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Yusuf Dadoo and the ‘London Debates’¹

In the testament he signed on 19 September 1983, the day he died, Yusuf Dadoo expressed regret at not having written his memoirs. On reflection, he said he realised that his autobiography would have brought to the fore ‘three crucial developments linking together three motivating ideas of struggle.’² The first was the re-ignition of militancy among the Indian community in South Africa ‘after years of reliance on court actions, negotiations with governments, compromise and the bribery of white officials or politicians had dampened the spirit that once inspired Gandhi’s *satyagrahis*.’³ The second development, Dadoo argued, was ‘the growth of consciousness for the urgent need of unity with the majority of the oppressed, the African people, which led to unity in action of all oppressed and democratic forces.’ And third, there was the mobilisation of class struggle as a key part to South Africa’s liberation and the creation of a socialist society.⁴ This paper is primarily concerned with the second of these endeavours – namely the achievement of a united front of all oppressed people and democratic whites – to which Dadoo devoted most of his life. From a very early stage Yusuf Dadoo understood that unity was essential not only to defeat apartheid but also for the creation of a future non-racial South Africa. However, in a society deeply divided along the lines of colour, unity and united action between different groups were neither inevitable nor natural developments. As the political biography of his life suggests,⁵ Yusuf Dadoo was often ahead of his time (and of his comrades) in what Joe Slovo has described his ‘unending political drive to achieve unity,’⁶ which took years of painstaking work to bear fruits.

In particular, this paper focuses on the debates concerning the reorganisation of the former Congress Alliance and of the SACP in exile in the period between the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960 and the Morogoro Conference of 1969. These debates are evidence of the difficulties involved in forging non-racial unity on the ground. Moreover, they suggest that the liberation movements’ move into exile was not a matter of unproblematic continuation. Rather, this entailed a set of profound transformations and adjustments which, far from being linear, were punctuated by disagreements and setbacks. There were two major changes that occurred in this period. The first was the opening of ANC membership to non-Africans at Morogoro in 1969. Secondly, and closely

¹ This paper is based on my PhD research, see A. Lissoni, ‘The South African Liberation Movements in Exile, c. 1945-1970’ (PhD Thesis, University of London, 2008). Some of the arguments presented in this paper have recently been published in an article, also based on my PhD thesis. See A. Lissoni, ‘Transformations in the ANC external mission and Umkhonto we Sizwe, c.1960-9,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Special Issue: Liberation Struggles, Exile and International Solidarity, Vol. 35, No. 2, June 2009, 287-301.

² Quoted in J. Slovo, ‘A Tribute to Yusuf Dadoo,’ *The African Communist*, No. 126, 1991.

³ J. & R. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (London, International Defence and Aid Fund, 1983), 506.

⁴ Quoted in Slovo, ‘A Tribute to Yusuf Dadoo.’

⁵ In 1938 Yusuf Dadoo was one of the key founders of the Non-European United Front. This was the earliest instance of an organisation formally bringing together all oppressed groups. Although, as the Simons argued, ‘the seed of a grand non-racial alliance had been planted,’ the front was short-lived. Moreover, the ANC refused affiliate with it. Simons, *Class and Colour*, 504.

⁶ Slovo, ‘A Tribute to Yusuf Dadoo.’

linked to the issue of non-racialism, was the turn to the armed struggle. This paper argues that Dadoo was a central force in the liberation movement's development of a policy of non-racialism and its adoption of a revolutionary strategy. This was exemplified by the opening of ANC membership and the creation of a new non-racial body, the Revolutionary Council. Far from being linear, however, this rearrangement was a highly contested process, in the course of which Dadoo was often left disappointed and frustrated. Nevertheless, it was thanks to the overarching commitment to unity upheld by leaders like Dadoo that this change was ultimately possible.

Sharpeville, exile and the policy of the 'African image'

Yusuf Dadoo was among the first small group of South African leaders from various organisations to leave the country in the aftermath of Sharpeville. After spending a brief period underground when the State of Emergency was declared at the end of March 1960, SACP 'decreed that it was essential for the movement to maintain contact with the outside world and not allow the government to isolate in from world public opinion.' 'After lengthy discussions' and despite Dadoo's own 'strong inclination and desire [...] to be among and work with the people'⁷ the Party in consultation with the SAIC decided that Dadoo should go abroad so that he could 'assist with the organisation of solidarity work and consolidate the external apparatus of the Party.'⁸ (A small SACP cell had been operating in London from as early as 1954 under the leadership of Vella Pillay.)⁹ On 9 April 1960, the day Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd was shot, Dadoo skipped the border into Botswana where he joined the ANC Deputy President Oliver Tambo, who had secretly left South Africa under instruction from the ANC 'to carry abroad the message of its vision and solicit support of the movement' in the event of the organisation's banning.¹⁰ The PAC, who had recently split from the ANC, also sent two of its representatives abroad: Nana Mahomo and Peter 'Molotsi.

Under pressure from African states, especially the Ghanaian government and its President Kwame Nkrumah, who understood the liberation of Southern Africa within a framework of African unity, the ANC, the PAC and the SAIC leaders in exile agreed to come together by forming a joint external machinery known as the South African United Front (SAUF).¹¹ Although in the context of the post-Sharpeville crisis mistrust and other issues of contention between the PAC and the ANC were buried under the urgent need of both organisations to gather international support for the struggle at home, this union of convenience was always an improbable one. The differences which had led to the Africanists' breakaway from the ANC in the first place soon resurfaced within the SAUF. By the end of 1961 Dadoo reported to the COD in South Africa that the SAUF was 'no longer in existence except in name.' Unity abroad had been made impossible, Dadoo explained, by

⁷ University of the Western Cape (hereafter UWC), Mayibuye Archives, MCH05, Boxfile 2.6.1, Y. Dadoo, 'Notes on his move into exile in 1960,' 1972.

⁸ B. Bunting, *Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary: A Political Biography*, 3rd ed. (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1998), 262. On Dadoo's escape see also S. Mottiar, 'Yusuf Dadoo: Bafa Begiya' (MA Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 2000), 182-3.

⁹ According to Simon Zukas this was set up by Ruth First during a trip to London in 1954. Vella Pillay was the core member of this cell and acted as the SACP Central Committee representative in London up to Dadoo's arrival. See S. Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka, Bookworld Publishers, 2002).

¹⁰ L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Cape Town, David Philip, 2005), 253.

