



## INVALUABLE FACTUAL SUPPORT

By Christian Kelm-Hansen  
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I was pleased to hear that AWEPA are still active in the important work that they have been doing for the last 25 years. I am also pleased that you are using the upcoming anniversary to record and summarise what AWEPA has done and accomplished.

I have unfortunately no clear recollection of how I came in contact with AWEPA. But the cause must have been that as a former member of the Social Democratic group in the parliament. I had been appointed to work with for Danish relations concerning the apartheid policy in South Africa. I was also Chairman of the DANIDA Board and thereby a centrally placed person concerning the work with developing countries, especially in Africa. So if AWEPA approached the Social democratic party this request would have passed through me.

I am currently completing my memoirs and the first-time AWEPA arises in there, it states:

"Good to be a Dane. I also had the pleasure and benefits of participating in the conferences which were organised by AWEPA (Western European Parliamentarians against Apartheid), because there was an opportunity to meet African politicians, especially from Southern Africa. It was therefore an anti-apartheid conference in Strasbourg in late May 1987, when the two most central people of Zimbabwe "Speaker" i.e. President Mutaza and the leader of SWAPO, Namibian (later President) Sam Nujoma.

In a rhetorical accomplishment without script, Mutaza directed an attack on the European governments concerning their colonial past, where they had exploited Africa, and now they will not actively join in the struggle against apartheid. In addition countries like Israel and Taiwan were in direct cooperation with the Republic of South Africa to develop weapons. As far as the arms embargo was concerned it was not worth anything, since each country itself defines what "weapons are". It is also difficult to control the goods in the containers. There have not been enough resources given in to solve what they contain, compared to the effort made to reveal if people smuggled an extra packet of cigarettes through airport duty. The Sentences are too mild, and the cases are quickly getting too old.

Sam Nujoma was too harsh in his criticism of the Europeans. Apartheid can not be reformed, it must totally be eradicated. Europe has been unleashed from the Nazis - now we have a commitment to free South Africa from their kind of Nazism. The situation is very serious and can no longer be controlled. Western companies are turning a blind eye to the assault, for example with what occurs in Namibia and South Africa friends is making a veto to the proposal in the UN Security Council, which should improve the situation. But the Namibian patriot fight continues!

It was good to be a Dane with this kind of meeting, because there was expressed a recognition of the Danish effort."

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As shown by this quote, I participated in various events and gained knowledge about AWEPA and the key people in the African struggle against apartheid and their arguments. Besides that, this was an invaluable factual support for my work in the Danish parliament; it was furthermore a very important inspiration, giving light and energy to continue working for the Danish anti-apartheid politics. We were the first country in 1985-86 to cut off all trade cooperation with the South African republic and generally worked hard for a comprehensive boycott of the Republic. AWEPA also gave us the opportunity to meet and exchange experiences and views with a wide range of Western European Parliamentarians who were also occupied with the anti-apartheid policy. It had a decisive influence on the decisions taken in different countries.

So AWEPA, in my view, had been tearing walls down in the work to eliminate apartheid. But there are still major tasks left in Africa. The wealthy Western countries have to increase aid significantly to sub-Saharan Africa, so people of these countries can achieve a satisfactory standard of living. At the same time, we need to increase our support and inspiration for developing the countries' parliamentary democracy significantly.

AWEPA should continue work to strengthen contact and cooperation among African politicians and European parliamentarians. AWEPA should in this work inspire and support African politicians to solve their part of the task, while expanding the network to the European politicians' and thereby their knowledge of African conditions. It will mean that the decision process will be based on cooperation with the African countries, and thereby taken on the strongest possible foundation of exact and factual knowledge.

I wish you success in further work.

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