

NEDERLAND TEGEN APARTHEID. THE ROLE OF ANTI-APARTHEID ORGANISATIONS 1960-1990

Genevieve Klein *

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990s, during a visit to the Netherlands, Nelson Mandela specially thanked the Netherlands for the role they had played in helping to bring apartheid to an end, and more specifically for their support for the African National Congress (ANC).¹ However, on considering the actions of the Netherlands' government during the apartheid period,² it becomes apparent that the government did not take major steps to help end apartheid. In actual fact, the Netherlands' government's policy was more often characterised by a lack of specific resolutions against apartheid with few promised actions resulting in concrete steps. This lack of action is seen in aspects such as the 'ton van Luns';³ continued cultural relations through the Cultural Accord;⁴ and in the two-stream policy of the RFM Lubbers government.⁵ The aim of this article is to look beyond the official Dutch government reaction to apartheid, and consider the non-governmental anti-apartheid organisations in the Netherlands in order to assess why the Netherlands is characterised as so actively anti-apartheid.

* Department of History and Cultural History, University of Pretoria.

¹ D Hellema and E van den Bergh, "Dialogo of Boycot. De Nederlandse-Zuid Afrika-politiek na de Tweede Wereldoorlog", *Het Instituut voor Zuidelijk Afrika (IZA)* nr. 2, November, 1995, p. 12.

² G Klein, "Relations between the Netherlands and South Africa in the twentieth century", BA(Hons) dissertation, University of Pretoria (UP), 1999; G Klein, "De strijd tegen apartheid. The role of the anti-apartheid organisations in the Netherlands, 1960-1995", MA dissertation, UP, 2001.

³ The 'ton van Luns' was the first donation by the Netherlands' government to the anti-apartheid struggle. They planned to give 100 000 guilders to the Defence and Aid Fund (DAF), but due to disagreement it went to the United Nations (UN). J Luns was the Netherlands' Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time of the donation.

⁴ South Africa and the Netherlands entered into a Cultural Accord in 1953, which the Netherlands did not officially end until 1981.

⁵ The Lubbers government's two-stream policy included increased international pressure on South Africa, community programmes inside South Africa and dialogue with the South African government. S de Boer, *Van Sharpeville tot Soweto. Nederlands regeringsbeleid ten aanzien van apartheid, 1960-1977* (Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 349-53; R Rozenberg, *De bloedband Den Haag-Pretoria. Het Nederlandse Zuid-Afrikabeleid sinds 1945* (Amsterdam, 1986), p. 24; GJ Schutte, *De roeping ten aanzien van het oude broedervolk. Nederland en Zuid Afrika, 1960-1990* (Suid-Afrikaanse Instituut (SAD)-reeks, no. 1, Amsterdam), 1993, pp. 25-8.

During the apartheid period there were various non-governmental anti-apartheid organisations in the Netherlands, with the first being formed in 1960. In his speech in the Netherlands, Mandela thanked by name three of these organisations - Werkgroep Kairos, the Anti-Apartheidsbeweging Nederland (AABN) and the Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika (KZA) - for their political, moral and material support. It was also these three organisations that the white South African government earmarked as 'dangerous' organisations during the 1970s, even banning some of their pamphlets. The Netherlands was the only country to have three organisations on this South African list, and the National Party (NP) regarded the anti-apartheid groups in the Netherlands as the most active in the world.⁶ In this article, the three organisations will be briefly introduced, their aims outlined and their differences highlighted. Through this it will be apparent why there were three separate organisations in the Netherlands, and why the Netherlands is regarded as having played an important role in the struggle against apartheid despite its limited government reaction.

By focusing on the non-governmental anti-apartheid organisations in the Netherlands, it is also possible to get a better idea of the general public view of apartheid. The importance of public opinion lies in the fact that relations between the Netherlands and South Africa have always been characterised by stronger private than official relations. Already during the nineteenth century, it was individual organisations, rather than the government itself, that played the most important role. When considering the Netherlands' relations with South Africa, or more particularly with the ZAR in the 1880s, it is interesting to note that it was not the official Netherlands' government reaction to support the Boers in their struggle against the British. Rather, it was individuals that took the lead in supporting the Boer struggle and that put pressure on the Netherlands' government to take an official stand, which they consistently refused to do. Although the government did sympathise with the Boers, they recognised their position as a small power, needing the support of Britain in their colonial activities in Asia. They recognised the danger of isolating themselves from the powerful countries, and so rather followed a middle path of neutrality⁷ as they knew that they could not stand alone, either economically or politically. The exact same views can be seen regarding the Netherlands' government in the apartheid period. They again did not want to take steps alone, and did not want to isolate themselves, this time from the European

⁶ Nederlands Instituut Zuidelijk Afrika (NIZA), 10.1, Kairos, 31 May 1995; E van den Bergh, "Dialoog was geen dialoog, sancties bleven omstreden" in *Amandla*, November 1995, p. 14.

⁷ KW Grundy, "We're against apartheid, but...": Dutch foreign policy towards South Africa", *Studies in Race and Nations*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1973-1974, Colorado, pp. 2-3; M Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the rise of imperialism. Colonies and foreign policy, 1870-1902* (transl. H Beyer) (Oxford, 1991), pp. 190-2; A Vandenbosch, *Dutch foreign policy since 1815. A study in small power politics* (The Hague, 1959), pp. 71-5, 82-6.

Community (EC). Once again it was therefore individuals, joined together in the non-governmental organisations, that took a specific stand, defined the Netherlands' view of apartheid and influenced the view the rest of the world had of the Netherlands in this regard.