¹¹ The formation of the SAUF, which also included the Namibian liberation movements SWANU and SWAPO, was announced at the second Conference of Independent African States in Addis Ababa in June 1960. Offices were set up in London, Accra, Cairo and Dar es Salaam. Dadoo worked alongside Mahomo, Tambo and Jariretundu Kozonguizi (of SWANU) in the London office of the SAUF. The SAUF's aim was to mobilise world opinion and to draw governments into active participation in the application of various pressures (economic and political) on South Africa. Its greatest political victory was South Africa's forced withdrawal from the Commonwealth in March 1961. The PAC's boycott of the May 1961 stay-away in South Africa, as well as ideological differences lying at the heart of rift between the ANC and the PAC (most notably the ANC's collaboration with whites and Indians) eventually led to the SAUF's gradual dissolution, which was formally announced in March 1962. See Y. Dadoo, 'Why the United Front Failed,' *New Age*, 29 March 1962; A. Lissoni, 'The South African Liberation Movements in Exile.'

‘the constant undermining carried on by PAC over a long period,’ and by ‘the differences between the organisations in South Africa.’¹² As the crisis in the SAUF developed the ANC and partner organisations in the Congress Alliance¹³ in South Africa and abroad ‘engaged in a very thorough discussion as to what was required to replace the SAUF.’¹⁴

By the late 1950s, the ANC’s collaboration with its non-African allies had given rise to allegations the ANC ‘danced to the tune of the Communists.’¹⁵ Moreover, the ANC’s multi-racialism (as embodied by the Congress Alliance and the Freedom Charter) appeared out of step with developments on the rest of the continent, where African leaders were not accustomed to the ANC’s approach on race and distrusted its policy of cooperation with Indians and whites, as Mandela painfully discovered during his tour of the continent in 1962. Mandela was taken aback on discovering how much support the PAC had gained on the continent. In his travel diaries he noted:

The PAC has started off with tremendous advantages ideologically and has skilfully exploited opposition to whites and partnership. Sharpeville boosted them up and the stand of their leaders during the trial, and the imprisonment of Sobukwe, fostered the belief that they were more militant than the ANC.¹⁶

When Mandela arrived in Tanzania, Julius Nyerere even suggested that the armed struggle be postponed until Sobukwe was released from prison.¹⁷ But Mandela’s possibly most frustrating visit was to Ghana, ‘the Mecca of Pan-Africanism’ and the leading state on the African continent. Here Mandela tried to see President Nkrumah, but instead got ‘lectured’ by the Ghanaian Foreign Minister that ‘the ANC was a tribalist organisation.’¹⁸

From Ghana Mandela went to London. When Mandela met with Yusuf Dadoo and Vella Pillay during the course of his ten-day stay they had a fall out. Because of the resistance he had encountered throughout Africa, Mandela now told Dadoo ‘that the ANC must show itself as an independent force to be represented only by Africans at international conferences.’ ‘Dadoo protested that Mandela was changing ANC policy,’ but the latter ‘insisted that it was a change of image only. The ANC, Mandela argued, had to appear genuinely African: it had got “lost in a nebulous organisation representing everybody”.’¹⁹

After Mandela’s return to South Africa, ‘the phrase “the image” which the ANC presents to the outside world became a nucleus of wide ranging discussions,’²⁰ which led to the formulation of a policy internally known as the ‘African image.’ Despite being the subject of ‘comprehensive and at times acrimonious’²¹ debate (Dadoo’s remonstrations to Mandela being a clear example),²² it was according to this principle that the ANC began to set up offices or external missions in various

¹² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH229, Boxfile 1.2.2, ‘Decisions taken at a meeting of the Secretariat of the NEC of the COD held on 24 October 1961.’

¹³ Prior to March 1960, the Congress Alliance had functioned through the Joint Congress Executives, the formal head of the alliance, and through the National Action Council, or Secretariat, a consultative, non-policy making body with delegates from each of the four sponsoring bodies. Members of the Secretariat included Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe for the ANC, Yusuf Dadoo for the SAIC, George Peake for the CPC, and Piet Beyleveld for the COD (he was replaced by Ben Turok around 1958).

¹⁴ University of Fort Hare (hereafter UFH), Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 81, File B.2.3.1, ‘Political report of the NEC to the Consultative Conference of the ANC, Morogoro, April 1969.’

¹⁵ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 244.

¹⁶ Quoted in Martin Meredith, *Nelson Mandela: A Biography* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1997), 213.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorized Biography* (London, HarperCollins, 1999), 167.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² ANC President Chief Albert Luthuli also initially objected to Mandela’s plan. See N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (London, Abacus, 1995), 369-71.

countries, at this stage mainly in African cities. These were in fact and practice ANC offices, led by ANC personnel, responsible to the ANC executive. The other organisations in the Congress Alliance, as well as the SACP,²³ agreed with the decision that only the ANC should set up offices abroad as the most senior member in the alliance and as the representative of the African majority of the population in South Africa. The aim of the 'African image' policy was to assert African leadership and hence to correct the idea in African circles that the ANC was controlled by Indians and white communists.

At the time the 'African image' policy was adopted by the ANC and its allies a relatively strong leadership was still operative inside South Africa where it was able to direct operations. However, the Rivonia raid and the arrest of the Second NHC in late 1964 in effect wiped out the surviving underground leadership. This meant that by 1965 the external mission of the ANC found itself in the position of having to assume responsibility for the whole of the ANC, including for MK, which had never been its job when it was established. By the mid-1960s, the 'African image' policy, which in effect excluded the non-African leadership in exile from policy and decision-making positions, increasingly came to the fore as a stumbling block to the full participation of all exiles into the structure and workings of the ANC external mission. This problem applied especially to the London context, where the majority of the white, Indian and Coloured exiles were based. These individuals found themselves in 'organisational limbo'²⁴ as a result of the decision that only the ANC should open offices abroad.²⁵ The choice of the UK for many South African exiles was in part determined by the practical need of earning a living,²⁶ and partly by the fact that whites, Coloureds and Indians – especially if communist – did not appear to be very welcome in African states. Many well-known non-African communists, including Yusuf Dadoo himself, Joe Slovo, Ruth First and Michael Harmel, 'had been declared prohibited immigrants in Tanzania and had consequently been obliged to operate from Europe.'²⁷ On the other hand, ANC members going into exile, including prominent SACP members such as Moses Kotane and J.B. Marks, tended to establish themselves in those African capitals which hosted ANC offices.

By 1965 the ANC felt it was finally on the ascendancy in the battle for legitimacy against the PAC as the vanguard party in the struggle for national liberation in South Africa. (This achievement may have had more to do with the PAC's self-disintegration in this period than with the successful projection of the 'African image' by the ANC.) But to some of the ANC's supporters in exile the 'African image' had been almost *too* effective. Given that Dadoo had been the very first critic of this policy, it is likely that he was among this group of people. Their views were reported in an ANC document dated February 1965. According to the critics of the 'African image,' the external mission only reflected 'the majority, and not the minorities who are subject to oppression in South Africa.' Secondly, the notion of the 'African image' entailed, they argued, an implicit 'danger that in deference of the views of certain reactionary states in Africa [...] the present machinery might make concessions on matters of principle on the question of non-racial democracy.' Thirdly, they complained that the current external setting did not accord room at the policy-making and decision-making levels to 'certain persons who are very important in their political organisations at home,' as well as inhibiting full use of all available manpower resources

²³ See 'A Landmark in South Africa's History: The Sixth National Conference of the South African Communist Party,' *International Bulletin*, no. 4, December 1962, in Allison Drew (ed.), *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A Documentary History*, Vol. 2, 1943-1964 (Cape Town, Buchu Books, 1997), 358-64.

