

# The Case Of "Belgium"

## The Truth Commission Files

### [Belgium-report]

#### An example of pro-apartheid support groups in Europe:

- The Flemish party Vlaams Blok/VB (Flemish Block) and its extremists front organisations as for example the former Vrienden van Zuid-Afrika (Friends of SA) & Voorpost (Outpost, the continuation of the banned paramilitary force VMO) are violent, racist, anti-migrants, pro-apartheid and maintain good relations with white right-wing extremist groups in South Africa, as the AWB, the Afrikaner Volksfront/AVF & the Boerestaat Party.

Roger Spinnewijn [VB; VMO/Voorpost; co-founder of the Belgian section of the World Anti-Communist League/WACL (named AKF); father of VB senator John Spinnewijn] and others recruited mercenaries (beginning 1990's) to fight for the creation of a white homeland. In South Africa these mercs had contacts with Monica Huggett (failed), Willie Lubbe (AWB, leader of the SA section of Voorpost), Robert van Tonder (Boerstaat Party), Manie Maritz & General Heever (AWB) .

The SAP arrested Huggett and others and some of the mercs. According to Belgian journalists the AWB receives also money of the Vlaams Blok and Eugene Terre Blanche has visited (even recently) his Belgian friends several times.

#### Sources:

- Searchlight (The International Anti-Fascist Monthly): July, August, September & November 1996
- Gijssels, Hugo: Open je ogen voor het Vlaams Blok ze sluit; Leuven: Kritak, 1994
- "Vrienden van Zuid-Afrika" Vlaams-Afrikaanse Vereniging: Wie zijn wij? Wat doen wij?" (pamphlet)
- Cremer, Clifford C: "De Vlaamse konnektie", De Morgen 1/10/1994
- The most important pro-apartheid lobby was Protea. Protea or the Flemish-South African friendship club, was founded in 1977 by professor André J Vlerick (ex Minister of Finance and vice-president of the "Kredietbank") and the late senator Wim Jorissen. The right wing members consisted of MP's of the liberal and Christian-democratic parties, some important Flemish bankers and industrialists, some journalists and high civil servants. Its aim was to furnish "objective information" about South Africa, defending the apartheid regime and attacking the ANC. Since 1981 there existed a Protea student association. Protea organised meetings, debates, tourist trips to South Africa and offered opportunities to student to do their practical training in SA. Many members of Protea lobbied also against a new law against racism and xenophobia (1987).

Other pro-apartheid lobbies, with more or less the same membership as Protea, were

- The Interparlementaire Verening België
- Zuid-Afrika (the interparliamentarian association Belgium-SA) founded in 1976 and the
- Studiecentrum voor Zuidelijk Afrika (Study Centre on Southern Africa), founded in 1986 by Vlerick

and others .

At the end of the 80's, beginning 90's all these organisations withered away.

These more "respectable" pro-apartheid lobby-organisations maintained good relations with the Vlaams Blok. For example Karel Dillen (former president of the VB) was also founding-member of Protea, as was the late Bob Maes (former leader VMO).

Rochtus friend of the old and new South Africa?

An important right wing founding member of Protea was Leon Rochtus, the director of the bank Paribas in Antwerpen. Rochtus was also one of the founding members of the Vlaams Kultureel Centrum Dr. Missak in Johannesburg (1981). Rochtus, called "Black Leon" because of his Nazi sympathies and his financial mentorship for the extremist right. He maintained contacts with the Vlaams Blok and helped the VMO financially. Leon Rochtus was honorary consul of South Africa from 1975 until his death in 1997. The SA Ministry of Foreign Affairs (as well its Ambassador in Belgium Mrs. Anette de K. Joubert as its Minister Alfred Nzo) blundered by writing in the journal "Beelden" of the South African Embassy in Brussels [Beelden, febr.97] about this former enemy of the ANC and pro-apartheid activist: "Mr. Rochtus was an exceptional man for South Africa, since he fulfilled the role of Honorary Consul in an admirable way. He received in 1992 "Die Orde van Goeie Hoop" for his excellent record of service, especially for the promotion of trade relations between South Africa and Belgium". (comment: in other words " thanks for your boycott busting activities!")

Sources:

pro-Protea:

- Protea kontakblad, nr. 25 1988
- Jorrissen, Wim: Zondebok Zuid-Afrika. Een positieve balans; Tielt: Lannoo, 1980
- newsletters of Protea & the Protea student-association
- "Omtrent <PROTEA>", Beelden (monthly of the SA Embassy in Brussels) Febr.1978
- "In Memoriam Leon Rochtus", Beelden, Jan. 1997
- "Zuid-Afrikaanse ereconsul overleden", Beelden, Febr. 1997 nr.2

contra-Protea:

- Vlaams-Zuidafrikaanse kontakklub <PROTEA>, Amada 9/11/77 (a list of the founding-members of Protea)
- "Les sudafricons", HUMO, 6/12/77 (list of founding members of Protea)
- "De kombine van Brussel tot Pretoria", Rood 24/2/78
- Gijssels, Hugo: "Baron André Vlerick, apartheidsprofessor gelauwerd door Zuid-Afrika.", Halt, 8806
- Laarmans, Gust: "Zwarte Leon, het witte huis en de bruine kaffers", Halt, 8610

(about Leon Roctus)

- Bock, W. De and others: Extreem-rechts en de staat, EPO, Febr. 1982 pp.100-107

(about Leon Roctus & the extremist right)

- Groeneweg, Cor: "Het proces Notaris X of de Kleinbrabander als Uebermensch", De Tijd, 27/2/1987:22-27 (about Leon Roctus & his son, the notary Luc Roctus -accused of incest- and how the administration of justice has been corrupted)

- Bock, Walter De and others: Suikerbossie. België en Zuidelijk Afrika, Brussel & Amsterdam: Manteau, 1978

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**The (secret) Truth Commission Files**