Links between the Netherlands' non-government organisations and South Africa date back to 1881, when the *Nederlandsch Zuid-Afrikaansche Vereeniging* (NZAV) was formed. Its aim was to establish and increase contact with South African Afrikaners on a cultural and intellectual level, and it continued to do this into the apartheid period.⁸ Aside from the cultural movements, church organisations also played a big role in keeping ties between South Africa and the Netherlands alive. It was only during the 1930s, and increasingly after this, that relations really developed between South Africa and the Netherlands on an official level. These were originally more in the field of trade, although educational and cultural agreements did develop later, most noticeably the relations with the University of Pretoria and the Cultural Accord of 1953.⁹

The importance of unofficial relations in early links between the Netherlands and South Africa is thus apparent, and they remained so in the apartheid period. It is from the anti-apartheid organisations that the most intense and important criticism of apartheid emanated. It is these organisations that took definite steps to help bring apartheid to an end, most noticeably in the form of direct support for the freedom struggle. It was also these organisations that attempted to force the Netherlands' government to take action, in the same way as the pro-Boer activists tried to force the then Netherlands' government to take action during the two Zuid-Afrikaansche Republic (ZAR) wars of independence, 1880-1881 and 1899-1902.

2. THE NETHERLANDS' REACTION TO APARTHEID

Studies of the Netherlands' relations with South Africa during the apartheid period present various reasons for the Netherlands' reaction. The most prominent reason cited is the Dutch feeling of kinship with the Afrikaner in South Africa.¹⁰ These relations are often traced back to 1652, with the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck in the

⁸ NIZA, 19.4, S de Boer, July 1994, pp. 31-2.

⁹ G Klein, "Relations between the Netherlands and South Africa in the twentieth century", pp. 5-13; M Kuitenbrouwer, *De ontdekking van de Derde Wereld. Beeldvorming en beleid in Nederland, 1950-1990* (Den Haag, 1994), p. 213; GJ Schutte, "Een eeuw Nederlandse aandacht voor Zuid Afrika" in *Zicht op Zuid Afrika. Honderd jaar van Zuid-Afrika, 1881-1981* (NZAV, Amsterdam, 1981), p. 1.

¹⁰ WG Hendricks, "De betrekkinge tussen Nederland en Zuid Afrika, 1946-1961", PhD dissertation, University of the Western Cape (UWC) 1984, p. 6; HO Terreblanche, *Nederland en die Afrikaner: gesprek oor apartheid. Die paginaruil tussen Trouw en Die Burger, 1963-1964* (Port Elizabeth, 1998), pp. 1-2.

Cape, and the setting up of a refreshment post by the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC). However, this reasoning is not convincing given the lack of any significant relations in the early nineteenth century. The Netherlands and the Afrikaner had hardly any contact from the period of the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806, until the first Anglo Boer War in 1880. Other reasons for feelings of kinship must therefore be sought.

The answer lies in the first and second Anglo Boer Wars. These wars awakened feelings of kinship in the late nineteenth century, and gave the Netherlands hope for the extension of their culture into South Africa. Never before had the public really considered South Africa to be so much a part of the Netherlands as they did with the outbreak of the Anglo Boer Wars. It was only at this point that feelings of kinship were really established. According to the Dutch historian, GJ Schutte, the pro-Boer movement during the Anglo Boer War within the Netherlands was largely based on Dutch nationalism. This means that, rather than being influenced by liberal ideas of sovereignty and freedom, many people looked at the benefits a 'Nieuw Nederland' in the south would have for the Netherlands. This is obviously a generalisation, and some people did act out of sympathy and belief in liberalism. On the level of nationalism, Schutte looks at how the Netherlands was beginning to accept its position within the world as a small power. Although they were still a colonial power, they could not rely purely on their own strength to keep their possessions. This led to a growth of nationalism, as they wanted to maintain, preserve and develop their culture.¹¹

It is in this climate that they realised the similarities they had with the Afrikaners in the ZAR. Boers, whom they had often previously regarded as 'lazy', 'incompetent' and 'racist', now held potential as distant kinsmen. They thus saw the possibility of strengthening and expanding their own culture, and in this way increasing their position in world politics - imperialism and nationalism started to merge. Schutte considers the benefits the Netherlands recognised in the link they could have with South Africa - possibilities for increased trade and for immigration to South Africa if the Dutch character of the ZAR was emphasised. It was thus during the late nineteenth century that the idea of the 'blood bond' between the Netherlands and South Africa was firmly established. Thus, it was not just a group of Afrikaners, with ties dating back to 1652, that controlled apartheid South Africa, rather it was people of their culture, and of the 'Nieuw Nederland', dating back to the 1880s. The

¹¹ De Graaf, **De mythe van de stamverwantschap**, pp. 4-5; Schutte, "Een eeuw Nederlandse aandacht voor Zuid Afrika", pp. 7-16; GJ Schutte, **Nederland en de Afrikaners - adhesie en adversie** (Den Haag, 1986), pp. 37-44.

ties between the two countries were much more recent, and thus in a sense much stronger, than they would otherwise have been.¹²

The Dutch reservations and criticism of the racial policy of the Afrikaners did not begin with apartheid. Already in the days of the first Anglo Boer War, the Netherlands regarded the Afrikaner's racial policy as the only possible justification for the British annexation of the ZAR. It was only when they realised that the British racial policies were not much better than those of the Boers that the Netherlands no longer saw this as sufficient justification for Britain's actions.¹³ It can therefore be seen why the apartheid situation in South Africa was regarded by the Netherlands as more important than just the domestic policy of another country. To them it was the policy of a people of their own culture whom they had supported in their independence struggle and in their growing nationalism. It was thus a situation much closer to home, and one that had direct connections to the Netherlands.

