

**The South African liberation movements in exile,
c. 1945-1970.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the reorganisation in exile of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) of South Africa during the 1960s. The 1960s are generally regarded as a period of quiescence in the historiography of the South African liberation struggle. This study partially challenges such a view. It argues that although the 1960s witnessed the progressive silencing of all forms of opposition by the apartheid government in South Africa, this was also a difficult time of experimentation and change, during which the exiled liberation movements had to adjust to the dramatically altered conditions of struggle emerging in the post-Sharpeville context.

The thesis traces the roots and early history of the international networks of solidarity between South Africa and Britain from the time of the 1945 Pan African Congress to the founding of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1960. It proceeds to examine the first attempts by the South African liberation movements to set up an external presence through the South African United Front, the causes of its demise and its legacy in terms of future unity. The establishment of the external mission of the ANC, its activities, and its relationship with host African countries vis-à-vis that of the PAC are analysed in detail. The research then focuses on problems of representation emerging from the gradual take-over of the ANC external mission as the sole representative of the whole of the Congress Alliance as a result of the Rivonia raid and trial. It is suggested that the internal debate between the ANC and its allies, most notably the South African Communist Party, signal a transition from the multi-racial approach of the 1950s to the creation of a unitary, non-racial liberation front. Issues of strategy and tactics arising from the decision to embark on a path of armed struggle in the early part of the decade are also analysed, including the state of affairs within the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the complex relationship between military and political structures. Finally, the parallel development of the PAC in exile is reviewed, and some of its distinctive features are compared and contrasted to those of the ANC.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Anti-Apartheid Movement
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organisations (USA)
ANC	African National Congress
BCP	Basutoland Congress Party
BNP	Basutoland National Party
CAO	Committee of African Organisations
CCC	Cooperation and Coordination Committee (ANC)
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
COD	Congress of Democrats
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COREMO	Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique
CPC	Coloured People's Congress
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPL	Communist Party of Lesotho
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
IDAF	International Defence and Aid Fund
MCF	Movement for Colonial Freedom
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
MPLA	Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola
NAC	National Action Council (South Africa)
NLC	National Liberation Council (Ghana)
NHC	National High Command (Umkhonto we Sizwe)
NUS	National Union of Students (UK)
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PAFMECA	Pan-African Freedom Movement of Eastern and Central Africa

PAFMECSA	Pan-African Freedom Movement of Eastern Central and Southern Africa
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SAFA	South African Freedom Association
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SASA	South African Students' Association
SAUF	South African United Front
SWANU	South West Africa National Union
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TUC	Trade Union Congress (UK)
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFH	University of Fort Hare
UN	United Nations
UNIP	United National Independence Party (Zambia)
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WAY	World Assembly of Youth
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

INTRODUCTION

1960: A year of destiny?

In 1960, seventeen African countries won their independence from colonial rule. This was the year in which more African countries became independent than any other year, and 1960 went down in history as the ‘Year of Africa’ or ‘Africa Year.’ At the end of his tour of the African continent in February, the Conservative British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan famously warned the South African parliament of a “wind of change” sweeping all over Africa. As the process of decolonisation gained speed on the rest of the continent, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the two most prominent African nationalist organisations in South Africa, increasingly associated their predicament with the struggles of fellow Africans against colonialism. Even in South Africa, the most industrialised country on the continent, the prospect of liberation from white minority rule did not seem far off. In his address to the December 1959 Annual Conference of the ANC, its President Chief Albert Lutuli exhorted:

Africa is very much astir. She is fast freeing herself from the shackles of colonialism. The year 1960 could be described as a Year of Destiny for many areas in Africa. [...]

WHAT ABOUT THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA? THE OPPRESSED COULD MAKE THE YEAR 1960 A YEAR OF DESTINY IN SOUTH AFRICA.¹

¹ Chief Albert Lutuli, “The Liberation Struggle is on in Earnest,” Presidential Address to the 47th Annual Conference of the African National Congress, Durban, 12 December 1959, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/lutuli59.html>. Original emphasis.

The PAC similarly identified itself with “the progressive forces of African nationalism” elsewhere in Africa, where, as stated in its Manifesto (adopted in April 1959), “[t]he liquidation of the forces of oppression is a process that not even nuclear power can halt.”²

Originally called the South African Native National Congress, the ANC was born in 1912 to bring together Africans across what was then the Union of South Africa into a single organisation which transcended regional and ‘tribal’ differences by promoting a spirit of African nationalism. Initially drawing most of its support from the African middle classes, in its first three decades of existence the ANC focused its activities on getting a hearing for African grievances by using peaceful means such as petitions, deputations, appearances before government bodies, pamphleteering, and civil disobedience. In the mid-1940s, the socio-economic developments unleashed by the Second World War – most importantly African urbanisation, employment in the secondary sector and trade union organisation – helped bring about a double process of revival and radicalisation of the ANC, under the powerful influence of its Youth League. By turning to non-violent tactics of direct action, the ANC grew in the years that followed into a truly mass organisation which was now determined to achieve full citizenship rights for black South Africans throughout the country as laid out in its 1949 Programme of Action.

The accession to power of the National Party under a programme of apartheid in 1948 helped unite the opposition movement. In 1947, the leadership of the ANC and of the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) signed the Declaration of Joint Cooperation, better known as the Dadoo-Naicker-Xuma or ‘Three Doctors’ Pact, which ushered in a new era of

² Manifesto of the Africanist Movement, document 39b in Thomas Karis and Gail M. Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964*, in Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter (eds.), *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964*, Vol. 3 (Stanford, 1977), 518-519.

inter-racial collaboration. The alliance was first consolidated during the 1952 Defiance Campaign against Unjust Laws, which was organised jointly by the ANC and the SAIC.

In the early 1950s, the Coloured People Congress (CPC) and the (white) Congress of Democrats (COD) were formed to mobilise their respective communities in opposition against the government and in support of the ANC. Together with the ANC, the SAIC and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), they came to constitute a broad union of forces that came to be known as the Congress Alliance. The alliance grew out of the principle that the ANC, as President Lutuli explained, was “prepared to cooperate fully on the basis of equality with any National or political party or organisation, provided they share common objectives and common methods of achieving our aims.”³

On 26 June 1955 the Congress Alliance adopted its manifesto, the Freedom Charter, at the historic Congress of the People in Kliptown. The Charter outlined the vision of an equal society which would be governed according to principles of economic and social justice. Despite being often quoted as evidence of the ANC’s non-racialism, the Freedom Charter actually reflected a multi-, rather than non-racial conception of the South Africa as a plural nation made of four nations or, to use the terminology of the Charter, “national groups.”⁴ African, Indian, Coloured and white.⁵ The same multi-racial understanding also

³ Presidential Address by Chief A.J. Lutuli, ANC Annual Conference, 18-20 December 1953, document 3a in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 122.

⁴ See “Freedom Charter,” adopted by the Congress of the people, Kliptown, 26 June 1955, document 11 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 205-208.

⁵ These divisions mirrored the official categories used by the South African government. The latter did not view all Africans as constituting a single nation, but further subdivided the African population into a variety of smaller, ethnically defined nations. This classification system underpinned much of apartheid legislation, as well as the Bantustan project. Although this study does not subscribe to the divisions imposed by the apartheid state, it does nevertheless use the terms “African,” “Indian,” “Coloured,” and “white” as this was the terminology used by the liberation movements at the time. When the term “black” is used, it is used in the

informed the tactical union of the four, racially separate Congresses in the Congress Alliance. The debate around the so called ‘national question’ (i.e. what constitutes the nation), with the attendant ambiguity between non- and multi-racialism, is one of the subjects of this thesis.

The PAC was formed on 6 April 1959 after internal dissention within the ANC led to the breakaway of a group known as the Africanists, who had been growing more and more disgruntled with the policies of the ANC. Three main reasons for the Africanists’ disagreement can be identified. First, the Africanists had been opposed to the calling off of the 1952 Defiance Campaign by the senior ANC leadership in January 1953. Second, there was the issue of cooperation with Indians in the SAIC, and white liberals and communists in the COD. According to the Africanists, the ANC had come to be unduly influenced by non-Africans in the Congress Alliance, whom they accused of dictating policy to the ANC. Third, the Africanists claimed that the ANC had abandoned the 1949 Programme of Action and substituted it with the Freedom Charter.

Despite the general mood of optimism which seemed to infuse the start of the decade, the year 1960 turned out to be an anti-climax for the South African liberation struggle. The date nevertheless remains a watershed in South Africa’s history. On 21 March 1960, peaceful anti-pass demonstrations organised by the PAC ended in the brutal police massacres of Sharpeville and Langa. The ANC and the PAC, which were consequently both declared illegal organisations, resolved to move underground and to embark on a path of armed struggle to meet the South African government’s increasing violence and repression. In the next few years, new draconian legislation was introduced which in effect turned South Africa into a police state. The decade which followed, on the surface a period

same sense as the post-Soweto generation intended it to refer to African, Coloured, and Indian sections of the populations collectively.

of apparent tranquillity, saw the effective crushing of almost all forms of internal political opposition by the apartheid machinery.

The year 1960 is also crucial in the history of the South African liberation movements as it coincides with the establishment of permanent outside machineries by the ANC and the PAC. The history of the liberation movements' external work between 1960 and 1969 is the principal subject of this thesis. The period in question, which has traditionally been regarded as one of relative political quiescence in the history of the South African liberation struggle, has received scant attention from historians of South Africa. In a way, the total suppression of the resistance movement in South Africa in the 1960s is also mirrored in the literature. Most histories of the liberation struggle either end with the banning of the liberation movements in 1960 and the subsequent turn to armed struggle, or they almost literally 'jump' from the early 1960s to the Durban strikes of 1973. The narrative usually picks up again in the mid-late 1970s, when the exiled ANC and, albeit to a less extent, the PAC gradually linked up with the resurgent resistance movement in South Africa and were thus able to capitalise on internal developments which occurred somewhat independently from them. This in turn enabled the two organisations to reappear as significant forces on the South African political scene in the 1980s. But what happened to the liberation movements in the years leading up to these events is rarely questioned, despite the fact that both the ANC and the PAC had in the process become quite different from the organisations they had been up until 1960. Moreover, their continued physical existence in exile has tended to be taken simply as a given fact.

Until the late 1960s, the few existing surveys of the history of black political organisations were those written by some of the intellectuals of the various opposition movements as a result of their own political involvement. One of their purposes was to redress the general indifference of the dominant settler and liberal traditions in South

African historiography to contemporary black politics as a subject matter.⁶ A pioneering work in this respect was Eddie Roux's *Time Longer than Rope*, originally published in 1948.⁷ This was followed by Jack and Ray Simons's *Class and Colour in South Africa* which appeared in 1969 – the same year as the first volume of Wilson and Thompson's *Oxford History of South Africa*.⁸ Although not strictly academic because of their underlying political aim – the Simons' preferred to call their book “an exercise in political sociology on a time scale,” rather than a history⁹ – these early Marxist works have too often been ignored by the next generation of radical historians.¹⁰ Some of the questions introduced by these authors – for instance with regards to the nature of race and class exploitation and the relationship between national and class struggle in South Africa – are still relevant half a century later. However, the historical period under scrutiny in this study was too recent to be written about by this group of scholar-activists.

From the early 1970s, the recurrence of popular protests in South Africa itself was matched by a corresponding interest in social and popular history by a new generation of radical-revisionist and Marxist-inspired historians. In the preface to 1977 edition of the third volume of the epic documentary collection, *From Protest to Challenge*, which charted

⁶ Edward Roux, *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (London, 1948), 7.

⁷ Another important book was John Burger (pseudonym of Leo Marquand), *The Black Man's Burden* (London, 1943). For a non-Marxist interpretation see Jordan Ngubane, *An African Explains Apartheid* (London, 1963).

⁸ Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.1, South Africa to 1870, and Vol. 2, 1870-1966* (Oxford, 1969-1971). Leo Kuper's chapter in volume two (426-476) was the only contribution to the collection devoted to the history of African nationalism in South Africa. In the South African edition, even this was omitted from publication.

⁹ H.J. and R.E. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Harmondsworth, 1969), 9.

¹⁰ Bernhard Makhosezwe Magubane, “Whose memory – whose history? The illusion of liberal and radical debates,” in Hans Erik Stolten (ed.), *History Making and Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* (Uppsala, 2007), 270.

the history of black resistance in South Africa in the period 1882-1964 through a combination of archival material and analytical essays, American scholars Karis and Carter expressed the hope that their project would be “a stepping-stone for new generations of historians.”¹¹ However, in the preface to the fifth volume in the series, which appeared in 1997 and covers the history of the liberation struggle from its nadir in 1964 to its resurgence in 1979, readers are told that “these expectations are as pertinent [today] as they were almost two decades ago.”¹² With a small number of exceptions, such as Tom Lodge’s influential survey of black resistance *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*,¹³ it has in fact been one of the failings of the revisionist school that only a few comprehensive syntheses of South Africa’s history have been attempted,¹⁴ despite the proliferation of numerous, in-depth case studies.¹⁵ Although black political organisations have been regarded in principle as key agents of political change and as important mobilisers of social identity by revisionist historians, their concern with social history and history ‘from below’ – rather than ‘institutional’ history – has resulted on the whole in a localised focus of enquiry. Bernhard Magubane has boldly argued this point in a recent critique of the liberal and revisionist traditions in South Africa’s historiography:

When one reads the contributions of the Neo-Marxist historians, the infrequency of discussions of the national liberation movement and its struggles strikes one very

¹¹ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, Vol. 3, xv.

¹² Thomas Karis and Gail M. Gerhart (eds.), *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990, Vol.5, Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Pretoria, 1997), xxii.

¹³ Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (London, 1983).

¹⁴ Some examples include: Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2000); Robert Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (Cambridge, 1999); William Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, rev. ed. (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁵ Hans Erik Stolten, “History in the new South Africa: An introduction,” in Stolten (ed.), *History Making*, 18-19.

forcefully. The banning of the ANC and the PAC seems to have suggested that the national aspirations of Africans were no longer realistic.¹⁶

Moreover, the 1960s have tended to be viewed by radical historians as a rather inconsequential phase when compared to the militancy of the 1970s and 1980s – or to the mass public campaigns of the 1950s. This has meant that for a long time Tom Lodge’s chapter on “Revolutionary exile politics, 1960-1975”¹⁷ provided the only overview of the period stretching from the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960 to the Soweto uprising of 1976.

A number of popular and official histories of the ANC have been written over the years by some of its members, friendly supporters and onlookers.¹⁸ The first, obvious problem with this body of literature is their open partisanship. Secondly, they have done little to correct the academic neglect of the 1960s and turn it into a period deserving closer investigation. And thirdly, they were written at a time when the political climate in South Africa was too highly charged for them to be able to escape the heavy ideological burdens imposed by the struggle. On the academic front, Peter Walshe’s account of the ANC during its legal era ends in 1952.¹⁹ Saul Dubow’s brief survey of the ANC is the only book to have been written by an academic which covers the entire history of the organisation from its

¹⁶ Magubane, “Whose memory – whose history?,” 273.

¹⁷ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 295-320.

¹⁸ See Mary Benson, *South Africa: The Struggle for a Birthright* (Harmondsworth, 1966); Francis Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC* (Harare, 1988); Heidi Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the African National Congress* (London, 1989); Dale T. McKinley, *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography* (London, 1997).

¹⁹ Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: the African National Congress, 1912-1952* (London, 1970).

birth to its election to power in 1994.²⁰ However, this book too pays limited attention to the 1960s.

The secondary literature on the history of the PAC is remarkably limited. This can in part be explained in terms of the organisation's own political decline. Gail Gerhart has traced the ideological origins of the Africanist movement in her *Black Power in South Africa*.²¹ The activities of the PAC/Poqo underground in the early 1960s have been documented in detail by Lodge,²² Karis and Gerhart,²³ and more recently by Brown Bavusile Maaba and Sello Mathabatha.²⁴ Both Lodge and Karis and Gerhart have provided general overviews of the history of the PAC in exile,²⁵ which is also the subject of a doctoral thesis by Kwandiwe Kondlo²⁶ and of an article by Thami ka Plaatjie.²⁷ No institutional histories of the PAC have been written thus far.²⁸ The same goes for

²⁰ Saul Dubow, *The African National Congress* (Johannesburg, 2000).

²¹ Gail M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley, 1979).

²² See Tom Lodge, "The Paarl insurrection: A South African uprising," *African Studies Review*, 25 (1982), 95-116; and "The Poqo insurrection," in Tom Lodge (ed.), *Resistance and Ideology in Settler Societies* (Johannesburg, 1986).

²³ See Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 669-671.

²⁴ Brown Bavusile Maaba, "The PAC's war against the state, 1960-1963," and Sello Mathabatha, "The PAC and POQO in Pretoria, 1958-1964," both in South African Democracy Education Trust (hereafter SADET) (eds.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Vol. 1, 1960-1970 (Cape Town, 2004), 257-297, 299-318. See also Thami ka Plaatjie, "The PAC's internal underground activities, 1960-1980," in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Vol. 2, 1970-1980 (Pretoria, 2006), 669-701.

²⁵ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 305-317; "The Pan-Africanist Congress, 1959-1990," in Ian Liebenberg, Fiona Lortan, Bobby Nel, B., and Gert van der Westhuizen (eds.), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria, 1994), 104-124; and Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 46-50.

²⁶ Kwandiwe Merriman Kondlo, "In the twilight of the Azanian Revolution: the exile history of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa): 1960-1990," D. Litt. Et Phil Thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, October 2003, <http://etd.rau.ac.za/theses/available/etd-08182004-115716/>.

²⁷ Thami ka Plaatjie, "The PAC in Exile," in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 2, 703-746.

²⁸ Bernard Leeman wrote a partisan account of the PAC and Basutoland Congress Party. *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania: Africanist Political Movements in Lesotho and Azania: The Origins and History of the Basutoland Congress Party and the Pan Africanist Congress* (London, 1985).

autobiographies and political biographies of PAC leaders and activists. The PAC's most important leader, Robert Sobukwe, has been the subject of just two political biographies.²⁹ C.J. Driver is the author of a biography of Patrick Duncan, which in part also covers the history of the PAC as Duncan became one of its members in the early 1960s.³⁰ Philip Kgosana and Mxolisi Mgxahe's personal memoirs appear to be the only existing autobiographies of PAC activists.³¹ By contrast, ANC and communist leaders and activists have been both the authors and the subjects of a wide array of autobiographies, memoirs and political biographies, especially after 1994. Among the most notable examples of personal accounts are Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, Ahmed Kathrada's *Memoirs*, Joe Slovo's unfinished autobiography, Ben Turok's *Nothing but the Truth*, and Rusty Bernstein's *Memory Against Forgetting*.³² Anthony Sampson's authorised biography of Mandela,³³ and the life stories of Walter and Albertina Sisulu and Oliver Tambo are among the most important political biographies written by others.³⁴

Only in recent years have scholars started to bridge some of the gaps in the literature and to fully appreciate the complexity of the 1960s as a decade worthy of attention in its own right. On one hand, this change in the historiography has been made possible by new

²⁹ See Bejamin Pogrund, *How Can Man Die Better: Sobukwe and Apartheid* (London, 1990); Elias L. Ntloedibe, *Here Is a Tree: Political Biography of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe* (Mogoditshane, 1995).

