations during the visit. The ANC in particular felt that the government had not yet sufficiently established the conditions for a resumption.

The ANC's hesitation was due in particular to the lack of progress in resolving the outstanding issues of political prisoners and their release, general amnesty and violence, including the carrying of dangerous weapons and the control of hostels for male workers.

At short notice, we arranged a meeting between Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, representing the Troika, and the ANC negotiating leader Cyril Ramaphosa to discuss whether the EC could assist the parties by offering an independent mediator to help resolve the outstanding issues, including in particular those relating to political prisoners. The Foreign Minister suggested Professor Carl Aage Nørgaard, who had previously played a role in particular in the work on a workable definition of political

crimes for use, inter alia, in the negotiations on Namibian independence.[60] However, the ANC was not interested in such a catalyst or mediation effort at the time, nor did President de Klerk seem overly enthusiastic about the idea. As mentioned earlier, both parties believed that they could resolve these issues themselves.

In retrospect, I have no doubt that the visit and the offer of mediation put some pressure on the parties to resume negotiations, and they did so later in the year.

The more concrete results of the visit, which were to have a major impact on the negotiating process, were the commitment by the EC to send a number of peace observers to South Africa, and the dispatch of a group of five experts from EC countries to support the work of the Goldstone Commission to clarify the causes of the violence in South Africa, as described in the box below and in Chapter XVI.

In addition, the Community undertook to support police training and to make expertise available should the parties consider that special mediation efforts were needed.

These efforts to support the existing South African police and security system were all rooted in ideas put forward by the Danish side, initially through Peter Lysholdt and myself in the local EC circle in Pretoria. It may have seemed paradoxical to take the initiative to support one of the most controversial representatives of the apartheid system, the police, in the first place. Our argument was that the increasing violence threatened to sabotage the whole process, both a future election campaign and the elections themselves. Countering this threat required an effective police force. The existing police force was far from perfect, but it was all there was. There was no time to set up a new one, and there were no reasonable alternatives. Denmark and

60 Professor Carl Aage Nørgaard later played a key role in the informal working group set up after the 1994 elections to propose a legal basis for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), including a definition of political crimes for which individual amnesties could be sought.

like-minded countries should therefore help the country's leaders to make the police force better suited to the new tasks.

Most of the meetings took place in the British ambassador's residence, an impressive modern building that reflected Britain's status in South Africa. The meetings took place in a spacious hall on the first floor with a magnificent view over the beautiful garden. The Ministerial Troika sat on one side of the large table and the various South African interlocutors, invited to the Troika meeting one at a time, sat opposite as if they were sitting at a kind of oral examination.

During the meeting on 3 September 1992 with Supreme Court Justice Richard Goldstone, Douglas Hurd asked at the end if the judge had any special requests. Judge Goldstone mentioned that his commission was particularly interested in obtaining support for a witness protection program. This would require about 100,000 Rand (about 200,000 Danish kroner). Douglas Hurd looked over at the Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Andriessen, who muttered something about it being a lot of money and that it would have to be considered.

When Douglas Hurd was about to end the meeting with a conclusion along those lines, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen turned to Head of Unit Torben Brylle and me and asked in Danish whether the witness protection programme was something we could manage from the Danish side? We had been given approval to carry out a number of initiatives costing up to DKK 300,000, so we could say yes straight away. The Danish Foreign Minister then asked for the floor and said, half to Hurd and half to Goldstone, that the Danish side was prepared to meet the judge's request. The embassy was ready to discuss the details at any time. I do not forget the silent reaction reflected in the expressions of Hurd and Andriessen, a mixture of astonishment, irritation and frustration - presumably that the Danes had (again) found their own quick way out.

It would later turn out that Denmark itself became actively involved in the application of this particular witness protection programme.

The Goldstone Commission

The Goldstone Commission was a commission of inquiry to prevent public violence and intimidation established in connection with the conclusion of the National Peace Agreement in September 1991. The Commission consisted of five members, chaired by Judge Richard Goldstone. The members and the chairman were appointed in October 1991 for a term of three years. The Commission's task was to investigate the violence and its causes and to make recommendations to the President of South Africa on measures to prevent the violence.

Since its establishment, the Commission had conducted a number of investigations, including into taxi and train violence, violence in a number of townships and the involvement of workers' landlords in violence. The Commission also developed guidelines for mass demonstrations with the assistance of an international panel of experts and set up an electoral panel to study the containment of violence and intimidation in the South African elections of 26-29 April 1994.

The Commission's recommendations often played a positive role in political developments in South Africa.

The EU, on a Danish initiative, had supported the Goldstone Commission from the outset with international police experts attached to the Commission's special investigation teams to give legitimacy to these teams, composed of individuals recruited from the South African police.

Denmark had a police expert attached to the Commission (Police Commissioners Palle Biehl and Willy Hove) from October 1992 until the start of the Commission's winding-up in mid-May 1994. Furthermore, during the electoral process and the elections themselves, a further Danish police expert was attached to the Commission (Hans Herluf Pedersen).

Through a private South African organisation (NICRO), Denmark supported a witness protection programme in

connection with the Commission's investigations into specific incidents of violence. In addition, Danish support was provided in connection with the protection of Q and the other South African witnesses.

In co-operation with Ivar Boye, Chief of the National Police, a course was organised in Denmark at the end of June 1994 on Danish police investigation and clear-up methods for the benefit of the leaders of the six investigative teams of the Goldstone Commission and the three lawyers of the Commission.

Contacts with the Danish police Academy were initiated as early as 1992. The head of the school, Police Commissioner Karsten Petersen, took part in a seminar in South Africa in the autumn and in the same year a group of South African police officers and community leaders had made a fruitful visit to Denmark.

Chapter XV

EC Observer Mission in South Africa: ECOMSA and the Goldstone Commission

As Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen answered Pia Kjærsgaard's question of 13 October 1992[61], violence was the most burning issue in the then South Africa. In addition to its human cost, it had poisoned the political climate and led to a prolonged breakdown of the negotiation process in the summer of 1992.

The parties involved in South Africa had expressed the wish that the international community, including the EC, should contribute to the fight against violence by sending observers.

On this basis, as mentioned in Chapter XIII, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 772 on 17 August 1992, which proposed, inter alia, to send UN observers to South Africa to reinforce the mechanisms of the 1991 Peace Agreement. The UN had therefore decided to send 50 observers, recruited not from member states but from the UN Secretariat itself, presumably because it could be implemented more quickly and simply than if member states were asked to find suitable subjects.

The resolution also called on the EC, among others, to send its own observers to South Africa. During the EC Troika visit to South Africa on 2 and 3 September, the three Troika Foreign Ministers confirmed that the ANC and the Government in particular would also welcome EC participation in this task welcome. In this context, it was decided that the EC would send 15 peace observers and as mentioned earlier, five experts to serve on the Goldstone Commission under the Peace Agreement. These observers would co-operate fully with the UN observers and any observers who might be sent by the Commonwealth and the

61 Reply to Question No S 45 of 13 October 1992 on the reasons for sending Danish police officers to South Africa under EC auspices.

Organisation of African Unity. The EC observers would co-operate with the National Peace Secretariat.

The Foreign Minister added that "*in view of this and of the high Danish profile in the South Africa issue, it is important that Denmark is prepared to make a contribution to the efforts against violence in the present situation. It has therefore been decided to send three Danish police officers as Community observers. The Foreign Policy Committee has been kept informed. It may be noted that on 15 October 1992 Mr Palle Biehl, head of the Interpol department, travelled to South Africa to meet the Goldstone Commission. It is also planned that two Danish peace observers, together with the other Community observers, will travel to South Africa at the end of October 1992.*"

On 29 October 1992, Police Inspector Kaj Stendorf Jensen and Deputy Police Commissioner Poul Erik Bentsen also arrived in Johannesburg, and the following day I had the three Danish police officers for dinner. This was the first team of Danish peace observers for both the EC mission ECOMSA (European Community Observer Mission in South Africa), which - unlike the UN observer team - was to consist mainly of experienced police officers, but also lawyers and economists from EC countries, and for the Goldstone Commission, which was to consist entirely of police officers with several years' experience.

As will be seen, the decisions to set up ECOMSA and to appoint and deploy the mission's participants were taken in an admirably short space of time. It was not surprising, therefore, that all the practical, administrative and organisational tasks necessary to make the mission work had not been resolved at the same time. The designated coordinator, Gavin Aarvold, from the UK Presidency, had arrived a little earlier than the others and had quickly taken stock of the situation and submitted his initial recommendations.

Although the UN resolution had stipulated close cooperation with, among others, the UN observer teams and the National Peace Secretariat, Mr Aarvold realised the need to maintain a certain distance from both and all the more from the national authorities, including the military and police. He confirmed the Embassy's impression that suspicion in the prospective electorate

was widespread and ran deep. It would be necessary to establish an independent identity and maintain a certain distance from all the other parties.

The head of the UN observer team (UNOMSA), Angela King, with whom we had the closest working relationship, was prepared to host ECOMSA for the time being, but could not otherwise deal with our administrative and logistical needs.

Nor would anything have been gained by any dependence on the National Peace Secretariat, headed by Dr A Gildenhuys. Although the Secretariat was set up by mutual agreement between the ANC and the government, it was clearly Aarvold's impression that the National Peace Secretariat had a credibility problem in the country: *"The distrust of anything that smacks of South African authority can almost be tasted, it hangs so heavily in the air."*

It was therefore necessary not only to find accommodation for all ECOMSA participants, but also their own office facilities and equipment in Johannesburg and Durban, mobile phones, rental cars to take the observers to the various events, meetings and assemblies requiring the presence of security authorities, as well as ways of financing the whole operation. Not least, there were shirts, caps, armbands and stickers - all in EC blue, something that would prove extremely useful in the field - recognisable clothing inspired by the UN observers.

When the South African police had to respond to the many meetings, demonstrations and rallies, the presence of EC and other observers was often crucial to ensuring calm on the ground.

Poul Erik Bentsen was stationed in Johannesburg as Aarvold's deputy coordinator, while Kaj Stendorf Jensen came to Cape Town. Palle Biehl fell in with Judge Goldstone and became one of his most trusted advisers.

The 15 ECOMSA supervisors were seconded for a six-month period - with the possibility of extension - and comprised two each from Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK and Germany, plus one each from Greece, France and Portugal, plus two from the European Commission. All 12 EC countries

had been offered the opportunity to participate, but only 8 were initially represented.

Although the ECOMSA observers were largely self-sufficient, the mission entailed a number of additional tasks for the embassies of the EC countries involved, an extra burden in particular for the embassies of the small Troika countries. In a fax of 23 November 1992 to Mr Brylle, I complained about the stress on the embassy. Normally, expatriate staff were not paid overtime but had to accept compensation by taking time off. We foresaw that with the takeover of the EC Presidency in the first half of 1993, we would face so much overtime that it would be impossible to compensate. The Foreign Office was, as usual, accommodating and found the money for overtime pay.

In another fax of 8 December 1992, following a meeting with Troika partners Britain and Portugal, I pointed out that we might now have to recognise that the price of a lack of ECOMSA guidelines and a clear mandate would have to be a firmer management structure. For the time being, ECOMSA was weakened both internally and externally by a lack of designated leadership. After examining several possible options, I ended up proposing the deployment of a suitable ambassador from an EC country who could match the rank of the observers and the heads of the UN and Commonwealth missions.

In the end it was a German candidate who was given the post of ECOMSA head, Ambassador Paul Joachim von Stülpnagel. Pending his appointment, there was agreement to continue the Troika arrangement, now with Danish Poul Erik Bentsen in the driving seat and with the title of Head of Mission.

British Coordinator Aarvold's second report of 3 December 1992 was quite illustrative of the complexity of the task. He outlined the solution to the logistical problems, adding a request for bulletproof vests because a team of observers had some time earlier been caught in the crossfire during a mission in Durban. He also reported on all the introductory visits ECOMSA had made to the South African police, the military, government representatives and the leaders of the still existing homelands: Ciskei, Transkei,

Lebowa, Qwa-Qwa and Kangwani. All had welcomed the EC observers.

Aarvold's statement[62]

Aarvold's account of ECOMSA's participation in various events around South Africa is indicative of the diversity of the tasks:

> "**Funerals**: It has been a sad duty of all observers to attend a steady stream of funerals in the townships, all of which are of the victims of violence, mostly political in nature. One tends to lead to another as reprisal is followed by vengeance. Funerals are long, drawn-out affairs, lasting as much as eight hours and become extremely tense with regular minor skirmishes between the police and mourners. It has been our experience that the presence of observers has helped to bring sanity to these occasions.
>
> **Marches**: Protest marches, like funerals, are a regular feature of life in and around the townships. Observers have attended marches every weekend in a variety. The most important and potentially disastrous one being at Nylstroom in Far Northern Transvaal. This area is the stronghold of the Conservative Party and the AWB (Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging) had issued public threats to the people from the nearby township, who had obtained the authority of a magistrate to march into town to present a petition to the mayor. Through our links with the NPS, pressure was brought to bear on the SAP to take these threats as seriously as the information coming into the observer teams warranted. Over one thousand SAP and 50 SADF were eventually deployed to protect the one thousand marchers. The event passed off peacefully, although the SAP reported turning back 70 carloads of AWB, some coming 300 km. there is absolutely no doubt that the presence of observers calmed the marchers, who were very well disciplined throughout, despite quite provocative SAP deployment. It is also true to say the presence of observers

62 Danish translation

served to discipline the SAP. Comment to this effect was received on the day and came from a number of sources, including members of the international press corps and local monitoring groups.

Train violence: Combined observer groups have been present during SAP operations to curb violence on commuter trains, particularly at Kathlehong, where many deaths have occurred. Meetings of transport officials have also been attended.

Taxi wars: The phenomenon of violence between competitive taxi owners is not restricted to South Africa. But the deadly level of violence must surely be. Observers have taken part in reconciliation meetings in a number of districts."

From various quarters, including the National Peace Secretariat, requests for an expansion of the observer corps were expressed relatively quickly. The South African government opposed this.

On the other hand, several observer teams, including the Commonwealth Mission and ECOMSA, had taken independent initiatives, in response to local requests, to go beyond the UN mandate to observe, to also provide advice to the police on investigative methods and to have local conflict resolution committees established in full consultation with local organisations. Angela King initially stuck strictly to the Security Council mandate, but in December 1992 she changed signals and also allowed her UN observers to become involved in setting up local conflict resolution committees.

I myself had already visited townships haunted by violence in early 1990, before ECOMSA, including one case where the perpetrators of violence had been transported to and from the township by local police officers in Casspirs (armed personnel carriers). Later, I attended the funerals of some of the many victims. I also participated once in 1993 with observers from ECOMSA and UNOMSA to watch a police supervised march. On that occasion Angela King, a couple of her staff and I got caught in a bit of a crossfire and had to take shelter on the side of a road. The

anonymous gunmen were chased off by the police and the march proceeded peacefully.

ECOMSA was held shortly after the elections in April 1994. The final report stated, among other things[63]:

> *" To enumerate ECOMSA's achievements is difficult. We were certainly able to prevent much bloodshed although the numbers will never be known. Our ability to communicate with the police and persuade them to either refrain from, or take positive action, and with the public to persuade them to restrain themselves, has with certainty contributed to the avoidance of the loss of many lives. That we ourselves have frequently been in life threatening situations goes without saying "*[64]

Three Danish peace observers' experiences from South Africa

Extract from Kim Sverre Hansen's diary from ECOMSA posting in South Africa, Johannesburg from April 1993.

21 April 1993. Commemoration after a massacre in the township of Sebokeng, which cost 19 people their lives:

"I was a driver - badged with both UN and EC logos on the cars and flags out of the side windows. Here we felt the reaction of the masses, especially the youth. As we passed a central square in the township, we had to park the cars to go through the middle of a narrow passage which the demonstrating youth, led by the leaders of the organisations, opened for us while chanting "Viva APLA", "One settler, one bullet". As we passed the SAP armoured vehicles "Casspirs" we were cheered by the

63 Danish translation.

64 ECOMSA Final Report of 8 May, 1994. The Danish participants in the three consecutive 6-month periods of the EC observer mission (ECOMSA I, II and III) from autumn 1992 to spring 1994 were in alphabetical order. Poul E. Bentsen ECOMSA I in Johannesburg, Jørn Gravesen ECOMSA III in Johannesburg and East London, Kim Sverre Hansen ECOMSA II in Johannesburg and East London, Finn Kromose ECOMSA II and III in Johannesburg Durban and Cape Town, Henry Sørensen ECOMSA II and III in Johannesburg and Durban, Kaj Stendorf ECOMSA I in Cape Town.

crowd who recognised us as international observers. ..... It was then that I realised I was in Africa. Things are not what. they seem. Though we shook many hands, and though we saw much warmth in many eyes, those deep resigned eyes, it only takes a spark for a minority in the crowd to move and stone all who are white, and that includes the observers, and then it is with life at stake that one ventures into these areas. Our predecessors in the job have experienced that. And you can't really blame the young for that, when you look at the contrast between their upbringing and that of the whites: a black township is a desolate row of primitive brick/corrugated iron shacks, spread over countless square miles. Our job as neutral observers is to make credible contacts on all fronts; it's a balancing act on the knife's edge."

April 24, 1993: At the funeral of three victims of police shootings of protesters at Soweto police headquarters:

"A distinctively Christian funeral with a strong political flavour, including toi-toi on the periphery and the firing of AK 47 rounds into the air. Crazy, at previous funerals people have been hit, injured or killed. As our experienced Irish colleague commented: "I'm not so much worried about the bullet with my name on it, I'm more concerned about the bullet labelled To whom it may concern." Our approach was, as soon as we left the cars, to walk straight into the crowd and raise our hand in greeting - open hand (neutral) as opposed to their clenched and then shake hands with as many as possible".....

27 April-3 May 1993 in East London:

"Have since been to Fort Beaufort for a university occupation where we mediated with a reasonable result. What struck me was that we actually enjoy respect and are able to exert influence. From toi-toying groups in townships to a student committee at a higher black institution of learning, this is the land of contrasts and complexities, accentuated by my "homey" luxuries. Exciting and satisfying to be able to go into the crowd/ student committee, be respected and listened to and actually be able to contribute suggestions, leading to a peaceful resolution along with the peace committee people."

Johannesburg 13 September 1993 on transport problems to and from workplaces:

... "The Zulus take the train to work, while the Sotho take the mini-buses, an extensive industry characterised by too many mini-buses ("Combi's"). The result is deadly attacks on train and mini-bus travellers. The aim is to prevent each other from reaching workplaces. It is also a battle for customers of the transport industry, which lacks any regulation from the government. To observe this situation is to uncover layer upon layer of complicated relationships. The more layers that are uncovered, the more complicated this social reality appears, which can be traced back to some extent to tribal antagonisms. These have now been exacerbated by the social impoverishment resulting from apartheid policies. Other international observers have withdrawn from the area because of the risks involved. Only local observers from the peace committees and our mission remain. We will not be frightened away!"

Excerpt from Police Commissioner Finn Kromose's diary of an observation visit to the town of Calvinia in Namaqualand (a region of 47,000km2) north of Cape Town. The visit takes place together with Helena Maria Lim, UN observer from Brazil, and Peter Crossney, field worker from the Regional Peace Committee:

The next day is public holiday in Denmark (The Day of Prayer 7 May,1993). In South Africa it is a normal day, and we will attend some meetings according to the programme. There is a change, as a march has been announced. In South Africa all demonstrations are called marches. The march will go from New Town - a small township - to Calvinia and back. The march is organised by teachers and students from the school in protest against the education system and the Minister of Education. The marchers carried banners reading "De Klerk - Gangleader" and "Saaymann - Gangster". De Klerk is the President of South Africa and Saaiman is the Minister of Education. The banners refer to the gentlemen as gang leader and gangster respectively. Not very flattering terms for people at that level.

When I'm out at marches, I find myself as an observer on the "sidelines" - not inside the demonstrators. Here it will look as if I have taken sides. And neutral we absolutely must be. The march in Calvinia is fairly calm. However, stones are thrown at the march at a place where our pilots are standing and photographers. I have not noticed the stones being thrown, although I am very close. Afterwards Helena and I introduce ourselves to a group of demonstrators and we tell them about our mission in South Africa. Peter encourages the teaching staff to participate in the upcoming peace work. Here they can meet with, among others, the people of the municipality, with whom many are unhappy.

As observers, we are in uniform. My uniform consists only of a vest in the blue colours of the EC. On the back is a circle with the 12 yellow stars of the EC. To be a bit funny, I often refer to this circle as the "target". Later we get shirts with the same "decoration". The shirts have long sleeves and are made of the same thick fabric as the vest. It is very hot in South Africa, so we complain about the thick shirts, and the complaint results in us getting thinner shirts with short sleeves. A blue cap with the yellow stars is also part of the outfit. We are unarmed and none of the observers have any desire to carry weapons, even though we are regularly in dangerous situations. In my pocket I always carry a small emergency first-aid kit that I bring from home - issued by the Home Guard.

After the march, Peter and I have a meeting with the station chief at the police station, Lieutenant Botha. Once again, the future of the police is discussed. Botha is 'is having trouble with the staff', as he puts it."

Extract from Police Commissioner Kaj Stendorph Jensen's article on the Danish peace observers in South Africa, Danish Police No. 11 of 15 November 1993.

"Criticism of the local police helped.

It could also be about the behaviour of the police towards the blacks or the administration by the local municipal councils (whites) of land that had previously been allocated to the blacks

as residential areas, but which was now to be used for other purposes, so that the blacks were ordered to move.

The police were used for such removals. And whatever trust the police had built up with the blacks disappeared like the dew of the sun in these confrontations, which always occurred.

We criticised the police management on several occasions for this immediate use of the police in these situations. The criticism was heard, as in several subsequent cases we saw the police take a much more mediating role and instruct the local councils involved to "do their homework" better and find a negotiated solution."

During my meeting with Danish police officers in 2018, Kim Sverre Hansen and Danish colleagues summarised their advice to South African police forces when faced with major popular demonstrations: *'We did not say afterwards what the police should have done, but continuously tried to make suggestions on how to deal with the crowd in question and in any case: to shoot only if absolutely necessary and justifiable.*[65]

Danish contributions to the training of South Africa's future police forces and to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In addition to the Danish contributions to ECOMSA and the Goldstone Commission, Danish policing in South Africa included a number of other activities:

In the autumn of 1992, a delegation of South African police and freedom movement members paid a two-week visit to Denmark, where they visited various Danish police stations in mixed small groups, among other things. This was the first time that such a mixed visit had been carried out and

65 In his article "Danish Police in South Africa", Detective Superintendent H.P. Sørensen has talked about the efforts of the Danish police, see Nordisk Kriminalreportage 1997, published by Nordisk Politi-Idræts Forbund. In Dansk Politi of 15.11.1993 No. 11, Police Inspector K. Stendorf Jensen has written an article on "Danish police on the job in South Africa".

significant contacts were established between these groups, which had previously been principal enemies.