This is obviously not the only reason why Netherlanders opposed apartheid and the different anti-apartheid groups gave different reasons for their specific actions. Aside from looking at the cultural link, it is also necessary to look at the Netherlands' view of the Third World; the independence of its own colonies; and its growing concern for human rights in the 1960s. One important reason for the Netherlands' concern about South Africa during the apartheid period, was the loss of its colonies in Indonesia, which should be considered in the same light as their position in the late nineteenth century. Once again the Netherlands was being faced with its diminishing position among the world powers, and many reacted by wanting to do something to increase their status internationally. There were others who saw the Netherlands' colonial experience in Indonesia as so negative that they wanted to stop all other colonial problems. There were awakening feelings of the importance of human rights and a social obligation to protect suppressed people.¹⁴

Another major influence on the Netherlands' view was World War II. After experiencing the horrors of racial superiority and suppression during Nazi occupation, the Dutch wanted to help prevent such an incident from recurring. This awakened a desire within the Netherlands to protect the South African blacks, and to help bring apartheid to an end.¹⁵ The War, together with changes in the 1960s, led to an increased awareness of human rights, not only in the Netherlands but also

¹² De Graaf, pp. 4-5; Schutte, "Een eeuw Nederlandse aandacht voor Zuid Afrika", pp. 7-16.

¹³ Schutte, "Een eeuw Nederlandse aandacht voor Zuid Afrika", pp. 25-6, 28-9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-3; Kuitenbrouwer, **De ontdekking van de Derde Wereld**, pp. 24-66, 209-13.

¹⁵ Schutte, "Een eeuw Nederlandse aandacht voor Zuid Afrika", pp. 32-3; J Heldring, **Changes in Dutch society and their implications for Netherland - South African relations** (Braamfontein, 1984), pp. 7-8.

across the western world. The change in attitude in the 1960s was brought about by various things, and Dutch political scientist, J Heldring, identifies seven causes, with the most important being the influence of the war years; the role of mass media and television; increased education and personal prosperity; and finally democratisation and secularisation. This meant that the youth of the 1960s were prepared to question the actions of their leaders and were aware of the political situation they were living in, which also led to the break down of the hold of the church over society. This change is known as the 'Cultural Revolution', and had political repercussions in both domestic and foreign policy.¹⁶ This also led to a greater interest being taken in Africa, and in particular in South Africa, where the apartheid system went against basic human rights.

The importance of considering the non-governmental reaction to apartheid is therefore evident, along with the respective reasons for taking part in the struggle. In this article it will be shown how each organisation found a different reason for participating in the struggle and how this influenced the actions took.

3. THE ORIGIN OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENTS

The fact that there were different anti-apartheid groups within the Netherlands is often criticised as having been less effective than if there had been one large organisation. However, in outlining their different focuses, it can be seen that the division also had positive effects, as more elements of the struggle could be dealt with simultaneously and more members of the public were drawn into the struggle. In order to understand why there were different organisations, the origin and aim of each must be considered.¹⁷

Anti-apartheid organisations began in the Netherlands in May 1960, with the Comite Zuid-Afrika (CZA) being formed by JJ Buskes, K Roskram and two members of the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA).¹⁸ The basic aim of this organisation was to inform the Netherlands' public about the situation in South Africa.¹⁹ The 1970s saw the rise of numerous other anti-apartheid organisations in the Netherlands. The main reason why civil society organisations started was a reaction to the Netherlands' government's lack of action against apartheid. This decade saw the birth of the three large organisations - Werkgroep Kairos in 1970, the AABN in 1971 and the KZA in 1976, as well as smaller organisations focusing on one aspect of the struggle, such as Betaald Antwoord in 1970 and the Boycot Outspan Aktie

¹⁶ Heldring, pp. 1-7.

¹⁷ Van den Bergh, "Dialoog was geen dialoog", pp.16-7.

¹⁸ NIZA, 19.4, A Vuurens, 30 May 1997, p. 62.

¹⁹ JJ Buskes, **South Africa's apartheid policy - unacceptable**. sl, 1956, pp. 2-4; Comite Zuid-Afrika (CZA), **Informatie Bulletin**, December 1960 (1), p. 1; Hellema and Van den Bergh, p. 12.

(BOA) in 1973, and thirty work groups to support these organisations locally. All these organisations were intent on ending apartheid and supporting those fighting it. In 1970 the first annual Zuidelijk Afrika Congress was held in the Netherlands to discuss the South African situation. Over time the anti-apartheid movement's knowledge of South African issues broadened, and they developed the know-how and political contact necessary to take effective steps in their efforts to bring apartheid to an end. The influence of the various movements was particularly strong in the media and they received much social support from churches, trade unions and communities.²⁰

The three anti-apartheid organisations that will be considered in this article are Kairos, the AABN and the KZA. These were the three most important anti-apartheid organisations in the Netherlands, and unlike other organisations, they were also general organisations, dealing with various aspects of the struggle despite their focus on a specific area. However, in order to understand their origin, position and background, the initial organisation of the CZA, along with some of its actions, needs to be considered briefly.