³⁰ C.J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African* (London, 1980).

³¹ Philip Ata Kgosana, *Lest We Forget: An Autobiography* (Johannesburg, 1988); Mxolisi Mgxahe, *Are You with Us?: The Story of a PAC Activist* (Houghton, 2006).

³² Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (London, 1995); A.M. Kathrada, *Memoirs* (Cape Town, 2004); Joe Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography* (Randburg, 1995); Ben Turok, *Nothing but the Truth: Behind the ANC's Struggle Politics* (Johannesburg, 2003); Rusty Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting: Memoirs from a Life in South African Politics 1938-1964* (Sandton, 1999).

³³ Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorised Biography* (London, 1999).

³⁴ Elinor Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime* (Claremont, 2002); Luli Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Cape Town, 2005).

documentary sources and oral history projects that have become available in South African archives since 1994. On the other hand, South Africa's transition to democracy has enabled historians, as well as many of the participants in the anti-apartheid struggle, to write and speak about the past more openly than before. As the bans on individuals and organisations were gradually lifted after 1990, so were many of the inhibitions which the demands of the struggle and the commitment to oppose apartheid exacted. The challenge today lies, as historian Shula Marks has argued, "in transforming South African history from being a morality play – whether in its settler version as a narrative of the confrontation between civilisation and savagery (or modernity and irrationality) or in its humanitarian version of villains and victims."³⁵

The publication of the first volume of *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* in 2004 has marked a very important step in this direction. The chapters in the volume provide fresh insights into the years 1960-1970 by focusing on particular organisations, their activities, the evolution of their strategies and tactics, as well as specific events and other salient aspects which shaped the decade. Their overall aim is to challenge "the notion that the 1960s was a decade of political quiescence."³⁶ However, it is perhaps a shortcoming of the book that the composite chapters, which individually stand on their own, do not form a continuous narrative, as it is common with collections of this nature.

Building on this new body of scholarship, this thesis also challenges the characterisation of the 1960s as the 'decade of quietude' or, as the period has also been

³⁵ Shula Marks, "Rewriting South African history: or the hunt for Hintsa's head," in Simon McGrath, Charles Jedrej, Kenneth King, and Jack Thompson (eds.), *Rethinking African History* (Edinburgh, 1997), 105.

³⁶ SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, xv.

referred to, ‘the lull.’³⁷ It argues that although the 1960s witnessed the progressive silencing of all forms of internal opposition by the apartheid machinery, this was also a critical time of experimentation and change, in which the exiled liberation movements had to adjust to the dramatically altered conditions of struggle emerging in the post-Sharpeville context. Within a few years from their banning and the momentous decision to take up arms, both the ANC and the PAC virtually ceased to function in South Africa, where a large portion of their leadership languished in prison, and were effectively transformed into exiled movements. Forced to operate under conditions of illegality after long years of mass-based public campaigns and extra-parliamentary activity, cut off from their internal support base, separated from South Africa by a physical barrier of countries which were either allies of the apartheid state or too economically dependent on it to be able to oppose its policies, the liberation movements faced enormous challenges ahead of them. An in-depth analysis of what happened to the ANC and the PAC during their first decade of exile is important to reaching a greater understanding not just of the 1960s, but also of the years that followed. In fact, one could argue that it was on the basis of the achievements, as well as of the difficulties, setbacks, disagreements and doubts that appeared at this time, that the liberation movements ultimately emerged victorious in 1990.

In particular, it is remarkable that the ANC and its allies managed not only to stay together but were actually able to create a degree of unity, purpose and thrust which in turn allowed the ANC to pull through one of the bleakest periods in its history. The PAC in exile, on the other hand, was affected by a number of internal problems which in part overshadowed the message of the political tendency that the organisation represented when

³⁷ Nigel Worden has dubbed the period after Sharpeville “decade of quietude,” although with an important question mark. *The Making of Modern South Africa*, 128. For “the lull” see Julie Frederikse, *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-racialism in South Africa* (London, 1990), 92-103.

it was founded in 1959. Despite these difficulties, which became visible from a very early stage, the PAC never disappeared from the political scene. The PAC's continued survival, however troubled, can in part be attributed to its very Africanist ideology and the powerful appeal it was able to generate both within South Africa and at a Pan-African level.

Periodisation and outline

The primary concern of this thesis is with the reorganisation of the ANC and its allies, most notably the South African Communist Party (SACP), in exile from the time of the Sharpeville massacre to the Morogoro Consultative Conference of 1969. The history of PAC in exile during the same period is the second important topic of this study. An analysis of the PAC not only provides an interesting point of comparison with the ANC, but is also necessary because the ANC's development after 1960 was in some measure determined by the PAC. Although the focus will be almost exclusively on these organisations, this is not to imply that they were the only organisations committed to ending apartheid in South Africa. The ANC and the PAC were, however, the only South African nationalist organisations which managed to regroup externally in a way that was both significant (in terms of the numbers of people involved) and enduring. This can in part be explained by the 'liberation movement' status they were both accorded by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), unlike smaller groups such as the Non-European Unity Movement, and the material support they were able to benefit from as a result.

Although none of the chapters in the thesis is dedicated exclusively to the history of the SACP, the Party's relationship with the ANC and its overall influence on the liberation struggle are an important aspect of this study. The SACP was established in 1953 following the disbandment of the original Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) as a result of the

Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. Until the public announcement of the Party's existence in July 1960, the SACP was not only a clandestine but also a secret organisation. Moreover, no official methods of contact governed the relations between the Party and the ANC, which functioned in a completely separate manner. However, individual communists generally occupied prominent positions either in the ANC or one or the other of the constituent organisations in the Congress Alliance. In this way, the Party was still able to bear its mark on the movement as a whole without, however, counterposing itself to it. The determination of SACP members to play a part in the Congress Movement stemmed from the Party's resolve to build a strong ANC which would spearhead a national democratic revolution, not a socialist one. The origins of this policy and its implications are analysed in the thesis.

The role of the SACP in South Africa's liberation struggle and the influence it has had on the ANC have been the subject of much historical debate – a debate which originated within the liberation movement itself. Some scholars, such as Ellis and Sechaba, have argued that the aim of the SACP was essentially that of taking over the leadership of the ANC, which they claim was achieved at Morogoro in 1969.³⁸ Eddy Maloka's more recent study of the SACP in exile and Vladimir Shubin's work on the ANC and the Soviet Union, however, have painted a rather more complex picture of ANC-SACP relations.³⁹ In the period under scrutiny in this study, these relations were certainly not as straightforward as they may appear from the perspective of the present. Without a doubt the banning of the ANC in 1960 and the subsequent decision to form Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) by a section of its leadership in conjunction with the SACP to carry out sabotage operations brought the

³⁸ Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (London, 1992).

³⁹ Eddy Maloka, *The South African Communist Party in Exile, 1963-1990* (Pretoria, 2002); Vladimir G. Shubin, *The ANC: A View from Moscow* (Cape Town, 1999).

ANC and the Party considerably closer. Nevertheless, the two organisations still continued to operate independently of one another. By 1965, the task of leading both the ANC and MK came to fall entirely onto the shoulders of the external mission of the ANC, with its headquarters in Tanzania. As a result, the SACP, the majority of whose members in exile were based in London, in effect lost all control over MK's direction, as well as organised contact with its own members in MK. This lack of contact also affected relations between non-African members of the Central Committee of the SACP in London and those representing the ANC external mission in African countries. It was not until the late 1960s that the SACP managed to establish a good degree of cohesion among its leaders scattered in exile and was thus in the position to be able to formulate policy once again.

One aspect of the debate about the SACP on which commentators generally agree is that the Communist Party played a unique role – for good or for worse – in South Africa's liberation. This is certainly true if one looks at other African countries, where no equivalent of the SACP can be found. Something which is perhaps less acknowledged is that the SACP's decision to support the formation of a broad alliance of forces in the fight against apartheid is not as exceptional if compared to the policies of other communist parties outside of Africa. South Africa was not the only context in which a local communist party consciously adopted policies which would prevent the development of extremism and worked with other political groupings to defeat the immediate common enemy.⁴⁰ This thesis argues that the SACP, like the communist parties of other countries, acted as a dynamic and unifying force within the liberation movement during the period in question,

⁴⁰ For example, the role played by the Italian Communist Party in the war of resistance against Nazi-fascist occupation in 1943-1945 and its aftermath bears striking similarities with the SACP's development of an alliance with the ANC, its controlled approach to the armed struggle, and the prominent part SACP leaders played in South Africa's transition to democracy. For a brief history of the Italian Communist Party see Palmiro Togliatti, *Il Partito Comunista Italiano* (Roma, 1961).

by the end of which it had become an integral part of the alliance, yet with its own independent ideology, programme and role.

The five chapters which make up this thesis are ordered chronologically, so that each chapter covers a fairly discrete number of years. Every chapter is also organised around a central defining theme, which means that in some cases the narrative may go back in time to place that particular theme in historical context. The periodisation which informs the separation of the chapters is based on the identification of five stages. The first period, 1945-1960 (Chapter One), coincides with the liberation movements' early diplomatic activity and the founding stages of the international solidarity movement, one of the liberation movements' key pillars of support throughout their long years of exile. At this time, the liberation movements were still legal in South Africa, from where operations were conducted in their entirety. The next stage, 1960-1962 (Chapter Two), covers the life-span of the South African United Front, the first external structure set up jointly by the ANC and the PAC in the aftermath of their banning. The third stage, 1962-1965 (Chapter Three), saw the establishment of a number of key operational centres or missions by the ANC and the PAC outside South Africa and their transformation into exile movements. Stage four, 1965-1967 (Chapter Four), witnessed the emergence of a series of problems leading to intense internal debate within both exile movements. The last phase, 1967-1969 (Chapter Five), was marked by the ANC's military undertakings in Rhodesia and the act of intervention to stop the ensuing crisis by the ANC leadership at Morogoro in 1969.

March 1960 marks the formal beginning of the liberation movements' external work and the setting up of international offices by both the ANC and the PAC. However, this thesis maintains that since the end of the Second World War, the ANC had become increasingly aware of the importance of foreign support for the internal resistance movement. After the war, contact was established with various international organisations,

individuals and even states, mainly through the broader Pan-African and anti-colonial movement, which had its centre in Britain. Hence, Chapter One traces the roots and early history of the international networks of solidarity between South Africa and Britain from the time of the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress up to the formation of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in 1960. The chapter argues that the AAM was born as a by-product of the Congress Movement in South Africa thanks to the commitment to the liberation struggle of a small group of highly politically conscious South Africans who had been arriving in Britain since the late 1940s. Moreover, the timing of its formation, which coincides with the liberation movements' move into exile, was especially important because throughout all of the 1960s, when ANC membership was still restricted to black South Africans, the AAM provided the kind of public platform that the Congress Alliance had been in the 1950s. Prior to the Morogoro Conference, it was largely through the AAM that white, Indian and Coloured exiles could offer their services in support of the national liberation movement.

Chapter Two proceeds to examine the first attempts by the South African liberation movements to establish an external presence through the South African United Front, which lasted from 1960 to the beginning of 1962. Given that the Front was created at a time of political divisions and bitter rivalry between the ANC and the PAC inside South Africa, the chapter investigates the reasons behind its formation and eventual demise, as well as its legacy for future ANC-PAC relations. The history of the SAUF is also worth analysing because it brings into focus the views of independent African states, Ghana in particular, about South Africa's liberation. What emerges is that the ANC's multi-racial approach to politics was largely viewed as problematic on the rest of the continent. As a result, the ANC decided to re-orient its external image in order to gain full recognition by African states.

The establishment of the external mission of the ANC, its activities, and its relationship with African host countries, especially Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia, vis-à-vis the PAC are analysed in Chapter Three, which covers the years 1962-1965. The formulation of the policy of the “African image” by the ANC following the demise of the SAUF is given special attention. The impact of specific events in South Africa, notably the Rivonia raid and trial, and their implications for the exiled movement and its development are also examined. The second half of this chapter provides a detailed account of the activities of the PAC in Basutoland in the same period. The aim is to highlight the PAC/Poqo movement’s potentialities and their shattering, which was in part self-inflicted and in part achieved by the collusion of the British colonial authorities in Basutoland with South Africa in uprooting the PAC from this country.

Chapter Four analyses problems of external representation stemming from the gradual take-over by the ANC external mission of the leadership of the whole of the movement after Rivonia. The first indication of these problems was a dispute between the ANC external mission and some representatives of the Coloured People Congress in exile, which only finished with the latter’s defection to the PAC in 1966. The breakaway, however, did not bring a permanent solution to the problems of external representation, as the continued debates between the various parts of the former Congress Alliance now in exile demonstrate. The position of the SACP on this issue is also discussed. The Chapter goes on to suggest that the debates which occurred in this period are evidence of a gradual transition from the multi-racial approach of the 1950s to the creation of a non-racial, united front. Far from being linear, this transition involved a fundamental transformation of the relations between the ANC and its non-African allies and was further complicated by the policy of the “African image.” Lastly, the chapter looks at the PAC’s attempt at solving its internal problems during the Moshi Conference of 1967. Although the meeting did not

succeed in putting an end to the PAC's in-fighting, the Moshi Conference seems to indicate a process of ideological transformation on the part of the PAC in exile.

The Morogoro Conference of 1969 can be viewed as the equivalent of the PAC's effort at internal reform at Moshi by the ANC. The Conference, which is dealt with in Chapter Five, took place at a time of extreme crisis in the ANC. An investigation into the roots of the crisis reveals serious problems of discontent within the ANC's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. From 1966 the growing unrest in ANC military camps erupted in a series of desertions, rebellions or small mutinies and the scathing criticism of the ANC leadership by MK members such as Chris Hani. These incidents point to a widening gap between the political and military wings of the ANC which by 1969 had come to threaten the organisation's very existence. Therefore the Chapter scrutinises military matters and issues of strategy and tactics arising from the decision to embark on a path of armed struggle in the early part of the decade. It argues that the ANC had failed to sufficiently adjust its strategy and tactics to the changing context. By 1969 this had led to deadlock which the ANC was able to overcome through the Morogoro Conference. Lastly, the impact of the Conference in the restructuring of the relations between the ANC and its non-African supporters is assessed, with special reference to ANC-SACP relations.

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. Although today the ANC is a non-racial party which anyone is free to join, until 1969, ANC membership, including that of its external mission, had been exclusively African. The opening of membership in 1969 was an event of huge proportions in the history of the ANC and the development of its policy of non-racialism, which is one of the most important themes running throughout the thesis. On the one hand, non-racialism had a long tradition in South Africa – evidence of which can be found for instance in the history of the trade union and

socialist movements. Julie Frederikse has gone as far as to argue that non-racialism has run like an ‘unbreakable thread’ throughout the history of the liberation struggle.⁴¹ On the other hand, the difficult process of forging non-racial unity is perhaps more problematic than what Frederikse has suggested. In a society deeply divided along lines of colour, unity and united action between different groups were neither inevitable nor natural developments. More specifically, as Nhlanhla Ndebele has also suggested, this study seeks to demonstrate that it was the new conditions of exile which called for a rethinking of the ANC’s membership policy at Morogoro in 1969.⁴²

Methodology and sources

The methodology that has been applied to the writing of this thesis is archival research. The principal documentary sources that have been used are the written records of the liberation movements, both published and unpublished. Published documents include various documentary collections (such as Karis and Carters’ *From Protest to Challenge*) and the ANC’s official website, which has a substantial section dedicated to the organisation’s historical documents.⁴³ The bulk of the ANC external mission papers are held at the official ANC archive, the University of Fort Hare’s Liberation Archives. As well as the ANC Morogoro papers and part of the organisation’s London papers, the Oliver Tambo Collection, which is part of the same archive, has been consulted. The Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape holds the other half of the ANC London mission documents. It is also the repository of the personal papers of many prominent anti-apartheid

⁴¹ See Frederikse, *The Unbreakable Thread*.

⁴² Nhlanhla Ndebele, “The African National Congress and the policy of non-racialism: a study of the membership issue,” *Politikon*, 29 (2002), 133-146.

⁴³ See <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/>.

activists. In particular, the papers of Yusuf Dadoo, Brian Bunting and Reg September have been important sources of information. The Mayibuye Centre also boasts a large Sound and Oral History collection, including the full transcripts of Hilda Bernstein's interviews on the experience of exile, which have been especially helpful in the writing of the first chapter. Lastly, the Karis and Gerhart collection at the Historical Papers of the University of the Witwatersrand has also supplied valuable material.

The National Heritage Cultural Studies Centre, based in Fort Hare, is the official custodian of the archival records of the PAC. However, very little material dating to the 1960s has survived other than the early documents which are published in the third volume of *From Protest to Challenge*. However, some documents concerning the PAC can be found in some of the above mentioned ANC collections. Moreover, the British National Archives in London have supplied interesting and detailed information about the activities of the PAC in Basutoland during the years when its headquarters were based in Maseru. But the overall paucity of PAC archival documents – as opposed to ANC primary sources for the same period – has determined that main focus of this study would have to be on the ANC in exile, while the PAC can only be dealt with in secondary measure.

Although the documents of the SACP were originally deposited at the Mayibuye Archives shortly after 1994, the Party then recalled these so that they could be processed and classified but has not returned them since. Despite this major obstacle, many individual collections, especially those that belonged to members of the Party, hold material which has helped to bring light into the history of the SACP during this period. Other than the collections that have already been mentioned so far, the Simons' papers, which are part of Manuscripts and Archives at the University of Cape Town, have been especially important. As with the PAC, however, the sketchy nature of SACP documentation can only produce a partial picture of the history of the Communist Party in the 1960s.

Rhodes House Library in Oxford has been consulted to research the papers of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, which is discussed in chapter one. The Movement for Colonial Freedom archival collection at SOAS Library has also been examined.