The head of the police academy, Karsten Petersen, and the deputy head of the Danish Police Intelligence Service (PET), Finn Ravnsborg, took part in seminars in South Africa in 1993 and 1994 on the future South African police and a future intelligence service respectively. The cooperation was also expressed in a number of concrete areas:

At the request of the South African Electoral Commission, two Danish experts (Hans Herluf Pedersen and a representative from PET) carried out a security review of the Electoral Commission'**s** premises and communication. This review was a major factor in the change of premises by the Electoral Commission. The Danish experts could not guarantee the security of the premises initially chosen. At the request of the Election Commission, Hans Herluf Pedersen was sent to the Election Commission in the last month before the elections to advise on and monitor the effectiveness of the security of the Commission and its members.

In addition, a Danish police expert (Kim Sverre Hansen, previously deployed as an EC observer) was deployed to assist in the investigation of complaints of irregularities during the election process.

In August 1994, the Police Academy organised a three-week course for 25 representatives of the South African police in management training.

Cooperation with South African police continued after my time in South Africa, including Danish police support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I remember that in the summer of 1994 I met the new South African Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, at Peter Lysholt's home in Copenhagen, where Peter was on summer holiday with his family. Dullah Omar asked for Danish support for a proposal to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Peter and I reacted with one voice that South Africa was now a democratically

governed country with a transitional government led by the ANC president. Surely such a proposal could easily be implemented. We had discussed the concept with Alex Boraine, the director of the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA, see block Chapter IV), who had a great deal of material on historical precedents in relation to judicial settlements. Dullah Omar then told us that his proposal could not, unfortunately, be expected to have an easy time either as expected with the National Party, but neither with the ANC. Dullah Omar needed international support, first and foremost from Denmark. And he got it.

Danida supported the process from its infancy. The Commission was preceded by extensive legislative work, based in part on the experience of other countries that had gone through similar traumas. Danida actively assisted in this process, among other things by funding seminars where representatives from El Salvador, Chile, Argentina and others spoke about their experiences of reconciliation after periods of massive repression and widespread human rights violations - or about the consequences of the absence of, or inadequate, confrontation with the past. Professor dr. jur. Carl Åge Nørgaard was sent on several occasions at the request of the South African Minister of Justice in connection with the preparation of the legal basis for the Truth Commission. Professor Nørgaard's internationally recognised principles on amnesty for political crimes as the basis for the Truth Commission's work in this area, see Block on Political Prisoners Chapter XI1.[66]

66 This paragraph is taken from a column by the Minister of Development "Reconciliation through truth" in Politiken in 1996. Professor Carl Aage Nørgaard was in South Africa in May 1995 to advise the Minister of Justice in connection with Parliament's consideration of the TRC Bill, particularly on the modalities of amnesty. In addition, Inspector Palle Biehl participated in a planning workshop in January 1995 - organised by Dullah Omar - on the modalities of the Commission's work.

Denmark's involvement in other important justice and democracy efforts, building on cooperation initiated in the run-up to the democratic elections.

In 1995, the new South African government faced the task of building a coherent justice system anchored in a new Department of Justice. This effectively meant the merger of eleven different justice departments under one ministry and the development of a new justice system that could deliver justice to all citizens of the new South Africa.

The new Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, discussed this major task with Peter Lysholt, building on the trust in Denmark that had been established in the years leading up to the end of the apartheid regime. The same people at the embassy discussed the challenge of bringing together the many departments with the director of what was then called the Danish Centre for Human Rights, Morten Kjærum. The Centre became involved because human rights was the fundamental value of the new South African government, and because Morten Kjærum was already part of the Danish circle of advisors around the new South African Minister of Justice, Dr Dullah Omar, and his close associates.

There were close links between the South African Minister of Justice and the Speaker of the South African Parliament. As a result, the Centre for Human Rights was invited, following work in the Ministry of Justice, to discuss the extent to which it could assist Parliament in the forthcoming process of overall reorganisation with a view to building a parliamentary structure that could effectively serve the elected politicians of the new Parliament in accordance with the principles adopted in the new South African Constitution. This meeting was the start of a long process of collaboration with Parliament, involving a reorganisation process followed by an integrated planning process based on the same principles as were used in the Department of Justice.

Chapter XVI

Preparations for the Danish Presidency of the European Community

Shortly after the EC Foreign Minister Troika's visit to South Africa in September, I took stock of the negotiating process in a letter dated 9 October 1992 to the Head of Unit for Southern Africa, Torben Brylle, with a view to preparing for the Danish EC Presidency in the first half of 1993. The following are selected key passages from the letter which provide a snapshot of the situation in 1992 between the parties, the uncertainty about how far they dare and will go and the parties' views of the EC countries:

On the negotiating situation with President de Klerk:

"The negotiating situation in South Africa up to the end of September was reminiscent of the story of the young Danish naval officer Tordenskjold (Ed.:Thunderbolt) when, having frightened the commandant of the Swedish coastal fortress Marstrand with his retreating soldiers into signing the city's surrender, he nevertheless sees the Swedes hesitate and therefore shouts the famous words: "What the hell are you waiting for?"

President de Klerk's foot-dragging was provoking similar exclamations from many quarters here in South Africa. The ANC's position has also made many impatient.

Someone may have told de Klerk about Thunderbolt. In any case, the 26 September summit gave the negotiating process a second chance. However, as already reported, there are enough obstacles ahead and the question is whether we can do more to support efforts to keep the negotiating process on track.

Both de Klerk and Mandela, as you know, have appealed to the international community for assistance. We have already had

special Nordic contact with the ANC on mass actions involving imminent risk of violence and death. We are planning a Nordic meeting with the new Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, L.H. Evans, to explain the approach to the ANC and to recall our views on the government's responsibility to protect lawful demonstrations.

The question is whether we in the European Community should also be inspired by the example of our famous naval hero and speak in clearer terms to the main players in the negotiating process.

Colin Coleman of the Consultative Business Movement told us the other day of a CEO of a very large South African business who had become fed up with the government's delay, which he felt was destroying the economy of the country and his business. He declared that he was now prepared in principle to support the ANC and that the only thing preventing him from making financial contributions to the ANC's election campaign, for example, was the ANC's all too close links with the Communist Party, the SACP. According to Coleman, this business leader's attitude was symptomatic of an increasing number of company directors who were both concerned with company strategy and had retained contacts at grassroots level.

Here at the embassy, we have a growing sense that de Klerk may not have a fully accurate picture of the views of the EC countries, and that he takes the EC and its member countries too much for granted as a support for government policy. This perception is probably based on the sympathy which washed over de Klerk around the March (1992) referendum. He has undoubtedly forgotten that the sympathy was primarily for the continuation of the negotiating process. As we have written before, de Klerk misled the overwhelming majority to pursue narrow NP goals.

The proverbial straw broke the camel's back when de Klerk expressed disappointment at the reactions of some European countries to the Bisho massacre at the EC lunch on 21 September. All EC colleagues were astonished and slightly annoyed.

Prior to that, the Troika mission had raised the question of whether de Klerk was himself ill-informed or whether he underestimated the intelligence of his interlocutors. In any case, it surprised me that he presented the collapse of CODESA II as a direct result of the ANC's prior decision. We who witnessed CODESA II know this to be untrue, and would think that de Klerk was aware that we knew better.

Another example in this vein was Pik Botha's portrayal of the international community's reaction to the Bisho massacre during the diplomatic briefing on 29 September. farcical to say the least.

During the Troika visit, de Klerk presented the link between the release of all political prisoners and a general amnesty as a legal imperative. Recent developments have confirmed our suspicions that this link was purely political.

Would we not be doing de Klerk and the cause a disservice if we allowed him to remain in the mistaken belief that the European Community countries were unreservedly behind him? Should we not rather say to him: "Cut the crap - if you want a fruitful dialogue with the EC countries, we must have a common basis for discussion. You must accept that we do not always feel convinced of the validity of the South African Government's arguments and that in such cases we must say no."

The visit of the Troika mission may not have helped to change de Klerk's perception of EC attitudes. Both diplomatic colleagues and ANC representatives perceived the visit as an exercise in British rather than typical EC attitudes. It is true that Douglas Hurd was pulling the government's (and to some extent the ANC's) leg. Only our Minister dared to speak out against Pretoria.

This is not a question of moral rearmament or the introduction of Oxford meetings with the President of South Africa and his henchmen. They could do with that. For they are all very Bible-

strong and fully aware that the Ten Commandments contain no prohibition against lying[67]*.*

The crucial thing, as I have said, is that de Klerk is not misled by our inaction, or rather our diplomatic language, but that we - in the interests of both - speak out and make clear our assessment of the situation and, where appropriate, our wishes as to the government's position. On this point, we here at the embassy agree with the French and like-minded EC partners that it is primarily the Pretoria Government that must deliver in the present situation. De Klerk was the main debtor at the 26 September Summit, but the goods have not been finally delivered.

To that end, one could envisage a revival of the idea of a closer dialogue with the government and clearer messages on our policy, as well as, for example, a new Troika mission under the Danish Presidency. This alone could increase pressure on Pretoria."

A key question from Denmark was whether a new Troika mission under the Danish EC Presidency would take the process forward. To this, I replied in the letter:

"Sometimes one may have doubts about de Klerk's willingness and/or ability to enter into real negotiations. Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert[68] *in an article in The Star on 24 September puts it as follows:*

"Whether through incompetence, collusion, arrogance, ignorance or deliberation, the government has underestimated the dynamics of transition. It thought it could control the

67 I have subsequently been reminded of the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour", but have argued that it applies only to "thy neighbour"...which has probably been interpreted very narrowly.

68 F. Van Zyl Slabbert was the leader of the opposition Progressive Party from 1974 and from 1979 to1986 leader of the Progressive Federal Party. Despite the party's 26 seats in parliament, he left party politics in frustration in 1986 to form IDASA (Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa) with party colleague Alex Boraine, one of Denmark's closest NGO partners in South Africa

agenda for negotiations, but the agenda refused to stay pinned down or be subject to the will of any political party. Very soon, tension, suspicion and anger emerged. Posturing, bad faith and double agendas became the order of the day.

But the worst was the violence. Like malevolent slime it oozed into every fabric and texture of society. Instead of addressing it, politicians cursed each other for it."

On de Klerk's Rubicon and the parallel with Soviet President Gorbachev

"Change in South Africa means the introduction of a new system. Apartheid cannot be reformed - it must be abolished. On 2 February 1990, de Klerk crossed his so-called "first Rubicon", which began a process of change towards a new democratic South Africa. This change is in effect to abolish the old system and introduce a new one, but all under the current South African Constitution. Can one expect a system to be so tolerant that it will consent to its own abolition? Not willingly, at any rate.

At CODESA II, de Klerk refused to cross his second Rubicon. It is now reported that he may have been instrumental in preventing his predecessor P.W. Botha from crossing the first Rubicon already in 1985/86. Indeed, Pik Botha has recently - presumably to boost his own credit for a new South Africa - had published his so-called liberal draft of the Rubicon speech P.W. Botha was to give in 1985, but which was heavily modified in the final version. Rumour has it that the penman for the restrictive changes to the speech was F.W.de Klerk.

My Swedish colleague thinks that de Klerk looks more and more like Gorbachev - the man who initiated the changes but was unable to complete them.

As shown in the study on white South Africans' negative perceptions of the transition process, the task often seems insurmountable. The resistance of his white hinterland can hardly be overestimated. Added to this is the negative influence

of the security forces in the negotiation process. In this context, clear words from us might be timely for him.

All in all, I think that in this situation we can best serve the democratisation process by helping to keep de Klerk on his toes and - preferably in private - giving him our honest opinion on developments, including having the courage to speak out: "What the hell are you waiting for?"

Pik Botha himself has said that one of the worst risks South Africa can run is to be forgotten by the northern world because development is not proceeding at a reasonable pace.

The problem, of course, is that we in the EC do not always agree on what needs to be done. Some EC partners seem as frightened by the idea of a new South Africa as de Klerk.

Under the Danish EC Presidency, we may have a chance to paint a picture of the EC which is not dominated by British views."

In the letter I also set out the ANC's position on the process and the role of the international community:

"The ANC's position also gives cause for reflection on the role of the international community. Especially in the Nordic circle we have a creeping feeling that the movement takes us and our support for granted. One thing is that the Troika mission has been perceived by many as a British performance, but when senior ANC representatives felt that the EC Troika came with its index finger raised (the word was "prescriptive"), it suggests that the ANC too has been out of normal international conversation for too long. And many - not least Nordic circles - have supported the ANC in the view that the movement was by definition infallible.

The point is that in Danish communication with the ANC, it has been largely only the ANC that has made demands of us. This is very natural and understandable up to 1990/91. Now that conditions are slowly being normalised and one-way communication is being replaced by something that could be mistaken for dialogue, it comes as a shock to the ANC that the movement's proselytes are also making suggestions, even voicing what might sound like demands. Our ANC-

representative in Copenhagen, Tim Maseko, whose office in Copenhagen was partly financed through Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke, is a good example of ANC attitudes in this respect[69]

It has probably come as something of a surprise, for example, that the ANC is now being told by the Swedish side that the negotiation process will not survive a new Bisho. Even my Swedish colleague was surprised by such a clear and blunt statement from Stockholm, a sign that Swedish ANC policy is under review.

Thabo Mbeki's reaction to the message could suggest that the ANC is not fully aware that the movement could jeopardise its international image if it clings tenaciously to the Leninist concept of mass action.

The ANC leadership also knows that we know that a report on the ANC's treatment of its own "political prisoners" in frontline states has been on Mandela's desk for some time. Informed sources will know that the report contains material that is quite incriminating to the ANC. In fact, we should be advising the ANC to make the report public soon in order to prevent the government from using it against the ANC at a time that suits Pretoria alone."

Finally, the letter concluded on the two parties' perception of the EC countries' position on developments in South Africa and how the Danish EC Presidency could be used to create a closer dialogue based on a more realistic foundation:

"We have a strong suspicion that the Government has a distorted view, to say the least, of the EC countries' position on developments in South Africa and that we should consider, in our own interest and that of the negotiating process, how they might be corrected. For example, the idea of a more regular EC dialogue with the Government could be revived. The Danish EC Presidency offers an appropriate opportunity to test this idea, reinforced for example by a Troika mission in the first half of

69 ANC representative Tim Maseko had a small office in Copenhagen partly funded through Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (ActionAid Denmark).

1993. We have had a similar impression of a distorted ANC picture of the Nordic countries' position. With the change of government in Sweden, there now seems to be an opportunity to correct this impression. ANC "foreign minister" Thabo Mbeki supports the idea of more regular Nordic meetings with the ANC, but even the British recognise that the Nordic countries often have more influence on the ANC than the EC. The point is that the positions of the North and the EC are converging. It is important that we increasingly establish a two-way communication with the ANC, in which demands can also be made from our side.

In the dialogue with both major players, South African business can have an increasing influence: the analysis of the worrying developments in South Africa's economy should make an equal impression on both camps.

From an EC and a Nordic point of view, Denmark is a kind of soldier of officer Tordenskjold (Thunderbolt). The crucial thing is that we dare to say, especially to the government and the ANC: "What the hell are you waiting for?"

I remember that during Torben Brylles' subsequent visit there were several opportunities to talk about the proposals in my letter. As always, Torben was very receptive to our suggestions. In this case, it was a question of adjusting the Danish approach to the negotiation process, a proposal to tighten demands not only on the de Klerk government, but also on the ANC and especially Inkatha. This was expressed, for example, during Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen's negotiations with the parties and during Development Minister Helle Degn's visit, see Chapter XX.

Chapter XVII

Cooperation with other Countries' Representatives in South Africa

For a newcomer diplomat like me to a country where there had not been a Danish diplomatic representative for many years, it was invaluable to be able to draw on already established diplomatic colleagues, especially from the other Nordic and other EC countries. Sweden, Norway and Finland were all represented at ambassador level, masquerading as envoys or consuls general. The Norwegian Consul General, Bjarne Lindstrøm, had kept us well and thoroughly informed of developments in South Africa for several years, and with his successor, Jens Otterbech, and the Swedish Envoy, Ingemar Stjernberg, as well as the Finnish Ambassador, Bjørn Ekblom, I enjoyed a good and close working relationship. We all needed to report to our capitals on the dismantling of the apartheid system, particularly with a view to the lifting of sanctions by our governments. Although the Nordic countries had agreed on a Nordic anti- apartheid profile, the Joint Nordic South Africa Programme, this consensus among the Nordic capitals could not be maintained when it came to the lifting of the Nordic countries' national sanctions. On the other hand, Nordic co-operation in South Africa only intensified as political developments unfolded.

The meetings of the Nordic colleagues, also known as the Constantia meetings (a suburb of Cape Town where the Nordic colleagues' residences were located), traditionally took the form of a weekly afternoon tea at each other's homes. During this period, Denmark was still the only Nordic country that was also a member of the EC;[70] we therefore often acted as a channel of information between the two groupings.

70 Of the then 12 EC Member States, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Denmark had diplomatic missions in South Africa in the period 1990-94. Ireland established an embassy shortly before I left in 1994. The

This gave us more work, but also a privileged and often courted position among colleagues.

Meetings of EC countries at the level of Heads of Representation were held at the home of the colleague in charge of the biannual EC Presidency. It was my impression that these meetings only really gained momentum after Mandela's release and the start of the negotiation process. A single main objective quickly became the main focus: how could the EC, and after 1992 the EU, and the Member States best and most effectively support the negotiating process?

Historically, Britain, the EC country, had the closest relations with South Africa. The then British Ambassador, Robin Renwick, was hand-picked by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and rarely turned up at EC meetings. It was my impression that he was running his own show and felt above the EC circuit. Despite Margaret Thatcher's fundamental opposition to a core ANC policy, namely economic sanctions, the not uncharitable Robin Renwick managed to establish what was by all accounts a very close relationship with Nelson Mandela, and - at least in his own view - had a major influence on Mandela's views on various core issues.[71]

He was, however, well assisted by a tireless Prime Minister who, as early as the 1980s, had been exerting persistent and strong pressure on the Pretoria government to release Nelson

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de facto representative of the European Commission, Tim Sheehy, was a keen analyst and forward thinker, whose role during those four years far exceeded his official status as head of the European Commission's co-ordination office for the EU's programme for the victims of apartheid.

71 See his book "The End of Apartheid" from 2015 and the following quote from Simon Jenkins' article in The Guardian on March 5, 2015: "How significant this was to the course of events is unclear. Certainly, Renwick appears to have been operating at the limits of diplomatic courtesy. The diary entries become frenetic. Whomever he addresses, "I advised him to release detainees ... I warned him against the advice of the head of the security police ... I raised the issue of the abolition of the death penalty." When the die for reform is cast, Renwick is in full proconsular mode. "I asked the ANC to consider suspending the sports boycott ... I asked for the state of emergency to be restricted to Natal ... I congratulated Mandela on the suspension of the armed struggle."

Mandela. To this was added a British Embassy staffed by highly competent young diplomats. Robin Renwick and his staff had an unrivalled network in all circles in South Africa. This did not mean that Britain was not regarded by many, particularly within the ANC, with the ingrained suspicion that the former colonial and imperial power rightly deserved. Indeed, doubts were later even raised about the Iron Lady's fundamental attitude to the process of democratisation in South Africa, a country which, according to Sir Patrick Wright's diaries *Behind Diplomatic Lines*, she basically believed should be reserved for whites.

After Margaret Thatcher had been forced to hand over the reins of government to John Major in 1990, she visited South Africa, where she was received with full honours by both Mandela and de Klerk. At the British Ambassador's well-attended reception for her, she greeted all guests at the entrance with a handshake that was not only firm but also quickly followed by a jerk or heave to the right, almost sending the guest - at least Buller - flying into the arms of, among others, the guest of honour's husband Dennis, who was standing nearby in a group of South African businessmen[72]. Even after her resignation, the Iron Lady was effective in her no-nonsense handling of such social occasions: they should be over as quickly as possible.

That the British ambassador had built up a special status, including within the ANC, was demonstrated at a 1991 reception to mark the inauguration of the rebuilt Khotso House[73], which President P. W. Botha had ordered bombed in 1988. All that could crawl and walk in the fledgling new South Africa, including

72 Mr. Dennis Thatcher had financial interests in South Africa's business community. British economic interests in South Africa concentrated mainly on mining (gold, platinum and diamonds), but the former colonial power Britain's business community was otherwise engaged in virtually every other economic sector of importance.

73 Khotso House, belonging to the South African Council and Churches (SACC), was bombed because it housed members of the South African trade union, Cosatu, who had been made homeless a year earlier because their building Cosatu House had been bombed. The Khotso House bombing, which resulted in 19 deaths, was led by Colonel Eugene de Kock, who was later revealed as the leader of the death squad, see Chapter XXII.

virtually the entire diplomatic corps, crowded into the meeting hall. As if he had not greeted enough notables and virtually the entire diplomatic corps, guest of honour Nelson Mandela looked out over the assembly and asked in a loud voice: "Where is Robin Renwick?" I can't remember if he even turned up on that occasion, though.

From the EC circle, I remember in particular the cooperation with the new German Ambassador, Immo Stabreit, whom I knew from my time as "European correspondent" in the field of political cooperation between the EC countries, and the new French Ambassador, Joëlle Bourgois, the only female Ambassador in the diplomatic corps. The representatives of the two large EC countries were able to exert a certain influence on the parties, had a vast local network and were usually ready to share their impressions, experiences and analyses with us representatives from smaller EC countries. Joëlle Bourgois established a particularly good relationship with Mandela and later wrote a book about it. In June 1991, the EC Ambassadors produced a joint Heads of Mission Report on the state of play of the abolition of apartheid, a report which made quite an impression in EC capitals.

Joint action against violence

As the violence began to have an increasingly devastating effect on the negotiating process, Peter Lysholt and I began to discuss whether we in Denmark and like-minded countries could assist efforts to combat the wave of violence. As I recall, we were greatly inspired by our conversations with the head of the Commission of Inquiry into the Causes of Violence, Supreme Court Justice Richard Goldstone. In the early months of 1992, I certainly contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, where, during telephone conversations with Torben Brylle or his deputy, Carsten Nilaus Pedersen, I raised the suggestion that we, on the part of the Danish and possibly EC partners, should try to support the South African security authorities, in particular the South African police.