The CZA was the first movement established inside the Netherlands with a distinctly anti-apartheid character. The CZA saw the Sharpeville massacre as a potentially dangerous situation, and aimed to inform the public about apartheid so that they could join together against it.²¹ The founder of the CZA, Buskes, was a Christian minister who visited South Africa in 1955 at the request of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. His mission was to investigate race relations and apartheid in South Africa. On his return, he felt he needed to inform the public about the realities of apartheid, and was specifically concerned about the number of Dutch immigrating to South Africa, and wanted to be sure that they were aware of apartheid.²² Until 1961, Buskes was the key figure in the running of the CZA, whereafter Roskram took over from him.²³

²⁰ NIZA, 19.4, A Vuurens, 30 May 1997, p. 63; CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, December 1968 (42), p. 2; Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika (KZA), "Partij kiezen voor Zuid Afrika", Deel 1, pp. 14-5; M Van Kalveren (ed.), **Nederlands' aandeel in apartheid. Nieuwe feitens gegevens economische relaties Nederland - Zuid Afrika** (Den Haag, 1983), p. 52; Hellema and Van den Bergh, pp. 4, 12-3; C Van Lakerveld (ed.), **Nederland tegen apartheid** (Amsterdam, 1994), p. 63.

²¹ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, December 1960 (1), p. 1.

²² Buskes, pp. 1-4, 154.

²³ NIZA, 19.4, S de Boer, July 1994, pp. 33-4; CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, December 1961/January 1962 (5), p. 1.

The foremost aim of the CZA was to keep the Netherlands' public informed through articles and its own publication, the **Informatie Bulletin**,²⁴ on what apartheid was and what developments were taking place at Netherlands' government level regarding apartheid. The CZA thus differed from later anti-apartheid groups in its aim, which focused on the Netherlands public, rather than encouraging people to participate in the freedom struggle. This is evident in its magazine which only called for donations to cover the cost of the magazine, making no mention of collecting money for the movements in Africa.²⁵ From this it can be deduced that the CZA was not concerned with fighting apartheid actively, but rather just to fight apartheid through an awareness campaign.

The CZA also organised various actions to try and break the ties between South Africa and the Netherlands, and in this way it tried to isolate South Africa. For example, in 1962 the CZA organised a protest at the opening of the South African Airways' (SAA) office in Amsterdam,²⁶ while it also organised boycotts of certain South African products.²⁷ It was thus primarily against the continued close link between the Netherlands and South Africa on an economic level.²⁸

Aside from informing the Dutch public about apartheid, and trying to isolate South Africa, the CZA also concentrated on lobbying the Netherlands' government. In 1962 a letter was sent to the Netherlands' government informing them of human rights violations in South Africa. The response was that this was a matter of internal affairs.²⁹ In 1963 another letter was sent to the government highlighting the amount of resistance to apartheid from both inside and outside South Africa.³⁰ The CZA was not only concerned with South Africa, but also with other countries in southern Africa.³¹ The CZA urged the Netherlands' government to take a stand in the United Nations (UN), and through this body call on all other nations to end diplomatic and trade relations with South Africa. The CZA also requested the government to implement individual sanctions, end the export of weapons and police dogs to South Africa, stop subsidising immigration to South Africa and terminate the Cultural Agreement with South Africa.³²

²⁴ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, December 1960 (1), p. 1.

²⁵ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, January/February 1965 (18), p. 10.

²⁶ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, January/February 1962 (10), pp. 16-8.

²⁷ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, November/ December 1962 (9), pp. 21-3.

²⁸ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, April 1968 (39), p. 6.

²⁹ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, January/February 1962 (10), p. 17.

³⁰ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, 1963 (12), p. 16.

³¹ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, June 1968 (40), p. 19.

³² CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, 1963 (12), pp. 16-8.

Towards the end of 1965, just prior to the announcement of the budget for 1966, the CZA sent a letter to the Second Chamber informing the Cabinet of the aims and needs of the Defence and Aid Fund (DAF), and requesting 100 000 guilders for this cause in the next budget.³³ The relationship that developed between the Defence and Aid Fund Netherlands (DAFN) and the CZA ushered in a new era, as the CZA decided to support the DAFN in its aims, meaning a move away from only informing the public, towards more concrete action against apartheid. In 1965 the CZA made its first call for donations for the struggle in South Africa when it asked for more money for the DAF after the Netherlands' government's promise of the 'Ton van Luns'. The CZA started to lose its independence in this period, as it was absorbed into the DAFN.³⁴ At the same time the CZA began to experience problems within its management, as some members wanted to remain moderate, while others felt that it was time to start taking more concrete steps. This led to a division within the CZA, and eventually some members broke away in 1971.

4. THE AIMS OF KAIROS, THE AABN AND THE KZA

Werkgroep Kairos came into being in 1970 primarily as a result of a connection with the Christian Institute (CI) of Beyers Naude that was based in South Africa.³⁵ Cor Groenendijk was the leader of the organisation, with Erik van den Bergh also holding an influential position. Kairos complied with the need for a Christian anti-apartheid organisation in the Netherlands, and also focused on informing the Dutch public, because the **Trouw** newspaper received many requests for more information on South Africa.³⁶

As a Christian organisation, Kairos' aim was to spread information among the churches on developments in South Africa. It did not have a broad following, but was very important in church circles, both inside the Netherlands and in South Africa.³⁷ It focused on informing people of the developments in South Africa and the surrounding countries, making people aware of the relationship between structures in western countries and South Africa and campaigned for financial and other support for organisations and people fighting apartheid. It also participated in activities to help the victims of apartheid. Kairos paid particular attention to keeping contact and offering support to church organisations and Christians in South Africa that supported ending apartheid and forming solidarity with victims of

³³ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, November/December 1965 (25), pp. 1-2.

³⁴ CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, June 1965 (21), p. 7, CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, December 1968 (42), p. 2.

³⁵ CGR Clur, "From acquiescence to dissent: Beyers Naude, 1915-1977", MA dissertation, UNISA, 1997.