In order to make up for some of the shortcomings of these primary sources, a number of individuals who had been active participants in the events discussed in this thesis have been interviewed. Oral history, however, presents its own set of problems. The first one is that interviewees have been asked to look back into a past which is quite remote. Second, some of the interviewees have been reluctant to discuss certain topics and have tended to gloss over some of the problems put before them because of their sensitive nature. Despite this, oral interviews have nevertheless provided precious insiders' viewpoints, helping to personalise the arguments and debates which arose during the period under scrutiny.

CHAPTER ONE

External support for the South African liberation struggle, c. 1945-1960

In March 1960, a handful of black leaders of the opposition secretly left South Africa in order to rally international support for the struggle against apartheid. Within the span of a few years they had been joined by a considerable number of their friends and colleagues and had come to form a sizeable community of South African political exiles clustered in various centres throughout Africa, Europe and North America. Wholesale repression by the apartheid regime in South Africa during this period meant that it was from these centres that the South African liberation movements would have to continue to direct their struggle from now on. Despite a period of relative disorientation and uncertainty which lasted throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the ANC was able not only to survive, but also to re-emerge as a powerful force in South African politics by the early 1980s. Over the next three decades after its banishment in 1960, the external structures of the ANC expanded on a scale which is unprecedented in the history of any other exiled liberation movement. By the time the ANC and its allies were able to return ‘home’ in the early 1990s, they had developed a bureaucratic machinery of huge proportions which included diplomatic missions, publicity and information centres, military camps and educational and other vocational facilities. In the late 1980s, an estimated ten to fifteen thousand people (most of whom were members of Umkhonto we Sizwe) were represented by the ANC outside South Africa, and spread throughout as many as twenty-five countries.¹

¹ Tom Lodge, “Rebellion: the turning of the tide,” in Tom Lodge and Bill Nasson (eds.), *All Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (London, 1992), 173-174.

How was this impressive development possible? Prior to 1960, neither the ANC nor its newly-formed rival, the PAC, had established external offices, nor were they officially represented abroad on a permanent basis. However, this is not to say that no international links and contacts were in place prior to this date. By the time of the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, the internationalisation (or externalisation) of the anti-apartheid struggle had been well under way for over a decade as part of the wider pan-African and anti-colonial movement, particularly in Britain. This process was the result of a growing international awareness on the part of the liberation movements in South Africa on the one hand, coupled with the commitment to the freedom struggle of a small group of South Africans who had been emigrating to Britain since the late 1940s on the other. So when the ANC and the PAC began to set up an external presence after March 1960, they did not move into a vacuum but were able to link up with a growing transnational anti-apartheid network whose foundations had started to be laid down from the mid-late 1940s. The development of these international connections from the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress to the formation of the British AAM in 1960 are examined in this chapter.

This chapter will take the view, as Christabel Gurney has suggested, that the AAM “began almost as an offshoot of the South African Congress movement.”² Although the ANC was not directly involved in establishing an anti-apartheid movement in Britain, both the origins and future direction of the AAM were directly shaped by Congress-related events in South Africa. Moreover, it was largely through the initiative and dedication of South African Congress supporters in London that a boycott of South African goods was started in Britain in June 1959, culminating in the birth of the AAM less than a year later.

² Christabel Gurney, “In the heart of the beast: the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1959–1994,” in SADET (eds.), *International Solidarity*, Vol. 1 (forthcoming in 2008), 2.

The ANC, Britain and the United Nations

Since its birth in 1912 the ANC had looked to the outside world for support for the grievances and concerns of black South Africans. The obvious immediate focus of attention of the leaders of the ANC was Britain, as it had also been for their predecessors. Britain occupied a unique position in relation to South Africa, being the former colonial power and major investor in the country's economy. Moreover, it was the British parliament that had sanctioned the Act of Union under which the Union of South Africa was created in 1910 as a self-governing white Dominion within the British Commonwealth – but from whose parliament non-whites would be permanently excluded. Hopes that Britain would lend a sympathetic ear to the grievances of black South Africans dated back to the nineteenth century and stemmed from the inherent belief of the Western-educated, Christianised leadership of the ANC in the standards of British practice and justice. Ultimately, these hopes rested, as Peter Walshe has argued, “on an idealised version of a multi-racial empire governed by non-racial principles, on Britain’s nineteenth-century position as ultimately responsible for Native affairs, and on a constitutional judgement that was but recently out of date.”³ This idealised notion of a benevolent British empire produced a tension with enduring influence on following generations of African leaders and which has been summed up by Mandela in his autobiography:

I confess to being something of an Anglophile. When I thought of Western democracy and freedom, I thought of the British parliamentary system. In so many ways, the very model of the gentleman for me was an Englishman. Despite Britain being the home of parliamentary democracy, it was that democracy that had helped to inflict a pernicious system of iniquity on my people. While I abhorred the notion of British imperialism, I never rejected the trappings of British style and manners.⁴

³ Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 20.

⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 360.

By the end of the Second World War, the South African nationalist movement had become disillusioned with the tactics of sending deputations to present appeals and polite petitions to the South African and British parliaments and the King. A younger, bolder generation of African leaders entered the political arena in the wartime period and their militancy helped to resuscitate the ANC from the moribund state it had reached in the mid-late 1930s. In 1944 they founded the ANC Youth League, whose Manifesto completely rejected the old philosophy of trusteeship in favour of one of “African self-determination,” which translated into the clear demand for “full and free citizenship.”⁵ The Youth League criticised its mother body for being an “organisation of the privileged few.” These “privileged few” had become “out of actual touch with the needs of the rank and file and of our people” and were “merely reacting negatively to given conditions, able neither to assert the national will nor to resist it openly.” Freedom from white domination could only be achieved, the Youth League argued, through mass action under the banner of African nationalism. Despite the criticism, the Youth League saw it as its challenge “to build Congress from within” by acting as its “brain-trust and power-station.”⁶ At its Annual Conference in December 1949 the ANC adopted a Programme of Action, which the Youth League had drafted. The Programme declared the right of black people to self-determination and laid out plans for strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience and non-cooperation.⁷ Increasingly, under the influence of the Youth League, the organisation became internationalist in outlook, as its focus now

⁵ “Congress Youth League Manifesto,” issued by the Provisional Committee of the Congress Youth League, March 1944, document 48 in Thomas Karis, *Hope and Challenge, 1935-1952*, in Karis and Carter (eds.), *From Protest to Challenge*, Vol. 2 (Stanford, 1973), 300-308.

⁶ Ibid., 308.

⁷ See “Programme of Action,” statement of policy adopted at the ANC Annual Conference, 17 December 1949, document 60 in Karis, *Hope and Challenge*, 337-339.

expanded to the African continent. In their 1944 Manifesto the founders of the Youth League listed among their creeds that:

We believe in the unity of all Africans from the Mediterranean Sea in the North to the Indian and Atlantic oceans in the South - and that Africans must speak with one voice.⁸

On the one hand, it can be argued that the emergence of the Youth League and the radicalism it generated are indigenous products of the South African environment.⁹ Yet, on the other hand, both the radicalisation of African politics and the ANC's growing internationalism during the Second World War and its aftermath are not phenomena exceptional to South Africa and they also need to be understood within the broader trend of the intensification of anti-colonial struggles during the same period. The Second World War and the signing of the Atlantic Charter (which enunciated the right of all peoples to self-determination) by Roosevelt and Churchill in 1941 placed the colonial powers, Britain in particular, under pressure as to what the future of their colonial territories would be once the war ended. The Atlantic Charter, which was endorsed by South Africa's Prime Minister Jan Smuts, inspired the ANC to draw up its own charter, *Africans' Claims in South Africa*, which was unanimously adopted at its Annual Conference in December 1943. The ANC hoped, Mandela later explained, "that the government and ordinary South Africans would see that the principles they were fighting for in Europe were the same ones we were advocating at home."¹⁰ This document was divided into two parts, "The Atlantic Charter from the standpoint of Africans within the Union of South Africa," and a "Bill of rights." In the latter, the ANC demanded full citizenship rights, equal share in the material resources

⁸ "Congress Youth League Manifesto," issued by the Provisional Committee of the Congress Youth League, March 1944, document 48 in Karis, *Hope and Challenge*, 308.

⁹ See Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 335-339.

¹⁰ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 110.

of the country, equal opportunities in all spheres of employment, and full participation in and access to educational, economic, and medical facilities.¹¹ On the question of the franchise, the call was made for “the extension to all adults, regardless of race, of the right to vote and be elected to parliament, provincial councils and other representative institutions.”¹² Although the call for full citizenship rights had variously been made in the past and the principle of one man one vote had been implicitly suggested in the wording of some of its statements, the ANC now seemed to take a more radical position on the franchise issue than it had until now.¹³ *Africans’ Claims* is also evidence of a “more self-conscious and assertive Pan-African thinking” which had been latent in the ANC, and which the war helped bring into greater focus. As Walshe has pointed out “through having to interpret the Atlantic Charter, Congress therefore received a boost to its own expectations and simultaneously had its attention directed to the process of political emancipation throughout the entire African continent.”¹⁴

Hopes that the British government would support the demands of black South Africans had largely waned by the time the war ended. The UN emerged in the aftermath of the war as the arbiter of a new, international world order, and its importance was immediately recognised by Congress. In 1946 ANC President Dr A.B. Xuma personally delivered a petition to the UN, which he visited alongside a delegation from the SAIC¹⁵ and Indian government representatives (who were lobbying the UN on the Pegging and Asiatic

¹¹ See *Africans’ Claims in South Africa*, including “The Atlantic Charter from the standpoint of Africans within the Union of South Africa” and “Bill of rights,” adopted by the ANC Annual Conference, 16 December 1943, document 29b in Karis, *Hope and Challenge*, 209-223.

¹² Ibid, 217.

¹³ Karis, *Hope and Challenge*, 89.

¹⁴ Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 334.

¹⁵ The two SAIC delegates were H.A. Naidoo and Sorabjee Rustomjee. Senator Hymie Basner also travelled with them.

Acts), to protest against the incorporation of South West Africa into the Union. Xuma wanted to link the incorporation of South West Africa to the issue of South Africa's domestic Native policy, which, he argued, could not merely be considered as an internal matter because it left Africans with "no means of effective influence over Parliament through normal democratic channels."¹⁶ The UN's rejection of Pretoria's request for incorporation of South West Africa and its condemnation of anti-Indian legislation¹⁷ did little to shift the future course of South Africa's politics. However, "[i]n the years that followed, Congress continued to draw on the United Nations as a source of moral support and to use it as a platform for protesting against apartheid."¹⁸

Despite the shift of focus to the UN, Britain nevertheless continued to hold a special relationship with South Africa as a result of its deeply-rooted historic and economic links and its imperial responsibility. Moreover, from the 1930s Britain had become a centre of growing pan-African and anti-colonial activity, which found expression in the formation of a number of organisations such as the West African Students' Union (founded in 1925), the League of Coloured Peoples (1931), the International African Service Bureau (1937), and the Pan-African Federation (1944). United by a common anti-colonial and anti-imperialist spirit, by the belief that the right to self-determination must be extended to colonial territories after the war and by their experience of British racism, these various groups increasingly came together during the 1940s. A series of initiatives were organised in

¹⁶ Quoted in Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 330. See also Dr. A.B. Xuma, President-General, ANC: Cable to the Chairman, General Assembly, opposing South Africa's proposal for incorporation of South West Africa, January 1946, <http://www.anc.org.za/un/letters/index.html#xuma>.

¹⁷ See A/RES/44 (I), 8 December 1946,

[http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/44\(I\)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION](http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/44(I)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION), and A/RES/65 (I), 14 December 1946,

[http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/65\(I\)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION](http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/65(I)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION).

¹⁸ Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 331.

Britain to articulate the concerns and the demands of colonial peoples with the view of influencing the discussions on colonial issues at the UN, enlisting the support of the international trade union movement, as well as of exerting pressure on the British government and influencing British public opinion.¹⁹

In February and June of 1945, London respectively hosted the World Trade Union Conference and the All Colonial Peoples' Conference. A "Charter of Labour for the Colonies" was discussed at the World Trade Union Conference which raised, amongst other issues, the problem of trade union representation for African workers specifically in South Africa and Rhodesia.²⁰ A South African writer-journalist, Peter Abrahams, was among the speakers at the All Colonial Peoples' Conference, where he said that in South Africa "only a revolution can ever liberate the Africans from slavery under which they now exist."²¹ That South Africa was represented within this growing Pan-African and anti-colonial movement in Britain at this time was largely the result of the voluntary, individual effort of this one man, who acted as its international ambassador in this period. Abrahams had first become politicised in South Africa, before leaving the country in 1939 in order to fulfil his ambition to be a writer.²² After working as a seaman for two years, he arrived in England in 1941, where he soon became active in Pan-African circles through the International African Service Bureau. In Britain he also worked as a regular correspondent for the *Daily Worker* and later *The Observer*, before resettling in Jamaica in 1955.

¹⁹ See Hakim Adi, "Pan-Africanism in Britain: background to the 1945 Manchester Congress," in Hakim Adi, Marika Sherwood, and George Padmore (eds.), *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited* (London, 1995), 11-32.

²⁰ Ibid., 15.

²¹ Quoted in ibid., 18.

²² See Peter Abrahams, *Tell Freedom* (London, 1954) for a moving account of Abrahams' political journey and early life in South Africa.

The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress

In October 1945 the fifth Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester, marking the culmination of a period of intensified anti-colonial activity in the UK. The initial impetus for the Manchester Congress came from George Padmore and the Pan-African Federation, with the support of W.E.B. Du Bois, ‘the father of Pan-Africanism.’ The West African Students’ Union, the League of Coloured Peoples, as well as several individuals and organisations from the USA, the Caribbean, and Africa were involved in its preparation.²³ Twenty-six of the ninety delegates to the Manchester Congress came from Africa. Among them were Hastings Banda, Kwame Nkrumah, Obafemi Awolowo and Jomo Kenyatta, who all became the leaders of their respective countries at independence.

Peter Abrahams, who had been appointed Publicity Secretary to the Conference, had written to D.D.T. Jabavu (President of the All African Convention) in South Africa inviting him to attend and asking him to forward the request to the ANC as well as to the Non-European Unity Front. All the South Africans failed to participate as they could not obtain passports from the South African government. The ANC was in the end represented at the Congress by Peter Abrahams himself and Makumalo (Mark) Hlubi,²⁴ “but their appointment had been a belated and haphazard one.”²⁵ Still, it was fortunate that Abrahams and Hlubi happened to be in London at the time, or the ANC would have not been represented at the Congress at all. As well as acting as the Publicity Secretary, Abrahams collaborated with Padmore in the publication of a commemorative pamphlet on the Congress.

²³ See Adi, Sherwood, and Padmore (eds.), *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress*.

²⁴ Hlubi had arrived in Britain to study medicine on a scholarship around the mid-1930s, but instead became involved in show business and acting. He had begun his acting career at the Bantu Men’s Social Centre, which is where that Hlubi and Abrahams had first met.

²⁵ Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 338.

The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress has been viewed as a landmark event in accelerating the end of colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa, marking the beginning of a new, militant phase in the fight against colonialism. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus will be on its relevance in regards to the South African freedom struggle specifically. The right of all people, including those living under colonial rule, to govern themselves was affirmed by the Congress, which also called for complete social, economic and political emancipation of the colonies. The strike and the boycott were pinned down as the two “invincible” weapons through which colonial peoples could win the battle against imperialism.²⁶ In particular, the call for boycott turned out to be of crucial significance for the South African resistance movement, for in the late 1950s the boycott weapon was extended beyond the country’s borders to become one of the most effective weapons to isolate South Africa internationally.

A session of the Manchester Congress chaired by W.E.B. Du Bois was dedicated to discussing “Oppression in South Africa,” and was addressed by both Hlubi and Abrahams. Hlubi spoke of South Africa’s policy of segregation and in particular its implications on the labour front. Abrahams, on the other hand, drew attention to the Pass Laws and African education. In the resolutions passed by the Congress, several demands were made in relation to South Africa, on top of the list being the universal suffrage. The Congress pledged its support for the non-European people of South Africa and their struggle, which was viewed “as an integral part of the common struggle for national liberation throughout Africa.” Alarm over South Africa’s expansionist regional policies was also voiced in a resolution which rejected any plans of incorporation of the neighbouring Protectorates and

²⁶ See George Padmore (ed.), *Colonial and... coloured unity, a programme of action: history of the Pan-African Congress*, reprinted in Adi, Sherwood, and Padmore (eds.), *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress*, 51-124.

demanded that the British Labour government honour the initial promise of Protection under which it had come to rule these territories.²⁷ Finally, a draft resolution on South West Africa was adopted and later submitted to the UN, rejecting South Africa's claims to rule this territory and demanding the abolition of its League of Nations mandate.²⁸

The resolutions adopted by the Pan-African Congress in relation to Southern Africa are significant for a number of reasons. First, the demand of one man one vote was clearly stated. Then, South Africa's policy towards South West Africa on one hand and the Protectorates on the other were identified as two critical areas of concern over which international action should be mobilised through the UN. Finally, the struggle in South Africa was declared as inseparable from the liberation of Africa as a whole and firmly placed within the context of anti-colonial struggles. Yet, Walshe has argued, whereas the Pan-African Congress played an important role in terms of the development of Pan-African thinking in middle Africa, "it would be easy to exaggerate its impact" on black South African politics.²⁹ In fact, neither Abrahams nor Hlubi had the necessary political credentials to make them properly representative of the ANC, of which they were not, formally speaking, members. Moreover, they both remained in the UK, which meant that the ideas and vision which were promoted at the Congress were not directly brought back into South Africa. Perhaps most significantly, the South African counterpart of the generation of African leaders who was present at the Congress and who would come of age in the 1950s to lead the anti-colonial struggle in their countries of origins, was rather insular in comparison. Whereas the likes of Nkrumah and Kenyatta shared a similar experience of British colonialism and came together in the UK where they all spent time studying,

²⁷ Ibid., 105-106.

²⁸ Ibid., 111-112.

²⁹ Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 337-338.

Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Govan Mbeki, who were politicised in the 1940s and emerged as the leaders of the South African nationalist movement the following decade, were shaped by very different (and very South Africa) experiences.