We were quickly given the green light to continue our exploratory work, particularly with a view to seeing whether there was any interest in the idea among my colleagues. There

was, and it was on this basis that Uffe Ellemann-Jensen made his proposal at the EC Foreign Ministers' meeting on 2 May 1992 for the deployment of EC experts to assist South African authorities in combating violence, as described in Chapter XIII.

This action became one of the main tasks of EC co-operation in the coming years.

Chapter XVIII

Informal Interaction with South Africans

Buller had arranged to have our accommodation both in Pretoria and Cape Town furnished as soon as possible, in particular with a dining table that could be extended to accommodate at least 18 guests.

Rarely, I think, has a table been used so often to bring together, among others, South African guests who had never before been in the same room. There's nothing like a well-prepared meal and a glass of wine to loosen the tied tongue, and South Africa, fortunately, produces superb wines. There were no other options in Pretoria in the early years for easily bringing South Africans of different skin colours together under one roof in the city's restaurants. Such events were much easier to organise in Johannesburg.

Unfortunately, I did not keep a diary of our years in South Africa, but the conversations around the table often provided material for many of the reports that I quite often had to use night hours to get written, and which I can draw on today to support my memory.

In the first half of 1991, we hosted a dinner at our house with, among others, the internationally known author André Brink, whose books Buller and I had read with a voracious appetite, especially *A dry white Season*. André Brink co-founded the writers' group Die Sestiger for young Afrikaans-speaking writers who opposed apartheid. He wrote both in Afrikaans and in English; his novels were all about what apartheid had done to South Africa. From the dinner table discussion, I remember how his view of the prospects for a future rainbow South Africa[74] was marked by

74 A rainbow nation is a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to describe a post-apartheid multicultural South Africa made

a surprising sadness bordering on pessimism, an assessment reminiscent of the view later expressed by fellow writer J.M. Coetzee in his book *Disgrace* and by opposition politician Helen Suzman[75] in a 2004 newspaper interview on, among other things, South Africa's relations with Zimbabwe:[76]

> *"My criticism of the present system does not mean that I would like to return to the old system. I don't think we will ever follow Zimbabwe's path, but people are allowed to be concerned. I still have hope for a future for whites in this country too - but I'm not entirely optimistic."*

My own first meeting with Helen Suzman in 1991 was a memorable one for me. She took the time to talk about her own political work and about her views on the emerging democratisation process, a narrative at the time characterised by relief, joy and optimism. It was as if she was finally seeing the result of her years of persistent effort, often as the sole and often even bullied representative of the opposition in the white South African parliament. I remember that she had her counterfoil up on the memorial wall in the parliament building one day when I had been sitting alone in the gallery. The regime did have some respect for its most tenacious opponent in parliament.

I was told afterwards by a polite police chairman that I was not allowed to take notes during parliamentary proceedings, probably a rule drawn from British parliamentary tradition. I had pointed out that it must be in everyone's interest that reports

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up of many groups. This is reflected, for example, in the new multicoloured flag of democratic South Africa

75 Helen Suzman, born Helen Gavronsky (7 November 1917 in Germiston, South Africa - 1 January 2009 in Johannesburg, South Africa), was an anti-apartheid activist and politician and the daughter of Lithuanian Jewish immigrants. She studied economics and statistics at Witwatersrand University. In 1953 she was elected to Parliament as a member of the United Party, but switched to the liberal Progressive Party in 1959. Suzman became known for her strong criticism of apartheid. She made numerous visits to Nelson Mandela in prison and stood by his side when he signed the new constitution in 1996.

76 Interview with Jane Flanagan in The Daily Telegraph 15 May 2004). Already Karen Blixen, towards the end of her major work *The African Farm*, expresses a similar lack of optimism.

should be made as accurately as possible to those capitals which actively supported a process of democratisation which the majority of Parliament had also advocated. My equally polite objections to this peculiar practice meant that I - and later my colleagues - were never stopped from writing in the gallery.

From those early days, I also recall our initial meetings with the ANC's younger budding political players, including Trevor Manuel, later Minister of Finance, Kader Asmal, future Minister of Water and Forest Resources then Minister of Education, Dullah Omar, future Minister of Justice and Aziz Pahad, future Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. They all helped to give me a deeper insight into the ANC's vision of a new South Africa, as expressed in the final draft of a new constitution.

During the negotiations on a new constitution in 1992 and 1993, I often went to the conference centre near Johannesburg where the negotiations were taking place. In the breaks between negotiations, I had the opportunity to contact several of the negotiators, notably Cyril Ramaphosa and Roelf Meyer, the ANC and government's key leaders, who had built up a special personal relationship over time, including on joint fishing trips. I was often one of the few diplomats at the conference centre, but it was a sustained interest in the negotiations that, I believe, helped to create a certain trust in the players and thus greater openness during our informal talks.

In April 1993, Buller and I had helped to organise a canoe trip lasting several days down South Africa's longest river, the Orange River, on the stretch that forms the border with Namibia. Here it flows through the Namibian desert, where the climate is so hot and dry that we could spend the night on the riverbank without a tent. Participants included anti-apartheid activist and human rights campaigner Kader Asmal and his wife Louise Asmal, Cape Town Mayor and Democratic Party member Frank van der Velde and French Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois. The trip provided ample opportunity for discussions on the future of South Africa around the evening bonfire.

It was on the way home from the canoe trip that we heard over the car radio about the assassination of the very popular

ANC leader and Communist Party chairman Chris Hani. After a nine-month break, negotiations had resumed just the month before, now in the most inclusive political forum of 26 groups, including the conservative party and the socialist Pan Africanist Congress. We were shaken and feared what it might lead to. Would it definitely derail the negotiation process? How would the ANC's supporters react?

The killer who shot Chris Hani outside his residence in Boksburg was quickly apprehended. A neighbour, an Afrikaner who witnessed the murder, had taken the number of the killer's car and immediately contacted the authorities. Police soon identified Janusz Walus, a far-right Polish immigrant who appeared to be in league with a prominent Conservative Party member, Clive Derby-Lewis. During the trial, Derby-Lewis admitted that he intended to provoke a race war and to sabotage the negotiation process. Both defendants were sentenced to death sentences which were later converted to life imprisonment.

The murder sent South Africa into a state of shock. Riots broke out in many places and tensions between the various groups only worsened. There was a real fear that the country would descend into violent conflict that could not be brought under control. One question loomed: could the negotiating process survive another act of political violence of this calibre?

In a statesman-like speech, Nelson Mandela appealed for calm, saying among other things:

> *"Tonight, I am reaching out to every single South African, black and white, from the very depths of my being. A white man, full of prejudice and hate, came to our country and committed a deed so foul that our whole nation now teeters on the brink of disaster. A white woman, of Afrikaner origin, risked her life so that we may know, and bring to justice, this assassin. The cold-blooded murder of Chris Hani has sent shockwaves throughout the country and the world. Now is the time for all South Africans to stand together against those who, from any quarter, wish to destroy what Chris Hani gave his life for – the freedom of all of us."*[77]

77 Unofficial Danish translation

Chapter XIX

Denmark's EU Presidency in the First Half of 1993

In Denmark there had been a change of government in January 1993, and Niels Helveg Petersen from the social liberal party had taken over the post of Foreign Minister and thus also responsibility for the Danish Presidency of the EC.

Not least because of the speedy investigation, helped by the testimony of the Afrikaans-native, the murder of Chris Hani did not lead to any serious interruption of the negotiations. I had the feeling at the time that Mandela's appeal, the speedy trial, the severe sentences and the fact that it was an Afrikaner who had reported the crime had had a cathartic effect on all sections of society in South Africa. This murder was just too much, even for voters on the right. The negotiation process was too deeply entrenched for this murder to block further progress.

We could breathe a sigh of relief and start preparations for the Foreign Minister's visit at the end of May 1993, particularly in his capacity as representative of the Danish Presidency of the European Community. Buller and I were looking forward to the visit of an old acquaintance from our time in Brussels, when Niels Helveg had been head of cabinet to the then Danish EC Commissioner, Finn Gundelach.

The programme for the visit on 27-29 March was extensive. It included meetings and talks with the main players in the democratisation process: President de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, Inkatha Freedom Party leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Democratic Party leader Zach de Beer, as well as representatives of the Peace Structure, the international observers of violence (EU ECOMSA, UN UNOMSA, and Commonwealth COMSA) the Goldstone Commission and of South African NGOs and church leaders. In his capacity as President of the EC Council of Ministers — he also addressed the World Economic Forum in Cape Town on a panel

with Pik Botha and Thabo Mbeki, chaired by Professor Schwab, founder and Chairman of the World Economic Forum.

In his speech on the theme *"The new challenges in Southern Africa"*, Mr Helveg Petersen took an overall perspective: the EC's relationship with the whole of Africa.

The Danish Presidency would pursue the dual objective of making Africa more visible in the EC and the EC more visible in Africa. Under the heading "The African Profile", the EC would seek to develop and deepen its already extensive cooperation with Africa in three areas: peace and security, democracy and the economy.

Without peace there could be no political or economic progress. The EC was ready to help Africa develop security mechanisms and methods of conflict resolution, including a system of rapid deployment of ceasefire monitors. The EC observer mission in South Africa could be a source of inspiration.

On democracy, Niels Helveg drew on the history of Danish democracy. It took time - 70 years - for democracy to take root in Denmark. It was not enough to hold elections; it was essential for democratic thinking and action to permeate all forms of society, such as organisations, associations, education, and cooperative movements. The EC was considering making a substantial contribution to support the forthcoming elections in South Africa.

On economics, he pointed out - not without a smile - that the fall of the Berlin Wall had proved Karl Marx wrong. It was politics that determined economics, not the other way round.

Developments in Eastern Europe had demonstrated that strict political control led to economic stagnation. (This was a small hint to any remaining communist planned economists in the ANC ranks.) The most urgent task for the countries of Southern Africa was to create a strong local capacity to build and implement economic programmes, especially now that democratisation and the introduction of a market economy went hand in hand. The EC was the region's largest trading partner and grant donor and remained ready to provide financial resources and promote investment in sustainable projects and programmes. The prospect

of increased co-operation and trade also between the countries of the region depended to a large extent on a positive outcome of the negotiations in South Africa (and Mozambique). He therefore concluded by expressing the hope for an early, successful climax to the host country's democratic process.

The main purpose of Mr Helveg Petersen's visit was to underline the EC's continuing commitment to democratisation at a very critical and crucial time, and to explore ways in which EC countries could support the continuation of the process, in particular the preparations for the first free elections, which we now knew would take place before the end of April 1994.

During the visit, the Foreign Minister made it clear to his interlocutors that the objectives of the visit were to underline the importance the EC attached to a rapid breakthrough in the negotiations, that the EC was ready to take a number of initiatives in relation to South Africa, including in the field of economic and aid assistance, once the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) was in place, and to offer EC assistance in the electoral process with election observers, if deemed useful. This meant in the first instance assistance to prevent violence and intimidation during the electoral process and to ensure international acceptance that the elections had been free and fair.

Mr Helveg Petersen was very satisfied with the visit, where the talks had given him the impression of a common desire from all actors to achieve an early breakthrough in the negotiations. As Mandela had stressed, the negotiating process had now shown it could survive all kinds of attack. It had become extremely robust. The multiparty conference had become a kind of provisional parliament where it now seemed possible to reach a united outcome. The outstanding issues concerned the transitional constitution and a number of constitutional principles which the Inkatha Freedom Party had wanted to give some power to the regions.

In addition to the federalism issue, agreement was reached on power-sharing during the transition period and the human rights chapter: How were adequate guarantees provided that

individual rights and freedoms would be protected? And what about private property rights?

Chief Buthelezi, the leader of the Zulu-dominated Inkatha party, had been in high spirits during the Cape Town meeting, which he opened by reading a six-page speech to the foreign minister. In it he drew parallels between the Zulus and the Danes, who had now shown after the Maastricht referendum *"that they wanted to remain an independent people in a united Europe".* Buthelezi was known for his long introductory speeches, but this one had been extra-long, perhaps intended as a special, respectful welcome to the new Danish Foreign Minister and President of the EC Council of Ministers.

Niels Helveg Petersen urged Buthelezi to help reach a negotiated settlement as soon as possible. Without this, it would not be possible to bring the violence under control. To Mr Helveg Petersen's offer of various forms of electoral assistance, including voter education, Buthelezi reacted with some scepticism about the EC, which in his view was mainly helping South Africa through the ANC and could therefore not be considered neutral. Niels Helveg Petersen thought there must be a misunderstanding and asked me to explain in more detail the support for voter education provided by the EC and Denmark. I explained that the support was available to all parties and organisations that had committed themselves to the democratic process and had not previously had the opportunity to participate in free elections for all South Africans. Buthelezi nodded, but said nothing. He did not pursue the matter.

During the other meetings with Mr Helveg Petersen, all the interlocutors agreed that South Africa's economic situation was catastrophic and that a turn for the better could only be expected after agreement on a constitution. The South African business community said it urged agreement on a constitutional settlement that protected private property and investment. Finance Minister Derek Keys agreed; 300,000 new jobs had to be created each year as 600,000 students start school annually. Keys saw no reason to make international development assistance dependent on a transitional council. The economy had to be put on its feet as soon as possible.

Niels Helveg Petersen stood firm; only a negotiated solution, including agreement on a transitional council, would get the EC to provide aid and other trade benefits. On the other hand, the EC should not hesitate to prepare the deployment of election observers without waiting for the establishment of an electoral commission.

UNOMSA chief Angela King was somewhat critical of national peace structures, which were not always as independent of government as they should be. The Goldstone Commission, she said, had taken on too many tasks, with the result that its recommendations did not always go far enough. Angela King called on the Foreign Secretary to use his influence to ensure that the UN Security Council could take an early decision that would allow the UN Secretary-General to work with the Independent Electoral Commission.

Judge Goldstone, who also attended the meeting with Niels Helveg, mentioned among other things his Commission's efforts to set up a panel on preventing violence in the electoral process, a task which would in no way, as the Government feared, interfere with the work of the future Electoral Commission, quite the contrary.[78] Goldstone also mentioned that there were now insufficient resources to conduct cases before the Commission. He had therefore considered the possibility of setting up a trust fund to finance lawyers' fees in connection with the Commission's hearings; this would have to be done on a completely non-discriminatory basis. Niels Helveg Petersen replied that the EC and Denmark were ready to consider positively such a trust fund.

Further details could be discussed with the embassy in Pretoria.

Violence, now more criminal than political, continued to threaten the democratisation process. The Foreign Minister promised to support actively ECOMSA's wish to have better security equipment to operate in the increasingly tense situation.

78 The panel, which included Associate Professor Jørgen Elklit, made very useful recommendations later in the year on the role of international election observers

The Peace Secretariat mentioned that, in addition to violence monitors, there was also a need for mediators to mediate in the many local conflicts, a role which ECOMSA police officers had already informally taken on in many cases.

Mr Helveg Petersen was in no doubt after the visit that the EC and Member States were doing the right thing in stimulating the interest of the parties to reach an early solution. One way of doing this was to acknowledge the normalisation and increased willingness to cooperate on economic matters which had been suggested during the visit. He had also noted the high level of satisfaction with ECOMSA's efforts and the general interest in obtaining the participation of international election observers. He saw it as a good sign that a precise election date would be scheduled before the end of June so that an accurate timeline for the transition to democracy could begin to be seen.

Development Minister's visit 29 June-2 July 1993.

No sooner had the Foreign Minister's visit ended than we at the embassy began preparing for the visit of Development Minister Helle Degn. She came both as a representative of the EC Presidency, which we held until 30 June, and as a Danish government representative.

On 25 June - just before the visit - negotiations had come under another fierce attack, this time from the ultra-conservatives. A group of members of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), including its leader Eugène Terre'Blanche, had broken into the World Trade Center negotiating building, disrupted the talks and behaved in a highly threatening manner towards several negotiating participants. According to our sources, Buthelezi had become very upset that a number of Inkatha Freedom Party members had been harassed by the AWB during the invasion.

There had already been 314 marches or rallies, monitored by ECOMSA and others, by this time in 1993. Over time, certain types of violence, including mass clashes, had been successfully curbed. Terrorist killings, on the other hand, were extremely difficult to prevent. In the first half of 1993, 614 people had been killed in

political clashes in Natal province, the same number as had been killed in the whole of 1992.

The security authorities managed to contain the situation relatively quickly after the AWB attack. 25 people were arrested, although not Terre'Blanche. Fortunately, shortly after the attack, the parties had returned to the negotiating table. It was something of a surprise that the extreme right had confessed its colours at this point, but it was perhaps better that it had revealed its intentions at this time rather than during the elections. The negotiating process had survived another attack and the programme for the Development Minister's visit was successfully implemented as planned. One of the particular highlights of the visit was a roundtable on development issues with senior representatives from nine development, church and political organisations, a first meeting of for further discussion of South Africa's development needs. The embassy had put a lot of effort into arranging this meeting with the contacts we had established over time.[79]

The Minister for Development stressed at the outset that it was important for the EC - and Denmark - to give a clear signal that, as soon as generally acceptable political structures were in place, it would strengthen dialogue with South African institutions on urgent development needs in the country. The EC would then be ready to promote the normalisation of South Africa's relations with, *inter alia*, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) and to enter into consultations on future EC-South Africa economic relations.

EC assistance would be based on the following development priorities: promoting economic and social development, and focusing on poverty, democracy and human rights. The EC

79 The participants were as follows: Shaheed Ragie, ANC Project Department, Eric Molobi, General Secretary, Kagiso Trust, Frank Chikane, Secretary General, SA Council of Churches, J.H. Meijer, Deputy governor, SA Reserve bank, John Samuel, ANC Head of Department of Education, C.F. Beyers Naude, General Secretary rtd. SA Council of Churches and well-known anti-apartheid activist, Wiseman Nkuhlu, Independent Development Trust, Jay Naidoo, General Secretary, COSATU, J.E.L Potloane, General Manager DBSA and Bror Jude Pieterse, SA Catholic Bishops Conference.

assistance programme was flexible and could be adapted to individual development needs. This meant that aid priorities were drawn up in broad consultation with stakeholders.

In the evening of the same day, Helle Degn had a dinner meeting with a number of key actors on violence prevention, conflict mediation and human rights. Several of the Embassy's close contacts from previous years participated: Charles Nupen, Independent Mediation Service of South Africa(IMSSA), Laurie Nathan, Center for Intergroup Studies, Ahmed C. Motala, Lawyers for Human Rights, Janine Rauch, Policing Research Project, Gilbert Marcus, Lawyer, ANC, Frank Chikane, SA Council of Churches, Arthur Chaskelson, Legal Resources Centre, Safoora Sadek, Human Rights Commission and John Hall, Chair of the National Peace Committee.

Helle Degn also used her visit to open a Danish-funded trauma clinic for victims of violence in Cape Town (Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture), a very moving event. As I recall, among the many dignitaries were two prominent victims of apartheid violence, the Trauma Centre's pastor Michael Lapsley, who had both hands torn off and an eye seriously injured by a letter bomb in 1990, and Professor Albie Sachs, later a Constitutional Court judge, who had one arm torn off by a car bomb in 1988. Meeting them and other victims of violence helped me to realise the importance of later setting up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I particularly remember the meeting with the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, this time in his KwaZulu capital Ulundi, as one of the more colourful and memorable.

Buthelezi met the young female minister with obvious scepticism, but gradually thawed during the conversation, during which Helle Degn spared no arguments to persuade Buthelezi to join the negotiation process and participate in the upcoming elections. At the farewell, official gifts were exchanged; Buthelezi gave the Development Minister a beautiful woven carpet, and Helle Degn presented the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party with a Georg Jensen watch, saying that this gift was meant

as a symbol that time was running out for the world to get an answer from him, whether he would agree to run an election in which he would participate. A gesture that elicited a broad smile from Buthelezi.

Although we received a warm welcome and distinguished treatment, there was no hiding the fact that Buthelezi's suspicion of the government and the ANC was reaching a painful point. Would Buthelezi again throw sand into the negotiating machinery? So far, he had exercised his influence on the negotiating process mostly as a "spoilsport".

After the Development Minister's talks with the various players, especially Buthelezi, we concluded the following about the negotiating situation as recorded in my notes from that time:

> *Neither party is strong enough to impose a constitutional settlement on its own, nor is the ANC. The two main players, the government and the ANC, are equally weak; and neither feels a sure winner of the first elections. Both increasingly recognise that only by standing together can they achieve a negotiated settlement. Both agree on a two-phase transition process: a preparatory phase governed by a Transitional Executive Council (TEC) to ensure a level playing field in the run-up to the Constituent Assembly elections; a second phase governed by a Government of National Unity for up to five years, during which the Constitution will be adopted.*
>
> *The two main actors also agree in principle on most fundamental constitutional principles, including the need for a transitional constitution.*
>
> *The third major player Inkatha wants a single-phase process: a new constitution should be negotiated by the current multi-party forum and put to referendum. However, if Buthelezi's wishes for strong regional autonomy are met, at least for KwaZulu-Natal where Inkatha has its strength, he is expected to accept the two-phase process.*
>
> *The disagreement over the form of state for a new democratic South Africa and the way to get there is one of the main outstanding issues.*

After the Boipatong massacre in September 1992, the ANC and the government had reached a new understanding, which evolved into an agreement on the above two-phase process. For de Klerk, this was a choice of principle: the government must find an overall arrangement with the ANC and hope to bring Inkatha on board; the government, on the other hand, cannot reach an arrangement with Inkatha and hope to bring the ANC on board.

The deeply suspicious Buthelezi was aware that the Inkatha Freedom Party would not get enough seats in a constituent assembly to be able to block undesirable outcomes on its own or to ensure the implementation of its desire for far-reaching regional autonomy. He therefore preferred the constitution to be finalised in the non-democratic multi-party forum, where he had considerable influence, and only then put to a referendum.

Buthelezi sought support so far mainly from like-minded home states (Bophuthatswana and Ciskei) and conservatives who joined the multi-party talks in March. However, this alliance was predicted to collapse if the Inkatha Freedom Party achieved its claims for regional autonomy and the conservatives maintained their unrealistic demand for an independent homeland in which all Africans have citizenship rights.

The idea of a homeland, in Afrikaans Volkstaat or Boerestaat, was based on a number of different proposals to establish self-determination for Afrikaners in South Africa. Such a home country could be a region of a federal South Africa or an independent Boer/African home country.

Ultimately, the idea had to be dropped because Afrikaners did not constitute a majority in any geographical area that could be viable as a more or less independent homeland.