²⁴ T.G. Karis and G.M. Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979*, Vol. 5 in Karis and Carter (eds.), *From Protest to Challenge* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 1997), 36.

²⁵ The first indication of these problems of external representation (or rather what was perceived as lack of) was a dispute between the ANC external mission and some representatives of the Coloured People Congress in exile led by its President Barney Desai, which started to brew as early as 1963 and only ended with the latter's defection to the PAC in 1966. See Lissoni, 'The South African Liberation Movements in Exile.'

²⁶ Interview with Brian Bunting, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 22 November 2004.

²⁷ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 326.

outside the country.²⁸ In the London context this meant that the bulk of South African exiles worked on the fringes of the ANC office, mainly through British solidarity organisations such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the World Campaign for the Release of South African Political Prisoners, and the International Defence and Aid Fund.

The ANC Executive internally acknowledged the existence of these problems and the need to solve them, while undertaking to 'improve or even alter any practice which is proved to be harmful to our cause.'²⁹ However, the problem of external representation continued to raise its head throughout the rest of the decade.

The 'London Debates'

Some steps towards strengthening liaison between the ANC external mission and the other organisations in the Congress Alliance were finally initiated around September 1965. On Oliver Tambo's initiative, a series of meetings of supporters of the Congress Movement were held in London. Following these meetings, Tambo appointed an informal committee to draft proposals for submission to the ANC external mission's headquarters. The Committee's members were Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo and Joe Matthews.

In November 1965 this informal committee produced a memorandum identifying a twofold problem. First, there was the problem of maintaining a close liaison between the leadership of all organisations in the Alliance, namely the SAIC, the SACPC, SACTU and former COD members. The committee proposed that a Special Liaison Group or Committee be immediately set up with the purpose of maintaining direct contact with the ANC headquarters and replace 'the present unofficial and personal and often ragged links.' Such a Committee would consist of top-ranking members from the above mentioned organisations, as well as from the ANC, and function as a consultative body in a confidential manner (meaning that no formal offices or public image would be established). It was recognised that the solution was not 'ideal,' but that it would nevertheless begin to fill some of the existing gaps in the existing external machinery.³⁰

Second, there was the issue of mobilisation at all levels of the large number of South Africans now residing in Britain (and London in particular) and in other European and North American countries. From around 1965 the ANC external mission, through its London office, had turned its attention to the problem of getting all ANC members and supporters engaged in one aspect or another of the work of the office. Several committees were established to deal with special issues such as 'women', 'youth and students', 'publicity', 'information and research' and 'films', the aim being 'to enable all Congressites and well-wishers to find some field in which they can make an effective contribution to the common cause.'³¹ Despite these efforts, it was reported that 'a genuine problem' persisted:

For these supporters it is not enough to call on them to work in the various solidarity movements abroad. They also feel the need to work actively in the building of support for the organisations of which they are members at home.³²

²⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Proposals for strengthening liaison between the External Mission of the ANC and other organisations in the Congress Alliance, November 1965.

³¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC London Papers, Box 5, File 34, ANC Newsletter published by the ANC Office, 3 Collingham Gardens, London SW5 [1965].

³² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Proposals for strengthening liaison between the External Mission of the ANC and other organisations in the Congress Alliance, November 1965.

The question of mobilisation was distinguished from that of support for the ANC external mission. The belief that there must be only an ANC external mission backed by the whole of the Congress Movement, in which, however, *all* members would be active participants, was reaffirmed. Effective methods of participation thus needed to be agreed on for specifically mobilising members of all organisations in the Congress Alliance.³³

The set of proposals, however, met no response from headquarters.³⁴ In May 1966 Reg September (General Secretary of the CPC) wrote to Tambo that 'London needs to be put on a proper foundation organisationally.' September warned of a 'dangerous development' in London: the emergence of numerous Congress groups (former CPC and SAIC members had constituted themselves into loosely organised groups), which he thought had to be questioned. He pointed out to Tambo that although small such units were necessary for maintaining contact with home, the present set up seemed 'rudderless in the main.'³⁵ For example, the SAIC and the CPC, although theoretically part of the same Congress Movement, occupied separate offices in different parts of town,³⁶ to the effect that 'one office does not know what the other one is doing.' He further suggested that the ANC should take proper control of affairs in London by setting up a Committee, headed by a senior figure such as Yusuf Dadoo, to handle Congress matters. In place of the present loose Congress committee, which had no formal relations with the ANC office and did not act under the direction of the ANC headquarters, new arrangements had to be made so that all Congress elements could be readily marshalled at once whenever necessary, and not on a separate basis.³⁷

On the ANC's request,³⁸ a new memorandum was sent to Dar es Salaam by the London Congress Committee led by Dadoo which included an analysis of the present situation in South Africa and internationally and the proposal of a meeting. At the international level, the Committee pointed out that the liberation movement had suffered some major setbacks since the early 1960s, as Africa had revealed to be 'an unstable factor as an aid and assistance to our struggle.'³⁹ This was because, as Joe Slovo explained years later, 'the OAU had to accommodate itself to a unity which incorporated disparate levels of commitment to the anti-imperialist struggle,' which translated in practice in 'less assistance and facilities than the amount [MK] needed.'⁴⁰ Slovo also later admitted that the degree of support for the struggle from African countries had been overestimated when he wrote: 'We had a rather euphoric expectation of what the African states would be prepared to do for us. We thought they could even provide aeroplanes to drop our personnel. We were a little naïve.'⁴¹ According to Vladimir Shubin, by 1965 85 per cent of ANC funds came from the Soviet Union and the socialist countries,⁴² rather than from African countries. Incidentally, it had been Dadoo who had initiated Soviet financial support during a first visit to the USSR in July 1960, which Shubin has described as 'the first stone [...] in building regular contacts between the USSR and the SACP and the Congress Alliance.'⁴³ The question of the unreliability of African support is a point which has to be emphasised, given that the whole 'African image' policy had been geared towards it. Early expectations that South Africa would be politically isolated by the world community of nations had

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

³⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, London, to O.R. Tambo, Morogoro, 5 May 1966.