First, they were all educated in South Africa, where, up to the late 1940s, the African elite could still enjoy the benefits of non-racial missionary institutions such as Lovedale, Healdtown and Fort Hare, the '*alma mater*' of African nationalists. Furthermore, before the Bantu Education Act was introduced in 1953, small numbers of Africans could still enter the 'liberal' English-speaking universities. In the mid-late 1940s, the University of Witwatersrand brought nascent African leaders such as Mandela into close contact with white radicals and Indians (many of whom were also members of the Communist Party). The inter-racial friendships which developed among this groups of Wits graduates played an important role in the softening of Africanist sentiments within the ANC and in the development of a South African brand of African nationalism with no equivalent elsewhere in Africa. In Mandela's case, which can be used as an illustration of the feelings of most of the ANC leaders of his generation, Lodge has suggested that: "Increasingly, the narrow solidarities of the more doctrinaire Youth League ideologues were emotionally at odds with his own personal experience, however intellectually appealing he may have found them initially."³⁰

Even so, the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress was significant in that it marked the beginning of a new era of active campaigning for colonial freedom in Britain which challenged the previous moderate, legalistic and gradualist attitude towards decolonisation adopted by Western governments and liberal human rights groups.³¹ The

³⁰ Tom Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life* (Oxford, 2006), 48.

³¹ George W. Shepherd, *Anti-Apartheid: Transnational Conflict and Western Policy in the Liberation of South Africa* (Westport, 1977), 31-32.

Congress was attended by representatives of the British Independent Labour Party and Common Wealth Party. The Lancashire and Cheshire District Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), Pat Devine, sent a fraternal message in which it pledged to campaign for the extension of the principle of self-determination to the colonies and for the introduction of immediate reforms by the British government.³² In 1948, Nkrumah, Kenyatta, and Padmore were among the participants in the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism, whose Chairman was Andrew Fenner Brockway of the Independent Labour Party. Significantly, it was within this growing anti-colonial movement that anti-apartheid began to make itself heard in the UK.

Early campaigning against apartheid in the UK

As decolonisation helped to throw into greater prominence the plight of the black population of South Africa, anti-apartheid activism started to grow in Britain after the Second World War. In the 1950s, a diverse range of new organisations and personalities leaning to the left of British politics entered the political scene of anti-colonialist and anti-apartheid discourse in the UK. They included Fenner Brockway's Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF), Michael Scott's Africa Bureau and Canon John Collins's Christian Action.³³ Trevor Huddleston, Michael Scott and John Collins, who collectively gained a reputation as 'the turbulent priests,'³⁴ all played a prominent role within this network and articulated Christian critiques of apartheid long before the Christian Churches would take a

³² Adi, Sherwood, and Padmore (eds.), *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress*, 115-116.

³³ The origins of both Christian Action and the Africa Bureau can be traced back to the Anti-Slavery Society of 1906, which in turn had grown out of nineteenth-century anti-slavery groups. Shepherd, *Anti-Apartheid*, 33.

³⁴ See Rob Skinner, "Turbulent priests or movement intellectuals? Christian voices and international opposition to apartheid in the 1950s," <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/aam/turbulent.html>.

stand on the issue. Scott and Huddleston³⁵ both had a first hand experience of South Africa, and during their time in the country they had formed close contacts with the ANC and the Congress Movement. On their return to the UK, they became outspoken critics of apartheid and champions of black people's rights. In 1956, the publication of Huddleston's personal account of life in Sophiatown, *Naught for Your Comfort*,³⁶ "carried its message of the humanity of black South Africans into the homes of church people throughout Britain" at a time when the British public knew very little about apartheid and South Africa.³⁷ Several Labour Party constituencies, Labour MPs, trade union groups, and the CPGB were also involved in the campaigning. These organisations and individuals were the first to act on a transnational level through international structures like the UN. Their primary concern was with Africa as a whole, and with the independence of African states. As for South Africa, their expectations were that apartheid had to be dismantled and that majority rule had to be established soon.³⁸

As early as 1946 Michael Scott testified before the UN in New York on behalf of the Herero people of South West Africa regarding South Africa's incorporation of this mandate territory. In March 1952, after having been prohibited from returning to South Africa, Scott established the Africa Bureau in London, "to help people in Africa opposing unfair discrimination and inequality of opportunity and to foster cooperation between races," and "to oppose racial tyrannies in Africa [...] to promote the achievement of non-

³⁵ In 1981 Huddleston became President of the AAM. He also became IDAF's Chairman after Collins's death in 1982.

³⁶ Trevor Huddleston, *Naught for your Comfort* (London, 1956). Michael Scott also published an autobiographical account covering his years in South Africa and Namibia. *A Time to Speak* (London, 1958).

³⁷ Gurney, "In the heart of the beast," 4.

³⁸ Shepherd, *Anti-Apartheid*, 34-35.

discriminatory majority rule in Africa.”³⁹ The Africa Bureau Committee included members of the Labour and Liberal Parties, while the Conservative Lord Hemingford was its Chairman. Jane Symonds, an Englishwoman, and Mary Benson, a South Africa émigré, assisted Scott in the office.⁴⁰ Scott and the Africa Bureau were close to David Astor, editor of the London *Observer*, known at the time as “the black man’s friend.”⁴¹ South African Labour Party leader and journalist Colin Legum, who left South Africa in opposition to the National Party’s electoral victory in 1948,⁴² became *The Observer*’s first Africa correspondent. In the 1950s, the Bureau aided the people of Nyasaland, Southern and Northern Rhodesia in their opposition to the creation of the Central African Federation by the British government, and took up the case of Tshekedi and Seretse Khama who had been exiled from Bechuanaland by the British authorities. Other campaigns included protests against the imposition of the 1953 Bantu Education Act and the Sophiatown removals, as well as publicity on conditions in the Rand’s shantytowns and in prison farms. Finally, in early 1956, Scott and Trevor Huddleston started a protest against apartheid in sport⁴³ and the arts at a meeting in the House of Lords.⁴⁴

Christian Action was another organisation working on Africa during this period. Following the arrests of the Defiance Campaign in 1952, on Huddleston’s request from South Africa, Canon Collins set up the British Defence and Aid Fund as an offshoot of

³⁹ Africa Bureau Constitution, quoted in Shepherd, *Anti-Apartheid*, 35.

⁴⁰ In 1957 Mary Benson became the secretary of the Treason Trial Defence Fund in Johannesburg. She permanently moved to England in 1966 after she was banned in South Africa. See Mary Benson, *A Far Cry: the making of a South African* (Pretoria, 1996).

⁴¹ Sampson, *Mandela*, 128.

⁴² See Mark Israel, *South African Political Exile in the United Kingdom* (Hounds Mills, 1999), 26.

⁴³ For a brief overview of the beginnings of the campaign against apartheid in sport see Abdul Minty, “International boycott of apartheid sport,” United Nations Unit on Apartheid, Notes and Documents, No. 16/71, April 1971, [http://www.anc.org.za/ancredocs/history/aam/abdu-2.html#\(1\)](http://www.anc.org.za/ancredocs/history/aam/abdu-2.html#(1)).

⁴⁴ Benson, *A Far Cry*, 88.

Christian Action to provide aid to “the prosecuted victims of unjust legislation and oppressive and arbitrary procedures, and relief to their families and dependants [...] until the blacks in South Africa are politically, socially and economically free men and women.”⁴⁵ During the Treason Trial of 1956-61, the British Defence and Aid Fund changed its name into the Defence and Aid Fund; in 1961 it became the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF). Until its banning under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1964, IDAF held offices in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. After 1964 it continued its work until 1991 through an international office based in London, and national committees in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, the US, Denmark, Switzerland and Australia. Under the effective direction of Canon Collins, IDAF “injected tens of millions of pounds into the struggle against apartheid.” This money was directed at the defence of “almost every political trial of importance to come before South African courts” and the dependants of political prisoners.⁴⁶

MCF was formed in 1954 under the chairmanship of Fenner Brockway “in order to coordinate the activities of British organisations concerned with anti-imperialism and colonialism.”⁴⁷ It incorporated the League Against Imperialism, the Central Africa Committee, the Kenya Committee and the Seretse Khama Defence Committee. Its early work concentrated on informing and pressurising British MPs to raise colonial issues in

⁴⁵ Canon J. Collins, “The Work of IDAF,” Address to the 62nd meeting of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, New York, June 1965, in Canon John Collins, *Southern Africa: Freedom and Peace. Addresses to the United Nations, 1965-1979*,

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/solidarity/collinsp.html#1>.

⁴⁶ Denis Herbstein, *White Lies: Canon John Collins and the Secret War Against Apartheid* (Oxford, 2004), 1. For an account of the work of Canon Collins and IDAF see also Diana Collins, *Partners in Protest: Life with Canon Collins* (London, 1992).

⁴⁷ School of Oriental and African Studies, Archives and Manuscripts, Movement for Colonial Freedom (hereafter MCF), Catalogue.

both Houses. A Committee on Southern Africa and the Protectorates was established in 1954, and a Committee Against Racism in Sport was created in 1956, thus introducing anti-apartheid and anti-racist campaign work alongside anti-colonialism. Sponsors of the Movement included Lord Archibald, Barbara Castle MP, Canon Collins, Trevor Huddleston, and Gerald Gardiner QC. In 1958, Barbara Castle went to South Africa to report on the Treason Trial for the *Sunday Pictorial*.⁴⁸ In 1962 Castle became the first AAM Honorary President.⁴⁹ Brockway, MCF's Vice-Chairman John Stonehouse MP, and its General Secretary John Eber were among the early supporters of the first British boycott of South African goods. The support of these British political figures, who stood out against the majority of public opinion at a time when "large sections of the British public were still believing that colonialism was a good thing and Africa was backward," played a very important role in swinging that opinion in the opposite direction.⁵⁰

One of the earliest supporters of the South African freedom cause that existed in London at the time was the India League, which had been set up by the Indian National Congress and had campaigned for India's independence. South African Indians in London converged onto the India League and used it as a base from which they could take initiatives on the South African question, "especially given the importance that India was attributing to the South African question in the UN at the time."⁵¹ In 1948 the India League published a pamphlet, which had been jointly written by Dr Yusuf Dadoo (President of the Transvaal Indian Congress) and Cassim Jadwat for circulation at the UN General Assembly

⁴⁸ Christabel Gurney, "'A great cause': The origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, June 1959-March 1960," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26 (2000), 130.

⁴⁹ Castle resigned in 1964 after the Labour Party's electoral victory as she was appointed Minister of Overseas Development in the new government. David Steele replaced her as AAM Honorary President.

⁵⁰ University of the Western Cape (hereafter UWC), Mayibuye Archives, "Hilda Bernstein Interviews on the Experience of Exile" (hereafter HBI), Abdul Minty, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 8.

⁵¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Vella Pillay, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts, Vol. 13.

in Paris in November that year.⁵² Jadwat was a representative of the SAIC and the Passive Resistance Council who had arrived in Britain as early as 1945, after he had been “seen off at Cape Town docks by Yusuf Dadoo who urged him to get international support for the anti-apartheid struggle.” In 1949 Jadwat and the India League organised a meeting at Friends House in London that was addressed by Dadoo and Paul Robeson.⁵³

Early South African political exile⁵⁴

From the late 1940s a more substantial number of South Africans started to travel abroad, and to the UK in particular. This development was in part a consequence of the enforcement of apartheid legislation from the late 1940s. For some, the move was a permanent one. Others, like Brian Bunting, Bram Fischer, Harold Wolpe and Lionel Forman, intermittently visited or resided in London during the 1950s because of their connections with the international communist world and socialist youth and students’ organisations. Many of the South Africans who arrived in Britain during this period came as students and eventually failed to return as a result of a combination of personal and political circumstances as well as of changes in South Africa itself. Vella and Patsy Pillay arrived in 1949 so that Vella could enrol for a Masters degree at the London School of Economics. The Pillays also had personal reasons for leaving as they had got married in South Africa before the Mixed Marriages Act and the Group Areas Act came into effect

⁵² See “South Africa – on the road to fascism,” November 1948, http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/jadwatda.html#N_1.

⁵³ Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 132.

⁵⁴ For a comprehensive study of South African political exile in the UK see Israel, *South African Political Exile*. For a collection of oral testimonies on the experience of exile see Hilda Bernstein, *The Rift: The Exile Experience of South Africans* (London, 1994).

which would have made it very difficult for them to continue to live together.⁵⁵ Vella Pillay became one of the most important contact persons for South Africans arriving in London thereafter. Rosalynde ‘Ros’ Ainslie de Lanerolle similarly left in 1954 in order to further her studies in English literature and live in England for some time. She later got married to a man from Sri Lanka, which, as for the Pillays, made their return to South Africa impossible. Ainslie was a graduate of the University of Cape Town, which she had attended alongside Ronald Segal, and was recruited as the contact person in London for the South African radical quarterly *Africa South*, which Segal edited.⁵⁶ For much of the 1950s Ethel de Keyser was also in London, where she came to continue study English literature and theatre.⁵⁷

Towards the end of the decade the initial trickle of South African students arriving in the UK turned into a stream as educational opportunities in South Africa became even more severely restricted. This was as a result of the establishment of the newly segregated universities after the enactment of the Extension of University Education Act of 1959. Mac Maharaj came in 1957, Abdul Minty in October 1958⁵⁸ and Kader Asmal in 1959.⁵⁹ Steve Naidoo, Tony and Hassim Sedaat, Mana Chetty, Freddy Reddy and Joan Nair also arrived

⁵⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Vella Pillay, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 13.

⁵⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

⁵⁷ *The Guardian*, 20 July 2004.

⁵⁸ Abdul Minty arrived in the UK in 1958 to finish his O-levels and A-levels. In South Africa he had attended a non-racial school run by the Congress Movement with Aziz and Essop Pahap in the Indian township of Lenasia (Johannesburg). Here they were taught by the likes of Duma Nokwe, Molly Fischer and Alfred Hutchinson, which had a profound influence on them at a very early age. See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Abdul Minty, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 8.

⁵⁹ Kader Asmal left South Africa in 1959 to study Law at the London School of Economics (apartheid legislation prohibited him from studying this subject in South Africa). He stayed in the UK until 1963 and then moved to Ireland with his wife Louise where they founded the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1964. Interview with Kader Asmal, Cape Town, 26 January 2005.

around this time. However, as Christabel Gurney has observed, “a consequence of apartheid was that only whites, and some South African Indians, could afford the ‘luxury’ of going into exile.”⁶⁰ This meant that very few Africans were able to go overseas. Among the few Africans to leave in this period was Mzwandile Piliso, who came to Britain in 1950 to study pharmacy. Raymond ‘Mazisi’ Kunene, the Zulu poet, came in 1959 on a Christian Action scholarship.⁶¹ The year 1959 also marked the important arrival of Tennyson Makiwane, former Treason Trialist and leader of the Youth League (as well as, incidentally, Piliso’s cousin). All of the South African émigrés just mentioned played an instrumental role in the launch of the first British boycott of South African goods in 1959, its transformation into the AAM in 1960 and continued to play an active part in the organisation throughout the rest of its existence. Ainslie, for example, was the Boycott Committee’s Secretary and went on to become the AAM’s first Honorary Secretary. After a couple of years she was replaced by Abdul Minty, who remained Honorary Secretary until the AAM was dissolved in 1994. Vella Pillay became AAM Honorary Treasurer. Finally de Keyser filled the most senior full-time position in the AAM, that of executive secretary, from 1967 to 1975.

Most of these young South Africans were already politicised when they moved to the UK as they had been involved in student politics back in South Africa, where they had been close to the SAIC,⁶² the Young Communist League, the CPSA and, after 1953, the underground SACP. As well as students, there was also a number of important South

⁶⁰ Gurney, “In the heart of the beast,” 5.

⁶¹ Bernstein, *The Rift*, 354.

⁶² Like the ANC, the SAIC had undergone a process of radicalisation as a new leadership was voted in in the mid-1940s. In 1945 Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Dr Monty Naicker were elected President of the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses respectively. The change of guard in the SAIC leadership spurred the passive resistance campaign of 1946-1947.

African trade union and Communist Party leaders who came to Britain after their banishment under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. They included Solly Sachs and James Phillip (respectively the General Secretary and National Chairman of the Garment Workers' Union), and Guy Routh of the Industrial Council for the Clothing Industry. For a period of time, Sachs worked for Canon Collin's Defence Fund as Secretary.⁶³ H.A. Naidoo, a member of the Central Committee of the CPSA from 1945 to 1950, and his wife Pauline Podbrey, a fellow CPSA member, left with permission from the Party after they had both been 'named' under the Suppression of Communism Act. Being a mixed couple, family concerns also influenced the Naidoos' decision to leave. Before leaving, Moses Kotane, on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPSA, told them that there was "an important job to be done overseas."⁶⁴ Lastly, Simon and Cynthia Zukas,⁶⁵ and Max and Saura Joffe, who had been members of the CPSA, also joined the network of South African political activists in Britain in the early 1950s.

⁶³ See Herbstein, *White Lies*, 62.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Israel, *South African Political Exile*, 28.

⁶⁵ Simon Zukas was a Lithuanian-born trade unionist and communist who grew up in Northern Rhodesia. In the late 1940s he studied Engineering and Politics at the University of Cape Town (UCT) where he became involved in the activities of National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and worked closely with the Communist Party. He then returned to Northern Rhodesia, from where he was deported to the UK in December 1952 because of his trade union and anti-Central Federation activities. In London he joined the growing network of South African exiles (many of whom he knew from his Cape Town days) and continued to campaign against the Central African Federation and for Zambia's independence. As well as being a member of SASA, he served on MCF's South and Central Africa Committee. He broke off his ties with the SACP after the crushing of the Hungarian uprising by the Soviet Union in 1956. Zukas's wife Cynthia was from South Africa. She had also been a student at UCT where she was introduced to politics through the left-wing discussion group the Modern Youth Society. She met Simon Zukas in London (where she had moved to do post-graduate studies) through the South African social network and they got married here. Like her husband, Cynthia Zukas also devoted herself to anti-apartheid work in London through the South African Students' Association, the Boycott Movement, and the AAM – whose Finchley local Committee she became Secretary of. After independence in 1964, the Zukas returned to Zambia where they continued to support the ANC. See Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka, 2002).

International links through the SACP

Until the early 1960s, most of the SACP's (and, through the SACP, the ANC's) external contacts were channelled through the CPGB.⁶⁶ Therefore, one of the most immediate points of contact for South Africans communists in the UK was naturally with the CPGB. David Kitson,⁶⁷ for example, was a member of the Hornsey branch of the CPGB, whereas the Pillays were active in its Finchley branch. The British Communist Party arranged for H.A. Naidoo, six months after he had arrived from South Africa in 1951, to go to Hungary to work on the English language broadcast at Radio Budapest.⁶⁸ The CPGB also had an International Committee which was divided into a number of "sub-committees covering every area of Britain's former empire, including committees for Africa and South Africa, to which, where possible, it recruited members from the territories concerned, including South Africa." Vella Pillay served on both these committees, whereas Mac Maharaj was a member of the Africa Committee.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Shubin, ANC, 13.