Regionalism or federalism? A Danish contribution

In December 1992, the embassy reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on one of the themes that would shape the negotiation process for a democratic South Africa: regionalism or federalism?

The embassy had participated in consultations organised by the South African business organisation Consultative Business Movement with a number of embassies. The Consultative Business Movement envisaged the establishment of a think tank consisting of representatives of ten individuals, including from the government, the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party and the Democratic Party, as well as four international experts representing respectively the German, Spanish American and Danish systems. We imagined Professor Peter Germer, who had contributed to similar discussions in other contexts, including Nepal and Eastern Europe, would be a suitable Danish candidate. The Foreign Ministry supported these ideas.

Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any archival material on Peter Germer's visit, and I never had the opportunity to speak with my old textbook lecturer in international law about the visit. Peter Lysholt knew Peter Germer from his work in Nepal, where he had advised the government on how - with reference to the Danish experience - a constitutional monarchy could be established.

In addition to the constitutional monarchy, I also regularly discussed issues such as the ombudsman institution and electoral methods (single-member plurality as in the UK or proportional representation as in Denmark) with ANC representatives, including Tozamile Botha, head of the ANC's Local and Regional Government Department, and Jacob Zuma, who had become Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC in 1991.

It was certainly an issue that, in addition to the theme of regionalism or federalism, preoccupied South African negotiators because Buthelezi, First Minister of the Zulu Kingdom and leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, demanded an acceptable solution to the question of the integration of the Zulu Kingdom into a new South African democracy. King Goodwill Zwelithini was the reigning king of the Zulu Nation from 1971 until his death in 2021. The king's role - like that of the Danish monarch - was

predominantly ceremonial; the king could act only on the advice of his chief minister. Throughout his reign, this office was held by the king's uncle Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

From the point of view of the Pretoria government, KwaZulu ("the homeland of the Zulus") was until 1994 a partially independent homeland (Bantustan) which the apartheid regime had intended to be a homeland for the Zulu people. Until its abolition in 1994 with the adoption of the new democratic constitution, KwaZulu was led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. He implemented the limited powers of self-determination Pretoria had given him, but refused to accept the formal independence that four other homelands had accepted. In 1975 he had formed the Inkatha Freedom Party with the blessing of the ANC, but in 1979 he broke with the ANC and the antagonism between the two parties grew. During the constitutional negotiations the Inkatha Freedom Party created great difficulties and decided only at the last moment to participate in the elections of April 1994.

We knew from other sources that Buthelezi had been very pleased with his recent meeting with Mandela.

And I had no doubt that Helle Degn's visit to Ulundi, the capital of KwaZulu, had helped to further stimulate Buthelezi's interest in participating in a negotiated settlement. Like it or not, the Inkatha Freedom Party was a crucial piece in any future peace settlement. Buthelezi represented 25% of the black population in South Africa. An end to violence was a precondition for a peaceful transition to a peaceful and democratic South Africa. It was therefore important to involve him constructively in the negotiation process. And that was also the reason for inviting him to Copenhagen later in the year - despite misgivings from some politicians on the left in Denmark. These arguments were not weakened by the fact that on 2 July Inkatha had suspended its participation in the multi-party negotiations in protest at the fact that the government and the ANC had set 26-28 April 1994 as the dates for the first democratic elections.[80]

80 Map of South Africa showing the 10 homelands (Bantustans), see Glossary.

Map of South Africa showing the 10 homelands (Bantustans), see Glossary.

Chapter XX

Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Visit to Denmark 2-3 September 1993

Buthelezi's visit to Denmark was part of the overall effort to get him to rejoin the negotiations. The Danish Foreign Minister and Development Minister, as Presidents of the EC Council of Ministers, had put some pressure on Buthelezi during their visit to South Africa. They wanted to use this pressure and we invited him to Copenhagen. He had previously visited Germany and the UK.

As a reason for leaving the talks, Buthelezi reiterated at the beginning of his visit that he could not accept the way in which the "sufficient consensus" form of decision-making had been applied, particularly in setting the date for the decisive election. Furthermore, he had been dissatisfied with the ANC's and the government's insistence on a two-stage constitutional process, whereby a Constituent Assembly would first be elected and would then draft the Constitution. Buthelezi demanded that the constitutional principles, particularly on the form of government, were established before the elections, as far as we understood, because he felt he had more influence in the Multiparty Negotiating Forum than in a democratically elected parliament. Finally, Buthelezi wanted a discussion of a "federal model", for example on the German model, so that this would accommodate the homelands' desire for autonomy within the framework of the South African state.

During a meeting with Buthelezi in Denmark, Niels Helveg Petersen expressed the view that there was no alternative to the negotiating process and that the Inkatha Freedom Party should return to the multi-party negotiations as soon as possible. He stressed the need to reduce the high level of violence and to create a climate that would attract foreign investment.

One of Buthelezi's advisers had suggested the possibility of breaking the deadlock in the negotiations by possibly convening a summit between the leaders of the negotiating process.

Buthelezi's visit to Denmark failed to persuade him to return to the multi-party talks. But I think in retrospect it helped to make him realise that he could not find any international support to stay out of the multi-party process. At the same time, he wouldn't be able to claim that nobody would listen to him. On the contrary. Further constitutional negotiations also turned out to lead to an outcome that largely took into account the views of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

But before that, the process had to go through a series of dramatic events that were about to upset it completely.

Chapter XXI

Campaigning and Election Observation

In his address to the UN General Assembly on 13 September 1993, Nelson Mandela called for the lifting of economic sanctions. It was as if the ANC leader was finally officially confirming that the alliance with the government was strong enough to sustain the democratisation process through the final difficulties with the extreme parties, including the Inkatha Freedom Party, towards a successful conclusion. Another corner was turned when the Transitional Executive Council held its first meeting on 7 December. Prior to this, broad agreement had been reached on a democratic transitional constitution and an electoral law.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize that autumn to the two key players, Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk, was thus a fitting tribute to this joint effort.[81]

With the Transitional Executive Council, for the first time in South Africa's history, a structure was in place that allowed representatives of all political organisations to sit around the same table and help lead the country towards democratic rule. The main task of the Transitional Executive Council was to create a level political playing field for all South Africans to participate in the electoral process.

So far, the ANC, the government and their respective allies sat around the table of the Transitional Executive Council. There would also be room for the others as soon as they wished. These were initially the participants in the right-wing Freedom Alliance, set up in the autumn of 1993 between the Inkatha Freedom Party, the Conservative Party, the Afrikaner Volksfront and the so-called independent homelands of Bophuthatstwana and Ciskei.

81 However, there were several South African critics who felt that de Klerk's participation in this award was an affront to the many victims of apartheid.

They were united in their dissatisfaction with the ANC's and the National Party's attempts to push through the two parties' agenda without due regard for their wishes, namely for the widest possible regional autonomy and a not too strong central government. On the left, the Pan African Congress had decided to participate in the elections, but was still considering membership of the Transitional Executive Council.

Although the Tripartite Parliament approved the text of the Transitional Constitution, the door was not closed to further negotiations with the Freedom Alliance, in particular on its wishes for regional autonomy, including the right to tax.

In the autumn, it was our assessment at the embassy that a majority of the Alliance parties would eventually accept a compromise: in return for further concessions, notably from the ANC, they would be prepared to participate in the elections and presumably in the Independent Electoral Commission. Parts of the alliance would probably stand out. The rest would possibly form an electoral alliance and seek to threaten the National Party as the second largest party.

From the Danish side, we worked hard to secure broad international support for the elections. Not least the European Union, the EU as it would called from November 1,1993, would have an important role. The EU had decided to send more than 300 election observers to the campaign and the elections. To manage this effort, an Election Secretariat was established in Pretoria.

The Danish side was already planning to deploy some 25 Danish EU election observers before the end of 1993/94. Approximately the same number were sent in a special Danish operation for varying periods from January to April 1994. The Danish contingents included several members of the Danish Parliament, representatives of Danish NGOs and persons with experience of electoral processes in other countries.

The task of monitoring the election campaign proved increasingly difficult as the elections approached. A series of violent events threatened to sabotage the whole process.

On 11 March 1994, an armed right wing, including the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), invaded the homeland of Bophuthatswana. They wanted to support the Mangope regime, which the ANC, the AWB claimed, was threatening to overthrow. But the invasion collapsed, and three white participants were killed. A disillusioned General Constand Viljoen, former commander of South Africa's armed forces and leader of South Africa's invasions of Namibia and Angola (The Border War, from 1966 to 1990), left the rebels and fled to Cape Town to form the Freedom Front party.

Through the General's twin brother Bram Viljoen, who was on the opposite political wing and collaborated with the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA), we had the opportunity to follow developments. Peter Lysholt had met him on several occasions. We had intelligence that Nelson Mandela had already had a series of secret meetings with Constand Viljoen to convince him that the General's supporters, many of them white farmers, wanted a new South Africa and that they should participate in the elections. Mandela persuaded Constand Viljoen to abandon his threats of a coup in return for certain concessions to the general's supporters of an Afrikaner Volkstaat. Furthermore, Constand Viljoen agreed to allow the Freedom Front to participate in the elections. A decision on which the brother had probably had some influence, and which certainly had an impact on the positions of the other right-wing parties on the election.[82]

Mandela and the Afrikaners

During a radio interview with journalist Torben Brandt on 13.1.2013 in DR's P1, the South African journalist, Allister Sparks, told, among other things, about how Mandela, in prison on Robben Island, came into close contact with the prison officers, the real Afrikaners, and gained an

82 Nelson Mandela was subsequently blamed for selling out too dearly to the right, whose threats turned out not to be true. But at the time Mandela had little choice, and in the long run his understanding of his political opponents helped change the attitude of many sceptical white voters towards the ANC.

understanding of their background and problems (excerpt from the transcript of the interview):

"Mandela was a lawyer, and he realized that the wardens on Robben Island were not the elite of the Afrikaner community. They were from the bottom ranks, economically, educationally and in other respects. They were the most vulnerable to any kind of economic undercutting or threat from the black masses.

Therefore, they were the most racist, they were the most afraid. The poorer people, the least educated were the most vicious in their relationship with the black people. Now Mandela was a lawyer, and he found that these people had endless legal problems, domestic problems.

Marriages were breaking up, and he would engage with these wardens to find out about their private lives. And he endeared himself to them, some of them, to the point where they became real friends. I think understanding that is what brought him to this point - Mandela the commander of ANC's military unit - I think that his prison experience changed him - and changed his strategies. That is why he was able to adopt the strategy of conciliation, he knew how to approach them, he knew how to speak to them. He used these skills to cut the deal when he was out of prison."

In the run-up to the elections, the wave of violence increased dangerously. On 28 March, 19 people were killed when 20,000 Inkatha Freedom Party supporters marched on the ANC headquarters at Shell House in Joburg in protest at the April elections.

During Easter week in early April, more than 64 people were killed in violent clashes between ANC and Inkatha supporters. With the agreement of the Transitional Executive Council, a state of emergency was declared in KwaZulu-Natal to empower the army and police to quell the violence and ensure the conduct of the forthcoming elections in this area as well. At the same time, a meeting was scheduled between de Klerk, Mandela, King Zwelithini and Buthelezi, who opposed the decision on martial law. A meeting between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom

Party was also envisaged, with the assistance of a special international mediation team led by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

The violence did not plague the whole country. Apart from KwaZulu-Natal and Johannesburg, the greatest danger was in the grey areas where ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party supporters lived in close proximity, such as Durban and Pietermaritzburg. After all, the conflict in South Africa was not an ethnic conflict between - what some claimed - a Xhosa-dominated ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party, of which all Zulus were supporters; the Xhosa did not dominate the ANC and over half of Zulus were expected to vote for the ANC and lived in areas where they could do so without danger to individual voters.[83]

However, there was every reason to be aware of the security risks that international election observers might encounter in the violence-ridden areas. In order to prepare the Danish observers for this difficult task, special orientation courses were organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From the embassy, we assisted to the best of our ability in updating the newly arrived Danish election observers with additional information on developments in the country. The EU special Election Secretariat provided information on the tasks ahead, although not always to the satisfaction of the Danish observers. The EU observers had standing instructions to avoid areas where there was an imminent risk of violence and to leave immediately as soon as violent clashes erupted which could endanger life and health.

We had frequent meetings in the EU Ambassadors' circle where we discussed the situation with the Head of the Election Secretariat. The Election Commission, on which Jørgen Elklit sat, also followed the situation closely. We were very worried, I remember. The violence was still far from under control.

83 The black African population is divided into four major ethnic groups; namely Nguni (Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi), Sotho, Shangaan-Tsonga and Venda. There are several sub-groups within these, of which Zulu and Xhosa are the largest.

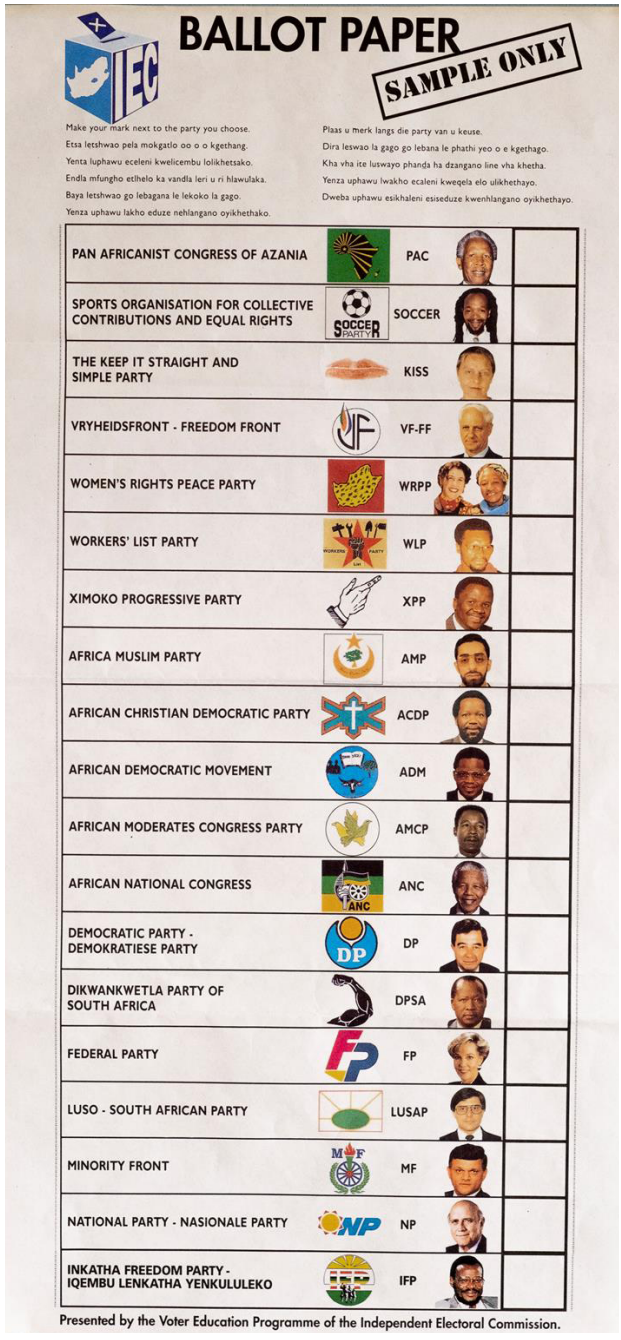
Henry Kissinger's mediation mission gave up even before it had started. It could not accept Buthelezi's ultimate pre-demand that the election date be postponed.

And so, at the last moment we could breathe a sigh of relief. On 20 April - a week before the elections - Mangosuthu Buthelezi announced that the Inkatha Freedom Party would contest both the national and regional elections.[84] The ballot papers with the names and logos of 19 parties were already printed; now the election officials at the 9,700 polling stations had to start sticking a label with Inkatha's name and logo and a photo of Buthelezi on the 45 million ballot papers.[85]

At the same time as the number of violent clashes increased in March/April, a very important source of many particularly horrific acts of violence was successfully identified and stopped. In mid-March, a death squad defector reported to IDASA and later to the Danish Embassy. The Goldstone Commission report on witness "Q" provides the first real evidence of the existence of the death squad we had long suspected.

84 It was alleged that an old acquaintance of Buthelezi, Kenyan politician Washington Okumu, had eventually helped broker a deal to make it clear to the Inkatha Freedom Party leader that he would lose everything if he did not take part in the elections: the homeland of KwaZulu-Natal would disappear, his financial state support would cease, King Zwelithini disagreed with his electoral opposition and many of his constituents would not understand why they were not allowed to take part in the elections. Finally, he would not be able to count on any international support.

85 Torben Brylle has stated that before the elections he received an unusual joint request from South Africa's new ambassador Conrad Sidego and the ANC representative Tim Maseko: they agreed that South African voters in Denmark could not cast their ballots either at the embassy or at the ANC office. But where else? The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reached an agreement with Arne Piil Christensen, Secretary General of the Danish Refugee Council, that voting could take place at the office of the Danish Refugee Council



BALLOT PAPER

SAMPLE ONLY

Make your mark next to the party you choose.
Etsa letshwao pela mokgatlo oo o o kgethang.
Yenta luphawu eceleni kwelicembu lolikhetsako.
Endla mfungho etlhelo ka vandla leri u ri hlawulaka.
Baya letshwao go lebagana le lekoko la gago.
Yenza uphawu lakho eduze nehlangano oyikhethako.

Plaas u merk langs die party van u keuse.
Dira leswao la gago go lebana le phathi yeo o e kgethago.
Kha vha ite luswayo phanda ha dzangano line vha khetha.
Yenza uphawu lwakho ecaleni kweqela elo ulikhethayo.
Dweba uphawu esikhaleni esiseduze kwenhlangano oyikhethayo.

PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA	PAC	
SPORTS ORGANISATION FOR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EQUAL RIGHTS	SOCCER	
THE KEEP IT STRAIGHT AND SIMPLE PARTY	KISS	
VRYHEIDSFRONT - FREEDOM FRONT	VF-FF	
WOMEN'S RIGHTS PEACE PARTY	WRPP	
WORKERS' LIST PARTY	WLP	
XIMOKO PROGRESSIVE PARTY	XPP	
AFRICA MUSLIM PARTY	AMP	
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY	ACDP	
AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	ADM	
AFRICAN MODERATES CONGRESS PARTY	AMCP	
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	ANC	
DEMOCRATIC PARTY - DEMOKRATIESE PARTY	DP	
DIKWANKWETLA PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA	DPSA	
FEDERAL PARTY	FP	
LUSO - SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY	LUSAP	
MINORITY FRONT	MF	
NATIONAL PARTY - NASIONALE PARTY	NP	
INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY - IQEMBU LENKATHA YENKULULEKO	IFP	

Presented by the Voter Education Programme of the Independent Electoral Commission.

Chapter XXII

The Death Squad. Q's Revelations

"We are believed to have made contact with a person directly linked to 'third force' activities in the South African police". It was Ivor Jenkins of IDASA who told Peter Lysholt in mid-March 1994, just a month before the elections, that he had just been visited by someone who wanted to talk about his and the police's involvement in political killings.

During a meeting that day between Ivor Jenkins and Peter Lysholt, the person gave so many details about the subversive activities of the Third Force that it could not have been pure brainwashing. A wave of violence that was sabotaging the entire negotiation process. It was therefore crucial, in the Embassy's view, to put him in touch with the Goldstone Commission, which was charged precisely with investigating the violence and its causes. Although he did not trust the South African police or other South Africans, we managed to persuade him to talk to Judge Richard Goldstone. Peter Lysholt told me afterwards about the meeting, which had revealed a person who was anything but likeable. However, he could be the only realistic prospect of a breakthrough in preventing further violence close to the elections.

After this contact, Goldstone had no doubt that he had finally found a genuine whistleblower. Due to a leak to the press, Goldstone accelerated his monthly report, which for the first time could report on "the third force": a secret unit of the South African police responsible for attacks on opponents of apartheid and arms supplies to the KwaZulu/Inkatha Freedom Party.[86] The criminal

86 The Inkatha Freedom Party was founded in 1975 by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who as party chairman and KwaZulu-Natal's sole prime minister ruled the homeland with a relatively heavy hand until the democratic elections of 1994. There was little difference between the party and home institutions. The homeland had its own police force, largely seen as the armed wing of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

activities, designed to destabilise the situation in the country, allegedly involved a number of senior police officers, including the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Basie Smit.

The whistleblower, a police captain Kobus "Chappies" Klopper, was referred to as Q in Goldstone's report for his own safety. In it, Goldstone detailed the development of the case, including how the judge's first contact was made - albeit disguised as an inquiry from a "senior diplomat" with no name or country given. This did not prevent enquiries from the media in South Africa and Denmark, all of which were answered with "no comment".

The report attracted widespread press coverage, and a few days later Goldstone called: it was overwhelmingly likely that Q's identity had been revealed and that his life was in danger; he had to be kept safe from possible persecutors. Now developments were gathering pace.

President de Klerk immediately sent three generals mentioned in the report on compulsory leave until April 6, 1994. The more liberal press raised questions about ministerial responsibility, while the more conservative media did not find that evidence had emerged to justify de Klerk's decision. South African police leaked to the press who they thought Q was and, according to Goldstone's sources, circulated a rumour that they had a tape recording of a conversation during which the Danish Embassy had offered Q 500,000 Rand to talk to the Goldstone Commission.

Goldstone also told us that he had received anonymous telephone calls threatening that President de Klerk and Nelson Mandela would be assassinated, and that the unit in question had highly sophisticated weapons stored at a factory in East Rand.

Of most immediate interest, particularly to the embassy, was an interview in The Star newspaper with a Captain Kobus "Chappies" Klopper, who denied being Q. According to Goldstone, Klopper and other police officers had met with the head of South Africa's Police Commissioner van der Merwe, the lawyer of the three holidaying generals and one of them, General Engelbrecht. This top general had also had a meeting with trusted associates, including Colonel Eugene de Kock, who would later turn out to be

the operational head of Vlakplaas, the farm outside Pretoria where the Third Force was based. During the conversation, according to Goldstone, Q and the other junior police officers were put under very serious pressure and the agreement was that they would return the following day to sign a statement rejecting the Goldstone report.

As we reported to the Foreign Office, *"The fact that they would not turn up will undoubtedly come as a surprise to the police leadership".*

Indeed, shortly after the revelation of Q's identity, Goldstone had asked the embassy whether Denmark could provide Q and two subsequent whistleblowers from the secret unit with witness protection in Denmark[87]. Goldstone had kept both de Klerk and Mandela informed of developments in the case, including the Danish role.