³⁶ The SAIC had kept a base at the India League at 1 John Adams Street, which had initially served as the office of the SAUF London mission. From this base Dadoo would occasionally send out statements concerning the SAIC. The CPC London Committee was initially based at 22 Pattison Road. After Barney Desai's unilateral decision to dissolve the CPC and join the PAC, the remaining CPC supporters operated from the ANC London Office at 49 Rathbone Street.

³⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, London, to O.R. Tambo, Morogoro, 5 May 1966.

³⁸ See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Duma Nokwe, Dar es Salaam, to Yusuf Dadoo, London, 24 May 1966.

³⁹ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

⁴⁰ J. Slovo, 'South Africa – No Middle Road,' in B. Davidson, J. Slovo and A.R. Wilkinson (eds.), *Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976), 190.

⁴¹ J. Slovo, 'The sabotage campaign,' *Dawn*, Souvenir Issue, 1 January 1986, 24.

⁴² V. Shubin, *The ANC: A View from Moscow* (Cape Town, Mayibuye Centre, 1999), 68.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 34.

also gone unfulfilled. UN assistance had in fact proved to be indecisive as a result of the undermining carried out by the major Western powers, notably Britain, the United States and France.⁴⁴

On the home front, on the other hand, the London Committee spoke of the liberation forces as engaged in a struggle for power by revolutionary means against the apartheid forces in all fields: political, economic, social and military.⁴⁵ Such was the emergency situation that:

A nation at war requires a Council of War. [...] The leaders outside the country have to do what can no longer be done at home – to formulate policy and take practical steps to give leadership to our respective communities and the South African people as a whole. It is in the spirit and tradition of our movement that all the various groups and organisations that constitute the forces of revolution in our country must do this work together and not in isolation from one another.⁴⁶

Following the arrest of the first and second NHCs, MK's leadership had in effect passed to the ANC external mission in its entirety. Yet, the military and political aspects of the struggle continued to be kept as separate units in the ANC which still operated, in some respects, independently from one another. An ANC committee known as the Planning Council was set up under Tambo's overall leadership to replace the old NHC and direct MK operations. However, unlike the old NHC whose composition was non-racial, the Planning Council was an exclusively ANC body. This meant that in exile, non-African communist leaders who had played a prominent role in MK's formation and early sabotage operations now found themselves cut off from the management of MK. The proposal of a Council of War not only represented a plea for inclusion into MK's affairs but also implied the recognition by the London group that armed activity was the most important strategy by which the struggle could now be advanced. This was to be one of the key resolutions endorsed by the Morogoro Conference a few years later in 'Strategy and Tactics.' Furthermore, the Council of War can be viewed as a forerunner of the Revolutionary Council which was established at Morogoro.

The machinery of the Congress Alliance as it existed in South Africa (which had in any case ceased to exist as a formal structure after the banning of the ANC) was acknowledged to be inadequate for the present tasks facing the movement. Since the Congress Alliance had fulfilled its historic role, the London Committee argued, new, appropriate organisational forms of alliance ought to be created. In the present conditions of illegality or semi-legality where no formal delegates could be elected or given mandate to a conference, 'constitutional niceties' could no longer be adhered to. The bulk of the ANC executive had been elected in 1959 in conditions of legality and under a general policy of non-violence. The liberation struggle had undergone a radical transformation since; nevertheless, the same leadership continued to function. The London Congress Committee urged that a top level meeting consisting of 'a top level selection of leaders [...] whose authority and standing is such that it is not likely to be challenged' be convened by the ANC. Its purpose would be to work on the establishment of a body, a Council of War or Council of National Liberation, 'enjoying the support of all constituents of the Congress Alliance,' 'to plan and direct the overall strategy of our movement.'⁴⁷

An ANC Sub-Committee, consisting of Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks, and Duma Nokwe as convenor, met in Dar on the 24 August 1966 to respond to the suggestions made by the London Committee. The Sub-Committee asked the London comrades to spell out more clearly the idea of a

⁴⁴ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

⁴⁵ Such an assessment was very idealistic. Although MK fighters became engaged into battle against South African forces during the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns, and one attempt after another was made to find a way back into South Africa, not a single shot was fired on South Africa's soil until the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire cracked South Africa's strategic invulnerability open.

⁴⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Council of War, and drew attention to the fact that not all organisations formerly associated with the Congress Alliance (namely the SAIC and CPC) had officially adopted sabotage, and later armed struggle, as a new method of fighting the enemy. This they considered an important difference to be borne in mind ‘in considering the form and machinery of the different organisations,’ which meant that:

The proposal to form a Congress Alliance machinery which will be a sort of Council of War to direct, plan, and prosecute the armed struggle at home is incorrect as it ignores the decided policies of the various constituent organisations of the Congress Alliance.⁴⁸

Instead, it was suggested that cooperation of the constituent organisations be found ‘in these fields where we have common tasks and can agree on common methods.’ This could be achieved, for instance, by setting up sub-committees, by involving Congress members in political international activities (such as delegations to conferences, seminars, and missions to other countries), in liaison with solidarity organisations and in propaganda and publicity work. As for the armed struggle, persons from all organisations would continue to be able to join MK on an individual basis. Finally, the Sub-Committee expressed the view that ‘many of the problems could be easily resolved if the leadership of the ANC was fully accepted by members of the alliance.’⁴⁹

The SACP in exile

Both the London Committee and the ANC Sub-Committee in Tanzania were composed of leading Communist Party members who, however, found themselves divided over the issue of external representation. These divisions within the exiled SACP leadership had started to show by the mid-1960s. In September 1964 a group of people, including Bram Fischer, had been arrested and charged with membership of the Communist Party. Fischer was granted bail to handle a case in London and after his return to South Africa in January 1965 he had gone into hiding to continue to lead the SACP underground. The internal underground apparatus, however, was already on its last legs, and Fischer’s sacrifice could do little to resuscitate it in any significant way. With his capture nine months later, the internal SACP network was wiped out and the last thread of contact with home was severed. During his time underground, Fischer had been communicating with the group of Central Committee members in exile in London now operating from a small office in Goodge Street under the leadership of Yusuf Dadoo and Joe Slovo. Following the raid on the SACP’s underground headquarters at Rivonia in July 1963, the Goodge Street office also served as the premises for the editorial board of *The African Communist*, the SACP’s mouthpiece.⁵⁰

In early 1965, the SACP group in London started receiving requests that they take over the leadership of the Party. They accordingly put forward to their comrades⁵¹ in Dar es Salaam (referred to as ‘Hull’ in the original correspondence) a twofold dilemma. The key questions that needed to be tackled were how to reconstruct the Party (both inside and outside) and how to establish a leadership which would be able to function. This, the London exiles explained, was because the organisation at home had been ‘so hammered’ that it could no longer ‘provide an effective political

⁴⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Report of the Sub-Committee on Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Since the time of the publication of the third issue of the *African Communist* in September 1960 (in which the SACP openly associated itself with its publication for the first time), correspondence and subscriptions had been managed via an agent in London whereas its editorial board operated from Johannesburg. See B. Bunting, ‘The African Communist,’ <http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/journals/African%20Communist.htm>.