⁶⁷ David Kitson left South Africa in 1947. He became involved in trade union work in Britain through the draughtsmen's union, AESD. This became the first British union to sell its shares in South African companies in protest against apartheid in 1958. Gurney, " 'A Great Cause,'" 131. In 1955 David Kitson met Norma Cranko in London as Norma was on her way to Poland to attend the Warsaw Youth Festival hosted by the World Federation of Democratic Youth as a delegate of the COD. They subsequently got married in London. In 1959 they returned to South Africa where David Kitson joined Umkhonto we Sizwe and became a member of the second National High Command after Rivonia. He was captured and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment in December 1964. Norma returned to London two years later and devoted her energies to AAM work, especially around the release of political prisoners. See Norma Kitson, *Where Sixpence Lives* (London, 1986).

⁶⁸ H.A. Naidoo's experience in Hungary was bitterly disillusioning and after his return to London in 1955 he took little part in political activities. "Obituary: H.A. Naidoo," *Sechaba*, Vol. 5, No. 4, April 1971.

⁶⁹ Gurney, " 'A Great Cause,'" 131-132.

After the secret re-formation of the SACP in South Africa in 1953, a SACP cell soon became operative in London. Ruth First helped to set this up during a visit to London in 1954. Three representatives were initially recruited: Vella Pillay, Simon Zukas, and a third, unidentified member (whose initials are CF), who was a fellow at Cambridge University.⁷⁰ The group slowly expanded and came to include Mac Maharaj, Kader Asmal and, immediately after March 1960, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, Barry Feinberg⁷¹ and Julius Baker. This group of seven or eight people met once or twice a week, initially at the Pillay's home, in order to hold political discussions and gather and organise the mailing of Marxist literature to South Africa⁷² The SACP cell in London was responsible for keeping in close touch with the rest of the party in South Africa by correspondence through safe addresses. Press cuttings on international affairs were also sent to South Africa on a regular basis, and confidential documents would sometimes be received from South Africa for passing to international organisations.⁷³ After March 1960, London grew considerably in importance as a centre of activity for the exiled SACP. The Party's executive body, the Central Committee, and the editorial of its journal, the *African Communist*, were both forced to move their headquarters to London in the early 1960s. By 1966, London was the *only* centre – both in South Africa and internationally – where an organised Party formation was still operative.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Zukas, *Into Exile*, 102-104. Zukas soon broke off his links with the SACP because of his criticism of the Soviet Union in Hungary in 1956.

⁷¹ Feinberg, who had also been a member of the COD in South Africa, later worked for IDAF.

⁷² Israel, *South African Political Exile*, 171.

⁷³ Zukas, *Into Exile*, 101-102.

⁷⁴ See Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 15.

South African activists in London also fell in with MCF through its Southern African Committee.⁷⁵ Simon Zukas and Dr Leon Szur (another South African) were among its members. They also gravitated around 2 Amen Court, the home of Canon Collins, who, in the words of Kunene, represented “the pivot, the stone against which we leaned.”⁷⁶ Finally, as many of them enrolled at British universities, they became part of the growing student movement in this country. So, this group of highly politically-motivated South Africans in the UK was functioning on the left of British politics, monitoring events were going on in South Africa and taking them up via the CPGB, MCF, and students’ politics, and through them they were in turn able to feed-in into the British labour movement and the Labour Party.⁷⁷

Contact with home was facilitated by frequent visits to the UK by fellow South Africans interspersed throughout the 1950s. The international connections of radical white and Indian students at Wits⁷⁸ proved to be of great importance “in securing invitations and travel arrangements that enabled a succession of ANC personalities to visit Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union”⁷⁹ during this period. Moreover, South African communists (and non-communists) travelling to international conferences (mostly in socialist countries) typically stopped-over in London, where they would stay and consult with the South African Congress supporters living there. The British Communist Party often helped with the practicalities of these trips – from raising money for airfares, to arranging for travel

⁷⁵ See MCF Com 8.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Bernstein, *The Rift*, 355.

⁷⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

⁷⁸ For example, in 1951-1952 Ahmed Kathrada was in Hungary working for the Budapest-based World Federation of Democratic Youth. Lionel Forman, another Wits student, lived in Prague in 1951-1953 where he represented NUSAS at the headquarters of the International Union of Students.

⁷⁹ Lodge, *Mandela*, 48.

documents (many in fact had to leave without passports, which were difficult to obtain from the South African government).⁸⁰

In 1951 SACP leader Bram Fischer attended the World Peace Council Conference in Vienna and returned to South Africa via London. Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe, at the time Secretaries of the ANC and the ANC Youth League respectively, made an important trip to a number of ‘iron curtain’ countries in 1953.⁸¹ First, however, they travelled to London, where they were put up by David Kitson and met other South Africans resident in London, including the Pillays. They were also introduced to CPGB leaders Palme Dutt (who was the chairman of the Party’s International Committee) and Idris Cox (chair of the Africa Committee).⁸² From Britain Nokwe led a contingent of twenty-five South Africans to Bucharest to attend a Youth and Student Festival and a conference of the International Union of Students in Warsaw. After Poland, Sisulu and Nokwe went to the Soviet Union and China, where Sisulu raised the question of Chinese support for a possible armed struggle.⁸³ Before embarking on their return trip home, Sisulu and Nokwe spent another few days in London. During this second stay Sisulu addressed a meeting at Holborn Hall

⁸⁰ Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 132.

⁸¹ Ahmed Kathrada was responsible for practical arrangements for Nokwe and Sisulu’s trip. See Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 110.

⁸² Sisulu talked to Palme Dutt and Idris Cox about the possible convening of a Pan-African Congress in Africa (he had previously written to organisations and governments in Africa on behalf of the ANC and had received positive responses from Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya and Egypt as well as nationalist movements). The two CPGB leaders were less than enthusiastic about the proposal. But Sisulu argued that the CPGB did not focus enough on colonial affairs and that it needed to pay serious attention to Pan-Africanism. Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 108, 110. This may have been due to the fact that it was not until around the mid-1950s that the CPGB resolved an ideological debate around the relationship between the struggle against capitalism in the metropolis and anti-imperialist struggles in the periphery of empire and came to the conclusion that the latter “need not wait on the establishment of socialism in the imperial centre.” Thereafter the CPGB’s policy towards colonial countries became one of “unambiguous support for independence [...] and majority rule in South Africa.” Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 131.

⁸³ See Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 110-112.

alongside Solly Sachs, where “he [Sisulu] emphasised that the English had an obligation to the people of South Africa because of the colonial relationship and the manner in which South Africa had been handed over to the white man.”⁸⁴ Through Fenner Brockway, Sisulu also spoke to a group of British MPs about the situation in South Africa. Lastly, Sisulu consulted with a number of Pan-African movement and African nationalist leaders in London.⁸⁵ When Elizabeth Mafekeng (the South African Food and Canning Workers Union’s trade unionist) visited China in 1954, she stayed with the Zukas’s in London before returning to South Africa.⁸⁶ In 1955 Moses Kotane (the SACP General Secretary) and Maulvi Cachalia (an executive member of the SAIC) arrived in London en route to the Bandung Conference. They were introduced to Krishna Menon and Pandit Nehru at the office of the Indian High Commission in London where, as they had left South Africa without a passport, they were given Indian travel documents. Max Joffe was their host during their brief stay in London, during which Kotane and Cachalia held talks with Fenner Brockway and Canon Collins and “canvassed as many representative groups as possible, including the parliamentary group of the Labour Party.”⁸⁷

It is fair to assume that all the meetings and activities undertaken by South African opposition leaders who visited London in the 1950s were facilitated by the group of fellow South Africans now living there through the mobilisation of the social and political networks they had begun to form. Moreover, these international trips can be viewed as evidence of the South African liberation movements’ increasingly internationalist outlook

⁸⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 113.

⁸⁶ SACP leader Ray Alexander Simons and union’s General Secretary, helped organise Mafekeng’s trip from South Africa as she was in regular contact with the SACP cell in London. See Zukas, *Into Exile*, 102.

⁸⁷ Brian Bunting, *Moses Kotane, South African Revolutionary: A Political Biography*, 3rd ed. (Cape Town, 1998), 212.

which has been mentioned earlier. Finally, they are further indication of a growing awareness, which had started to manifest itself after 1945, of the importance of international support for the struggle at home, and of the need to cultivate contacts with the outside world.

SASA, SAFA and the CAO

Sometime in the early 1950s, South African students in London organised themselves into the South African Students' Association (SASA). This group of progressive students felt it was important that while in the UK⁸⁸ they should keep together "with a sense of purpose of some kind."⁸⁹ According to the oral testimony of one of its principal founders, Vella Pillay, SASA essentially started as a social networking organisation in the attempt to mobilise the "growing number of South Africans [that] was coming to study at British universities." Gathering at the Pillays' home in East Finchley, they "formed a powerful group that met regularly in order to find what initiatives could be taken and in which direction, and how the support for the solidarity movement supported the South African freedom cause."⁹⁰ With the help of the India League, where Patsy Pillay worked as secretary to the High Commissioner, SASA organised some of the early demonstrations in Hyde Park and around South Africa House, which became the main focus of anti-apartheid protests in later years.

Around the mid-1950s, SASA set up a London New Age Committee in order to raise funds for the South African left-wing weekly newspaper.⁹¹ The paper had originally

⁸⁸ Many of them still considered their stay in the UK as temporary at this moment in time.

⁸⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

⁹⁰ Vella Pillay, Witness Seminar on the AAM origins, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 12 November 1998.

⁹¹ See Gurney, " 'A Great Cause'," 132-133.

been called *Guardian* but had been banned in 1952 under the Suppression of Communism Act. It then reappeared under a series of new names: *Clarion*, *People's World*, and finally *Advance*, until this was banned too in 1954. Thereafter it became *New Age*. The London New Age Committee was periodically revived at times of crisis, for example in 1957, after *New Age* offices were raided by the police and the documents seized were used as evidence in the Treason Trial.⁹² In 1962, the New Age Committee in London was mobilised for the last time, before the paper was banned forever. The 1962 General Laws Amendment Act made it compulsory for any newspaper starting publication to deposit to the Minister of Justice (John B. Vorster) the sum of R 20,000, which would be forfeited to the state in the event of its banning (this was essentially to prevent banned publications from reappearing under a changed name). As soon as the bill was introduced in parliament, Brian Bunting, editor of *New Age*, wrote to Vella Pillay and Yusuf Dadoo in London asking that “the maximum protest should be roused” and that the Minister “be deluged with protests” against his proposal to ban the paper.⁹³ A New Age Campaign was speedily launched in London. This took the form of letters of appeal and deputations (to British newspapers, television channels, the National Union of Journalists, the International Organisation of Journalists and British political parties and trade unions), the holding of several press conferences, a Declaration on the banning of *New Age* signed by Barbara Castle and other MPs, academics, newspaper editors and writers, and an appeal for funds for *New Age* personnel who had been affected by the banning.⁹⁴

⁹² The newspaper was accused no. 157 in the trial. Charges against *New Age* were withdrawn as the prosecution failed to have it convicted of offences arising from the contents of the paper.

⁹³ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH05, Brian Bunting, Cape Town, letter to Yusuf Dadoo, London, 23 May 2007.

⁹⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH05, Untitled document, London New Age Committee [n.d.].

When the Congress of the People took place in South Africa in 1955, SASA started “campaigning around British support for the Freedom Charter.”⁹⁵ This is how SASA gradually took on a more political character. The transition resulted in SASA’s transformation into the South African Freedom Association (SAFA) in the spring of 1958, following calls for support from home, where the Congress Movement feared that the South African government would soon crack down on the opposition, who was planning stay-at-homes in protest against the all-white elections in April.⁹⁶ As well as students, SAFA received those South Africans from the political movement (such as trade union and opposition politicians) resident in London so “that the campaign could be developed on a very much wider basis in support of the Congress of the People and of the Freedom Charter.”⁹⁷ Solly Sachs was SAFA’s initial secretary and was succeeded by Mac Maharaj.⁹⁸ SAFA was to offer “maximum support to the men and women within South Africa who are fighting for liberty and tolerance under very difficult circumstances,”⁹⁹ as well as to provide the British public with information about South Africa.¹⁰⁰

SAFA moved away from its original India League base to the Committee of African Organisations (CAO) – a coordinating body of African students in London probably established around the end of 1958.¹⁰¹ Frene Ginwala, who was then completing a degree in

⁹⁵ Vella Pillay, Witness Seminar on the AAM origins, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 12 November 1998.

⁹⁶ Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 133.

⁹⁷ Vella Pillay, Witness Seminar on the AAM origins, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 12 November 1998.

⁹⁸ Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 133.

⁹⁹ *The Sunday Times*, London, 22 June 1958, quoted in Israel, *South African Political Exile*, 161.

¹⁰⁰ *Africa Digest*, 6, July-August 1958, quoted in *ibid*.

¹⁰¹ The CAO’s constituent bodies were: the Ugandan National Congress, the Basutoland African Congress, the West African Students’ Union, the Nigerian Union of Great Britain and Ireland, Kenya’s Students’ Association, the Uganda Association, Tanganyika Students’ Association, SAFA, the East and Central Africa

Law at the London School of Economics, was a CAO unofficial member. After Ginwala left the country, Ros Ainslie and Steve Naidoo continued to attend CAO meetings on behalf of SAFA.¹⁰² The CAO provided a platform bringing together Anglophone African student organisations based in Britain and a number of liberation movements which had representatives in London at the climax of the campaign for African independence. The newly independent Ghanaian government had funded the setting up of Africa Unity House at 3 Collingham Gardens, London SW5. It was intended to house all the different African organisations in London under one roof, and the CAO had an office here. Among the CAO's aims and objectives were:

To work with, and promote the aims of the All-African People's Conference, as well as the Independent African States and to spread among Africans the spirit of Pan-Africanism; to work with all constituent organisations and to ensure the fullest possible cooperation and solidarity on issues affecting the continent of Africa, or a particular country; [...] to keep the conscience of the world alive to the problems affecting Africa; [... and] to assist the struggle of our people for freedom, liberty, equality and national independence.¹⁰³

SAFA's affiliation to the CAO was explained by Vella Pillay in these terms: "as we were approaching the 1960s the whole question of African independence had become a major international question. And above all a major question for this country, being the pre-colonial power."¹⁰⁴ In other words, South African activists in London understood their campaigning in support of the freedom struggle in South Africa as part and parcel of the

Study Circle, the African League, the African Forum, Sierra Leone Students' Union, Ghana Students' Union. Alao Aka Bashorum was the CAO's first Chairman and was succeeded by Femi Okunnu, Dennis Phombeah was the General Secretary. See University of Oxford, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, Archive of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (hereafter MSS AAM), MSS AAM 90a, CAO Constitution.

¹⁰² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

¹⁰³ MSS AAM 90a, CAO Constitution.

¹⁰⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Vella Pillay, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 13.

wider movement for liberation from colonial rule in Britain. According to Ros Ainslie, their determination to play a part in the British political scene came out of an inner conflict, a sense of loss arising in turn from their decision to leave South Africa: “Their energies come out of the conflict between what you’ve left and where you are. [...] The conflict produces the energy. It’s all an attempt to resolve your problem of being in exile.”¹⁰⁵ These articulate South Africans thus came to Britain with a feeling of responsibility for the movement they had left behind and saw their political activism in their host country as a direct extension of their commitment to the struggle in South Africa. As Kader Asmal has explained:

All of us were acting either as members of the underground Communist Party or the African National Congress. Consciously doing this as part of the externalisation of the struggle. Not as... simply as a human thing. [...] All of us were doing this, entirely as combatants, [...] consciously. It’s rather unusual.¹⁰⁶

The CAO and its affiliate SAFA were the initiators of the first British boycott of South African goods in June 1959, which will be analysed next.

The ANC’s call for a boycott

In South Africa, the coming to power of the National Party in 1948 and the implementation of the new doctrine of apartheid had triggered a decade of mass protests, stay-at-homes and passive resistance under the leadership of the Congress Movement. As the government responded with increasingly retaliatory measures against the opposition by placing bans on its leaders and outlawing all forms of political protest, by the late 1950s the ANC was

¹⁰⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

¹⁰⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Kader Asmal, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

increasingly focusing on the boycott as “one of the few forms of protest left to Africans that did not involve breaking the law.”¹⁰⁷

The first official call for an economic boycott, however, had been made not by the ANC but by the first All-African People’s Conference, held in Accra in December 1958. The Conference, which devoted special attention to the situation in South Africa, called on African states to withdraw their migrant labour force from South African industry and to break off diplomatic relations with African states that practiced racial discrimination. Most importantly, it had resolved to commence an international campaign to boycott South African goods. A permanent Secretariat was set up whose task was:

[To] urge any African independent states which conduct trade with South Africa to impose economic sanctions against the latter country as a protest against racial discrimination which the European minority are practising to the humiliation of the non-European majority. Such economic sanctions should include the boycott of South African goods.¹⁰⁸

Boycotts had a long tradition within South African resistance history. In 1907 South African Indians in the Transvaal staged one of the first boycott campaigns when they refused to register under the pass laws introduced by General Smuts. In the 1950s a number of organised as well as spontaneous boycotts had been staged with some success, thus providing “an example of African success in winning satisfaction on an economic grievance.”¹⁰⁹ Most noteworthy were the Evaton bus boycott of 1955-1956, and the Alexandra bus boycott of 1957.¹¹⁰ Although “economic grievances rather than political

¹⁰⁷ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 181.

¹⁰⁸ Resolution on Racialism and Discriminatory laws and Practices, All-African People’s Conference, 5-13 December 1958, http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/boycotts/first_allafrican_conf.html.

¹⁰⁹ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 276.

¹¹⁰ See Lodge, *Black Politics*, 153-187.

aims” were at the heart of the bus boycotts, ANC leaders came to recognise their potential “as an opportunity for politicisation.”¹¹¹

In the wake of the resolutions adopted by the All-African People’s Conference and of the recent bus boycotts in South Africa, the ANC proclaimed at its Annual Conference of December 1958 (which started as the All-African People’s Conference in Ghana had just ended): “The economic boycott is going to be one of the major political weapons in the country.”¹¹² A National Anti-Pass Planning Council and an Economic Boycott Committee were appointed to handle the task of organising an economic boycott campaign. This, the ANC “hoped would be reinforced by an international boycott of South African goods.”¹¹³ At the end of May 1959 the ANC held a Mass National Conference in Johannesburg, to which the Anti-Pass Council submitted its report. In particular, the report read: “By withdrawing our purchasing power from certain institutions we can, as Chief Lutuli said, ‘punch them in the stomach’.”¹¹⁴ At the end of the Conference, ANC leader Robert Resha called for a boycott of potatoes against the farm labour system and the brutal treatment of African farm workers. A wider boycott of goods produced by Nationalist-controlled institutions was also to begin on 26 June 1959, known as South Africa Freedom Day, which was to be observed as a day of ‘self-denial.’¹¹⁵ The desirability of an international economic boycott had been implicit in some of the ANC’s statements. The Economic Boycott Committee for instance had made the point that: “The economic boycott has unlimited potentialities. When our local purchasing power is combined with that of

¹¹¹ Ibid., 275.