³⁶ NIZA, 19.4, A Vuurens, 30 May 1997, pp. 64-5; **Amandla**, August 1985, p. 29; Kairos, pamphlet, Utrecht.

³⁷ Van Kalveren p. 55; NIZA, 19.4, PA Groenhuis, 1989, pp. 17-8.

the system. It also focused on developing support for and knowledge of the freedom movements in the region of southern Africa, developing support for the black trade unions and doing everything possible to end economic, political, cultural and church ties with white minority groups and the government of South Africa.³⁸

Kairos focused on working with churches inside South Africa so as to counter the South African government's use of certain churches to spread myths about white superiority. It also offered financial support to people living under apartheid and supported black churches morally and financially. Kairos worked closely with the churches in the Netherlands, making them aware of problems in South Africa, especially as many people had family members in South Africa. In the first years of apartheid, very few churches or church leaders openly opposed apartheid, with Buskes being an exception. However, over the years more churches took a stand against apartheid although the action remained abstract. Some individuals were against the church supporting anti-apartheid movements, and formed the 'Geen kerkgeld voor geweld' organisation in 1975, in reaction to Hervormde and Gereformeerde Churches collecting money for the freedom struggle.³⁹

Aside from dealing with the churches, Kairos also acted against investment in South Africa. They published numerous pamphlets to this effect and tried to convince the Netherlands' government to stop investment in South Africa. They were involved in campaigns to end investment in South Africa, to boycott South African products and to end exports to South Africa.⁴⁰

Kairos relied heavily on volunteers and donations throughout their existence. Donations came from Roman Catholic Orders, relief organisations and the Algemeen Diaconaal Bureau of the Gereformeerde, Hervormde and Remonstrantse churches. Other organisations, such as the Nationale Commissie Voorlichting en Bewustwording Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (NCO), Algemene Spaarbank Nederland (ASN) and the Haella Stichting also supported Kairos.⁴¹ Kairos received funding from the government, but would not state if the money was only for its own costs or if some of it was for the freedom movements.⁴² Funding also came from the Stichting Oecumenische Hulp van Kerken aan Vluchtelingen, which gave money specifically for training, supporting and helping South African priests and

³⁸ Kairos, **Jaarverslag 1990**, pp. 57-8.

³⁹ Van Kalveren, p. 55; NIZA, 19.4, PA Groenhuis, 1989, pp. 17-8, 30-2.

⁴⁰ NIZA, 19.4, PA Groenhuis, 1989, pp. 17, 19.

⁴¹ Kairos, **Jaarverslag 1991-1992**, pp. 7-8; **Amandla**, August 1985, p. 29.

⁴² Kairos, **Kairos Berichten**, 1970, No. 2, p. 9.

ministers who were against apartheid.⁴³ However, despite financial support, Kairos still experienced many financial problems, especially in the late 1980s.⁴⁴

In 1971 the more radical elements within the CZA broke away under the leadership of C Braam, B Schuitema and P Juffermans and formed the AABN.⁴⁵ The leaders of the AABN emphasised the role World War II played in their interest in apartheid. During the war they had personally experienced the evils of racism first hand with the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. Resistance movements developed in the Netherlands, giving assistance to victims and spreading anti-Nazi information. The AABN saw itself as a similar type of resistance movement, and felt its task was to support those fighting apartheid and disseminating information on the apartheid situation.⁴⁶

The aim of the AABN was "direkt of indirekt bij te dragen tot afschaffing van maatschappelijke diskriminatie, ...met betrekking tot Zuidelijk Africa".⁴⁷ Unlike the Netherlands' government, and many other organisations, the AABN did not consider the question of whether to support the armed struggle or not a moral dilemma, but rather felt that support for and solidarity with the freedom movements were the most important facets of its work. For the AABN, it was these freedom movements that represented the population, and it was through the armed struggle that Africa would be freed from apartheid and other forms of oppression.⁴⁸ The reason for this could lie in the fact that of the three main anti-apartheid movements, the AABN was politically the most left. They were often criticised for this, and were sometimes dismissed as being aligned to the Communistische Partij van Nederland (CPN).⁴⁹

The AABN's co-operation with the freedom movements was regarded as its most important action. This co-operation was not only in the form of financial aid, but also the showing of solidarity with those partaking in the struggle. Relations with the freedom movements therefore included visits to Africa and inviting resistance leaders to Amsterdam. Furthermore, the AABN went about trying to get public support for the freedom movement within the Netherlands.⁵⁰ The AABN did not only work with the freedom movements fighting for South African freedom, but also with those fighting for independence in other southern African countries such

⁴³ Kairos, **Kairos Berichten**, 1971, No. 1, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Kairos, **Jaarverslag 1990**, pp. 55-6.

⁴⁵ NIZA, 19.4, AVuurens, 30 May 1997, p. 63; CZA, **Informatie Bulletin**, December 1968 (42), p. 2; KZA, "Partij kiezen voor Zuid Afrika", Deel 1, p. 14; Van Lakerveld, p. 63.

⁴⁶ Hellema and Van den Bergh, p. 12.

⁴⁷ Anti-Apartheidsbeweging Nederland (AABN), **Jaarverslag 1976**, p. 1.

⁴⁸ **Ibid.**, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Van Lakerveld, p. 65.