We were given the green light by the Danish Foreign Ministry very quickly. Danish police were ready to receive the three witnesses and take them to safe houses. In cooperation with, among others, Danish police officers linked to the Goldstone Commission, we "smuggled" them to Denmark under fictitious names via, among others, Frankfurt. They were accompanied by a representative of the Danish police, who was subsequently able to report that they had been shadowed at least during the first part of the journey, but had probably shaken off the shadow at Frankfurt Airport. Finally, something good to say about one of Europe's most visited and confusing airports.

All this happened between 15 and 23 March 1994, just a month before the first democratic elections in South Africa.

87 The background to this request to Denmark was, among other things, that Goldstone, as mentioned in Chapter XV, had asked for support for a witness protection programme during a meeting some years earlier with the EC Troika (Britain, Denmark and Portugal). When the then British Presidency, represented by Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and EC Commissioner Frans Andriessen, hesitated, Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen took the floor and promised that Denmark would see to it that Goldstone's request was met. The three witnesses were given visas for 90 days in Denmark paid for by the South African government.

It happened so quickly that there was hardly time to reflect on the consequences, including for Denmark, of taking such a radical step: granting witness protection to people who had been complicit in outrageous crimes. I remember that it was quite crucial for us that, after such a long investigation, there was at last a chance of uncovering a main source of the violence that was undermining the very process of democratisation and thus the elections of 26-28 April 1994. It was essential for us and for Copenhagen to be able to comply with an explicit request from Judge Goldstone. Later, we were to discover that the task was not entirely straightforward.

Police Inspector Palle Biehl, who supervised the questioning of Q and other witnesses, asked himself the inevitable question: why did the witnesses begin to speak out? In a long article in Jyllands-Posten on 30 October 1994, Palle Bielhl was quoted as saying: *"They could see which way it was going, and the election was coming soon. People who came forward could get certain things forgiven. They tried to make sure. At the same time, the suicide rate was huge. Many police officers who had been involved in the actions simply couldn't live with it."*

In the days that followed, the Goldstone Commission made contact with other individuals who wanted to lighten their consciences about illegal activities, including the creation of a major weapons cache for use by some 5,000 Inkatha Freedom Party supporters. These Inkatha Freedom Party militants would be able to paralyse the Johannesburg area at a few hours' notice.

On 24 March, Peter Lysholt and I had a meeting with ANC Deputy Chief Thabo Mbeki, who reminded us that the ANC had long suspected a third force within the security forces. According to Mbeki, when evidence came to light so relatively late, it was because there had been a - mistaken - perception within both the police and the military that de Klerk and Mandela had struck a deal with the generals that they enjoyed "amnesty" for all illegal acts. Goldstone's report of 18 March had had the important side-effect of sending a signal to all potential whistleblowers that no such conspiracy - here called a "cabal" - existed and that it might

serve a useful purpose to report illegalities, for example to the Goldstone Commission.

Shortly before, Mbeki said, a number of officers had told Mandela that after their formal disbandment, individuals from the controversial army units (Recce, Battalion 32, Koevoet, etc.) had been integrated into other army units, from which they engaged in the same kind of "hit squad" activities, arms smuggling and so on, that the police officers mentioned in the Goldstone report.

The problem now was to clarify how far the cancer was spreading within the army, to take steps in time to prevent attempted coups or other resistance, and to prevent the destruction of evidence. The next phase was critical. According to Mbeki, it was a question of acting swiftly once the preparatory measures had been taken.

During my meeting with Mbeki and his closest colleague, Sidney Mufamadi, who later became Minister of Police Affairs, I was told that just before his departure Q had revealed that six senior ANC members were spies for the police. He had not, however, given any specific details. The ANC leadership had suspected this for some time but had so far lacked evidence. Mandela was now determined to act quickly so that the police generals did not have the opportunity to use their knowledge at a time when it would be critical for the ANC. Added to this was Mandela's fear that the suspected ANC members would be elected to prominent positions from which the cancer could spread to the new democratic institutions. Once they had gained a democratic base, it would be much more difficult to remove them.[88]

88 Mbeki was prepared to go to Denmark as soon as possible to obtain further information from Q and/or to Britain, where other witnesses were on their way, possibly as a stopover in Denmark. One potential witness thus claimed to have important evidence stored in London. Mbeki knew that Q and other witnesses were in Denmark, but not where in the country. From the Danish side, we would not and could not give Mbeki access to talk to Q unless he agreed and, if he did, under the auspices of the Goldstone Commission.

From my notes of those days, the following emerges:

> *"These new aspects may, in my opinion, serve to explain why de Klerk has hitherto treated the security forces with kid gloves. As you know, 11 police officers are now at last been suspended, while two of the highest-ranking generals, Basie Smit and le Roux, have so far successfully resisted suspension, strongly backed by the "generals' club," an unofficial union of active and former police generals. Their attitude may be a sign that the generals are still imbued with the arrogance with which, under apartheid, they peeled and chose as they pleased, or that they have some squeeze on de Klerk."*

My British colleague Sir Anthony Reeve would not rule out this possibility. He invited me to a meeting at the British Embassy, but not, as usual, in his office. Peter Lysholt and I were led outside into the embassy garden, where a container had been set up. It turned out to contain a special soundproof room. Here we sat 5-6 people crammed together and held a meeting. As I recall, it was on that occasion that the British Ambassador told us that the Goldstone Commission had asked the British Government to provide witness protection for one of the other South Africans who had wanted to unburden his heart about the criminal actions of the death squad. Sir Anthony was keen to know what role Denmark allegedly played in the Q case. I told him that we had acted as a kind of catalyst in relation to the Goldstone Commission. I remember being very careful not to say more than was strictly necessary; we knew that the British still had very wide and diverse traditional interests in South Africa, that there was probably close security cooperation between concerned authorities in the two countries, and that not all British interests necessarily looked favourably on the democratisation process. Sir Anthony confirmed that the South African National Intelligence Service, which reported directly to the President and enjoyed his confidence, appeared to be the least burdened of all the various security forces and services in South Africa. That there was every reason - as the British had done today - to keep the communications on the Q case as confidential as possible was demonstrated a few days later.

I recall that at this stage Peter Lysholt and I began to reflect more closely on the Embassy's situation. Had we gone too far in trying to assist the negotiating process in South Africa and, in particular, the preparations for the forthcoming elections? We were certainly acting in concert with the Foreign Ministry and benefiting from the advice of the Danish police officers based at the Goldstone Commission and ECOMSA. But it was the embassy that was in the front line and was asked for assistance by the various actors in the negotiation process; we conveyed the wishes to Copenhagen with suggestions on how they should be handled. We should also be able to continuously assess whether we were exposing ourselves and our staff to unnecessary security risks. Had our recent role contributed to increasing this risk?

Q had not been in Denmark long before one of the Danish police officers (I think it was Palle Biehl) reported that Q had defied a clear recommendation from the Danish police and phoned his family in South Africa. The phone call had been traced by certain agencies in South Africa and Q had to be moved to new sheltered accommodation. The tracing showed that the persons concerned were in possession of very sophisticated equipment. I recall that we were advised at the embassy to avoid any communication on the case via open electronic media and that we should even switch to writing non-coded texts on an old-fashioned mechanical typewriter. There were also reasonable suspicions that a police officer, Riley, who was alleged to have committed suicide, had in fact been liquidated. Q and Riley had worked together at Vlakplaas.

I contacted Goldstone, who advised me to go directly to President de Klerk. The Danish Foreign Ministry agreed.

During the meeting on 25 March with the President at the Government Palace Union Building in Pretoria, I began the conversation by telling him of the Danish Government's willingness to comply with The Goldstone Commission's request for witness protection. I also asked for de Klerk's assessment of the current security situation concerning the embassy staff.

The President replied without hesitation that he personally saw no concrete threat to the embassy staff unless we had real evidence in the case. De Klerk had understood that the embassy

had only responded to a "knock on the door" and had mediated the initial contact with the Goldstone Commission. In his view, they were not dealing with people who would take steps without reasonable cause that might bring them into further disrepute. If we still wanted further safeguards, he was prepared to look into it. However, according to de Klerk, these were not "desperados", but people who committed criminal acts for personal financial gain. The President was probably referring to the many illegal payments the death squad had received from secret accounts to liquidate members of various interest groups.

In response to my question about the follow-up to Goldstone's report, de Klerk said that in his view the best thing would be to start the police investigation with the assistance of outside persons. The aim would be to establish whether there were grounds for bringing charges. After the latest revelations, it was not unlikely that the majority of the persons concerned could be convicted.

Mr De Klerk also stated that the Government had carried out a very large-scale recall of reservists to the army to cover the last week before the elections on 26-28 April and the period immediately after the elections. Already, the government had deployed 800 security forces in critical areas of KwaZulu-Natal[89].

Buthelezi had not yet given the Electoral Commission sufficient guarantees that the forthcoming elections could be conducted freely and fairly. De Klerk wanted a meeting with KwaZulu's Chief Minister to make him understand that he should not put the government in a position where it was forced to implement its constitutional powers by force. One last attempt at a political solution.

De Klerk had earlier offered Buthelezi a solution whereby the Inkatha Freedom Party participated only in the Natal elections, thus bringing Buthelezi out of the dilemma between maintaining opposition to the new constitution and seeing his power disappear 10 days after the elections. After some hesitation, Buthelezi had rejected it, but it remained on the table.

89 See note 84 and Ch. XIX in fine on KwaZulu-Natal.

In de Klerk's assessment, Buthelezi wanted a postponement of the elections in KwaZulu-Natal. There was also the possibility that the election in the province could be declared valid even if, for example, only 40% of those eligible to vote had participated, if the election had otherwise been free and fair. Such a low turnout could perhaps be taken as support for Buthelezi's call not to vote but would also mean that he would be out in the cold. This would create a very tense situation.

During his meeting with Mandela the day before, de Klerk had got the impression that the ANC was almost inclined to the view that the Electoral Commission's critical report on the situation in KwaZulu-Natal was sufficient ground to send in the South African army. But deep down, in de Klerk's estimation, Mandela also wanted an amicable solution.

Finally, we addressed the issue of international mediation. De Klerk pointed out that in reality it was still "only a concept". There was progress on possible mediators, but still disagreement on what should be mediated. The idea had been that the ANC would accept international mediation in return for Buthelezi agreeing to participate in the elections. The continuing disagreement meant that this idea no longer seemed relevant. As far as de Klerk understood, the realistic option now was to reach agreement before the elections on what would be mediated once the elections were over.

I recall the suspicion which characterised our attitude to the development of this matter. Who could we really trust fully? Even the fact-finding team approved by the Transitional Executive Council[90] had representatives in whom, among others, the Goldstone Commission did not have full confidence.

Fortunately, there was no need for this fact-finding team to come to Denmark to interview the witnesses there. At present, at Goldstone's request, there were five witnesses in Denmark, including Q, as well as two accompanying spouses and three

90 Transitional Executive Council set up in 1993 in preparation for elections in April 1994. Each of the 19 parties involved in the constitutional negotiations was represented on the Council, which oversaw, in particular, the de Klerk government's administration.

children. In addition, there were two police officers from the Goldstone Commission's investigation team who received the various witness statements, as well as a representative of IDASA, the first intermediary of Q's information.

At the end of March, Judge Goldstone had come to Denmark for a visit after a short stay in London, where he had been prevented from meeting a witness there. In Goldstone's view, the British authorities gave no reasonable explanation for this obstruction. The witness in question later came to Denmark[91]. During his stay in London, Goldstone had managed to persuade Thabo Mbeki not to meet with the witnesses. Goldstone believed that such a meeting would come to the attention of the South African security police, who could then spread rumours damaging to the ANC, for example about the alleged role of senior ANC members as spies for the police.

The Danish government's position was that it was prepared to assist the Goldstone Commission in ensuring a sound framework for its investigations, while not wishing to be a party to them.

This role could be problematic for both the Danish government and the Goldstone Commission. There was very close cooperation between the Foreign Service and the National Police on various logistical issues, not least the provision of secure communications between Judge Goldstone and various parties to the case. All costs of the operation were borne by the Witness Protection Programme funded by the South African Government for the Goldstone Commission.

So far, both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassy had responded to the numerous media enquiries with: *no comment.*

During his meeting with Niels Helveg Petersen on 30 March, Goldstone began by expressing his gratitude for the support he received from the Danish side. If the embassy in Pretoria had not

91 The reason for the incomprehensibly negative attitude of the British authorities towards the work of the Goldstone Commission at this stage has not yet been clarified.

mediated the contact with "Q", it would not have been possible to achieve the breakthrough in the investigations that was now being faced[92]. The latest investigations had revealed an almost unimaginable criminal "police culture" characterised by illegal actions, violence, murder, intimidation and disinformation. Thousands of police officers, but also senior ANC figures, had been involved. He had been deeply shocked by the scale of the illegal enterprise.

It was crucial now to get to the bottom of the cases so that the evil was not perpetuated in the new democratic South Africa. Goldstone confirmed that he had the full support not only of Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, but also of President de Klerk, the South African Attorney General and the National Intelligence Service. However, he was unsure how the President would react when presented with some of the latest revelations showing that members of his current cabinet also had knowledge of the illegal activity.

The illegalities had begun, in Goldstone's estimation, as early as 1948, when the National Party formalised and extended the apartheid system. One of the key witnesses had provided the Goldstone Commission with a "case book" covering the period 1974-1990, which showed that the security police had committed everything from serious acts of violence (for example, bomb explosions at Khotso House and Cosatu House[93]) to fraud and systematic intimidation, burglaries of prominent apartheid opponents such as Desmond Tutu, and forged correspondence, inter alia, to "prove" links between the ANC and the IRA[94]. It

92 Referred from the minutes of Head of Office Torben Brylle of the same date

93 Khotso House was an office building in the centre of Johannesburg. The South Africa Council of Churches (SACC), which had fought apartheid for years, had offices in that building, see footnote in Chapter XVIII. The same was true of Black Sash, an association of courageous women who, among other things, were actively engaged in public protests against apartheid.

94 The IRA (Irish Republican Army) was claimed by some to be providing arms and other support to the ANC. Kader Asmal, founder of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Committee and Cabinet Minister after the 1994 elections, recounts in his posthumously published memoirs how the IRA trained the ANC's military wing and, among other things, supported the attack on the SASOL

would be necessary to build a whole new police organisation. Goldstone hoped that the experience of other countries, including Denmark, could be drawn upon.

Goldstone now believed he had enough evidence to advise de Klerk to arrest senior police officers, including Inkatha Freedom Party members. Otherwise, he would make his findings public himself. The now quite extensive evidence in original format, including tape recordings, would for the time being be kept in Denmark in police custody.

Goldstone had no doubt that a large number of the police officers involved were still active; evidence had emerged that, among other things, a widespread discrediting of the Goldstone Commission was being planned. The South African Police Commissioner had also been unwilling to extend the "compulsory leave" of the three suspected police generals, Basie Smit, Johan le Roux and Krappies Engelbrecht, a decision he was forced to reverse. Goldstone had reason to fear for his physical safety and would not return to South Africa until the whole affair had been made public.

Correspondence which we circulated in confidence between Judge Goldstone and his colleagues in South Africa revealed that his trusted deputy had met with, among others, de Klerk, who urged Goldstone to return; the President himself wanted to be involved in the further proceedings and would probably guarantee Goldstone's safety. De Klerk would also provide safe houses in South Africa for any witnesses who wished to come.

Goldstone flew to Johannesburg on 3 April, was received at the airport by, among others, the two Danish police officers Palle Biehl and Willy Hove, and that very day gave President de Klerk and Minister of Justice and Defence Coetsee a full account of the progress of the case. All the evidence relating to the current criminal activities would be handed over to the international investigation team headed by the Public Prosecutor, Jan d'Oliviera.

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refinery in Sasolburg on 1 June 1980. Kader Asmal died in June 2011. At the same time, reports have emerged that the apartheid regime, through ARMSCOR, the South African arms agency, supplied arms to the Unionists in Northern Ireland.

Goldstone would then issue only a press release limited to this handover. Speaking to Peter Lysholt later in the day, he said that the publication of his full report at this time could have led to the collapse, even mutiny, of the South African police. Disclosure could undermine the policing effort that was so crucial in the run-up to the elections later this month. He also said that de Klerk had asked him in confidence about Danish support in the case, including whether it had political implications; Goldstone had replied that Danish assistance had been absolutely impeccable. De Klerk had been very satisfied with this answer.

The only time during the conversation when Goldstone had disagreed with the President was when de Klerk "sympathised" with the continuation of political disinformation by the police. Goldstone had clearly protested against this position.[95]

The question of the return of the witnesses to South Africa had also been discussed. For the sake of the process, it would be best if the witnesses could be heard in South Africa. However, Goldstone was adamant that they could not be forced to return. He had given them that promise.

Nor, on the other hand, should the witnesses be able to dictate the actions of the Goldstone Commission. If the witnesses wanted to go public with their knowledge, that was their business, but in that case, it would be difficult to continue to protect them and to maintain the offer to support their application for amnesty in due course.

During the later conversation with Mandela, about which Goldstone briefed Peter Lysholt, the ANC leader had declared himself in full agreement with the conclusions reached by de Klerk and Goldstone. Mandela had been even more concerned than de Klerk about the police reaction if the report were made public at this time.

At Asia Square, there was some concern about Goldstone's position: that it must be the witnesses' own decision whether to

95 A position that only seemed understandable when seen in an election campaign context. And even in that context, using the country's police to create "fake news" would probably be considered unacceptable even today.

go to the press, albeit against Goldstone's advice. According to the Foreign Ministry, there was an independent Danish interest in maintaining confidentiality, also in the interests of Danish citizens. It should therefore be emphasised to the Goldstone Commission's representative in Denmark that the witnesses were still strongly advised against going to the press. Nor could the Danish side readily accept the termination of the Commission's witness protection in such a situation. This would make the safety of witnesses a purely Danish matter. Judge Goldstone accepted the Danish views.

The Danish side did not want to protect the witnesses any longer than necessary. If the case dragged on, it could not be ruled out in advance that there might be applications for political asylum. Mr Goldstone had clearly stated that the witnesses had no such motive for coming to Denmark, and there had been no subsequent concrete indications to that effect.

Time showed that this assessment was correct. In retrospect, however, one might ask whether we had not considered these possible risks of accepting the witnesses in Denmark from the outset.

All that can be said is that there was simply no time to think through all the possible scenarios in advance. The first priority, after a very short period of reflection, was to protect the only witnesses who had so far been able to prove the existence of a death squad.

During the Easter holidays, Judge Goldstone and a few members of the Goldstone Commission interviewed the witnesses in Denmark. This provided new information in the case, which was passed on to an international investigation team set up by the then South African government.

At the end of April, a number of representatives of the international investigation team, including its head, Attorney General Jan d'Oliveira, came to Denmark to receive sworn statements from the witnesses, a condition for making viable arrests of some of the main perpetrators in South Africa. On 5 May, just a week after the South African elections, news arrived

that three arrests had been made, including Eugene de Kock, the operational head of the third force.

Shortly afterwards, witnesses, several with families, began to return to South Africa, most of them via safe houses provided by the government. The witnesses were now expected to take part in the trials of those arrested.

Only after the elections did the government break the secrecy that had hitherto surrounded Danish involvement in the Third Force case.

During a meeting with Development Minister Helle Degn on 13 May 1994, Goldstone thanked Denmark for its unfailing support.

According to Goldstone, it was not yet clear how the new government would deal with political criminality, including the question of amnesty. Justice for the victims was crucial. At the same time, it was vital to put an end as soon as possible to the "systems" responsible for the abuses, which were still in place. Although there was a danger of "cover-ups" as long as senior officials, such as the Chief of Police, were still in power, Goldstone believed there was no reason to fear an attempted coup: the atrocities of the past were mainly the work of the leadership and not the expression of popular opinion.

Asked by the Development Minister where Danish support could best be provided, Goldstone recalled that the Commission's mandate expired in October and that the remaining time would be spent finalising the final reports. The Commission's archives would be entrusted to a documentation centre, an independent institution that did not receive government funding.

Goldstone would greatly appreciate Danish support for this, on a par with that provided by Norway. Subsequently, the Minister for Development arranged for funds to be made available for Judge Goldstone to complete the work of his Commission of Inquiry.

Support was also needed for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission[96] and for the human rights field in general.

96 See more at the end of Chapter XVI

Finally, assistance was needed for the reorganisation of the South African police, building on the valuable experience of a number of police officers from Britain, Canada and Denmark – not least Palle Biehl – who had contributed to the work of the Commission.

During his visit to Denmark on 2 June 1994, at a press conference with the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Justice, Judge Goldstone thanked a wider circle of Danish authorities, in particular the Chief of Police, Ivar Boye, and his staff, for "*the invaluable Danish efforts in support of the Commission's work to uncover the existence of a third force in South Africa, an exceptional and unique example of international cooperation in support of human rights.*"

Minister of Justice Erling Olsen could not refrain from revealing, with a smile, that the Danish effort had been such a well-preserved action that he himself had only been informed now, after it was well over.

The Prime Minister then hosted a lunch at Christiansborg for Judge Goldstone[97]. I know that Goldstone was very pleased and grateful for this honour. He deserved it too.

97 See Judge Richard Goldstone's own statement in the book "For Humanity. Reflections of a War Crimes Investigator" Witwatersrand University Press 2000.

Postscript

The head of the death squad, Colonel Eugene de Kock, was given the opportunity to reveal to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission the full details of the criminal actions of the C 10 death squad. He sought and was granted amnesty for certain crimes, but in 1996 was tried and convicted of 89 crimes, including six murders, and sentenced to a total of 212 years in prison. He was paroled in 2015 and began helping relatives of his victims track down where their remains had been buried.

South African poet Antjie Krog, writing in the New York Times on 13 March 2015, pointed out that repentance was not a requirement for amnesty and that most of those who testified to crimes during the apartheid period simply disappeared to continue anonymous lives. One military general and 19 top officers were charged with murder and similar serious crimes aimed at destabilising the country, but all 20 were acquitted. Eugene de Kock, known as "Prime Evil", was the only person jailed after 1994 for crimes committed during the apartheid era.

He is one of the few who, according to Antjie Krog, has repented of his crimes.

Vlakplaas

Vlakplaas is a farm about 30 km outside Pretoria. Dirk Coetzee, a company commander in the security police, set up a base here in 1979. It became the headquarters of a 15-man death squad that kidnapped anti-apartheid activists and brought them to Vlakplaas for interrogation under torture.

Some of the more high-profile victims included ANC lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, student activist Sizwe Kondile and freedom fighter Sipiwe Mtimkulu. Many never left Vlakplaas. Their remains were burned or blown up to remove evidence, while the killers sat around campfires, barbecuing and drinking beer.