¹¹² Report of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, submitted to the Annual Conference, 13-14 December 1958, document 31 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 445.

¹¹³ Ibid., 292.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*, 292.

¹¹⁵ See Report of the national Executive Committee of the ANC, submitted to the Annual Conference, 12-13 December 1959, document 33 in *ibid.*, 472.

sympathetic organisations overseas we wield a devastating weapon.”¹¹⁶ Thus far, however, the organisation had fallen short of making a direct call for an international boycott.

“Boycott Slave-drivers Goods”¹¹⁷

The ANC’s call for the boycott of Nationalist-controlled products in South Africa was immediately taken up in Britain by SAFA through the CAO. Although it is unclear who exactly came up with the idea of launching a boycott campaign in the UK, a CAO Boycott Sub-Committee was established to run this part of the organisation’s work. Ros Ainslie and Steve Naidoo both served on this CAO Sub-Committee as SAFA representatives. Femi Okunnu, President of the Nigerian Union of Great Britain and Ireland, was its Chairman. Claudia Jones of the *West Indian Gazette* was also part of the initiative. MCF joined the campaign in June by sending two of its representatives, Joan Hymans and Simon Zukas.¹¹⁸ The group quickly set out to organise a British boycott of South African products, including consumer goods industries and tobacco companies supporting the apartheid regime. The campaign targets were the oppressive pass-laws system, African farm ‘slave’ labour, and trade union recognition for African workers.¹¹⁹

Under the auspices of the CAO and in collaboration with MCF, the Boycott Sub-Committee announced its programme at a press conference at 200 Gower Street, London,¹²⁰ on Wednesday 24 June 1959. This was followed by a twenty-four-hour vigil outside South

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ MSS AAM 90a, “Boycott slave-drivers goods” leaflet produced by the CAO, 200 Gower Street, London NW1.

¹¹⁸ MSS AAM 90b, Brief report on the activities of the CAO from the latter part of 1958 to the beginning of 1960.

¹¹⁹ MSS AAM 90a, “Boycott of South African Goods” briefing, [June? 1959].

¹²⁰ This was the address of the surgery of Dr David Pitt, a West Indian doctor linked to the CAO, where the Boycott Sub-Committee had a small office.

Africa House starting at 6 pm on the same day. On June 26, a meeting was held at Holborn Hall to launch the boycott of South African goods in Britain. The speakers at the meeting, attended by over five-hundred people, were Michael Scott, Vella Pillay, Mr Chiume of the banned Nyasaland African National Congress, and Julius Nyerere – who was in London for constitutional talks after the recent electoral victory of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). According to Ainslie, it was thanks to the CAO that the Boycott Sub-Committee was able to bring Nyerere to take part in the event.¹²¹ Tennyson Makiwane of the ANC also addressed the meeting. After being acquitted in late 1958 from the Treason Trial, in early 1959 Makiwane illegally left South Africa to attend the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference in Cairo and other international conferences on behalf of the ANC. In the spring of 1959 he came to London and soon became deeply involved in the boycott campaign. Trevor Huddleston, who (together with Canon Collins, Michael Scott, Fenner Brockway MP, John Stonehouse MP, and Prof. Max Gluckham) sponsored the boycott, and whose name initially featured among the list of speakers, did not actually take part in the meeting.¹²²

During the days preceding the launch, a few articles publicising the start of the campaign (both in South Africa and in the UK) were published in the *Daily Worker*. Steve Naidoo wrote that “any expression of sympathy by the British people for the struggle of the African Congress may go some way towards forcing the South African authorities to bring a halt to their policies.”¹²³ On 27 June, the newspaper reported that according to an ANC

¹²¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

¹²² MSS AAM 90a, Letter from Trevor Huddleston to Bashorum, 2 July 1959.

¹²³ *Daily Worker*, 23 June 1959.

spokesman the response to the boycott call the previous day had been “very good indeed.”¹²⁴ Other than this, the event went largely unnoticed by the rest of the British press.

In South Africa, Herby Pillay told in the *Transvaal Indian Congress' Bulletin* of how Nyerere had spoken about the economic boycott as the “turning point in the struggle in South Africa,”¹²⁵ while Scott had appealed to the British public to support the boycott, which he described as “the testing point for the white people.”¹²⁶ Leaflets asking not to buy South African canned fruit, jams, fish, meat, potatoes and cigarettes, were distributed throughout June and the following months. The leaflet, echoing the words of the recent report of the ANC’s Anti-Pass Council, read: “the internal boycott in South Africa coupled with external support from sympathetic people overseas are devastating weapons against South Africa’s racialism.”¹²⁷

Some positive responses came from various organisations, especially from the left, including several trade unions, the Political Committee of the London Co-operative Society, the overseas branch of People’s National Movement of Trinidad and Tobago, the West Indian Organisation, the Fabian Commonwealth Bureau, and some Labour Party and Communist Party constituencies.¹²⁸ The Isle of Thanet Labour Party, for instance, passed a resolution calling “upon its members and all lovers of freedom and justice to boycott in

¹²⁴ Ibid., 27 June 1959.

¹²⁵ “...June 26th in London,” *Transvaal Indian Congress' Bulletin*, Johannesburg, July, 1959. Christabel Gurney supplied a copy of this article.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ MSS AAM 90a, “Boycott slave-drivers goods” leaflet produced by the CAO, 200 Gower Street, London NW1. See also “Report of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, submitted to the Annual Conference, December 12-13 1959,” document 33 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 472.

¹²⁸ See MSS AAM 90a, Correspondence and papers concerning the establishment of the Boycott Movement, June-July 1959.

whatever way all produce of South Africa”¹²⁹ which was endorsed by a few other Labour Party constituencies. In London, pickets were held in Finchley, St Pancras, Hampstead and Brixton in July and August in conjunction with the local contacts established, while more efforts were being made to widen support for the boycott.

By the beginning of August, however, the Boycott Sub-Committee had come to the conclusion that “after initial impact, CAO had not been able to mobilise enough forces to broaden and intensify the campaign sufficiently.” Despite the support of a few individual Labour Party constituencies, the Labour and Liberal Parties had been wary of backing the boycott, leaving it as a matter of individual choice. This was partly due to the fact that the British Labour Party was closer to the (white) South African Labour Party than to the Congress Movement. Moreover, colonial policy did not feature high on the Labour Party’s agenda for the October 1959 elections.¹³⁰ The TUC, on the other hand, seemed to be more concerned with promoting unity among already registered trade unions, which automatically excluded black South African workers.¹³¹ Finally, mobilising Conservative support for the boycott had proved to be an even more daunting task.

In order to remedy the situation, the need to work more closely with local Labour Party, Co-op and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) groups, and to establish contacts with the United Nations Associations (UNA), the National Union of Students (NUS), and the British Council of Churches was thus put forward. Most importantly, the Sub-Committee pledged to endeavour itself to mobilise as broad a support as possible and to gain more eminent sponsors.¹³² This tactic was consistent with the inclusive approach

¹²⁹ MSS AAM 90a, Letter from the Isle of Thanet Labour Party concerning a resolution passed on 8 June 1959.

¹³⁰ Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 136.

¹³¹ Ibid., 130.

¹³² MSS AAM 90a, Minutes of the South African Boycott Sub-Committee meeting, 3 August 1959.

and of the ANC and its Indian, white and Coloured allies in the Congress Alliance in South Africa. The question of whether communists should be approached or solicited as sponsors was also raised at this stage. It was decided that “all support should be welcomed and none excluded, and that the campaign should be seen as a ‘liberal’ (small ‘l’) issue and not in terms of party politics at all.”¹³³ Again, the Boycott Sub-Committee’s approach can be viewed as a reflection of the relationship of cooperation between the liberation movement and communists in South Africa itself. This emerges clearly from the minutes of an AAM meeting in June the following year. During an argument about whether the CPGB should be approached to send representatives or not, Raymond Kunene pointed out that not to do so would be contrary to the ANC’s policy of alignment with all political parties, including the Communist Party.¹³⁴

The Boycott Movement

In September 1959, the CAO Boycott Sub-Committee was reconstituted as an independent Committee. This time the Committee, chaired by Dennis Phombeah from the CAO, incorporated a larger number of South Africans who were determined that this time the boycott should succeed. Ros Ainslie was appointed Secretary and Vella Pillay Treasurer. Tennyson Makiwane and Patrick van Rensburg,¹³⁵ an executive member of the South African Liberal Party, became Associate Directors. Other South Africans on the new

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ See MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the AAM meeting of 1 June 1960.

¹³⁵ Van Rensburg was appointed Director from the end of November 1959, when Christian Action joined the campaign. See below.

committee were Abdul Minty, Steve Naidoo, Ruth Ballin, Mana Chetty, Kader Asmal, and Raymond Kunene.¹³⁶

Pat van Rensburg had worked in the Congo as a member of the South African Foreign Service. In 1957 he had resigned from his post in protest against the South African government's policies. After arriving in Britain sometime in 1959, he started to work with Canon Collins, helping to raise money for the Defence and Aid Fund. He had previously met Tennyson Makiwane in South Africa through Robert Resha, another ANC leader. As they met again in London, Makiwane invited him to join the Committee and, after seeking approval from the Liberal Party National Chairman, Peter Brown, van Rensburg agreed.¹³⁷

Makiwane and van Rensburg's presence on the reconstituted Committee proved to be of crucial importance. A known ANC leader, Makiwane was the first African South African with political credentials to arrive in Britain. As such, Makiwane could respond convincingly to the argument that the boycott would hurt the people it was designed to help. He had the political authority to speak of the boycott as being what Africans themselves wanted, no matter if they would have to suffer temporary sacrifice as part of the battle to win the greater goal of freedom. Van Rensburg, on the other hand, represented a key link with the Liberal Party in South Africa, to which he reported regularly.¹³⁸ As a white Liberal and moderate, he gave the campaign some measure of respectability and was thus able to mobilise broader support from across the field of British politics. Speaking of him, Ainslie remembered that: "The [British] press were quite delighted with this Afrikaner

¹³⁶ MSS AAM 90b, Brief report on the activities of the CAO from the latter part of 1958 to the beginning of 1960.

¹³⁷ Patrick van Rensburg, *Guilty Land* (London, 1962), 44.

¹³⁸ See MSS AAM 91.

who was coming to say that it was his culpa. Guilty man and guilty land and all that stuff.”¹³⁹

In early November 1959 the members of the new Committee decided to set up a working committee in preparation of a month of intensified boycott the following March, to coincide with major anti-pass demonstrations organised by the ANC and the PAC in South Africa. Soon afterwards, Christian Action approached the Committee, now calling itself the Boycott Movement, offering help in the form of money and secretarial facilities to run “what promised to become a tremendous campaign.”¹⁴⁰ After internal discussions concerning the Movement’s determination to maintain its independence, an agreement with Christian Action was reached and the offer was accepted. An initial grant of £500 to finance the campaign for the next four months (three months of organising and one month of boycott) and a paid secretary were provided on some conditions. First, two Christian Action nominees would have to be on the Committee, the first being David Ennals, Secretary of the International Department of the Labour Party. Secondly, Pat van Rensburg should be appointed Director as a link with Christian Action. Third, Christian Action’s part in the campaign should be acknowledged by some kind of formula along the lines of “the Boycott Movement in association with Christian Action.” Finally, the present Movement would continue to run the boycott provided they did not take a stand contradicting that of Christian Action.¹⁴¹ At this point, Martin Ennals of the National Council for Civil Liberties joined the Movement as Organising Secretary, while Keith Lye of the Africa Bureau became Deputy Director. These new arrangements for the campaign, the minutes of the Boycott Movement reported, “linked satisfactorily South African and English

¹³⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

¹⁴⁰ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting, 25 November 1959.

¹⁴¹ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting, 2 December 1959.

organisers.”¹⁴² Ros Ainslie, though, later remembered that “we [the South African initiators of the boycott] were all very cross about that. Didn’t like David [Ennals] foisted on us and we certainly didn’t like being told we should only have a three month boycott.”¹⁴³ However, the Boycott Committee, which until now had been relying on the voluntary effort of its members, desperately lacked funding, which meant that they had little choice but to accept whatever came along.

Until now, the initiative for starting a boycott of South African goods in Britain had rested entirely on the small group of South African exiles in London with the help of their British supporters. The ANC had in fact not made any direct calls for an international boycott, although it did acknowledge that “the international response was beyond all expectations.”¹⁴⁴ In order to enhance the boycott’s veracity, on Anthony Sampson’s (former editor of *Drum Magazine* in Johannesburg, now working for the London *Observer*) suggestion,¹⁴⁵ van Rensburg wrote to the ANC President Chief Albert Lutuli requesting “a statement calling freshly and clearly for the boycott.”¹⁴⁶ The appeal came in early January 1960, signed jointly by Chief Lutuli, G.M. Naicker (President of the SAIC) and Peter Brown (National Chairman of the Liberal Party). Directed “particularly to the people of Great Britain, by whose Parliament the original Act of Union was approved,” it asked them “to strike a blow for freedom and justice” by adhering to the consumer boycott.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Report of the national Executive Committee of the ANC, submitted to the Annual Conference, 12-13 December 1959, document 33 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 472.

¹⁴⁵ MSS AAM 91, Letter from Anthony Sampson to Patrick van Rensburg, 23 September 1959.

¹⁴⁶ MSS AAM 91, Letter from Patrick van Rensburg to Chief Albert Lutuli, 4 November 1959.

¹⁴⁷ MSS AAM 92a, Statement signed by Chief Albert Lutuli, G.M. Naicker and Peter Brown, 7 January 1960.

British support for the Boycott Month

Meanwhile, by the end of 1959 the political climate in Britain had changed considerably. The Conservatives' repeated electoral victories and the Labour Party's alienating 'right wing' policies had helped create a situation in which there was a creeping disaffection with party politics, especially among young people. This had fostered the development of a substantial extra-parliamentary movement, the most important part of which was the CND, and many of the British people involved in it were very much the same as those in the boycott campaign.¹⁴⁸ Also, a great deal of racism had been growing in the country as a result of West Indian immigration to Britain. This growing racism worried quite a few people on the left and was yet another factor in helping make the boycott a reality.¹⁴⁹ So, it was a fortunate coincidence that the boycott of South Africa came into British politics at this particular moment in time, as the Boycott Movement was somehow able to tap into these political feelings.

After its third consecutive defeat in the October elections, the Labour Party "was split from top to bottom."¹⁵⁰ Needing an issue around which to unite people, Labour Party General Secretary Morgan Phillips thought that this should be something that would appeal morally to the country. He therefore suggested "that consideration be given to making 1960 an 'Africa Year'."¹⁵¹ The designation of 1960 as 'Africa Year' was significant in two respects. First, it meant that Africa now received quite a lot of attention from the British media, thus arousing public interest in the anti-colonial struggles. Secondly, it made the

¹⁴⁸ Christabel Gurney, Witness Seminar on the AAM origins, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 12 November 1998.

¹⁴⁹ Dorothy Robinson, Witness Seminar on the AAM origins, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 12 November 1998.

¹⁵⁰ Gurney, "'A Great Cause,'" 136.

¹⁵¹ Labour Party NEC report, December 1959, quoted in *ibid.*, 136.

Labour Party Executive think again about supporting the boycott. This time, “the Party stumbled into supporting the boycott as a ready-made campaign that fitted into its ‘Africa Year’.”¹⁵² However, Labour support for the boycott remained cautious. As the leader of the Labour Party Hugh Gaitskell carefully explained while speaking at a Boycott rally in a packed Trafalgar Square in February 1960, the boycott was essentially a moral gesture. Its aim was not “to bring the South African Government to its knees but to encourage the white nationalists to adopt a new and better frame of mind towards the Africans.”¹⁵³ The Labour Party’s decision to back the boycott was readily followed by a TUC General Council resolution on 23 December 1959 which appealed to its members and the public generally “to express by a consumers’ boycott of South African goods their personal revulsion against the racial policies being pursued by the Government of South Africa in the political, social, and industrial fields.”¹⁵⁴ The resolution endorsed the consumer boycott, but fell short of calling for an industrial boycott, which the Movement was asking the trade unions to consider.

The Labour Party’s decision to join the boycott gave the campaign a major lurch forward. Official Labour support meant that individual Labour constituencies and councils would now have to pay serious attention to the boycott.¹⁵⁵ This, in turn, aroused fears that the boycott would become a party political issue, as local boycott committees mushroomed throughout the country. By February 1960, thirty-five committees had already been established while twenty-five more were reported to be in the process of being formed.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ *The Guardian*, 29 February 1960, quoted in ibid., 140.

¹⁵⁴ MSS AAM 91, TUC General Council resolution, enclosed in a letter to Patrick van Rensburg, 23 December 1959.

¹⁵⁵ Gurney, “‘A Great Cause,’” 139.

¹⁵⁶ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting, 3 February 1960.

The boycott organisers were concerned this may put local boycott committees in danger of becoming dominated by the Labour Party, which would be contrary to the their idea that the boycott should be perceived as “a movement, not individuals or organisations,” or what can be described as the Movement’s ‘collective principle.’ For this reason, the Movement’s National Committee worked hard to ensure that committees should be as broad as possible and not one party.¹⁵⁷

The CPGB, although not featuring on the list of the Boycott Month sponsors because of the Labour Party’s prescription policy, was involved in the campaign in other unofficial ways. The London Committee of the Boycott Movement for instance, had John Mahon (Secretary of the London District Communist Party), and Kay Beauchamp after him, on it.¹⁵⁸ The Party’s newspaper, the *Daily Worker* provided wide coverage of the boycott’s progress, as well as giving the boycott its total support. For the whole duration of the Boycott Month in March 1960, the *Daily Worker* changed its sub-heading from “the only daily paper owned by its readers” into “Boycott South African goods.”¹⁵⁹

The British Liberal Party, initially fearing “too close an association,”¹⁶⁰ did not join the campaign until mid-November 1959. It then issued a resolution condemning the South African government for its actions against Ronald Segal (who had recently been served with banning orders) and calling on the UK and other Commonwealth countries to subscribe to the boycott.¹⁶¹ Individual Liberal Party members and the Women’s Liberal Federation also decided to back the campaign. In December 1959, Jeremy Thorpe MP (who

¹⁵⁷ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting, 6 January 1960.