⁵⁰ AABN, **Kommunikee**, November 1974, p. 5; AABN, **Kommunikee**, April 1975, p. 2.

as Zimbabwe and Namibia. In South Africa it worked to end apartheid and supported the ANC, South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the United Democratic Front (UDF). It also gave money for an ANC school in Tanzania and to the ANC Women's Movement.⁵¹

The AABN did not limit itself to working with the freedom movements, but also set about informing the Dutch public on the situation inside South Africa. In order to get support for its cause it was necessary that the public be aware of the conditions suffered in South Africa under apartheid. The main actions aimed at informing the public were marches held in Amsterdam, the publication of books explaining apartheid, the screening of films and videos depicting the situation in South Africa, and the publication of a newspaper bi-annually reporting on events in South Africa and on the freedom struggle. It also had a cultural aim at one point, focusing on increasing interest in African culture in the form of music and art.⁵² The AABN also concentrated on informing the public about what actions the Netherlands' government was taking regarding apartheid, and highlighting their lack of action. It also discussed the policy of the different Dutch political parties.⁵³

The KZA was the last of the three main anti-apartheid organisations to be founded, but in many ways it was the most effective. The KZA is often regarded as the biggest of the committees working with southern Africa, and the group had a number of paid workers, as well as volunteers. Some within the group were fairly radical, and although the KZA was not politically aligned to any group, they worked most closely with the PvdA and Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij (PSP). In the second half of the 1980s the KZA had approximately 40 000 donors. Unlike the AABN and Kairos, it did not develop initially with the aim of fighting apartheid. In 1961 the Angola Comite (AC) was established to support the freedom struggle in Angola, with Sietse Bosgra and Trineke Weijdema as leaders. Aside from just supporting Angola, the whole of southern Africa became a zone of concern. With its aim being reached in Angola in 1975, the committee decided to change its focus, and hence its name also changed from AC to KZA. The KZA was established in 1976, and decided to focus on the South African, Zimbabwean and Namibian freedom movements.⁵⁴

⁵¹ NIZA, 19.4, PA Groenhuis, 1989, pp. 15-7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-7.

⁵³ AABN, *Anti-Apartheid Nieuws*, November 1974 (69), p. 10.

⁵⁴ NIZA, 19.4, PA Groenhuis, 1989, p. 14, Van Lakerveld, p. 63; FJ Buijs, *Overtuiging en geweld. Vreedzame en gewelddadige acties tegen de apartheid, 1960-1977* (Amsterdam, 1995), p. 25.

The KZA felt that the struggle could not be left to the AABN, mainly due to it having links with the CPN. It believed that the AABN would not be able to get the support of the majority of the society, especially those who were not politically inclined to the left. The KZA also looked at the other anti-apartheid movements, and decided that Kairos's focus on the Christian section of society was too limiting, and that other groups also limited their action to one aspect of the struggle. The situation in South Africa was becoming more urgent in the 1970s, and the focus of southern African problems had shifted from Angola to South Africa. Although the AC had always believed in Angola first, by 1976 they felt the time had come to alter their focus. The AABN was a little sceptical about a new group with the same aim also based in Amsterdam. The KZA thus decided to work more closely with Kairos, which was based in Utrecht.⁵⁵

Unlike the AABN, which focused on supporting the movements fighting for the liberation of South Africa, the KZA focused its work within the Netherlands. For the KZA the most important element of the struggle was to increase international awareness of the situation in South Africa, and in this way increase international criticism of apartheid. The KZA focused on the ending of diplomatic, economic and friendly relations with the white South African government. This did not mean that the KZA did not work with the ANC, South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and other freedom movements. In actual fact, it did give them a lot of material and political support and developed close ties with them, but it rather means they focused on actions inside the Netherlands and on economic sanctions against South Africa. The KZA also tried to get the Netherlands to stop buying South African gold and other South African products. It published lists of the companies still investing in South Africa and those trading with South Africa, and called on people to boycott these companies.⁵⁶

5. ACTIONS BY THE ORGANISATIONS

Having considered the origin of the three main anti-apartheid organisations, it is important to very briefly look at their actions. Actions focusing on funding for the freedom struggle and isolating South Africa will be considered. Their different aims are highlighted by the type of actions they focused on, although all the organisations arranged similar campaigns. The different style of the three organisations was sometimes an obstacle to their efforts as they fought over what demands should be made to the Netherlands' government; what actions should be focused on; and disagreed on how to react to human rights violations by the freedom

⁵⁵ J Van Beurden and C Huinder, *De Vinger op de zere plek. Solidariteit met Zuidelijk Afrika, 1961-1996* (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 81-2.

⁵⁶ Van Klaveren pp. 53-4.

movements. They also differed on issues such as total or partial boycott; should the UDF be supported as well as the ANC; and was it more important to get mass mobilisation or government action. Division did, however, also have a positive side, as it led to a more active agenda as they competed to increase their contact with South African organisations. The anti-apartheid organisations were also pushed to greater action by the Netherlands' governments' lack of reaction and due to the fact that the NZAV concentrated on keeping ties with white South Africa alive.⁵⁷

Material support for the struggle was seen as very important by all three organisations, and the groups went about offering support both through the supplying of money and goods. As a result of its links with the church, Kairos supported and cooperated with the World Council of Churches (WCC). In 1970 the WCC started a separate fund to support the struggle to end racism, which was called the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR), and indicated it would concentrate on southern Africa.⁵⁸ Kairos supported and promoted the PCR,⁵⁹ encouraging churches to support the programme. Within the Netherlands the various denominations debated the question of support for the PCR,⁶⁰ although some resistance to the church supporting the struggle continued.⁶¹ Kairos viewed personal contact with the ANC as imperative, but felt people should remain aware of the division within the struggle.⁶² It continued with this point of view in the mid-1980s, when Kairos wanted to increase the financial support made available to the UDF,⁶³ showing how Kairos favoured relations with groups inside South Africa.