In 1982, Dirk Coetzee was replaced by 33-year-old Eugene de Kock, who considered his predecessor a coward for always leaving the actual killings to his colleagues.

Eugene de Kock was not like that.

In November 1989, Dirk Coetzee had confirmed earlier reports about the existence of Vlakplaas to the anti-government weekly *Vrye Weekblad*. President de Klerk was pressured in 1990 to set up a commission of inquiry in Britain headed by Judge Louis Harms. Despite Coetzee's testimony, the Security Police stood firm, claiming that these were pure fantasies. The Harms Commission relied on these statements and found Coetzee to be an unreliable witness. Dirk Coetzee later testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and received amnesty in 1997. That same year, Eugene de Kock was convicted of, among other things, attempting to murder Dirk Coetzee. Vlakplaas was closed down during the transition to democratic rule. It is being considered for conversion into a museum.

Source: Marc Davenport, article in BBC News 30.8.2011Vlakplaas

PART 4

On the Front Row for the Big Win

South Africa's first democratic elections and Nelson Mandela's inauguration as president in 1994 were a moving culmination of four years as an eyewitness to the country's transformation. But our long effort also secured unique access to the dramatic run-up, with Danish election observers and election expert Jørgen Elklit at the heart of the Electoral Commission. Afterwards, everyday life began putting the new democratic principles into practice.

Chapter XXIII

Free at Last: The Elections and Nelson Mandela's Presidential Inauguration

On 23 May 1994 - shortly after the elections and the presidential inauguration - I wrote an article for the Foreign Ministry's magazine *Kureren* about this decisive turning point in South African history:

> *"Deep down, we knew there would be another ordinary weekday after this party; but the party was so lovely while it lasted."*

The day of the presidential inauguration in Pretoria I sat with a very patient prime minister and his delegation in the amphitheatre at the Union Building, waiting for other celebrities from around the world to find their seats. Probably the biggest turnout of heads of state and government since John F. Kennedy's funeral. The sun was already beating down. In front of us, Cuban President Fidel Castro was about to clash with US Vice President Al Gore in the crowded first seats under the podium. The PLO's Yasser Arafat had just taken his seat not far from Israel's President Weizman.

Mandela, President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, climbed the stairs accompanied by the ANC military leader and the heads of the military forces. Also following the old man were the leaders of the South African police, apartheid's spearheads, Mandela's jailers. Mandela took the presidential oath, they saluted him. If I had not experienced the paradox myself, I would not have believed it. The choir sang Die Stem, the national anthem of the Afrikaans people, whose tune is reminiscent of the song "Du danske Mand", followed by the ANC's moving Nkosi Sikelel'i- Afrika - the two new national anthems. South Africa's rainbow-coloured flag went to the top.

These were powerful and moving moments. Mandela took the floor:

> *"We enter a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall. a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world"*

Several squadrons of Air Force Impala jets, transport planes and helicopters flew in perfect formations over the 6036 guests from home and abroad. I saw the Chief of the Air Force strike the sign of the cross. The ceremony was more than an hour late. But all went smoothly, and the roar of thousands of South Africans revealed that it was more than a display of the military hardware that had bravely sought to counter the communist "total onslaught" against poor white South Africa as far north as Angola. In the days that followed, many South Africans told me that the very fact that they could stand in solidarity with the military flagships that day had been one of the most moving things.

> *"The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us."*

After 342 years of white rule, 40 years under the National Party's apartheid regime and 27 years of his own life in prison, Mandela was able to mark the culmination of one of this century's most remarkable revolutions with words of reconciliation, healing and unity.

Peace after a war with no victors or vanquished. Total system change marked by continuity. A white-dominated parliament voting for a transitional democratic constitution and thus for its own abolition. The paradoxes are legion.

According to the programme, a flock of white doves of peace were to be released over the assembly during the ceremony. They never came. Sabotage from the far right, many asked. It was claimed that it had not been possible to get peace doves in those days. It was the pigeons' mating season and they had other things to think about.

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After nearly four years in office, Buller and I had become accustomed to dramatic turning points in South Africa's democratisation process. "*Never a dull moment,*" we replied with mild understatement to our inquiring South African friends. The Danish language had been wrung weekly for new words and phrases to report on the often surprising stages the struggle for peace and democracy had passed through since 1990.

Even the elections we had all been looking forward to turned out to be different in several respects from what we had expected. Everything we feared would go wrong went right, and everything we thought could not go wrong went wrong anyway. It was not really an election in the traditional sense, but a power grab that took shape along the way and was eventually accepted by all parties.

The Danish member of South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission, Dr Jørgen Elklit, said that never had an election of such dimensions to be prepared in such a short time. 23 million voters, 20 million of whom had never tried to cast a ballot. In one of the world's most violence- ridden countries, with security forces that did not enjoy the general confidence of the population and homelands (Bantustans) that were either unwilling or unable to help prepare the elections.

Electoral rules had to be constantly adapted to changing circumstances.

Since July 1993, when the election date was agreed, the embassy, together with Nordic and EU colleagues, had worked to meet South African wishes for the best and widest possible monitoring of the electoral process.

From the outset, the EU had sought to assist the fledgling peace structures in quelling the violence. On the basis of a UN Security Council resolution of August 1992, the UN, the Organisation of African Unity and the Commonwealth, as well as the EU, had had some 100 special observers of violence stationed in South Africa since the autumn of 1992. The EU violence monitors (ECOMSA) were particularly valued in all quarters because we

used experienced police officers for the task. In particular, they managed to establish a good professional dialogue with the South African police. In addition, 5-6 police officers from EU countries were attached to the Goldstone Commission, which was tasked with investigating the causes of the violence. Denmark constantly occupied three of the approximately 16 seats of ECOMSA and had one to two police officers attached to the Goldstone Commission.

Against this background, it was only natural that the same four international organisations should be the main forces in setting up the international election observation teams. 9000 polling stations were planned. We did not dare to count on the same number of observers per polling station as in the Namibian elections. There would have been 25 000 observers in South Africa.

We managed to mobilise about 5000 observers from home and abroad. Denmark had a total of about 75 observers, including about 25 attached to the 307-strong EU Election Observation Mission and a similar number under the UN observation team. Finally, EU countries provided 112 persons as political experts, electoral experts and advisers, in particular to the Independent Electoral Commission. Like the EU and a number of Member States, Denmark made significant contributions to voter education through competent South African NGOs.

Through these efforts, we hoped to help prevent violent sabotage of the election campaign and of the elections themselves. I met virtually all the Danish election observers and got the impression that they were competent and committed people, whether young students or experienced members of parliament.

In particular, the EU observation team (EUNELSA) became a useful example of EU cooperation at grassroots level. The Danes distinguished themselves not only by their high level of professionalism, but also by their traditional lack of trust in authority. It was typically the Danish observers who dared to criticise shortcomings, for example in the management's induction courses. This shocked some EU colleagues, but in the long run won the respect of all. Everyone was ready to take on a task that, from the outset, could hardly be called risk-free. Inkatha's boycott of the electoral process right up to 19 April had

caused great tension, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal. Nervous election observers reported threats in "no-go areas", and the mood did not improve when a series of terrorist bombings took place in the days leading up to the elections, killing a dozen civilians and injuring hundreds more.

And then the election itself went completely differently than we had predicted. The election days were the most peaceful in South Africa in the previous 15-20 years. This is partly because Inkatha finally decided to participate in the elections, and because shortly before the elections the police managed to arrest 31 ultra-conservatives suspected of bomb attacks, and the police and military behaved in an exemplary manner throughout the country. The more bloodthirsty section of the world press was deeply frustrated.

The Embassy's expatriate staff had themselves been accredited as election observers, and we followed the election process in and around Pretoria, from black squatter camps around the black township of Mamelodi to the country's most Afrikaans-dominated areas in the Pretoria suburbs.

There was a wondrous atmosphere, an expectant silence. In Mamelodi, mile-long queues of patiently waiting first-time voters. In Pretoria, blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians among each other. Any worries about voter confusion over the ballot itself and the two ballot papers were put to rest. Voter education must have worked, not only on how to vote, but especially why to do so.[98]In any case, the turnout was about 87% and the number of rejected ballots, according to Dr Elklit, incredibly low, less than

98 I remember one curious exception from the following incident: after a voter had cast his vote, the voter's hand was provided with a receipt in the form of an invisible colour, which could only be seen by a scanner with ultraviolet light. At the polling stations, everyone who wanted to vote had their hands scanned to ensure they were not trying to cheat their way to an extra vote. As election observers, we witnessed a small incident on 27 April at one polling station, where a black voter was "caught" in the scan. When he was accused of trying to cheat, he looked quite distraught: "I was told that there would be voting on 26, 27 and 28 April. I was here to vote yesterday and now I'm coming today to vote again". He was given a brief explanation and left with a smile. There are many democratic rules we take for granted in Denmark.

1% despite the large number of first-time voters, over 50% of whom are illiterate.

The sense of freedom gripped everyone - including whites, some of whom said that for the first time they no longer felt like the world's most excluded people.

The ultra-conservatives, who did not want to take part in the elections and probably feared that the "communist-dominated ANC" would confiscate their homes and other worldly goods after taking power, had hoarded to such an extent in Pretoria that supermarket shelves of tinned food were almost empty. On election day, they reportedly stayed indoors with guns ready to fire. One journalist has claimed that some of them are probably still sitting there with their cellars full of tomato soup and beans, wondering where all the black vandals are going.

While all went well in the Pretoria area, at several polling stations elsewhere in the country, particularly in the former homelands, there were all sorts of problems with ballot papers and other voting materials. In several homelands an extra voting day had to be introduced. In addition, there were widespread and serious problems with counting. In particular, the procedures for marking, sealing and shipping ballot boxes were not followed.

At several counting stations the situation became quite acute. The problem was solved in a way that is not yet fully transparent to the international election observers. When about half of the votes had been counted on 2 May, de Klerk declared Mandela the winner and a few hours later the ANC leader declared himself the winner. Congratulations poured in from all parties, including Buthelezi, and that was the end of the matter - days before the count was over and the Independent Electoral Commission had declared the election "*substantially free and fair*". The international election observers did not use these words, but concluded that the elections accurately reflected the political views of the South African people.

The elections were over, Mandela was inaugurated as President with de Klerk and Thabo Mbeki as Vice-Presidents. Tomorrow the newly elected parliament will hold its opening session.

Mandela will talk about how to bridge the biggest social and economic gaps of any country in the world. How to combat the violence that is rearing its ugly head again around the country.

Cape Town, 23 May 1994"

The comic strip Madam and Eve *by S. Francis, H. Dugmore and R. Schacheri in the Cape Times just after the elections in April 1994.*

Erika Jørgensen's experience as an election observer

"As one of the EU team members, I was based in the then Northern Transvaal region. The task was 1. to help build confidence in the population that the electoral process was transparent, 2. to deter individuals or groups who might be tempted to manipulate the elections, and 3. to help ensure credibility both in South Africa and internationally in relation to the outcome of the elections.

We worked closely with the IEC, the Independent Electoral Commission, a group of 16 highly respected individuals tasked with overseeing the entire electoral process. Their mandate was to organise the entire electoral system, including ensuring in a very practical way that there were sufficient ballot papers, ballot boxes, election officials, relevant information on how to conduct the actual electoral process in order to conduct a proper election that made voters feel safe and that their votes would not be misused. This was a huge task which required, among other things, that the population was given sufficient information and that the polling stations were secure and had the right facilities.

There was tremendous will and support for the process to succeed and we were received in most places with open minds and great enthusiasm, but also with suspicion that the forces behind the apartheid regime would not just step aside. The closer we got to election day; the more people feared that radical elements in the country would obstruct the elections by violent means. It was not to be. On the contrary, we saw that the very logistics of the technical part of the elections were manipulated. In other words, the election material was not complete when it arrived at the polling stations. Ballot papers, pads, pens, ink, ballot boxes and so on were missing. It was a huge last-minute challenge, which was only solved by a joint effort that could not have been completed if the elections had not been extended by an extra day! How the infrastructure had been infiltrated and who was behind it is anyone's guess. Fortunately, the result was that the first free elections were held, and a rainbow state was created!"

Chapter XXIV

After the Elections

The election had not been quite so smooth as described in my article above. As indicated, the electoral process encountered highly unexpected difficulties which, even in May 1994, it was difficult to account for, even though we in Denmark were particularly well placed to become acquainted with the problem.

But first a little about the background.

As early as 2 December 1992, in his letter to Torben Brylle, Peter Lysholt outlined one of the issues that would shape the negotiation process for a democratic South Africa, namely the elections themselves and the establishment of an independent electoral commission. For the preparation of this, in the form of consultations with international experts, the embassy suggested Professor Jørgen Elklit, who had already been involved in the work of the Nepalese Election Commission. The proposal was accepted in Copenhagen; Jørgen Elklit already came to South Africa in 1993 to participate in the preparations for the elections and then became a member of the South African Electoral Commission.

The first democratic elections

All that could crawl and walk had been invited to the Gallagher Convention Centre at Midrand, symbolically halfway between the government capital Pretoria and the ANC capital Johannesburg.

The date was 6 May 1994, and the purpose was to hear the official announcement of the full results of the elections between 26 and 29 April.[99] The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which had been responsible for the conduct of the elections, was

99 The elections were originally scheduled to take place on 26 to 28 April, with the first day reserved for disabled voters. Due to technical problems, including a lack of voting material in several places, the polling was extended there by an extra day on 29 April to ensure that all voters had the opportunity to cast their ballot.

responsible for the announcement. Chairs were set up on stage for all IEC members, including the Danish member Jørgen Elklit. Representatives of all the parties, NGOs, election observers, the diplomatic corps and many others. Everyone was eagerly waiting.

De Klerk had already acknowledged on 3 May that Mandela and the ANC had won the elections. But we did not yet know the final figures, including whether the ANC had obtained the two-thirds majority needed to amend the Constitution. Nor did we know how the seats in the new parliament had been allocated. We waited, but nothing happened.

We were aware that there had been a lot of protests about irregularities in the electoral process around the country, but we assumed that they must have been resolved since we had been convened today.

Finally, after hours of waiting, the members of the Electoral Commission appeared on the scene and announced the results:

The ANC had won 62.6% of the vote, enough to legitimise its mandate, but not enough for the two-thirds.[100] The National Party got 20.4% and the Inkatha Freedom Party 10.5%.

A sigh of relief went through the assembly. The result sounded almost too good to be true to some of the audience. Had there been a so-called 'crap deal' on power-sharing?

After the announcement, I remember Jørgen Elklit telling me that after the election it had been discovered that the Electoral Commission's results control centre had been hacked and that a virus had been introduced which distorted the election results. By the time 12 million votes had been counted, two US IT people had signalled that there were signs of strange results in the IT system (then called electronic data processing - EDP). There had apparently been illegal intrusion into the system: a multiplier had been inserted which meant that each time a number for the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party appeared, they

100 In the time that followed, I got the strong sense that Nelson Mandela was far from unhappy that the ANC had not achieved a two-thirds majority. I do not believe that South Africa's new president wanted to be subject to pressure from just one party (the ANC) to implement changes to the new constitution

were multiplied by a factor of 1.03. The results control centre had therefore been shut down and data collection taken over by a manual data reception system that had operated in parallel as a back-up and verification mechanism.

The chairman of the South African Electoral Commission, Judge Johann Kriegler, in an article with Betty Welz in the Festschrift to Jørgen Elklit: *"Democracies, Elections and Political Parties"* published by *Politica* 2012, has taken a stand on and once and for all dismissed the many accusations that had been levelled from various quarters over time against the Electoral Commission for being responsible for an election result achieved by a "deal" between the main political parties. The President, either alone or in collusion with the parties, was said to have distributed votes and seats in a way that satisfied their own political ambitions. The article is entitled *"Too good to be true: the "Designer Outcome" of South Africa's 1994 Elections."*

In addition to dismissing these allegations convincingly, the two authors also recount the hacking the Electoral Commission had been subjected to and whether it could have played a role in the alleged "crap deal":

> *"The data collation (the comparing and checking of the various vote tallies) first at the RCC and then manually was undertaken by IEC members, more specifically by Jørgen Elklit, the world-renowned expert on proportional representation systems, who was responsible for the review and personally supervised the conversion of the vote counts into mandates in the various legislative institutions. Was he complicit in an electoral fraud - or was he so naive that he was simply duped? "(My translation)*

The authors' answer was a clear no.

The hacking attack had been averted, but those responsible for the attack have never been found, Jørgen Elklit told me during meetings in Aarhus in 2016.

Jørgen Elklit had already been to South Africa in 1993, before joining the Electoral Commission, to work with a number of other South African and international election experts to produce

a report with recommendations on how elections in South Africa could be conducted in a responsible manner. The report was the first of its kind prepared for the Goldstone Commission, with the main aim of showing how best to prevent violence and intimidation before, during and after the forthcoming elections.

In the run-up to the elections, Hans Herluf Pedersen, whom we called Rambo, came to assist the Electoral Commission in reviewing the various security measures. His efforts may have contributed to the timely detection of the hacking attack.

Jørgen Elklit has continued to follow developments in the young democracy after the elections.

European Human Rights: an inspiration for the new South Africa?

Shortly after the elections in April, we received word that my former international law professor and mentor Isi Foighel would be visiting South Africa. He had been invited to a seminar to tell a large gathering of the new South Africa's judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers about developments in the European human rights system based on the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the practice developed by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), where he was a judge. The new South African Constitution contains an extremely well-developed chapter on human rights; after all, it was these in particular that the democratisation process had set out to protect.

I met Isi Foighel in Cape Town just after the seminar, where he recounted an amusing but somewhat dramatic incident during the seminar. On the first day of the seminar, Isi Foighel had told the assembly about the famous Jersild or Green Jacket case, which had just been brought before the ECtHR. on 20 April 1994, a week before the elections.

In 1985, DR journalist Jens Olaf Jersild had made a TV interview with three young people from a group called the Green Jackets. During the interview, the three young people had made several racist and highly derogatory remarks about various ethnic

groups.[101] The case was reported to the police, who charged Jersild and his DR boss, Lasse Jensen, with violating the racism section of the Criminal Code. The case went through three instances all the way to the Supreme Court, which, like the Regional Court, upheld the District Court's verdict: Jersild and Jensen had violated section 266 on racism. The convicted had consistently denied their guilt, citing their freedom of expression.

Jersild chose to bring the case in Strasbourg primarily before the European Commission of Human Rights, which found by a large majority that the judgment against Jersild violated the ECHR's Article 10 provision on freedom of expression. That was in July 1993. The case was then taken up by the European Court of Human Rights, which reached the same result in September 1994: Jersild was acquitted.

Isi Foighel told me that he had taken a particular interest in the case, as he had been a member of DR's board in 1985 and therefore had to resign - as an ineligible person - as a judge at the ECHR when the case came up in 1994. He also recalled that this was the first case before the ECHR where the issue was not really whether a Member State had violated the provisions of the ECHR, but whether a Member State, in this case Denmark, had struck the right balance in a case where two human rights were at stake: the right to be free from racist statements versus the right to freedom of expression. Both the Commission and the Court of Justice had found that freedom of expression was the most important consideration and that this was particularly true when it came to the freedom of expression of journalists. The Court stressed that the media has an important role as a public watchdog. According to the majority of the judges, it was in the interest of Danish society to learn about the views and background of a group of young racists and that there were no grounds for accusing Jersild of having intended to disseminate racist views.

I had come to know Isi Foighel as a masterful and much-loved educator from his lectures on international law at the

101 The interview was broadcast on Sunday's news alongside, among other things, a documentary on the introduction of martial law in South Africa.

University of Copenhagen. He had apparently made full use of these skills with the South African Assembly. He had presented the Jersild/Grønjakke case as if it were a moot case, and had concluded his speech on the first day by saying that the European human rights system would conclude that there was a difficult balance to be struck between two - conflicting - human rights, but that most weight should be given to freedom of expression.

The next day, Isi Foighel picked up the thread and revealed to the assembly that this was not a sham trial or a moot case, but a case that had just been taken up by the ECHR, after the European Commission of Human Rights had decided by a large majority that priority should be given to freedom of expression, particularly that of journalists.

Isi Foighel said he had chosen this case to emphasise that our experience in Europe had shown that the management of human rights could present difficult challenges and that it would often be a dance on roses... with thorns.

Immediately afterwards there was a break and - as I recall Isi's account - a prominent participant, Arthur Chaskalson, who was about to be appointed as President of South Africa's new Constitutional Court, came up to Isi Foighel to reveal that he was terribly embarrassed but had to make a confession:

Isi Foighel's presentation the day before had caused consternation among several, especially among the "new" players in South Africa's judicial system. It was seen as a disgrace, indeed an insult to this very assembly, that consideration of the right to be free from racism had to give way to consideration of freedom of expression. That is why a group had drafted a resolution during the night that Isi Foighel should be expelled from the seminar. After Isi Foighel's revelation of the proper context this morning, the group had to crawl to the cross, throw the resolution in the trash and instead thank Isi Foighel warmly for his unforgettable and realistic account of the European experience in the field of human rights.

Isi Foighel grinned delightedly as we stood trying to spot whales off the coast of Hermanus, east of Cape Town.

Project Harem

And finally, from the very big to the very small, but no less relevant: Project Harem, which was the first Danish-supported project I heard about - as mentioned in the foreword - after I was told in 1990 that I would be opening a Danish Embassy in South Africa.

Project Harem in Denmark and South Africa

Gunvor Auken talks about her involvement in Project Harem:

"In 1986, at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the publisher Rosinante's founder, Merete Ries, came across the book 'Call Me Woman' by Ellen Kuzwayo, a South African women's and civil rights activist. The book is about how the oppression of black people in her time grew relentlessly and about the consequences of apartheid. She was instrumental in the ANC and known as 'Soweto's Mother'. I myself sat on the board of Rosinante and raised 10,000 kroner from the then Women's Workers' Federation for the book's translation.

Ellen Kuzwayo arrived in Denmark at the time of publication in the late summer of 1987. Here she joined the weaving workshop HAREM in Hvidovre, run by Gitte Olsen. It was for immigrant women. Ellen Kuzwayo had a great desire for South African women to come to Denmark and be trained at HAREM in design, production, administration and business management.

She herself was chairperson of the Maggie Magabas Trust in Soweto. A large fine workshop for women established by an English woman in memory of the black woman who was her good nanny. Erika Jørgensen, Danish Refugee Council and member of HAREM's board, Merete, Gitte and I throw ourselves into the project: black women from townships will have the opportunity to be trained at HAREM.