¹⁵⁸ See footnote 81 in Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 137.

¹⁵⁹ *Daily Worker*, 1 March 1960.

¹⁶⁰ MSS AAM 91, Letter from Patrick van Rensburg to Kevin Holland, November 1959.

¹⁶¹ MSS AAM 91, Letter from H.F.P. Harris (General Director of the Liberal Party Organisation), to Patrick van Rensburg, 18 December 1959.

later became the AAM Vice-President) and Manuela Sykes accepted to become sponsors of the Boycott Month. Other Liberals supporting a complete boycott were Lt Colonel Patrick Lort-Philips, Desmond Banks and Anthony Brooke.¹⁶²

The Conservative Party felt that they too had to formally condemn apartheid. As the British Government struggled to redefine its relationship with its ex-colonies to ensure that they would remain in the Commonwealth and join the Western camp in the Cold War, Macmillan was becoming increasingly concerned about “the political costs of British links with the apartheid government.”¹⁶³ Soon after his election he therefore planned a tour of Africa, which would terminate in Cape Town. Yet, despite Macmillan’s so called ‘attack’ on South Africa’s apartheid policies in his “wind of change” speech to the South African Parliament on 3 February 1960,¹⁶⁴ the British Prime Minister also took the opportunity to “deprecate attempts which are being made in Britain today to organise a consumer boycott of South African goods.”¹⁶⁵

Efforts to gain at least some degree of Conservative support for the boycott were largely unsuccessful, with the only exception of Lord Altrincham,¹⁶⁶ whose name appeared in the list of the sponsors from September 1959, and who said the Prime Minister had made a mistake in disparaging the boycott.¹⁶⁷ The attempt was made to establish contacts with the ‘progressive’ Bow Group, but without success. Christopher Chataway MP was also approached. Although he expressed his sympathy to the cause which inspired the boycott, he declined to become a sponsor since he doubted of the use of boycott as a political

¹⁶² MSS AAM 91, Newspaper cutting.

¹⁶³ Sampson, *Mandela*, 127.

¹⁶⁴ The mild criticism of Macmillan’s speech was mocked in the *Daily Worker*’s editorial of 4 February 1960 as having “about as much force as a bladder filled with sawdust in the hands of a five-year old child.”

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 142.

¹⁶⁶ Altrincham’s father had been Governor of Kenya and that’s where his interest in South Africa originated.

¹⁶⁷ *Daily Worker*, 25 February 1960.

weapon.¹⁶⁸ In a letter to Lord Altrincham, van Rensburg was thus forced to conclude that the Movement had “made miserably little progress amongst Conservatives.”¹⁶⁹ By January 1960 hopes for Tory support had given way to a hopefulness that at least the Conservative Party would not publicly oppose the boycott and consider leaving individual members free to join the campaign.¹⁷⁰

Considerable interest in the boycott came this time from the NUS and many Universities’ and students’ societies. British university students had been protesting against South Africa’s racial policies since 1947, when the Royal Family visited the country. In the late 1950s, British academics voiced their opposition to the Extension of University of Education Bill through a petition circulated by MCF. Scottish students also protested vigorously against the introduction of apartheid legislation in education as a result of the strong relationship that existed between missionary orders in Scotland and African educational institutions in South Africa.¹⁷¹ The Students’ Unions of the London School of Economics, of the University College of North Wales, Leeds, Edinburgh, and Oxford’s JACARI (Joint Action Committee Against Racial Intolerance), and Cambridge’s JAGUAR (Joint Action Group for Understanding Among Races) all passed resolutions in support of the boycott.¹⁷² As many of the South Africans involved in organising the boycott had either recently graduated or were still enrolled at British universities, they probably played an intermediary role in drawing British university students into the campaign.

As well as MCF, Christian Action, and the Africa Bureau, all of which had already put their weight behind the June 1959 boycott, other organisations now pledged their

¹⁶⁸ MSS AAM 91, Letter from Chris Chataway MP to Patrick van Rensburg, December 1959.

¹⁶⁹ MSS AAM 91, Letter from Patrick van Rensburg to Lord Altrincham, 18 December 1959.

¹⁷⁰ MSS AAM 91, Letter from Patrick van Rensburg to the Conservative Party Chairman, January 1960.

¹⁷¹ See Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’,” 132.

¹⁷² See MSS AAM 91, Patrick van Rensburg’s Correspondence, November 1959.

support for the Boycott Month. These were the newly formed Socialist Youth Movement, the New Left Review, as well as the Women's Co-operative Guild and the British, Asian and Overseas Socialist Fellowships – already among the supporters of the June 1959 boycott. Finally, the London Co-operative Society passed a resolution urging Commonwealth states to cease handling South African goods.¹⁷³

The Boycott Month

On 17 January 1960, the Boycott Movement organised a National Conference at Deniston House in London. It was preceded by a press conference on the 12 January, which was attended by thirty-two press representatives, and where it was stressed that the campaign was part of a continued activity with one month of intensified action. The National Conference attracted 250 people from 158 organisations. Chaired by Huddleston and Phombeah of the CAO, it was addressed by some prominent speakers and sponsors, including Lord Altrincham, Manuela Sykes, Harry Knight (General Secretary of the supervisory and scientific workers' union ASSET), Anthony Wedgwood Benn and Oginga Odinga of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo. As well as the forthcoming Boycott Month, the Conference discussed the future tasks of the Movement, which it was felt should continue its work after March.¹⁷⁴

The Boycott Month was officially launched at a march culminating in a mass rally, chaired by Huddleston, in Trafalgar Square on 28 February 1960. Up to fifteen thousand people took part in the event, at which Hugh Gaitskell, Lord Altrincham, Jeremy Thorpe MP, Tennyson Makiwane and members of the trade union and co-operative movements

¹⁷³ *Boycott News*, No. 1, January 1960.

¹⁷⁴ See MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting, 13 and 19 February 1960, and MSS AAM 92a, Boycott Movement National Conference Programme, 17 January 1960.

spoke. A renewed statement from Chief Lutuli was read out. It welcomed “most heartedly the action of overseas people in launching the boycott of South African goods [...] a demonstration of solidarity of freedom loving peoples throughout the world to fight oppression wherever oppression is found.”¹⁷⁵ In the following weeks the campaign was continued through poster parades, pickets and the distribution of a newsletter, *Boycott News*, and other publicity material.¹⁷⁶ On 27 March another march starting from Marble Arch and ending again in a mass rally in Trafalgar Square was planned to mark the end of the month of boycott.

Sharpeville and future implications

On 16 March 1960, five days before the Sharpeville shootings of 21 March, a meeting of the Boycott Movement Committee passed a resolution on future policy. It was agreed that “there should be a committee called the Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Committee (incorporating the Boycott Movement) to co-ordinate activities of all organisations opposing apartheid and in particular those of the committees formed throughout the country during the Boycott Month. Other campaigns would also be organised from time to time.”¹⁷⁷ Setting up a permanent anti-apartheid body in the UK was something that the South African core of the boycott organisers had always envisaged. Financial constraints and the challenge of creating longer-term support had proved to be the biggest impediment to this. According to Vella Pillay, Sharpeville was a turning point in generating sympathy and

¹⁷⁵ MSS AAM 92a, Interview and statement by Chief Albert Lutuli, January 1960.

¹⁷⁶ Three types of publicity leaflets were printed for over one million copies, ten thousand posters were distributed, and by mid-February the first issue of the Boycott Movement’s newsletter, *Boycott News*, had sold one-hundred thousand copies. Three issues of *Boycott News* were published in total. See MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement meeting of 17 February 1960.

¹⁷⁷ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting of 16 March 1960.

galvanising support, as “a large number of people began to associate themselves with the Boycott Movement.”¹⁷⁸ Moreover, although the Boycott Movement was already making plans for extending its activities beyond the boycott by becoming a permanent organisation at the time Sharpeville happened, Sharpeville made this transformation imperative. On the other hand, it was crucial that an organisation with a certain structure had already been established when Sharpeville took place so that the issue could be immediately picked up. While, for instance, the Defiance Campaign had come and gone without making much dent on international attitudes towards South Africa,¹⁷⁹ thanks to the work done by the Boycott Movement, South Africa was now very much on the agenda of British politics and had become a news item – thus ensuring that Sharpeville would not go unnoticed.

Sharpeville made newspapers’ headlines worldwide. In the days that followed, hundreds of people gathered in Trafalgar Square in protest against the police massacre: “wearing black and white anti-apartheid badges, some with black armbands, the demonstrators silently marched up and down or stood in groups reading and displaying *Boycott News*.¹⁸⁰ On 23 March, some one hundred students from the London School of Economics joined the steady stream of protestors picketing outside South Africa House to deliver a letter addressed to the South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd which suggested that he should stay at home as he would not be welcome in Britain (where he was due to arrive shortly for a Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference). Furthermore, a special prayer service to be held in St Martin’s in the Field on 1 April, and a recall conference on 30 April were planned.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Vella Pillay, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 13.

¹⁷⁹ Sampson, *Mandela*, 75.

¹⁸⁰ *Daily Worker*, 24 March 1960.

¹⁸¹ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting of 30 March 1960.

During a meeting on 23 March, having agreed that “an international Anti-Apartheid campaign should be initiated at once,” the Anti-Apartheid Committee (the word ‘Coordinating’ now dropped from the name) outlined a programme for international action through the UN and the Commonwealth and its first demands for government action. Lobbying the British government was to take place around three issues. First, “the British Government should protest at the use of weapons and no more should be supplied” to South Africa. Second, “the Government should make a grant of funds for the dependents of the victims.” And third, it “should express its disapproval of South Africa at the UN.”¹⁸² These requests, to which the imposition of economic sanctions was soon added,¹⁸³ were to remain key areas of AAM activity in the years ahead.

Sharpeville gave a new urgency to the need to organise future action. This, however, soon turned out to be no easy task, due to “certain jealousies [...] and a little strife amongst various organisations which have become very keen on the boycott.”¹⁸⁴ Some frictions had already surfaced towards the end of the previous year, when Christian Action had offered the Boycott Movement to help run and finance the campaign. In the spring of 1960, these tensions started to re-emerge, as the Anti-Apartheid Committee, having changed its name again into the Anti-Apartheid Movement from the end of April, and considering itself to be “the most useful group organising rank and file [anti-apartheid] activity throughout the country,”¹⁸⁵ concentrated on continuing its work. Canon Collins and Christian Action, on the other hand, felt that the AAM could not carry out this coordinating function and insisted that a separate committee be formed to plan future action. Although he was impressed by the work done by the Boycott Movement, which he had helped

¹⁸² MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Boycott Movement Committee meeting of 23 March 1960.

¹⁸³ Economic sanctions are also discussed in Chapter Two.

¹⁸⁴ MSS AAM 91, Letter from Patrick van Rensburg to Peter Brown, 15 December 1959.

¹⁸⁵ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Anti-Apartheid Movement meeting of 4 May 1960.

finance, Collins was at the same time “slightly alarmed by the thought that he might have helped create a monster.”¹⁸⁶ A Coordinating Committee, with representatives from Christian Action, MCF, the Africa Bureau and the AAM and convened by David Astor first and then Lord Altrincham, was established at the end of May 1960. A few meetings were called and continued to be held sporadically until the end of the year. Although every organisation represented on the Committee agreed in principle on the idea of establishing a permanent coordinating body, no agreement was ever reached in practice. This was because there was an underlying expectation that the AAM, as the more recent organisation, would submit its sovereignty to the Coordinating Committee and accepted it as a higher policy-making body, which the AAM categorically refused to do.¹⁸⁷

In the meantime, the South African founders of the AAM were adamant that the Movement should “remain free to implement [its] programme in whatever way we think fit.”¹⁸⁸ In the summer of 1960 the Movement reorganised itself into a National Committee and a separate Executive Committee. The National Committee was to be the policy-making body of the Movement, “composed of individuals and organisations active in the fight against Apartheid.”¹⁸⁹ The Executive Committee, on the other hand, was going to be responsible for carrying out the day-to-day work of the Movement, coordinating the activities of the organisations represented on both Committees and implementing policy. It would be composed of members of the National Committee, including one representative from each of these organisations: CAO, Christian Action, MCF and the Africa Bureau, as well as the officers of the Movement as appointed by the National Committee, and two

¹⁸⁶ Herbstein, *White Lies*, 41.

¹⁸⁷ See MSS AAM 90b, Notes on Anti-Apartheid “Coordinating Committee” by Lord Altrincham, 9 September 1960.

¹⁸⁸ MSS AAM 90b, Minutes of the Anti-Apartheid Movement meeting of 13 May 1960.

¹⁸⁹ MSS AAM 90b, Draft for discussion at the AAM meeting of 29 June 1960.

individual members of the National Committee.¹⁹⁰ These basic organisational arrangements continued to structure the AAM for the next thirty-five years of its existence. With the launching of the Penny Pledge Campaign in September 1960, the AAM had made clear its decision “to go it alone.”¹⁹¹

South African exiles and the AAM in the 1960s

After Sharpeville, Britain became again the destination of another small group of political exiles who were driven out because of the changed political situation in South Africa. Whereas during the 1950s it had still been possible for an extra-parliamentary opposition to operate in the country, the banning of the ANC and the PAC immediately after Sharpeville marked the beginning of a gradual transfer of the arena of the struggle from inside to outside South Africa’s borders. The Rivonia raid and trial of 1963-1964 marked the completion of this relocation process – as well as the arrival yet another, and this time rather sizeable, wave of political exiles.

For reasons which will be analysed in Chapter Three, London became home to the vast majority of non-African exiles, who steadily swelled the ranks of the AAM. In October 1962, Joan Hymans complained at a meeting of the AAM National Committee that the Executive Committee had a larger number of South African than British members.¹⁹² Despite Hymans’ remonstration, by 1965, an even larger number of South Africans was working in the AAM – either as members of its National and Executive Committees, or as

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ MSS AAM 90b, Notes on Anti-Apartheid “Coordinating Committee” by Lord Altrincham, 9 September 1960.

¹⁹² MSS AAM 43, Minutes of the National Committee of the AAM, Friends House, 8 October 1962.

one of the movement's officers, or in some other capacity.¹⁹³ This South African predominance in the early history of the AAM can in part be explained by the fact that ANC membership was at the time still confined to Africans. As a result, white, Indian and Coloured activists arriving in exile found themselves excluded from the external structures which the ANC established after 1960. Instead, the AAM gave them the political home which the external mission of ANC could not. The AAM came to function as a public platform of the kind that the Congress Alliance had been in South Africa in the 1950s, and through which non-African exiles could now throw in their resources and energies in support of the national liberation movement. It is therefore no accident that although the AAM portrayed itself to be non-partisan, in effect it was always closer to the ANC than it ever was to the PAC. Moreover, many of the AAM's defining features – notably its broad appeal – had their roots in the Congress Movement back in South Africa. It is also interesting that some of the AAM's internal debates and dynamics (which first emerged in this period and were to persist throughout its existence), as with regards to the position of Indians and communists in both movements, mirrored in many ways the debates that had recently taken place within the Congress Alliance. The AAM was in fact the target of a criticism similar to the one waged to the ANC by its critics and opponents: that it was run by Indians and communists.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ By 1965, South African exiles in the UK who were working in the AAM in one capacity or another (other than the ones that have already been mentioned) included (in no particular order): Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Hilda Bernstein, Harold and Anne-Marie Wolpe, Leon Levy, Jack and Rica Hodgson, Brian and Sonya Bunting, Margaret Legum, Mannie Brown, Ronald Segal, Bishop Ambrose Reeves, Mary Benson, Sonya Clements, Freda Levson, Wolfie Kodesh and Phyllis Altman. See MSS AAM 45, Proposed membership for 1965.

¹⁹⁴ University of Fort Hare (hereafter UFH), Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 12, file 99, Mazizi Kunene, ANC office, 3 Collingham Gardens, London, letter to ANC Dar es Salaam, Lusaka, Cairo, 22 November 1964.

The penetration of the AAM by South African exiles (most of whom had been associated with the Congress Alliance in South Africa) in the early 1960s, convinced successive British governments – whether under Labour or Tory administration – that the AAM was, just like the ANC, “under Communist control.”¹⁹⁵ The communist stigma was also applied by British government officials to individuals and organisations associated with the AAM. Ronald Segal, who in April 1964 convened an International Conference for Economic Sanctions against South Africa,¹⁹⁶ was written off by the British Foreign Office as a “communist sympathiser.”¹⁹⁷ In late 1954, the Foreign Office also labelled Abdul Minty and Mazizi Kunene as communists. IDAF, on the other hand, was perceived by the British government as “a respectable and liberal organisation” which, however, did “include communists who of course seek to use it for their own political purposes.”¹⁹⁸ This characterisation of IDAF influenced the 1964-elected Labour government’s decision not to make a financial contribution to the fund in late 1964¹⁹⁹ – a decision which remained unchanged ever since.²⁰⁰

The presence of communists in the AAM was also a source of controversy within the movement itself. In April 1964 Barbara Castle nearly resigned as Honorary President over an argument involving Vella Pillay, then AAM Vice-Chairman, and fellow executive

¹⁹⁵ PRO: FO 371/17767, Guidelines to Her Majesty's representatives on the Conference of Economic Sanctions, 8 April 1964.

¹⁹⁶ See Ronald Segal (ed.), *Sanctions Against South Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1964).

¹⁹⁷ PRO: FO 371/17767, Telegram from J. Wilson, Foreign Office, to the UK mission to the UN, New York, 18 March 1964.

¹⁹⁸ PRO: FO 371/177072, Notes of a conversation between J. Wilson, Foreign Office, with the Lord Chancellor, 18-21 December 1964.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ See Arianna Lissoni, “The Anti-apartheid movement, Britain and South Africa: anti-apartheid protest vs realpolitik. A history of the AAM and its influence on the British government’s policy towards South Africa in 1964,” MSc dissertation, LSE, 15 September 2000, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/aam/dissertation.htm>.

member Ros Ainslie. Following the publication of an article in the *Sunday Telegraph* which stated that both Pillay and Ainslie were members of the Communist Party, Castle wrote to the newspaper denying the allegation. She then demanded that the Pillay and Ainslie do the same, something which they initially refused to do.²⁰¹ It was only after Castle threatened that she “wanted to consider her position in regard to AAM” that Pillay and Ainslie sent a letter, having agreed that “it was most important to maintain the unity of the AAM.”²⁰² Ironically, Pillay and Ainslie’s overarching commitment to unity derived from the very SACP membership they were being accused of.