One of the early actions of the AABN was the 1974 'steun die vrijheidsstrijd in Zuidelijk Afrika'.⁶⁴ In its programme for 1975 it revealed its intention to provide direct and indirect financial support for the freedom struggle.⁶⁵ Already early in 1975 the AABN emphasised financial support for the freedom movements as more important than the economic boycott.⁶⁶ The AABN began a fund to collect money for the freedom movements,⁶⁷ and it decided to introduce a 'Steunfonds' to support

⁵⁷ Van den Bergh, "Dialogoog was geen dialoog," pp. 16-7.

⁵⁸ Kairos, "Kairos, kerk en bevrijdingsbeweging", p. 61.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁶⁰ **Amandla**, August 1985, p. 30; Kairos, "Kairos, kerk en bevrijdingsbeweging", p. 61.

⁶¹ Kairos, "Kairos, kerk en bevrijdingsbeweging", p. 62.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

⁶³ NIZA, 10.1A (Algemene regeringsbeleid), 1985-1991. "Beleid beschouwd, NR 5185 5/7/1985. Samengesteld door de rijksvoorlichtingdienst afdeling interne voorlichting, Den Haag. Zuid Afrika", p. 5, from: **De Volkskrant**, 11 Junie 1985, "Beyers Naude vraagt steun voor bonden Zuid-Afrika".

⁶⁴ AABN, **Jaarverslag 1978**, p. 15.

⁶⁵ AABN, **Kommunikee**, November 1974, p. 5.

⁶⁶ AABN, **Kommunikee**, April 1975, p. 2.

⁶⁷ AABN, **Kommunikee**, January 1975, p. 11.

the underground trade unions in South Africa.⁶⁸ A demonstration was held in Amsterdam on 28 August 1976 in reaction to the Soweto uprising to try and get more people to support the resistance movements in South Africa. Donations were made towards the 'Steunfonds', which collected almost 80 000 guilders by the end of 1976.⁶⁹ The AABN also increased its advertising campaign as it called for unconditional support for the ANC and the freedom struggle in South Africa.⁷⁰

During 1977 the AABN wanted to increase its material support for the freedom movements, and therefore planned more campaigns. Special attention was paid to the ANC and to their refugees, thus introducing Operation 'ANC-noodkreet' to provide for the basic needs of these people.⁷¹ In its programme for 1978 the AABN decided to increase funds donated to 'onderwijs tegen apartheid'.⁷² Actions continued to increase over the next few years, as apartheid became more prominent in the post-Soweto period.

In October 1982 the AABN started a call for donations for Radio Freedom, the ANC radio station broadcast from Tanzania, and also helped with the education of presenters and the provision of radio equipment.⁷³ In 1984 campaigns continued, but the AABN began to lose support and was in a weaker financial position than in previous years. This can be attributed to the more friendly attitude of the Netherlands' government and promises of reform from South Africa, as well as its close relations with the ANC and the armed struggle.⁷⁴ As late as April 1989 the AABN was still trying to collect money for the ANC,⁷⁵ showing how the AABN continued to support the ANC until it was unbanned by the South African government in February 1990. The efforts of the AABN to support the ANC were fairly successful, and although its monetary support was never extensive, it did help the ANC with various projects, and provided considerable advice and support.

Financially the KZA was much more successful than any of the other anti-apartheid organisations. From 1977 until 1991 the KZA collected 57,5 million guilders through their 'Bevrijdingsfonds'. It was guaranteed that at least 90% of all donations would go to the 'Bevrijdingsfonds', with the rest being used for administration, and

⁶⁸ AABN, *Anti-apartheids Nieuws*, April 1975 (72), p. 6.

⁶⁹ AABN, *Jaarverslag 1976*, pp. 9-10; AABN, *Zuidelijk Afrika Nieuws*, October 1976 (81), pp. 5-7.

⁷⁰ Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IISG), stzmap AABN I & II, AABN document, 1976/11/18; AABN, *Jaarverslag 1976*, pp. 9-10; AABN, *Zuidelijk Afrika Nieuws*, October 1976 (81), pp. 10-1.

⁷¹ AABN, *Jaarverslag 1977*, p. 10; AABN, *Zuidelijk Afrika Nieuws*, April 1977 (84), p. 2.

⁷² AABN, *Zuidelijk Afrika Nieuws*, April 1977 (84), p. 2.

⁷³ AABN, *Zuidelijk Afrika Nieuws*, October 1982 (117), pp. 4-7.

⁷⁴ AABN, *Zuidelijk Afrika Nieuws*, October 1984 (129), pp. 2-3.

⁷⁵ AABN, *Antiapartheids Krant*, April/May 1989, p. 6.

more than 25% went to the ANC.⁷⁶ The KZA, just like the AABN, Kairos and BOA, got a subsidy from the Netherlands' government and it also got money from the EC, UN and other ministries.⁷⁷ The KZA was also the organisation through which the government made their donation to the freedom movements available, which means that it received more than the other organisations.⁷⁸ This money could only be used for humanitarian purposes in respect of refugees from South Africa and Namibia and the money from the EC was to be used for peaceful development.⁷⁹

The KZA introduced the 'Bevrijdingsfonds' in 1977 after deciding that the struggle should be given more than just ideological support. The KZA saw itself as a supporter of the ANC from a distance, so most of the money was used for refugee camps run by the freedom movements.⁸⁰ In the first year, the bulk of the money was given to the freedom movements without restrictions. However, when the KZA started to get funding from larger organisations it was stipulated that the money had to be allocated more carefully, resulting in the forming of the 'Bevrijdings Komitee'.⁸¹ The KZA also had an emergency fund, which could be utilised by the freedom movements in any urgent situation.⁸²