Danida and the Danish UNESCO Commission grant Merete and Gitte a research trip to Soweto in July 1988. They stay at

the KFUK dormitory. They return home with a description of how women are often sole breadwinners and how, through the concept of 'sharing', they stick together, work together and support each other. A visit to Denmark could empower them, who in turn could teach and empower other women.

The so-called Long Committee of Danida grants 465.000 DKK for seven women to travel to and stay in Copenhagen with training at HAREM from 1.6 - 27.11.1989. They are all affiliated to more or less productive self-help groups. 4 are from Soweto, 2 from New Brighton near Port Elizabeth and one from Cape Town. They live in a disused brothel in Vesterbro. Karin Møller Jensen is hired to manage their stay, about which she has written an informative report. Her salary was pieced together from grants from five different places.

The seven women were captivated by their encounter with Denmark and all the support they experienced. After all, there was both the women's struggle and the fight against apartheid. They themselves took the task of acquiring knowledge at HAREM very seriously. They were up early and had a daily devotional with singing - the singing, dancing and laughter were in their bodies as a force. At HAREM there was teaching of design, textile, colour theory, and technique. Later they opted for weaving, cutting and sewing, and machine knitting. They also learned fractions. They often worked after 4 pm and sometimes on weekends.

Karen writes in her report, "As the teachers' statements show, everyone in the group was highly motivated and eager to get as much out of their training as possible - both to personally expand their knowledge, but also very much to be able to return home and share as much new knowledge as possible with the women in their own self-help groups. Throughout their stay, the women were very aware of the responsibilities placed on them and the expectations placed on them."

It is indescribable what they achieved during the stay. However, a week at Danebo Højskole on Als and days at Den Sønderjyske Højskole for Musik og Teater should be highlighted because there are commonalities between Danish public education and the values of black South Africans embodied in the concept of sharing: practical learning, community, shared responsibility, storytelling, singing and dancing. They went on HAREM's summer holiday. There was a myriad of people who helped with all sorts of things and wanted the women to go to all sorts of things, for example 'Danish Church Days', where Desmond Tutu spoke. Their stay was often reported in the press, and they performed in several places with speeches, singing and dancing, as well as raising money for the Maggie Magabas Trust. KULU, the Women's Development Aid Committee, Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (ActionAid) provided crucial support. Everyone had health and dental check-ups. There was a warm ring of volunteers especially women around the seven, during their stay.

Merete and Gitte were then in Soweto in April 1990 to assist with the strengthening of the Miggie Magabas Trust paid for with 40,000 DKK by I believe the Long Committee. Merete is dead, so I don't know much about the trip's outcome.

I myself was invited by Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke to attend as their representative the ANC conference on 'Affirmative Action in a new South Africa', 10 -12 October 1991 in Port Elizabeth. A great experience in which ANC leaders from Robben Island also participated. Later I visited Buller and Peter Brückner as the newly appointed ambassador couple. I was subsequently with Peter in Soweto to discuss possible help in developing modern educational principles based on those of Englishman Michael Young, internationally known for democratic education and education of oppressed groups.

In January - February 1992, Erika and I were granted a trip by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the townships of the seven women, to follow up on the stay in Denmark. We have

been in regular contact with Zolelwa Somana from Port Elizabeth in particular. In Soweto we met Ellen Kuzwayo and three of the four women from there. Esther who was supposed to lead the Maggie Magaba Trust, had died in the meantime. Buller and Peter also visited the place with us, where nothing much actually happened. Peter allocated a small amount of the Embassy's meagre funds. We don't know if anything has happened in the good buildings since.

In Cape Town we met one woman posted from a large women's workshop. We were received with celebration and colour, but it was not good. The woman was sad, the centre considered her almost as its property, now that she had been in Denmark and had become so good at teaching. We first stayed in the miserable township of New Brighton, near Port Elizabeth, where Zolelwa and Nada had developed HAREM at a larger local site with several workshops. Since their stay in Denmark, we had both been in written and telephone contact with them to assist strategically. HAREM was now relocating to Port Elizabeth because the training centre was in disarray and disintegrating as a consequence of the reclassification following the abolition of apartheid. We assisted Zolelwa with organisational and accounting models and with the application for HAREM's accreditation under the Regional Ministry of Education in the capital Bisho in Ciskei. We also arranged a trip to Bisho to plead HAREM's case.

Financially, it was difficult. Zolelwa had to support her husband and children and therefore also had a teaching job far away in Transkei next to HAREM, where her salary was low - and insecure. The same was true of the other teachers, for there was only the salary paid by the pupils in school fees, plus small allowances from here and there. This meant that school fees were too high for poor blacks. At times, students could earn money by sewing seats for cars and school uniforms. Everything including education was quite varied. Zolelwa, the qualified man toiled.

We were very happy to have her in Denmark during the UN Social Summit, 1996.

In 1996, Erika and I contacted the 'NGO: PROMETEUS' to get their professional help for HAREM in Port Elizabeth. They were known for education projects in the new South Africa, and they could apply for funds for this in the Ministry of Education. They were researching HAREM, and the message back was that HAREM was not worth funding. It was operating unqualifiedly. It was also a criticism of Erika's and my lackadaisical enthusiasm.

HAREM in Port Elizabeth lasted from 1990 - 2001. Much criticism can be made. We were happy amateurs compared to HAREM, which started in Denmark and was not self-grown. We were also premature in relation to the new constitution in South Africa. Zolelwa Zomana has no regrets. On the contrary. She feels very grateful to Denmark for giving her so much in the face of her difficult and poor life in New Brighton. She is and was a unique woman."

In a recent email to Gunvor Auken, Zolelwa Zomana concluded with the words:

"Lastly I congratulate and thank all those who made it possible for Harem project to survive for the duration of TEN YEARS. It was not in vain. Sincere thanks go to GUNVOR and ERIKA For their partnership and comradeship in achievements they made. S.A. women will always remember them for their bravery."

Chapter XXV

Epilogue

Visit of Minister for Co-ordination Mimi Jakobsen with business delegation

No sooner were the elections and the presidential inauguration over than the embassy had to prepare for a major Danish business promotion and a visit by Coordinating Minister Mimi Jakobsen and Head of Department Jørgen Rosted in August 1994. My call back to Copenhagen was already planned, and I therefore knew that it would be my last major event in South Africa, marked not only by a ministerial visit to members of the new democratic government, but also by an unusual ship call.

From the Embassy's side, we had already assisted in the opening or restarting of several Danish companies in South Africa, including Novo, Danfoss and Grundfos, after the economic sanctions were lifted.

Several Danish companies had signed up for this campaign, for which we organised special meetings in both Johannesburg and Cape Town.[102]

Head of Office George Dalmose from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Foreign Trade Secretariat accompanied Mimi Jakobsen and extended his stay to support and train embassy staff in export promotion, which was new to the embassy. We had previously focused on numerous forms of assistance to the democratisation process; now a new day began in which we had to be equipped to

102 During her visit, Mimi Jakobsen had confidential telephone conversations with the leader of the coalition government, Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, about the date for calling elections in Denmark. The date was 29 August, and the elections were held on 21 September 1994. Mimi Jakobsen therefore had to return home in a hurry. This is the first and so far, only time that a general election has been called under such circumstances.

assist Danish businesses that could finally realise their plans to enter the South African market.

The arrival of the frigate Vædderen in August 1994

A very special event was the visit of the frigate *Vædderen (Ram or Aries)* to Cape Town, which participated in the export promotion at the behest of the construction community behind the Thetis-class Naval Team Denmark. Consul Per Bjørvig in Durban had played a major and at times an extremely keen role, particularly with regard to contacts with Svendborg Shipyard, where these particular so-called FLEX-ships were built.

At the embassy, we felt that it was just such a multi-purpose ship that the new South Africa needed. During meetings with representatives of the South African Navy, we stressed, among other things, that it could be used for fisheries inspection in South Africa's newly established 200 nautical mile economic zone, as a transport vessel from South Africa to its scientific base in Antarctica and, if necessary, as a ship of war. I was also told that it was particularly suited to the long swells found in the North Atlantic and, allegedly, in the sea south of South Africa. Finally, we could add that - as far as we knew - it was the only candidate for the South African tender that actually existed and had proved its suitability.

***Vædderen* (Aries)**

Commander Poul Grooss, Director of Naval Team Denmark from 1999 to 2002, has provided the following information about the programme of which Aries was a part in the early 1990s:

"The big battle offer at that time was the "FLEX program", where a large number of weapon systems and other systems of the Naval Materiel Command had been "contaminated" with standard supply of power, water etc. These included missile systems, gun systems, mine-laying modules, anti-pollution modules and much more. The system was, in all modesty, ingenious, and Aries had the ability to connect some of these modules.

> Malaysia would acquire 26 corvettes with this FLEX system in the same period. It was said that Denmark had won the contract, but before a signature could be put on paper, the German Chancellor Kohl called his Malaysian counterpart and suggested that the German shipbuilding industry take over the order. In return, Germany would supply a factory to license VW, support the ailing Malaysian currency and more. Shortly afterwards, all the Southeast Asian economies were hit by a severe crisis and the German programme came to nothing. That Denmark did not get the contract at this time was probably a blessing in disguise.
>
> There was interest from many countries, including the US, Australia, New Zealand and a number of South American countries, but common to them all was a desire to see production carried out in local yards and that all decisions on contracts were at presidential/prime ministerial level.
>
> Later, when the two flexible support ships Absalon and Esbern Snare were presented in the US, the US Chief of Defence was quite impressed that Denmark could build these two ships for less than the price the Americans themselves paid for a single ship."

The day Aries arrived in the waters off Cape Town was another very moving highlight of Buller's and my time in South Africa. Together with South African guests, we were picked up in the frigate's Westland Lynx helicopter and flown out to the Aries, where we were received by the ship's commander, Captain Niels Erik Sørensen. The Chief of the Naval Operational Command, Rear Admiral Knud Borck, was on board during the stay in South Africa.

The entry into Cape Town was a monumental and beautiful experience. It was probably the first time since 1648 that a Danish naval vessel called at the port of Cape Town.

At the end of the visit, the Vædder's management served a delicious dinner to the Danish delegation and the South African dignitaries, led by Deputy Defence Minister Ronal "Ronnie" Kasrils. During the previous tour, they had shown great enthusiasm for the Danish frigate. There had also been

an opportunity to show the South African authorities what the Vædder was capable of during test cruises in the waters off Cape Town.

Unfortunately, the matter became political. After my departure from South Africa at the end of August 1994, the South African authorities began to put pressure on Denmark and the other interested frigate-selling countries in several areas, including demands for local co-production of various parts and for favourable financing terms. The Danish side gave up on this competition between the treasuries of different countries. South Africa finally chose, as far as I know, a Spanish-made frigate.[103]

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During one of the last EU Ambassadors' meetings I attended before my departure, we looked back with relief on the successful elections and presidential inauguration. The South African electorate had adopted what must, in my view, be one of the most modern and best equipped democratic constitutions with a strong human rights chapter.[104]

The human rights chapter contains 27 rules which, in addition to the classic rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly, also include a section on economic and social rights, including the right to housing, work, health care, food, water and social security, and the right to an environment that is not harmful to the health or well-being of citizens. In my view, this is a catalogue which could provide considerable inspiration when we in Denmark are about to update our 1953 Constitution.

However, the sigh of relief was accompanied by a quiet consensus that this milestone marked only a first phase, a prelude to the much more difficult process of bridging the huge economic

103 As I understand it, this arms deal developed into the first massive corruption scandal in the new South Africa, a case which – as far as we know – has not yet been cleared up.

104 The April 1994 elections were held on the basis of the 1993 provisional constitution, The final version was finalised by the democratically elected parliament and came into force after President Mandela's signing (promulgation) on 18 December 1994.

and social gaps left by the apartheid regime: *"this phase has been a tea party compared with the challenges South Africa is now facing"*, as the Greek President concluded at the meeting.

Helle Degn subsequently said that Mandela had told her during one of their talks that the reconstruction of his country would take at least three generations and would go in waves of two steps forward and one step back. The outside world had to remember that and not become impatient. Helle Degn had referred to the history of Europe, and Denmark in particular, where history had shown that the building of a welfare society also spanned several generations.

During Mimi Jakobsen's meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad, one of her last before departure, he made the following concluding remark:

> *"Had it not been for Denmark and the other Nordic countries, the ANC would hardly have been in power in South Africa."*

Chapter XXVI

Conclusion: What did we Achieve, What did we Learn?

There has never been a subsequent official evaluation of the overall Danish effort for the victims of apartheid and in South Africa itself until the launching in 1994 of the Special Transitional Assistance in 1994. It is not for me to attempt this field.

But there might be room for a few personal views on the question of whether we in Denmark have been able to live up to Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's words: that the Danish effort had been far, far greater than our geographical extent and our population numbers would suggest.

Since 1965, Denmark had provided almost DKK 1 billion in aid to the victims of the apartheid regime through the so-called anti-apartheid allocation. This aid had of course given Denmark a very positive status among the regime's South African opponents. But we were far from the only ones to provide such aid.

As will be clear from all the foregoing, Denmark did not - of course - act alone on the South African scene after the opening of the negotiating process.

The value of the Danish effort in South Africa from 1990 to 1994 perhaps lay precisely in the fact that we were able to inspire and mobilise collective efforts with our like-minded allies, and that we were able to draw on good strengths in the Danish resource base in close dialogue with all parties and adjusted as necessary.

In principle, all Western countries were pulling in the same direction. But for us, it was cooperation in the Nordic and especially the EC/EU circle that was and remained the most effective. Through collective, joint efforts, we achieved far more than any individual participant could have done individually. It is my impression that the EC was the inspiring actor, particularly in setting up peace and election observation arrangements,

including working with the South African security authorities to combat violence (ECOMSA - European Community Mission in South Africa) and to identify its causes (Goldstone Commission).

Through experience of the struggle against apartheid, of assistance to other emerging democracies and developing countries, particularly in Africa, we had an arsenal of ideas on which to draw. At the same time, we were free of a colonial past that could be compared with, for example, Britain, the Netherlands and Portugal, which had long-standing historical ties with particular circles of the ruling class. We had no vested interests that could impede our ability to act. And we were able to act more quickly than most, thanks in particular to the embassy's own authority to grant funds for projects in South Africa.

Furthermore, it was crucial for the success of our support that we had established good relations with all the key actors in the peace process; not only with the existing authorities, with the ANC and other political parties and actors in the negotiation process itself, but also with the existing network of civil organisations, including churches, with which Denmark had a long-standing but distant cooperation. In addition, there were all the new actors in civil society.

I think it was crucial for our relatively wide scope of action that we managed to be seen as supporting, not one party or another, but the peace and democratisation process itself. In turn, we were drawn deeply into the process, sometimes deeper than we had initially anticipated.

If I were now to look back over my four most exciting years in the Danish Foreign Service and try to summarise how we achieved a result that would make the Danish Prime Minister say, on his return from the presidential inauguration in South Africa in May 1994: *"We punched above our weight"* I would point to the following facts:

First of all, a Foreign Minister who, like his successors, demonstrated initiative, considerable interest and an extremely active commitment to assisting the democratisation process in South Africa. They made the development of Danish relations with the country at the southern tip of Africa a top priority. The

frequent visits to Denmark by the most important figures in the democratisation process in South Africa meant both broad political and popular support in Denmark.

Secondly, as a small country without a particularly burdensome colonial past, Denmark had a special opportunity to appear in all camps as a credible, active supporter of the democratisation process together with the multilateral organisations from the UN family, the EC/EU and the Commonwealth.

Another important factor was the Embassy's very short lines of communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, in particular the South Africa Office, which was responsible for all Denmark's relations with the country, and with other Danish authorities concerned, in particular the Chief of the National Police.

It also meant a lot to be able to act agilely in South Africa that there were such short and quick decision channels up in the house at Asiatisk Plads as well as a quick and efficient cooperation between concerned authorities in Denmark.

But for me personally, good embassy staffing, and good teamwork were crucial. It meant that as an embassy we were able to mobilise effective cooperation with other country representations, particularly those of EU countries, for example on the establishment of EU support for the South African security authorities as proposed from the Danish side.

Similarly, the embassy established a wide network of contacts not only with the main political actors in South Africa, but also with the many NGOs fighting for the interests of all South Africans, for example in the fields of human rights, democracy, agriculture and education, as well as a large number of representatives from the country's media and cultural life, etc., a form of public diplomacy.

As illustrated, the Embassy's power to fund local projects at its discretion without prior approval from the Ministry, the so-called local grant-making authority, enabled us to respond more

quickly to needs for support to the democratisation process than most other like-minded countries.

Last but not least, it was a joint effort, with Danish NGOs and the Foreign Service pulling in the same direction.

It is my hope that after these four years, doors were opened for further cooperation with South African partners at all relevant levels.

ANNEXES

Roll List

Acknowledgement of those who played a part from the Danish side during the democratisation process, and thanks to those who have contributed to this description of the Danish effort.

The establishment of Denmark's first embassy in South Africa.

First of all, I would like to highlight the cooperation at the embassy, which we had to build from scratch with infrastructure and logistics not only in the government capital Pretoria, but also in the parliamentary capital Cape Town.

From the outset we were just four staff members, administrative colleagues Rosa Haugedal and Dorthe Mikkelsen, and the embassy's locally employed driver Joseph Kgosieng. The Honorary Consulate General in Johannesburg provided important assistance, particularly through Vice-Consul Lis Skouboe Christensen during the initial set-up phase. Along the way we received much appreciated assistance from the Honorary Consuls in Cape Town and Durban, Jørgen Dahl and Per Bjørvig.

In 1991/92, the embassy staff was expanded with the addition of Counsellor Peter Lysholt Hansen, who became a driving creative force in the work of the embassy, especially with ideas and initiatives in support of the democratisation process. In the run-up to the election, Gert Meinecke joined as Embassy Secretary, Lars Faaborg-Andersen joined just after the election, and we received local assistance for shorter or longer periods from colleagues in the Home Service, including Erik Boel, Lone Spanner and George Dalmose Rasmussen. We also received help from local compatriots such as Lars Bo Sørensen, Karin Lysholt Hansen and Birgit Schrøder Hadsbjerg. This close cooperation with and between colleagues, who were able to work independently and in teams under widely varying circumstances, was crucial to the Embassy's work and - others say - success.

Cooperation with Danish authorities.

It was also essential for our work that the embassy had an extremely smooth 24/7 cooperation with colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who in turn had well-functioning cooperation channels with other Danish authorities concerned, in particular Chief of Police Ivar Boye and his staff.

This co-operation improved considerably after the structural reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1991/92. Instead of having to contact three different offices on political, economic and developmental developments in South Africa, all functions were brought together on a geographical basis in one office, initially headed by Head of Office Torben Brylle, with Deputy Head Carsten Nilaus Pedersen, and later Anne Ehrenreich, Tom Østergaard and Lone Spanner as the closest associates on South Africa matters. In this way, the Foreign Ministry became much better equipped to take a more holistic view of developments and to respond more quickly and effectively to the changing phases of the negotiation process.

And this was to happen in a context where a series of other dramatic international events were also straining the resources of the Foreign Service: the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia, the unification of Germany, the increasingly threatening conflicts in the Balkans, the Maastricht negotiations, the first climate conference in Rio de Janeiro, etc. There were enough balls in the air that had to be dealt with at the same time.

Interaction with the Danish media.

The Danish media also played a crucial role in informing the wider public about developments in South Africa. It is my impression that the embassy established fruitful relations with both the written and electronic press, in particular through the local media representatives. Five persons deserve special mention: Jørgen E. Petersen (Danish Radio DR and the newspaper Jyllandsposten JP), Anne Ravn (JP), Poul Husted (the newspaper Politiken), Henrik

Thomsen (JP), Peter Tygesen (DR and Berlingske/Weekendavisen) and especially Jesper Strudsholm, see below.

Thanks to those who helped with this publication.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the person who has advised and guided me in the process of writing from the very beginning: architect and journalist Jesper Strudsholm. Jesper also suggested the title and wrote the vignettes for the four main sections. With a brief interruption in 1994-95, he lived in South Africa from 1993 to 2010 and has visited the country regularly from 1992 to the present. Since his arrival he has reported on developments in South Africa for, among others, Det Fri Aktuelt, Berlingske and Politiken.

A special tribute goes to my friend and colleague, Christopher Bramsen, who died too soon and who, in his 1989 book, *South Africa: struggle or Dialogue*, gave a detailed account of Danish South Africa policy right up to Mandela's release in February 1990. It was of great help to me in preparing for the post in Pretoria/Cape Town. So was the South Africa library he had compiled over the years and donated to the embassy.

Grateful greetings are also due to all the police officers who served in South Africa in the EU Special Observer Mission ECOMSA and in the Goldstone Commission, see Chapter XVI. They kindly gave me access to their diary entries and other material about their experiences in South Africa.

Special thanks to Gunvor Auken, who facilitated the first meeting in Copenhagen on a concrete project, Project Harem, with Erika Jørgensen and Merete Riis of Rosinante. In 1987, the publisher had published the book *"Call Me Woman"* by the women's rights activist Ellen Kuzwayo, who had initiated the project, see Chapter XXVI. It was also Gunvor Auken who was among the first to encourage me to write down these memoirs and read through them. Erika Jørgensen has recounted her experiences as an election observer in a block to Chapter XXIV.

I am also very grateful to former Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen for giving me the interview reproduced in the

Preface, and for taking the time, together with two other Danish political actors whose efforts are mentioned in my account, to read through my manuscript and check the presentation of the factual sequence of events: former Development Minister Helle Degn and former member of Parliament for the Social Liberal Party Jørgen Estrup. I also greatly appreciated the suggestions for corrections I received from Torben Brylle, then head of the South Africa desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally, I would like to thank Commander Paul Groos for his information on the FLEX programme, of which the frigate *Vædderen* was a part.

However, the opinions and assessments I express are my own.

Many thanks to Kirsten Holck Rantorp, Jens Brückner, Uffe Stormgaard, Hans-Henrik Holm, Klavs Wulff, Torben Kornbech Rasmussen and Hans Grunnet as well as former Deputy Head of the Embassy in Pretoria, Karina Hedemark for their review and several good suggestions for improvements of the text.

I am particularly grateful to my British friends Chris Crabbie and Nick Bartman for their invaluable help in reviewing, and, if necessary, correcting my English translation of this book.

And a warm thank you goes to the Foreign Policy Society, which has undertaken to publish this book, and to the Society's director, Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, who has personally read through the manuscript and given me much valuable advice, and not least to project officer at the Foreign Policy Society Franciska Flugt, who has proofread, asked questions and asked me to elaborate where it was unclear or misunderstood.

But of course, I alone am responsible for the text and any errors or omissions.