⁵¹ Notably the SACP General Secretary Moses Kotane and its Chairman J.B. Marks.

and organisational leadership and want us outside to take over that responsibility.’⁵² Uncertainty was also expressed regarding the question of the relationship between the SACP and the national liberation movement both inside and outside by asking whether the Party had any role to play in the plans of the ANC (called ‘Jane’ in the correspondence) – ‘whatever they may be.’ Then, there was also the problem of cooperation between all the Congress Alliance groups. Lastly, the London-based SACP leaders asked clarification as to what ‘the whole future of MK from the point of view of the extent, if any, of non-African participation’ may be. SACP leaders in Dar es Salaam were also asked to attend to the writing of articles for *The African Communist*, as none had been received from them. These matters, they argued, were so serious that they could not be properly addressed without getting together at once.⁵³

Four months after these problems had first been raised, however, little or no progress had been made. As the situation in South Africa continued to deteriorate, the SACP London group felt they were being ‘called on to formulate a line of policy and take immediate practical steps to implement it.’ However, they reported that they had been ‘unable to proceed further’ on both the question of policy and organisation because of the lack of participation and cooperation of their African comrades.⁵⁴ In fact, the Central Committee members in London indicated that they were not sufficiently informed of developments in South Africa as well as of the views and plans of the ANC to be able to formulate policy. In terms of organisation, on the other hand, they felt they lacked the agreement of their colleagues in African countries on the suggestions they had submitted to them. Pending a full exchange of views and discussion, Central Committee members in London now claimed for themselves the authority ‘to go ahead and act as a political and organising leadership of the Party.’⁵⁵ Although members of the Central Committee in exile had met in Prague and then Moscow some time in 1963 and again in 1964,⁵⁶ according to Eddie Maloka, it was only in May 1965 that the first important meeting of the SACP Central Committee took place. The purpose of the meeting, which was held in Prague, was specifically ‘to deliberate on the reconstruction of the Party in exile.’⁵⁷ The Secretariat, to be known as the Central Executive Committee with headquarters in London, was formally authorised by this meeting, Dadoo was appointed assistant secretary to Kotane and given personal authority to act on behalf of the Secretariat. The Central Committee was also reconstituted to consist of those members who had been elected at the SACP’s fifth Congress in 1962. ‘Its responsibilities were to: (a) give political leadership and exercise all the powers of a central committee provided for in the constitution adopted at the 5th Congress; (b) work in liaison and consultation with Party apparatus inside the country; (c) draft and circulate to all members, both in and out of the country, general political directives from time to time, if necessary; (d) build the Party.’⁵⁸

In early 1965, allegations of misappropriation of ANC funds on the part of the SACP were made by Kotane in his capacity as ANC Treasurer. These can be interpreted as further evidence of the internal divide within the SACP in exile and of the lack of effective communication both between its various segments and between the Party and the national liberation movement. In April 1965 the London Secretariat wrote a letter to Kotane firmly refuting his claim that the SACP in South Africa had received the sum of £ 40,000 which was destined to the ANC locally and ‘instead of handing the money to its rightful owners, these trustees [i.e. the SACP] expropriated it.’ Kotane also maintained that the SACP at home had ‘doled out a portion of it to the ANC whenever it

⁵² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, ‘The mission to Hull’ [1965?].

⁵³ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, ‘Matters which cannot be solved without get together’ [1965?].

⁵⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, ‘The mission to Hull’ [1965?].

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, London Secretariat, letter to Moses Kotane, 12 April 1965.

⁵⁷ E. Maloka, *The South African Communist Party in Exile, 1963-1990* (Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2002),

11.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

pleased them and insisted that they were giving the ANC a loan.⁵⁹ Some of these funds had been transferred to South Africa directly from London and some through Bechuanaland. However, according to the information the London Secretariat possessed at this stage, which was based on reports from Bram Fischer and the surviving underground, the SACP in South Africa had only received a total amount of £ 19,000 in the 1963-1964 period. Moreover, it was pointed out that the Party in South Africa was paying out money to the ANC on a regular basis as well as 'devoting a part of its resources to organise the escape of witnesses in various trials of ANC, MK and Party members and to pay part of the legal costs in certain smaller trials.' In the light of the foregoing and pending a reply from home, the London Secretariat concluded that 'any judgement on the handling of funds by our Party at home would be wholly premature at this stage.'⁶⁰

In his autobiography, Turok has pointed out that '[t]here had, for a long time, been a subtle division of labour in the movement, with our black comrades giving a higher priority to the ANC and a small group of whites giving priority to the [Communist] party.'⁶¹ The pattern of political exile which has been described above, whereby the majority of the SACP members in London were non-Africans, further deepened the divide within the Party, as well as between the ANC and the Party, along racial and geographical lines. Furthermore, the Africa-based leadership was perceived to be physically closer 'to the "real" struggle arena, whereas the London-based cadres were perceived as primarily garnering solidarity.'⁶² Lastly, as Ndebele and Nieftagodien have pointed out, 'those communists who were based in Africa, such as Robert Resha and Tennyson Makiwane, had come under the influence of the very strong Africanist currents sweeping through the liberation movements in the 1960s.'⁶³

Central to understanding why these differences manifested themselves on the axis of geography as well as of race was the SACP's decision, on Kotane's insistence, to abstain from establishing formal structures in Africa, including among military trainees in the camps.⁶⁴ This meant that 'by 1966, only London had organised Party formation in exile.'⁶⁵ Kotane in fact believed that the Party should 'lie low' in Africa 'so as to avoid offending states such as Zambia and Tanzania which felt more comfortable with the politics of the PAC than the ANC.'⁶⁶ When Ben Turok arrived in Tanzania and raised the question of the absence of the SACP in Africa with Kotane, he was told in a 'brief letter' that 'there was no role for the party in the present circumstances and that any attempt to recreate the party would lead to the expulsion of the ANC from the region by governments which were hostile to communism.'⁶⁷ Kotane's approach on the relationship between the ANC and the SACP in exile mirrored and was consistent with the position he had adopted some years earlier on the question of the public emergence of the Party in South Africa. Kotane had been strongly against it for fear that a premature announcement of the existence of the SACP may prejudice the work of the liberation movement as a whole. According to Slovo, Kotane 'was driven in regard to his activities inside the Party by an endeavour to really assert the African personality both inside and outside the Movement' or, in other words, 'to drive the Party to indigenise itself.'⁶⁸ Kotane's understanding of the relationship between the SACP and the ANC is encapsulated in his dictum: 'I am first an African and then a Communist.'⁶⁹

⁵⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, London Secretariat, letter to Moses Kotane, 12 April 1965.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ B. Turok, *Nothing but the Truth: Behind the ANC's Struggle Politics* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 2003), 211.