Just as the AABN emphasised solidarity with the freedom movements, Kairos and the KZA saw isolating South Africa as the most important facet of the struggle. In August 1972, the Central Committee of the WCC held a meeting in Utrecht and called on all individuals outside South Africa to use their influence through disinvestment, stopping of trade and the pulling out of shareholders in South Africa.⁸³ In reaction to this call, Kairos decided to embark on a campaign in 1973 against the Koninklijke Nederlandse Petroleum Maatschappij NV, with Shell Nederland being a part of this company. South Africa relied on oil imports, and a boycott would affect all spheres of its economy without having a very negative impact on the black population as they were not as involved in the economic activities of the country. Shell was one of the Netherlands' biggest investors in South Africa, and was also involved with providing oil for the Ian Smith regime's army and government in Zimbabwe.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ KZA, Pamphlet ; NIZA, 19.4, PA Groenhuis, 1989, pp. 14-5; Van Lakerveld, p. 65.

⁷⁷ Buijs, p. 25; Van Lakerveld, p. 65; Van Beurden and Huinder, pp. 131-2.

⁷⁸ Van Lakerveld, p. 111.

⁷⁹ NIZA, 19.4, PA Groenhuis, 1989, pp. 14-5.

⁸⁰ Buijs, p. 25; Van Lakerveld, p. 65, 111; Van Beurden and Huinder, pp. 124-8, 131-2.

⁸¹ Buijs, p. 26; Van Beurden and Huinder, pp. 130-1.

⁸² Van Beurden and Huinder, pp. 128, 132-6.

⁸³ Raad van Kerken Nederland (Internationale Zaken), "Buitenlandse investering in Zuid Afrika" in **Oecumenische Informatie** (1), 1975, p. 3.

⁸⁴ **Amandla**, August 1985, p. 29; Van Beurden and Huinder, pp. 85-6.

In the beginning, the focus of the oil campaign lay in dialogue and investigation, but by 1976 no change had come about despite the UN call for an oil boycott in 1975.⁸⁵ At this point, the KZA joined Kairos's Shell campaign,⁸⁶ believing that South Africa was dependent on its outside contact, so economic boycotts would be very influential in ending apartheid.⁸⁷ This introduced the second phase of action against Shell - a phase of greater action with wider political and social support after a second call by the WCC. On 12 March 1979 Kairos and the KZA started a campaign to get government support for the oil embargo, working with some Second Chamber members of the PvdA and of the Christian parties. In 1979 Iran joined the oil embargo, meaning that the Rotterdam harbour became very important in the provision of oil to South Africa. A petition was published in the media and thousands of letters and telegrams were sent to parliament in support of a one-sided embargo. Discussions in parliament on the issue resulted in a lengthy debate on 26 June 1980, which reflects the prominence of the South African issue, despite the decision not to introduce one-sided boycotts.⁸⁸

The last phase of the oil campaign was influenced by the internal situation in South Africa. In June 1985 President PW Botha called off the State of Emergency and internationally there were expectations for reform, but as these did not materialise companies started withdrawing from South Africa and Shell began to reconsider its decision.⁸⁹ In 1989 a huge demonstration took place outside the Shell laboratory in Amsterdam North, calling for Shell to leave South Africa. Discussions and actions continued until 1990 when FW De Klerk released Mandela.⁹⁰ Although the oil campaign never resulted in Shell leaving South Africa, it did still have an effect on Shell, the Netherlands' public and on South Africa, with PW Botha reporting that the oil boycott cost South Africa 22 billion Rand.⁹¹ The oil campaign was not the only economic action taken by the KZA within the Netherlands - other campaigns focused on the purchasing of Kruger Rands⁹² and South African fruit.⁹³

The AABN also realised the importance of isolating South Africa financially and in 1976, together with the Dutch trade unions, called for a boycott of South African goods and published information on contacts with South Africa.⁹⁴ The AABN

⁸⁵ Van Beurden and Huinder, p. 86.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁸⁷ KZA, *Sancties tegen Zuid Afrika*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Buijs, pp. 39-44; Van Beurden and Huinder, pp. 88-90, 95-8.

⁸⁹ Van Beurden and Huinder, pp. 101-2.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-5; Buijs, pp. 105-6.

⁹¹ Van Beurden and Huinder, p. 106.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100; Buijs, p. 56.

⁹³ Buijs, p. 101.

⁹⁴ AABN, *Jaarverslag 1976*, pp. 11-2, 14; AABN, *Jaarverslag 1977*, p. 9.

continued to call on people to boycott companies that still invested in South Africa, and made the public aware of the Netherlands' trade relations.⁹⁵

6. CONCLUSION

The above discussion highlights the different ideologies, aims and actions of the three most important anti-apartheid groups in the Netherlands. In short, Kairos was a Christian organisation, while pacifism, socialism and social democracy influenced the KZA, and the AABN was politically left.⁹⁶ Although they cooperated on occasion, their different ideologies and focuses explain why they continued to function as three separate organisations. However, the combined result was to create an impression of 'Nederland tegen apartheid', despite the limited action taken by the Dutch government.

⁹⁵ K Zeelberg and F Nijssen, "De Nederlandse belangen in Zuid Afrika. Handel en wandel van 'onze' multinationals" (AABN, Amsterdam, 1976); Kongress Map: Zuidelijk Afrika Congress, 6-8 September 1974, "Geen geld voor onderdrukkend geweld" (Groningen, 1976), p. 7.

⁹⁶ Van Lakerveld, p. 65.