Last but not least, I thank the Velux Foundation for financially supporting the publication of this book. If this book raises any questions, the reader is welcome to send them to me at the email address: petbruckner@gmail.com, and I will try to answer them.

Glossary

ANC: African National Congress, largest and oldest political organisation in South Africa, founded in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress, founded in 1912 with the aim of securing the vote for the coloured (mixed-race people as well as Indians) and black people in the Cape Province. In 1923 changed to ANC. The ANC was the leading nationalist resistance movement against white minority rule in South Africa. After winning elections in April 1994, ANC leader Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first democratically elected president. The ANC in the broad sense is still a tripartite alliance, which also includes COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions, formed in 1985) and the SACP (South African Communist Party). An alliance that is gradually creaking at the seams.

Apartheid Grant: a grant set up by the government and parliament to provide "humanitarian and educational assistance through international organisations and freedom movements to oppressed peoples or communities" in South Africa, South West Africa (now Namibia) or Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe). In the period 1965-1993, Denmark gave a total of DKK 975 million in humanitarian and educational aid to the victims of apartheid, distributed through various channels quite widely, both to people in exile and, for example, to scholarships for ordinary public educational institutions in the countries concerned. The apartheid grant was replaced by transitional assistance on 1 January 1994. From 1994 to 1998, the transitional assistance amounted to DKK 750 million.

APLA: Azanian People's Liberation Army, formerly known as Poqo ("pure" and "blacks only"), was the military wing of the Pan Africanist Congress.

Azanian People's Organisation: Organisation formed in 1978 with the aim of filling the political vacuum left by the outlawing of the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa. The Azanian People's Organisation had black, coloured and Indian members

(whites could not be admitted) and worked to create a socialist unitary state.

Bantustans: Bantu homelands, areas of South Africa reserved for the black population; in 1989 they covered about 13% of the country's land area with about 16 million inhabitants, or about half the black population. The ten homelands were located in the eastern part of the country and were an important part of the white regime's policy of racial segregation (apartheid) until 1985. Four homelands were declared independent: Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977), Venda (1979) and Ciskei (1981). The six other homelands remained self-governing but non- independent: Gazankulu, KwaZulu, Lebowa, KwaNdebele, KaNgwane and Qwaqwa. Only two of the homelands had geographically contiguous territories (Ciskei and Qwaqwa); the others consisted of anywhere from 2 to 30 scattered blocks of land.

Black Sash: The Black Sash was founded on 19 May 1955 as a non-violent, liberal resistance organisation in protest against the disenfranchisement of the coloured population. Until 1994, the Black Sash was a powerful voice against apartheid, not least because many white women were active in the organisation.

CODESA: Convention for a Democratic South Africa, important negotiating forum for political movements in South Africa in the transition from apartheid to democracy. At CODESA I, the first session in December 1991, 17 of the 19 delegations signed a declaration of intent to work for a united democratic South Africa. CODESA II, the second session in May 1992, broke down because of major ideological differences between the parties and because the ANC and the government could not agree on the criteria for amendments to the new constitution.

European Political Cooperation (EPC): European Political Cooperation, cooperation on common foreign policy between EC Member States, which began in 1970 on an informal basis in the context of cooperation within the European Economic Community. With the Single European Act, the framework for cooperation became firmer, and with the Maastricht Treaty, the area of cooperation is enshrined in the Treaty as the 2nd and 3rd pillars of the EU.

Goldstone Commission: see under National Peace Accord and Secretariat and block at end of Chapter XIV.

Homelands: see Bantustans

Inkatha Freedom Party: a political party. Originally a Zulu cultural organisation, founded in 1920. In the early 1970s the organisation was revived as a political movement by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who has since dominated the party.

Lawyers for Human Rights: an independent, non-profit, human rights NGO, founded by a group of activist lawyers in 1979.

National Peace Accord and Secretariat: established 14.9.1991 between all major political organisations with the aim of bringing peace to South Africa and rebuilding communities affected by political violence. Under the Accord, three national structures were established, staffed by independent volunteers, lawyers and business people: **The National Peace Committee**, chaired by businessman John Hall, oversaw compliance with the agreement and mediated disputes. **The National Peace Secretariat** under Dr Antonie Gildenhuys set up and coordinated regional and local mediation committees. **The National Peace Commission**, under Judge Richard Goldstone, was charged with investigating the sources of violence in the country and making proposals to eliminate the causes of violence, better known as the Goldstone Commission.

Pan Africanist Congress: the full name of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania is a black South African nationalist movement and political party. It was formed in April 1959 by a breakaway group from the ANC. The Pan Africanist Congress members' position was that Africa should be for Africans. The Pan Africanist Congress was and is therefore a "pure" black organisation.

South African Council of Churches (SACC): The South African Council of Churches is an economic interdenominational forum in South Africa. It was a prominent anti-apartheid organisation during the years of apartheid in South Africa. Its leaders have included Desmond Tutu, Beyers Naudé and Frank Chikane. It is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa.

SADF: South African Defence Force comprised all of South Africa's military forces from 1957 to 1994. Replaced by SANDF, South African National Defence in 1994. Supreme Commander from 1990-93 General Andreas Liebenberg and from November 1993 to April 1994 General Georg Meiring.

SAP: The South African Police was the national police force from 1913 to 1994, when it was replaced by the South African Police Service. The supreme commander from 1990-96 was General Johan Velde van der Merwe.

The Transitional Executive Council (TEC): a multi-party body established by law in September 1993 to facilitate the transition to democracy in the run-up to the April 1994 elections. The TEC was intended to "level the political playing field" and create a climate which allowed free political debate and activity during the election campaign. A number of subordinate councils were set up with responsibility for law and order, stability and security, defence, intelligence, foreign policy, the status of women, finance, regional and local self-government and traditional authorities

List of Names

List of names of persons who appear several times in different places in the book, indicating their profession/functions in and around the period 1990-94.

Aarvold, Gavin: British Coordinator of the EC Peacekeeping Observer Team ECOMSA

Andriessen, Frans: Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for external relations and trade policy 1989-93.

Asmal, Kader: Professor of Human Rights at Western Cape University. Anti-apartheid activist. Minister of Water and Forestry 1994-99.

Auken, Gunvor: Social worker. Trade unionist and head of department, Special Workers' Union. Deputy Mayor (S) Frederiksberg 1998-2000.

Balslev-Olesen, Christian: 1989-92 regional representative of Folkekirkens Nødhjælp (DanChurchAid) in Zimbabwe and 1992-2002 its Secretary-General.

Beer, Zacharias "Zach" de: Leader of the South African Democratic Party 1989-94.

Bentsen, Poul Erik: Danish Criminal Commissioner attached to the EC peacekeeping observer team ECOMSA 1992-93.

Biehl, Palle: Danish Criminal Commissioner attached to the Goldstone Commission 1992-94.

Boraine, Alexander "Alex": Founder and Director of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA) 1987-95. From 1995 Vice-Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Botha, Pieter Willem: Prime Minister of South Africa 1978- 84 and first President 1984- 89.

Botha, Roelof Frederik "Pik": South African Minister of Foreign Affairs 1977- 94. Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources 1994-96.

Bourgois, Joëlle: French Ambassador to South Africa 1991-95.

Boye, Ivar: Denmark's Chief of Police 1980-99.

Brylle, Torben: Head of Office, S7, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with responsibility for Southern Africa 1991-94.

Buthelezi, Mangosuthu Gatska: Founder and leader of Inkatha Freedom Party in 1975 and Chief Minister of KwaZulu until 1994. Minister of Home Affairs 1994-2004.

Chicane, Frank: Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) 1987-94. Director-General, Office of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki 1994-99.

Degn, Helle: Member of Parliament for the Social Democratic Party for 26 years 1971-2000. Minister for Development 1993-94. Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee 1994-2000.

Elklit, Jørgen: Professor of Political Science. Election expert. Member of South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission 1994-99.

Ellemann-Jensen, Uffe: Member of Parliament for the Liberal Party (Venstre) 1977-2001. Chairman of the Party 1984-98 and Minister for Foreign Affairs 1982-93.

Estrup, Jørgen: Deputy chairman of the Social Liberals Party's parliamentary group from 1988- 94 and chairman from 1994-2000. Chairman of the Folketing's Foreign Affairs Committee 1994- 2000.

Foighel, Isi: Professor of Law. Lawyer. Judge at the European Court of Human Rights 1989-98.

Germer, Peter: Professor of Law, specialising in constitutional law, administrative law and international law.

Gildenhuys, Antoine: Head of South Africa's National Peace Secretariat.

Goldstone, Richard: South African Supreme Court judge. Head of a commission of inquiry into political violence in South Africa (Goldstone Commission, see Glossary) 1991-94. From 1994 Judge of the New Constitutional Court.

Hani, Chris: Leader of South African Communist Party (SACP) 1991-93.

Hansen, Peter Lysholt: Counsellor at the Danish Embassy in Pretoria 1992-94.

Haugedal, Rosa: one of the first two administrative staff at the new Danish Embassy in South Africa.

Hove, Willy: Danish Criminal Commissioner attached to the Goldstone Commission 1992-94.

Hurd, Douglas: British Foreign Secretary 1989-95. President of the EU Council of Ministers and its Troika, second half of 1992.

Jakobsen, Mimi: Minister for Coordination (Centre Democrats) in the Nyrup Rasmussen government 1993-94.

Jenkins, Ivor: Director of IDASA.

Jensen, Kaj Stendorph: Danish Police Commissioner attached to the EC peacekeeping observer team ECOMSA.

Jørgensen, Erika: Center Leader at the Danish Refugee Council 1982-2000. Election observer in April 1994.

Keys, Derek: South African Minister of Economic Planning, Trade and Industry 1991-92 and Minister of Finance 1992-94.

King Angela: Head of UNOMSA peace monitoring team.

Klerk, Frederik Willem de: Leader of the National Party and President of South Africa 1989-94. Deputy President 1994-96.

Klopper, Kobus "Chappie": member of Eugene de Kock's death squad.

Kock, Eugene de: Colonel in the South African Police Force and operational commander of the Dept. C10, the so-called death squad.

Laustsen, Agnete: Member of Parliament for the Conservative People's Party. Minister of Health and Housing in the late 1980s. From 1990 the party's foreign affairs spokesperson.

Mandela, Nelson Rolihlahla: After his release from prison on 11.2.1990, Deputy Chairman of the ANC. Chairman of the ANC from 1991 and President of South Africa from 1994-99.

Manuel, Trevor: Head of ANC Economic Department 1992-94. Minister of Trade and Industry 1994-96.

Mbeki, Thabo: Head of ANC International Department 1989-94. Vice-President 1994-99.

Meyer, Roelof "Roelf": Minister of Defence of South Africa 1991-92. Minister for Constitutional Affairs 1992-94 and chief government negotiator during the democratisation process. Minister for constitutional development and provincial affairs 1994-1996.

Mikkelsen, Dorthe: one of the first two administrative staff at the new Danish Embassy in South Africa.

Mufamadi, Sidney: Member of ANC Central Committee and ANC National Executive Committee. From 1994 Minister of Safety and Security.

Møller, Per Stig: Member of Parliament 1984-2015 and Minister of the Environment 1990-93.

Naudé, Beyers: Afrikaans theologian and anti-apartheid activist. General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) 1985-87. Only Afrikaner in ANC delegation during first negotiations with government in 1990.

Nørgaard, Carl Aage: Professor of Law. and originator of the internationally recognised principles of amnesty for political crimes.

Olsen, Erling: Minister of Justice of Denmark 1993-94.

Omar, Dullah: South African lawyer and anti-apartheid activist. Minister of Justice 1994-99.

Pahad, Aziz: Deputy Head of ANC International Department. From 1994 Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Pedersen, Carsten Nilaus: Deputy Head of Office S7, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with responsibility for Southern Africa 1990-94.

Pedersen, Finn Skadkær: Secretary-General of IBIS 1986-92. From 1992 responsible for Interfund in South Africa and from 1994 former Head of Office for the EU Special Programme for South Africa.

Pedersen, Hans Herluf: Danish Head of Investigation from PET, including assignments to the Goldstone Commission and the South African Independent Electoral Commission IEC 1993 and 1994.

Petersen, Karsten: Chief of Police. Head of the Danish Police Academy.

Petersen, Niels Helveg: Leader of the Social Liberal Party 1978-90. Minister of Economic Affairs in the Schlüter government 1988-90 and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Nyrup Rasmussen government 1993-2000.

Ramaphosa, Cyril: ANC Secretary-General 1991 to 1997 and ANC Chief Negotiator during the democratisation process. From 1994 chairman of South Africa's Constitutional Commission.

Rasmussen, Poul Nyrup: Chairman of the Parliamentary Business Committee 1988-92. Chairman of the Social Democratic Party 1992-2002 and Prime Minister 1993-2001.

Renwick, Robin: British Ambassador to South Africa 1989-91.

Reeve, Anthony: British Ambassador to South Africa 1991-96.

Schlüter, Poul: Member of Parliament 1964-93 for Conservative People's Party. Party Chairman 1974-94. Prime Minister 1982-93.

Sisulu, Walter: Deputy Chairman of ANC 1991-94.

Stjernberg, Ingemar: Swedish envoy to South Africa 1990-94.

Slabbert, Frederik van Zyl: South African businessman and politician. Founder, with Alex Boraine, of IDASA (Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa).

Strange, Ebba: Member of Parliament for the Socialist People's Party 1973-94 and the party's foreign affairs spokesman 1990-94.

Suzman, Helen: Anti-apartheid activist. Member 1953-89 of South African Parliament, first for United Party, later for Progressive Party.

Tambo, Oliver: President of the ANC 1967- 91. Succeeded by Nelson Mandela.

Terre Blanche, Eugene: Leader of far-right Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging.

Thatcher, Margaret: British Prime Minister 1979-90.

Tutu, Desmond: From 1986 Archbishop and leader of South Africa's Anglican Communion.

Velde, Frank van der: Mayor of Cape Town 1991-93.

Viljoen, Abraham "Braam": anti-apartheid activist, leader of the Northern Transvaal Peace Committee and member of IDASA.

Viljoen, Constand: Former leader of the South African Defence Forces. Founded the strongly conservative Afrikaner Volksfront party in 1993 and later the Freedom Front party, which contested the April 1994 elections.

Wessels, Leon: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1992.1992-93 Minister of Local Government, National Housing and Manpower.

Chronology of Significant Events on South Africa's Road to a Democratic Constitution

(Events that predominantly concern Denmark are in italics)

1989:

14 August: P.W. Botha resigns as President and is replaced by Frederik Willem de Klerk.

15 October: Walter Sisulu and five other black political leaders are released from prison 8-9 December: European Council declaration on special measures for South Africa

14 December: UN Assembly on apartheid

1990:

2 February: President de Klerk rejects apartheid, announces the release of political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, and legalises some 30 different political parties and groups, including the ANC, PAC and SACP.

11 February: Nelson Mandela is released from prison.2-4 May: The ANC and the South African government meet for the first time. Groote Schuur agreement to remove obstacles to negotiations: release of political prisoners, amnesty for politicians in exile and agreement to seek abolition of violence in townships.

6 August: Pretoria Agreement: The ANC agrees to a suspension of armed struggle.

Mid-August: arrival of first Danish ambassador.

1991:

20 March: Foreign Affairs Adviser Henrik Wøhlk meets ANC in Johannesburg to discuss direct support for ANC.

4 April: approval of local budget allocation for embassy.

24 April: President W.F. de Klerk visits Denmark as part of a tour also to Britain and Ireland.

5 June: Parliament abolishes "residential segregation" as well as laws reserving over 80% of land for the benefit of the 14% white minority.

17 June: Parliament passes repeal of " Land Acts, Group Areas Act and Population Registration Act".

June: Conference on combating violence in South Africa. The South African churches bring together all the major players.

End of June: EC Heads of Representation in South Africa prepare a report on the status of the repeal of apartheid laws.

July: The ANC holds its first congress in South Africa. Macro-Economic Research Group is established to assist the ANC in formulating macroeconomic policy.

10 July: The US decides to lift most of its sanctions.

August: The Danish government agrees to the Folketing's majority roadmap for the dismantling of Danish sanctions.

September: South African government and UNHCR reach agreement on return of exiles to South Africa. ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party reach agreement on violence reduction.

14 September: Adoption of the National Peace Accord. First meeting of the ANC, the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party. Pan Africanist Congress and Azanian People's Organisation were sympathetic but do not sign. Regional and local peace committees are set up, as well as the so-called Goldstone Commission, chaired by Judge Goldstone, to investigate the causes of the violence.

20-28 September: Danish parliamentary delegation visits South Africa.

25 October: Deputy Foreign Minister Renier Schoeman visits Denmark.

20-21 December: Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA I) is established with the participation of 19 parties and

organisations, with the agreement to create a democratic South Africa through continued negotiations.

1992:

Beginning of the year: the first Danish sanctions are lifted (sports etc.)

23 January: Following the lifting of Denmark's waiting list on 10 January, EC sanctions can be lifted on 23 January.

4-6 February: Nelson Mandela visits Copenhagen and then attends his first Davos meeting.

17 March: De Klerk wins 70% of the vote in a referendum of 3.3 million white voters in support of his negotiating line.

18 March: Remaining Danish sanctions, except arms embargo, are lifted. The Apartheid Committee increases the embassy's local budget allocation from 200,000 to 500,000 DKK.

12-16 April: Minister for Foreign Affairs Uffe Ellemann-Jensen visits South Africa with a large business delegation.

2 May: EC foreign ministers meet. Uffe Ellemann-Jensen proposes sending EC experts to assist South African authorities in combating violence.

16 May: Second CODESA II meeting.

17 June: The ANC and 10 allied organisations suspend bilateral and collective negotiations within CODESA II in protest at the Boipatong massacre on 17 June. ANC blames Inkatha Freedom Party.

17 August: UN Security Council Resolution 772 on the resumption of the constitutional process and the deployment of observers from the UN, the EC (ECOMSA) and the Organisation of African Unity, among others.

2 - 3 September: Visit of EC Troika Foreign Ministers from UK, Portugal and Denmark. Troika gets agreement of ANC and Pretoria governments to send EC experts to help fight violence. Agreement to send EC observers to help fight violence, 15 to ECOMSA and 5 to Goldstone Commission.

26 September: summit between Mandela and de Klerk on resumption of negotiations after Ciskei troops kill 26 ANC members. (Bisho massacre). "Record of Understanding" is signed.

27 September: Inkatha Freedom Party walks out of democracy talks, accusing government and ANC of marginalising Zulu nation.

1993:

5 March: preparatory multi-party talks resume after 9-month break at World Trade Centre Kempton Park with 26 political groups, including Conservative Party and Pan Africanist Congress.

6 March: South Africa Contact holds a conference on violence and human rights in Copenhagen.

9 March: The Danish Apartheid Committee holds its penultimate meeting. The Embassy's grant authority is increased to DKK 3 million, with a maximum of DKK 300,000 per project.

11-12 March: The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), an international parliamentary association, holds a conference in Copenhagen. Judge Goldstone participates.

25 March: De Klerk's government abolishes racial segregation in schools, the last cornerstone of apartheid.

1 April: Multiparty Negotiating Forum opens at the World Trade Center with the 26 groups that had agreed to restart negotiations in March. Only AZAPO and the most extreme Afrikaans groups remain outside.

10 April: Communist Party leader Chris Hani is assassinated. Mandela and de Klerk agree to reach early political agreement.

29 April: De Klerk apologises for apartheid.

7 May: The main political parties and groups agree to hold general elections by the end of April 1994. Whites on the right form a united front to fight for autonomy for Afrikaans.

27-29 May: Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen visits South Africa. Denmark proposes sending election observers from EC countries.

3 June: A majority of the negotiating parties propose April 27 as the election date.

25 June: A group of Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging members, led by Eugene Terre'Blanche, breaks into the World Trade Center and disrupts negotiations.

29 June–2 July: Minister for Development Helle Degn visits South Africa.

2 July: Election dates are confirmed for 27–28 April 1994. Inkatha Freedom Party and the white right leave the democracy talks.

2–3 September: Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, visits Copenhagen.

13 September: Mandela calls for lifting of sanctions during speech at UN General Assembly.

4 October: Mandela and de Klerk receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

17 November: de Klerk, Mandela and leaders of 21 groups participating in the democracy negotiations adopt provisional constitution and electoral law. Inkatha Freedom Party and conservative Freedom Alliance as well as Pan Africanist Congress are left out.

8 December: Parliament adopts the interim constitution and electoral law.

9 December: The Transitional Executive Council (TEC), which oversees the election campaign, meets for the first time. During bilateral negotiations, the ANC and the groups that have so far boycotted the outcome of the negotiations begin to make changes to the text of the Constitution.

1994:

1 January: Denmark's transitional aid programme for South Africa, totalling DKK 750 million over three years, enters into force.

22 January: The White Parliament meets for the last time. The election campaign is launched.

11 March: Armed Right invasion of Bophuthatswana Bantustan collapses, three white participants killed. A disillusioned General Constand Viljoen abandons the rebels and flees to Cape Town to form the Freedom Front party with a view to contesting the elections as a party for Afrikaners.

Mid-March: a defector from a death squad reports to IDASA and later the embassy. Goldstone Commission report on witness Q tells of the first solid testimony concerning the existence of the death squad on Vlakplaas.

28 March: Shell House massacre. 19 people are killed when 20,000 Inkatha Freedom Party supporters march on the ANC headquarters at Shell House in Joburg in protest at the April elections.

31 March: De Klerk imposes martial law in Natal and KwaZulu Homeland to combat violence.

8 April: De Klerk, Mandela, Buthelezi and Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini meet but fail to resolve outstanding issues.

20 April: Inkatha Freedom Party decides to join at the last minute. Ballot papers are adapted.

26-29 April: South Africa's first democratic elections.

10 May: Nelson Mandela is inaugurated as the first president of a democratic South Africa. The two vice-presidential posts are held by Thabo Mbeki and Frederik Willem de Klerk.

August: Visit of Minister for Co-ordination Mimi Jakobsen with business delegation.

August: The frigate "Vædderen" arrives in South Africa (Cape Town) as the first Danish naval vessel since the 17th century.

UJ Press

The purpose of this memoir is not to write the whole story from Nelson Mandela's release in 1990 to the first democratic elections in 1994. That has already been done. My aim is merely to describe the Danish efforts during the negotiation process in the four years that culminated in the adoption of South Africa's first democratic constitution and the installation of Mandela as president.

Peter Bürckner was Denmark's Ambassador to South Africa from 1990 to 1994.

African Political Science and International Relations in Focus Series

ISBN 978-0-906785-49-2