⁶² N. Ndebele and N. Nieftagodien, 'The Morogoro Conference: a moment of self-reflection,' in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Vol. 1, 1960-1970 (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2004) 585.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 584.

⁶⁴ T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (London, Longman, 1983), 301.

⁶⁵ Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁷ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 211.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Shubin, *ANC*, 112-3.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Simons, *Class & Colour*, 492.

The decision to refrain from establishing a Party presence on the African continent was taken not only to antagonise host countries, but also to avoid creating tensions in the camps. Since recruitment in the SACP was at the time still secret (membership was not by application; prospective members had to be co-opted into the Party), SACP cells in military camps would have had to operate secretly. The SACP leadership understood that the conspirational nature of recruitment and work of the Party ran the risk of creating suspicions and divisions in MK. Essop Pahad has suggested that in any case the SACP was probably not ready for such a move at that stage, as the leadership itself was still working on how to function as a collective in exile.⁷⁰

The SACP's tactical decision regarding its presence in Africa and in the military camps does not seem to have affected the work of MK straight away. But in the long run, it is clear that the lack of organised Party activity in Africa, and MK in particular, did become a problem and 'actually a very big danger to the historical survival of the Party.'⁷¹ During the first formal meeting between the ANC and the SACP held after the Morogoro Conference (which Dadoo attended), Joe Slovo explained that '[e]specially in the case of our members in Africa, both inside and outside, we have lost effective organised contact with them.'⁷² The decision not to establish SACP groups in the army had in fact made it 'difficult as to how you mobilised your own Party members who were in the camps, and that was a great difficulty because we [the SACP] couldn't then act as a cohesive image.'⁷³

In her biography of Dadoo, Shauna Mottiar has suggested that Dadoo concurred with Kotane on the question of the Party's emergence in 1960.⁷⁴ Although he may have shared Kotane's reservations then, Dadoo and Kotane's positions were most definitely at opposite ends on the question of the role of the Party as the decade unfolded. The exchanges between the London Congress Committee and the London Secretariat of the SACP (both of which Dadoo headed) on one hand and the ANC external mission headquarters in Morogoro and the SACP General Secretary and Chairman on the other are clear illustration of this.

The first meeting of the Congress Alliance partners in exile

These internal differences within the SACP, and between the ANC in Tanzania and the SACP in London, came head to head when a Consultative Conference of the joint Congress Executives was finally convened by the ANC in Morogoro on 26-28 November 1966. This was the first official meeting of the Congress Alliance partners in exile.

The debate at this meeting essentially centred around the nature of the organisational structure at home and abroad on the basis of the exchanges of opinion which had taken place thus far between London and the ANC in Africa.⁷⁵ Most of the ANC members present attacked the idea of forming a Council of War and argued that the ANC was not yet engaged in a war. Robert Resha and Mzwai Piliso, for instance, questioned the formation of a new body on the grounds that it was the ANC only that had taken the decision to embark on armed struggle while the rest of the Congress organisations had not. James Hadebe insisted that 'the London sub-Committee should withdraw their claim to policy making and the formation of the War Council for this implies a doubt in the leadership.' Alfred Kgokong similarly complained of a 'wavering attitude to the ANC

⁷⁰ Interview with Essop Pahad, Cape Town, 9 February 2005.

⁷¹ J. Slovo, quoted in Shubin, *ANC*, 113.

⁷² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Notes on the discussion between a delegation from the CC of the SACP and the NEC of the ANC [n.d.].

⁷³ Interview with Essop Pahad, Cape Town, 9 February 2005.

⁷⁴ Mottiar, 'Yusuf Dadoo,' 211.

⁷⁵ Present at the meeting, which was chaired by Tambo, were: Ray Simons, Moses Kotane, Robert Resha, William Marula (aka Flag Boshielo), M.P. Naicker, Joe Slovo, Moses Mabhida, Joe Matlou, Alfred Kgokong, J.B. Marks, Johnny Makatini, John Pule, Reg September, Michael Harmel, Joe Matthews, Ruth Mompati, Duma Nokwe, Mandy Msimang, James Hadebe, Yusuf Dadoo, and Mzwai Piliso. UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 8, File 68, Notes on a meeting of the joint Congress Executives, 26-28 November 1966, Morogoro.

leadership of this struggle by some of our colleagues.’⁷⁶ One of the few people supporting the London comrades’ demands for the inclusion was JB Marks, who agreed with them that some kind of structure had to be worked out to consolidate and coordinate all the forces outside South Africa.⁷⁷

The non-African comrades, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of mobilising all racial groups through the creation of suitable structures. This was essential for the struggle to succeed. According to Ray Simons, support by the Indian and Coloured people for the ANC could be traced as far back as 1918, when the ANC had protested against South Africa being given the administration of South West Africa. Furthermore, the various legal organisations which opposed the government at home, such as the Black Sash and the National Council of Women, as well as individual progressive whites, constituted ground that needed to be attended to in order to help them keep the ANC’s image alive. Joe Slovo proposed a compromise solution of a machinery consisting of the three oppressed racial groups under the leadership of the ANC.⁷⁸ Reg September agreed that the ANC should continue to lead the external mission as decided by all Congresses in 1962-3, but pointed out, as he had done before, that people in London, which represented a key area, had to be taken command of.⁷⁹

Yusuf Dadoo began to show signs of impatience with his African comrades’ insistence on the Indian people being non-violent, an idea which he wished to rid the ANC of. He stated: ‘it is not true that we [the Indian people] are wedded to passive resistance.’ South African Indians had been active participants in the sabotage movement. Ahmed Kathrada, Mac Maharaj, George Naicker, Indres and Steve Naidoo, Abdullhay Jassat, Shirish Nanabhai, Reggie Vandeyar, Ebrahim Ismail, Laloo Chiba and Babla Saloojee (who died in police custody in 1964) for instance, had all been early MK recruits (although arguably they were brought into MK via their affiliation to the SACP rather than the SAIC). Many of them were arrested during the Rivonia period and served their sentences on Robben Island alongside ANC prisoners.

According to Dadoo, the ANC now had to decide whether it considered all racial groups necessary to the struggle or not, and, if necessary, how best they could be mobilised. The stage had been reached for Dadoo where ‘[t]he leadership which is being given by the ANC should be given by all,’ as the people at home had been left in a political vacuum and were looking up to the leadership outside for guidance.⁸⁰ He thus concluded:

A stage has been reached when all the people should participate in an armed struggle. We are being told to subordinate ourselves, even the members of the ANC must subordinate themselves. If it is the considered view of this meeting that the ANC can go it alone then let it be so. But is this the correct thing? If it is not decided today to have a council of this type [Council of War] we will be faced with the same problem in the not so distant future.⁸¹

Partly in response to the ANC’s argument that the SAIC and the CPC never formally embraced the armed struggle, SAIC leaflets carrying a message from Dadoo were later distributed in South Africa during the time of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns. Dadoo asked the Indian people to support the armed struggle by allying with MK freedom fighters and helping them in every possible way

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 8, File 68, Notes on a meeting of the joint Congress Executives, 26-28 November 1966.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

and called upon the Indian youth to join MK.⁸² Similar leaflets were also issued by the CPC calling on the Coloured community to welcome MK fighters because, the flyers read, ‘they are our own.’⁸³ During an interview in 1968, Dadoo reconciled the SAIC tradition of passive resistance with support for the armed struggle by arguing that: ‘Passive resistance was never the ideology of the organisation [SAIC], although it had been used as a method of struggle since it was introduced by Gandhi in the early part of this century.’ It was true that some leaders in the SAIC, for example M.P. Naicker and Nana Sita, implicitly believed in the principles of *Satyagraha*, but these were never accepted by the Indian people as an absolute creed. When the ANC and the SAIC jointly embarked upon the Defiance Campaign in 1952, it was deliberately not called a passive resistance but a ‘defiance’ campaign. Although still non-violent, it expressed a more militant outlook, ‘because most of the leaders had realised that in the situation of South Africa, where violence was the normal instrument of Government policy, there could arise a situation where no alternative would be left to the people, if they were to continue to fight for their freedom, but to resort to violent methods.’⁸⁴

In the end, the 1966 Morogoro meeting of the joint Congress Executives resolved to elect a Steering Committee composed of Yusuf Dadoo, Michael Harmel and Oliver Tambo, and a Recommendations Committee with Duma Nokwe, Joe Slovo, Alex La Guma, MP Naicker and Joe Matthews on it. Ndebele and Nieftagodien have argued that:

The decision did not solve the question of full participation or open membership, but it did create avenues of cooperation among alliance leaders and opened the way for the [Communist] party to play a more influential role in shaping the politics of the alliance, and especially the ANC.⁸⁵

A further step towards the full mobilisation of all Congress Movement groups was the creation of the Cooperation and Coordination Committee (CCC) ‘as a mechanism for including minorities in the work of the ANC in exile and co-ordinating work among the Congress Alliance partners.’⁸⁶ The CCC was an internal, non-public sub-committee of the ANC, whose members were appointed by the ANC by virtue of their past and present links with non-African organisations. According to Joe Slovo, ‘[f]or the first time members of the SACP were included officially in such apparatus’⁸⁷ by virtue of their connection to the Party. The CCC worked with the ANC’s Planning Council on the military and other sensitive aspects of the ANC’s work. This enabled the SACP to throw its talent, resources and energies into the struggle more effectively than previously, especially in regard to the important sphere of internal work. No agreement, however, was reached on the question of open membership. It would take approximately three more years and the almost complete disenchantment of MK’s rank and file with the leadership – vented in the Hani memorandum⁸⁸ – for the ANC to finally give in to pressures to review its structure, strategy and tactics.

Morogoro

⁸² Freedom Fighters on the March! A Message from Dr Y.M. Dadoo to the Indian People, 1968, in Y.M. Dadoo, *South Africa’s Freedom Struggle: Statements, Speeches and Articles including Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi*, compiled by E.S. Reddy (New Delhi, Sterling, 1990), 183-6.

⁸³ University of the Witwatersrand, William Cullen Library, Historical Papers, A2675, III, 688, ‘Forward to Freedom!: We Call the Coloured Community...’ Leaflet in English and Afrikaans issued by the SACPC [1968].

⁸⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH05, Y. Dadoo, ‘The role of the Indian people in the South African revolution,’ An interview in 1968.

⁸⁵ Ndebele and Nieftagodien, ‘The Morogoro Conference,’ 585.

⁸⁶ Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 16.

⁸⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Joe Slovo, Thoughts on the Future of the Alliance, April 1969. This seems to contradict Maloka’s claim that the Party was excluded from the CCC. See Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 16.

⁸⁸ See ‘The “Hani Memorandum”’: introduced and annotated by Hugh Macmillan,’ forthcoming in *Transformations*.

The effect of the Hani memorandum was to finally wake the leadership of the ANC external mission up to the dangerous crisis that was developing within the ranks of the organisation, and to the fact that urgent action was needed to rectify the situation. Whereas until this moment the leadership in exile had argued that the external mission had no mandate to hold new elections, Tambo now realised that 'a consultative, decision-making event was not only vital but overdue.'⁸⁹ The leaders on Robben Island were asked by secret word to give their approval to a reorganising of the ANC, to which they replied affirmatively.⁹⁰ In February 1969, following a plenary session of the executive, the ANC issued directives concerning preparations for a conference, which was envisaged to be 'the climax of a campaign of discussion, criticism and proposals covering all aspects of our work.'⁹¹ A Preparatory Committee, or secretariat, was established in Morogoro and Joe Matthews appointed Secretary. Everyone who wished to was invited to prepare a submission to the Preparatory Committee expressing views and criticism.

Amongst the 'veritable torrent'⁹² of replies received by the Preparatory Committee was the report of a Commission of Enquiry on the Congress Alliance, which had been appointed by the Recommendations Committee set up by the November 1966 meeting of the Congress Alliance.⁹³ The Commission's findings strongly echoed the criticism raised by Chris Hani and his comrades, and pointed to a serious crisis of confidence in the leadership:

In recent years the leadership of the struggle both in the making and execution of policy has passed to the ANC Executive and it cannot be disputed that this executive has lost the confidence of a substantial layer of our cadres. This is not only an anomalous but also a most dangerous state of affairs.

A leadership so divorced from the led cannot be effective and may destroy the organisation. Imposition of decisions, harsh disciplinary measures, unwillingness to encourage discussion cannot be substitute for dedicated and inspiring leadership.⁹⁴

The present situation was ascribed to four factors. First, the leadership had been elected ten years earlier under radically different conditions: the ANC was then still legal and committed to non-violent struggle. The executive had recently come in for severe criticism, both individually and as a whole, and yet the same leadership remained in office. Second, the leadership was accused of 'an incorrect appraisal of our struggle,' meaning that it had failed to recognise the armed struggle as the central core of the struggle. Third, many comrades from other sections of the Congress Alliance who had made many sacrifices and valuable contributions in the past and were 'now ready to play their full role' had found themselves cut off from the struggle. Finally there were weaknesses in the present set up of the executive, where a small hierarchy seemed to have taken over, with the rest of the leadership being kept in the dark about matters.⁹⁵

In assessing the organisational needs of the movement, the Commission proposed that a new organisation or body composed of 'all dedicated and genuine Revolutionaries irrespective of their national origins' be set up, and that a new executive be elected by the forthcoming conference. Secondly, the establishment of various committees was proposed so as to 'leave the executive as free as possible to apply itself to the major tasks before us.' Finally, that the dichotomy between the

⁸⁹ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 330.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Duma Nokwe, Directive concerning preparation for Conference, Morogoro, 18 February 1969.

⁹² Joe Matthews, quoted in Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 35.

⁹³ Ndebele and Nieftagodien, 'The Morogoro Conference,' 586.

⁹⁴ University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Commission on the Congress Alliance, Report of the meeting held on the 23rd March 1969.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

military and the political movement be terminated through the creation of a single umbrella leadership under a Revolutionary Committee. A separate role was reserved to SACTU, which as a trade union (and not a strictly political organisation) had ‘a vital role in arousing the workers.’⁹⁶

Other submissions to the Morogoro Conference Preparatory Committee included a memorandum by Ben Turok, and contributions from Joe Slovo, the London Committee of the CPC, and the South African exile community living in Ireland.⁹⁷ All of these contributions voiced a similar criticism and proposed as a solution to the problems raised the integration of all racial groups into the liberation struggle – either through the opening of ANC membership to non-Africans, or through the creation of a new political body which would be open to all.⁹⁸

The Morogoro Conference of 1969 can be viewed as the climax of the discussions that had been taking place between the ANC external mission and members of other Congress organisations based in London throughout the second half of the 1960s. Among the resolutions adopted by the ANC at Morogoro was the historic decision to open up its membership to all South African exiles regardless of race. The decision, which was approved unanimously, was however limited to the ANC external mission, while ANC membership in South Africa continued to be confined to Africans on the grounds that scope still existed for the exploitation of semi-legal opportunities arising from the formal legality of the CPC, the SAIC and SACTU.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the composition of the NEC remained restricted to Africans only. As Shubin has noted, ‘these limitations to the ANC external structure were obviously aimed at satisfying those who thought that the most important decisions should be taken inside the country.’¹⁰⁰ A new body of twenty members, the Revolutionary Council, was also created at Morogoro; ‘its responsibility was to integrate political and military strategy for the struggle within South Africa.’¹⁰¹ The Revolutionary Council, which answered directly to the NEC, was chaired by Tambo with Joe Matthews as Secretary and, unlike the NEC, included non-Africans Yusuf Dadoo, who acted as Vice-Chairman, Joe Slovo, Aziz Pahad, and Reg September. Its purpose was to bring non-Africans into ANC/MK structures in a more organised manner.

The second most important development coming out of the Morogoro conference was the ANC’s commitment to a revolutionary path. In Strategy and Tactics, the key document adopted by the conference, the armed struggle was identified as ‘the *only* method left open’ for the winning of freedom in South Africa. The document also spoke of the ‘*overthrow* of White supremacy’ and of the development of ‘conditions for the future all-out war which will eventually lead to the *conquest of power*.’¹⁰² This marks a radical departure from the integrationist approach of the ANC’s history up to 1961, which had been implicit in the non-violent tactics of the 1950s, and whose aim had been to win rights for the African people by trying to bring the government into constitutional dialogue.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Mottiar, quoting from Essop Pahad’s unpublished biography of Dadoo, speaks of another memorandum drawn up by a loosely-constituted ‘SAIC group’ in London. This memo, which Dadoo redrafted in order to avoid ‘bitterness and hostility’ and allow a ‘comradely spirit to prevail’ also called for the full participation on the Indian people in the liberation movement. E. pahad, quoted in Mottiar, ‘Yusuf Dadoo,’ 208.

⁹⁸ See B. Turok, ‘What Is Wrong?’ A discussion on the present situation in the South African liberation movement, reproduced in Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 287-301; UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, J. Slovo, Thoughts on the future of the Alliance, April 1969; UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, London Committee of the CPC, Resolution, London, March 1969; UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC London Papers, Box 35, File 116, Memorandum submitted by South Africans in Dublin, Ireland [1969].

⁹⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Joe Slovo, Thoughts on the future of the Alliance, April 1969. Unlike the ANC, the CPC, SAIC, and SACTU were still legal organisations, although this description could only be academic in terms of organisational possibilities and political activity. The white COD was banned on 14 September 1962, and the organisation decided to formally dissolve when it became obvious that of all its active members where either banned, in prison, or abroad.

¹⁰⁰ Shubin, *ANC*, 335.

¹⁰¹ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 36.

¹⁰² ‘Strategy and Tactics,’ adopted by the Morogoro Conference of the ANC, meeting at Morogoro, Tanzania, 25 April - 1 May 1969, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/stratact.html>. Emphasis added.

This 'moderate' attitude had continued to have an influence on the ANC even after the embrace of organised violence in 1961. In its manifesto, MK had left the door still open for talking and negotiating, while the tactical choice of selective sabotage reflected the hope that outright military confrontation could be avoided 'even at this late hour.'¹⁰³

Conclusion

In the early 1960s, the ANC adopted the decision that it should present an 'African image' to the outside world. This would serve the purpose of presenting an image that was both acceptable and appealing to the ANC's potential supporters on the continent. However, from the mid-1960s this policy had also become a source of strain between the ANC and its non-African supporters. The debates of this period, in which Dadoo took active part, can be viewed as evidence of the difficult transition from the multi-racial approach of the Congress Alliance of the 1950s to the creation of a unitary, non-racial liberation front under the leadership of the ANC. This transformation was further complicated by the adoption of the 'African image' policy in the early part of the decade. Moreover, underlying the 'African image' problem was an enduring ideological tension between non-racialism and African nationalism within the ANC, which both preceded the history of the organisation in exile, and was not fully resolved with the opening of ANC membership to non-Africans at the Morogoro Conference in 1969.¹⁰⁴

The demands of the supporters of the former Congress Alliance for participation in the ANC were in the end fulfilled at Morogoro with the opening of membership to all exiles regardless of race and the creation of a new non-racial body, the Revolutionary Council. The significance of the debates that took place in this period is that the ANC and its allies were able to stay together by working out effective and acceptable strategies and structures thanks to the commitment to unity of all the dominant strands in the Congress Alliance. In spite of the disagreements, the issues and arguments which emerged in this period were ultimately about not whether, but *how*, this could best be achieved. Given the huge rifts in South African society, this was quite a remarkable achievement.

¹⁰³ See 'Manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe,' Leaflet issued by the Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe, 16th December 1961, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/manifesto-mk.html>.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, the conflict was to erupt again in the 1970s and lead to the expulsion of the Group of Eight in 1975.