Conclusion

Britain, in its unique position as the former colonial power and the major investing country in South Africa, had been one of the main targets of Black South Africans’ diplomatic efforts since the Act of Union in 1910. In the aftermath of World War Two, and following election of the Nationalist Party in 1948, most of the hopes for support for the predicament of black South Africans shifted to the UN and later to the newly independent African states. Despite this, Britain continued to hold a special relationship with South Africa because of its economic and historic links. From the 1950s, British support did eventually start to come, not from the government though, but from anti-colonial and church groups, the Communist Party, and sections of the Labour and Liberal Parties.²⁰³ Moreover, since the 1940s, a growing number of South Africans had been arriving in London, where they began to set up social and political networks of solidarity with the liberation movement in South Africa. These networks were also crucially interlinked with the growing movement for

²⁰¹ MSS AAM 66, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 27 April 1964.

²⁰² MSS AAM 66, Executive Committee emergency meeting minutes, 2 May 1964.

²⁰³ James Barber, *The Uneasy Relationship: Britain and South Africa* (London, 1983), 2.

African self-determination in Britain. As Ros Ainslie has pointed out: “it’s important to stress the African base of this thing and people [...] too often forget it.”²⁰⁴

In June 1959, a limited campaign for the boycott of South African goods was launched in Britain. Within less than year, as the emergency situation in South Africa intensified, the boycott campaign had grown into a Movement in its own right going under the name of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. From the onset, the AAM, which “operated [...] as an instrument of solidarity with the people of South Africa”, was characterised by an “umbilical cord relationship with the [liberation] struggle”.²⁰⁵ For the next thirty years the AAM campaigned for a sports, cultural, academic, consumer, arms and economic boycott of South Africa to help bring apartheid to an end. The AAM was formed to coordinate all the anti-apartheid work in the UK and to keep South Africa’s apartheid policy to the forefront of British politics. Its formation was not an easy process: it required the selfless dedication of a small group of committed individuals, a remarkable mobilising effort, and the overcoming of inter as well as personal and intra-organisational disputes and jealousies.

For a brief but significant period of time, the Boycott Movement was able to attract a wide and diverse range of support – from the British Communist, Liberal and Labour Parties, to the trade unions, individual MPs, the NUS, several Churches, and other organisations. This diverse range of people and organisations managed to work together on the basis of what they had to offer, despite their political differences. Although there had

²⁰⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, HBI, Ros Ainslie de Lanerolle, interview with Hilda Bernstein, Transcripts Vol. 1.

²⁰⁵ Abdul S. Minty, “The Anti-Apartheid Movement? What kind of history?,” *The Anti-Apartheid Movement: A 40-year Perspective*, Report of the Symposium Organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee to Mark the 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, South Africa House, London, 25-26 June 1999, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/aam/symposium.html>.

been an early recognition on the part of its founders that the movement needed to put down roots in British society if it was to become a successful venture, this only started to be accomplished from the mid-1970s.²⁰⁶ In the 1960s, the numerical superiority of South African exiles on AAM structures meant that it was them who in effect ran the organisation, which functioned almost as a surrogate of the former Congress Alliance.

The arrival of the Sharpeville and Rivonia generations of exiles in the UK played a central role in providing the emergent AAM with leadership and political direction. Direct contact with the liberation movements was made incredibly easier by the fact that after 1960 they established a formal presence in London, as the next chapter will show. At the same time, when the first group of South African leaders arrived in the UK immediately after Sharpeville, they were relatively unknown outside of South Africa. These exiles were welcomed and integrated into the anti-apartheid network that had been growing in London and, thanks to it, they were immediately given public status and recognition.

²⁰⁶ In 1975 Mike Terry (former NUS Secretary) took over the position of AAM Executive Secretary from Ethel de Keyser. According to Gurney, “His patient diplomacy and ability to work with organisations across the political spectrum were invaluable to the AAM as it expanded in the 1980s.” Gurney, “In the heart of the beast,” footnote 228, 48.

CHAPTER TWO

The South African United Front, June 1960-March 1962

On 21 March 1960 South African police shot on a peaceful crowd of PAC supporters who had gathered outside the police stations of the African locations of Sharpeville (south of Johannesburg) and Langa (Cape Town) to protest against the pass laws. Sixty-nine people were killed and hundreds wounded, including women and children. The shootings plunged the country into chaos, to the extent that “[t]he events of March 1960 came closest to representing a crisis for the South African state.”¹ In the African townships, the much hated passbooks were being burned, while workers went on strike in response to Chief Lutuli’s call for a National Day of Mourning on 28 March. Two days later, a young PAC leader, Philip Kgosana, led a 30,000-strong crowd from Langa into Cape Town’s city centre, “terrifying the white population, who feared that the dreaded ‘Revolution’ was finally upon them.”²

Wide international media coverage of the Sharpeville shootings caused the outrage of world public opinion. For the first time, the UN Security Council took a stand against South Africa by passing a resolution which deplored the South African government’s actions as responsible for the recent loss of lives and which requested “the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Government of the Union of South Africa, to make such arrangements as would adequately help in upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter and to report to the Security Council whenever necessary and appropriate.”³ Nine

¹ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 210.

² Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 255.

³ S/RES/134 (1960), 1 April 1960, <http://www.anc.org.za/un/undocs1a.html#14>.

countries, including the United States, voted in favour of the resolution, while Britain and France abstained.

South Africa faced a temporary economic crisis, as “[t]hese events provoked a flight of foreign capital” which in turn made share prices on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange plummet. Business groups called on the government to introduce reforms to settle African grievances and quell the wave of domestic and international protest.⁴

After a brief suspension of the pass laws, the apartheid state moved swiftly to prevent further unrest and restore public order. On 30 March a State of Emergency was imposed and thousands of people, including most of the leaders of the opposition, were rounded up by the police and detained. On 8 April the Unlawful Organisations Bill was passed, and the following day ANC and the PAC were both banned. Despite an assassination attempt on Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd on 9 April, by the end of the month the government had ruthlessly regained control of the country. Rather than being the revolution that many people had been hoping for, Sharpeville turned out to be “the revolution that wasn’t.”⁵ However, as Tom Lodge has argued:

The significance of the Sharpeville crisis was not that it was an occasion when revolutionary political and social conditions were present and consequently squandered. Instead it represented a turning point in the history of African nationalism, when protest finally hardened into resistance, and when African politicians were forced to begin of thinking in terms of a revolutionary strategy.⁶

March 1960 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the South African liberation struggle in a number of ways. The ANC and PAC, after being declared illegal organisations, had to go underground and find alternative forms of struggle to meet the

⁴ Dan O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party 1948-1994* (Randburg, 1996), 101.

⁵ Sampson, *Mandela*, 133.

⁶ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 225.

state's increasing violence and repression. In December 1961, on the initiative of some SACP and ANC leaders, Umkhonto we Sizwe announced its existence as "an independent body, formed by Africans" and including "in its ranks South Africans of all races," which would "carry on the struggle for freedom and democracy by new methods."⁷ As Umkhonto decided that the time was not yet ripe for guerrilla activity, selective sabotage was chosen as the first step towards armed revolution. The PAC produced its own insurrectionist offshoot, Poqo, which was committed to revolutionary change in South Africa by way of a general uprising.

The year 1960 also marks the formal beginnings of the liberation movements' external work. This chapter will deal with the first attempt at setting up a joint external machinery through the SAUF. Its aim was to seek "the sympathy and support of the peoples and governments of the world" for the struggle against apartheid, as well as "to bring international economic and political pressure on the South African Government, and in general to secure its expulsion from the world comity of nations."⁸

The Front came into existence just over a year after the Africanists' decision to form a separate organisation in April 1959. From the onset, the PAC had established itself as a rival of the ANC – and this rivalry had continued to shape relations between the two parties up until Sharpeville. The PAC's last minute announcement that its anti-pass demonstration would take place on 21 March, for example, was interpreted by the ANC as a deliberate attempt to sabotage its own anti-pass campaign, which was scheduled to start only ten days later. Mandela called the PAC's announcement "a blatant case of opportunism" which was

⁷ Leaflet issued by the command of Umkhonto we Sizwe, 16 December, 1961, document 66 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 716.

⁸ Yusuf Dadoo, "Why the United Front Failed," *New Age*, 29 March 1962.

“motivated more by a desire to eclipse the ANC than to defeat the enemy.”⁹ Still, the decision to form a United Front abroad was taken and it is thus important to ask why.

The history of the SAUF has generally tended to be overlooked, probably because ANC-PAC relations became so bitter and because, from about 1962, political separation appeared irrevocable. In other words, there has been a tendency to dismiss the Front, its workings, and its significance because of the underlying assumption that the organisation was in any case doomed to fail. Although it can still be argued that the PAC’s decision to undertake a separate political path as a result of fundamental ideological differences between the Africanists and the Charterists in the ANC was indeed one of the root factors in the collapse of the Front, its history is still worth analysing for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the creation of a united front so soon after the ANC-PAC split is revealing about the capacity of Africans to pool their resources at times of extreme crisis. Secondly, it has something to say about the liberation movements’ international standing and their needs as they attempted to set up structures outside South Africa for the first time. Thirdly, the history of the SAUF is indicative of how the liberation movements’ exile politics were inextricably tied to and shaped by what was happening inside the country. Then, the SAUF represents a first, uncertain stage in the gradual building of an external base by the liberation movements, which in turn was a process very much driven by South African events. Finally, the birth of the SAUF is directly linked to a call on the South African leadership in exile by Ghana’s President Kwame Nkrumah. This raises questions as to what the independent African states’ vision for the liberation of Africa as a whole was, how much this proved to be applicable to the South African situation, and what kind of relationship the ANC was able to establish with African states vis-à-vis the PAC.

⁹ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 280.

The Making of the SAUF, April-June 1960

During its last conference as a legal organisation in South Africa in December 1959, the ANC Executive had made provisions for its newly elected Deputy President Oliver Reginald Tambo to leave the country to represent the organisation abroad and rally international support for the anti-apartheid struggle in the event of the ANC being banned:

When that occurred, the NEC [National Executive Committee] anticipated, there would be widespread arrests, and the ANC would need an ambassador to carry abroad the message of its vision and solicit support for the movement.¹⁰

The Sharpeville massacre and the intense succession of events which followed it “dramatically accelerated the plan for an external mission” and now made it “imperative that Tambo leave [South Africa] immediately, before he was picked up.”¹¹ On 29 March 1960, Tambo drove into the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland with friend Ronald Segal, the banned editor of *Africa South*.¹² After a failed attempt to proceed to Tanganyika via Southern Rhodesia, Tambo and Segal drove back to Francistown, where Dr Yusuf Dadoo had now arrived and was, like them, eager to find a way out of the Protectorate, as all refugees were in danger of extradition or abduction by the South African police. Dr Dadoo had gone into hiding with SACP General Secretary Moses Kotane and Michael Harmel, another SACP leader, when the State of Emergency had been declared and left South Africa on 9 April. The decision that Dadoo should leave the country had been taken by the SACP in consultation with the SAIC so that he could “assist with the organisation of solidarity work and consolidate the external apparatus of the [Communist] Party.”¹³

¹⁰ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 253.

¹¹ Ibid., 254.

¹² For a story of their escape see Ronald Segal, *Into Exile* (London, 1963).

¹³ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 262. For a brief political biography of Yusuf Dadoo see Essop Pahad, “Yusuf Dadoo, A Proud History of Struggle,” <http://www.sacp.org.za/biographies/dadoo.html>

Although at this stage the ANC and the SACP, which was secretly functioning underground and would soon announce its existence, were still operating independently “and there was no intention at that stage to work together on an escape route [...] Dadoo was, nevertheless, included in the travel plans.”¹⁴

Through Frene Ginwala, whom the ANC had put in charge of helping people come out of South Africa, the group found their way to Dar es Salaam via the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland on a small chartered plane. According to Mac Maharaj, it was the small SACP cell active in London which raised the money for the airfare.¹⁵ Tanganyika, whose independence was imminent, was seen as a fairly safe staging post for people fleeing South Africa. In Dar es Salaam Tambo met PAC leaders Nana Mahomo and Peter ’Molotsi, who had left South Africa on 20 March, and the idea of working together in representing the interests of the South African people abroad was casually mentioned during the encounter. Neither the ANC nor the PAC leaders knew where they would settle. Thus, working together simply meant the possibility of cooperation of some kind.¹⁶ According to Tambo’s biographer Luli Callinicos, while in Tanganyika, Tambo asked Ginwala to arrange for travelling documents for the PAC men as well. This might have been more than a “thoughtful consideration” on Tambo’s part:

In the first place, it went without saying in African black circles that political differences should never interfere with personal relationships. In any case, the three men, far from home and united in the common oppression of both their organisations, were very pleased to see each other. In addition, Tambo may have also hoped to renew the opportunity to begin a process of reconciliation with the young PAC members. After all, the split had occurred just two years earlier; here

¹⁴ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 261.

¹⁵ Ibid., note 14, 642.

¹⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Oliver Tambo, “Notes and Observations on ‘United Front and Afterwards’ by Judy Coburn.” This document contains fairly detailed information about the SAUF and was written by Tambo in response to a paper written by Judy Coburn. Neither the paper nor its author have been identified.

was a chance to persuade them, eventually, to work within the mother body of the ANC.¹⁷

Tambo was not alone in thinking that unity with the Africanist dissidents was still possible. Mandela also thought that “once the heated polemics had cooled, the essential commonality of the struggle would bring us together.”¹⁸ Perhaps this hope was rooted in the simplistic characterisation of the PAC by ANC leaders like Mandela as “immature,” and in the dismissal of the PAC’s ideology as the “undeveloped and callous” “views of one’s youth.”¹⁹ Both Mandela and Tambo, however, were soon to find out that they had seriously underestimated the appeal potential of the PAC’s Africanism.

In the 1950s 'Molotsi had worked as a reporter for *The World* and in 1955 founded the *Africanist*. 'Molotsi left South Africa with Nana Mahomo on the eve of the March anti-pass demonstrations to represent the PAC internationally when the campaign took place. 'Molotsi was the PAC Officer for Pan-African Matters, while Mahomo was Secretary for Culture and had been in charge of PAC activities in the Western Cape.²⁰ On 20 March, 'Molotsi, Mahomo, P.K. Leballo (PAC General Secretary) and Robert Sobukwe (PAC President) had met at Ellen Molapo's²¹ house in Johannesburg and made preparations for 'Molotsi and Mahomo to escape.²² According to 'Molotsi, Sobukwe decided that 'Molotsi, being the Officer for Pan African Matters, “was the most qualified person” to act as PAC

¹⁷ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 262.

¹⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 269.

¹⁹ Ibid., 268.

²⁰ University of the Witwatersrand, William Cullen Library, Historical Papers (hereafter CULLEN HSTPAP), A2422, Peter 'Molotsi interview with Gail M. Gerhart, August 25, 27, 1969, New York.

²¹ Ellen Molapo was a prominent PAC and Garment Workers Union member in Newclare, Johannesburg. See Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, note 139, 372.

²² CULLEN HSTPAP, A2422, Ellen Molapo interview with Gail M. Gerhart, 3 January 1970, Leribe, Lesotho.

international representative and help put the PAC in touch with other movements and governments. Moreover, the PAC leadership had been discussing the idea that there should be representation abroad, especially because they saw “Makiwane of the ANC who was gaining all the sympathy abroad.”²³ Thus, part of the reason why ’Molotsi and Mahomo were sent out of South Africa was that the ANC was perceived to be ahead of the PAC in building international contacts.

Once all the South Africans had been issued with travel documents by the Indian Consulate²⁴ in Kenya so that they could continue their journeys, Tambo left on his own for Tunisia, where he had been invited to speak at a World Assembly of Youth (WAY) Conference by its Swedish Secretary General, David Wirmark.²⁵ On his way to Tunis from Nairobi, Tambo received a cable from the Ghanaian government inviting him to Ghana “for the purpose of discussing the South African situation.”²⁶ On his arrival in Accra he joined up again with Segal, Dadoo, ’Molotsi and Mahomo, who had all been cabled while in Dar es Salaam. Tennyson Makiwane was also in Accra to attend a meeting of the All-African People’s Conference Steering Committee, of which he was member, and was thus included in the Ghanaian invitation. Since he did not officially represent any organisation, Ronald Segal did not take part in the discussions.²⁷ It turned out that the purpose of the invitation was to put before the group the idea of forming a united front, of establishing the headquarters of such front in Accra, and of issuing a public statement announcing the

²³ CULLEN HSTPAP, A2422, Peter ’Molotsi interview with Gail M. Gerhart.

²⁴ These were probably obtained through Yusuf Dadoo, who was “certainly an asset to anyone seeking the patronage of the Indian government.” Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 261.

²⁵ Tor Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, *Formation of a popular opinion, 1950-1970* (Uppsala, 1999), 101-102.

²⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

²⁷ Interview with Ronald Segal, Walton-on-Thames, 14 November 2003.

decision.²⁸ The formation of a government-in-exile was suggested at first, and Ghana offered to raise a loan for this purpose. But the South Africans turned down the offer.²⁹

The rift between the ANC and the PAC troubled Nkrumah, who argued “that there was no room for opposition groups among patriots. A union of the two liberation movements, he maintained, was both necessary to achieve success at home and appropriate for Pan-Africanism in the region.”³⁰ Nkrumah’s emphatic concern might help explain why, according to Tambo, “the principle of forming a united front on some basis was readily agreed to,”³¹ in spite of the recent history of enmity between the ANC and the PAC. The question of where to establish the Front’s headquarters was postponed until the forthcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London in May, which Nkrumah would also be attending, so that the disposition of other African states towards supporting the South African liberation struggle could be assessed first. The exiled South African leaders were in fact anxious to secure support for economic sanctions from independent African states. They also hoped that African countries would help raise the issue of South Africa at the UN. Moreover, the South Africans may have been wary of establishing too close a relationship with Ghana too soon, which might irretrievably limit their freedom of action in future. In particular, it was felt that too close an association with Ghana could prejudice their chances of establishing friendly relations with Western countries, especially Britain and the United States, and thus of getting all the support possible they needed.³² Moreover, it is likely that the South African leaders did not want to

²⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

²⁹ Interview with Ronald Segal, Walton-on-Thames, 14 November 2003.

³⁰ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 264.

³¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

³² Ibid.

officially commit to anything without the approval of their respective organisations at home.

Preliminary talks about unity were resumed in London in May 1960. Nkrumah's offer to provide facilities for running an office in Ghana was accepted, whereas the decision of where to establish headquarters was kept open.³³ At this stage, another PAC leader, Vusumzi L. Make,³⁴ was brought into the discussions. It was also decided to include the South West Africa National Union (SWANU, formed in 1959 out of the South West Africa progressive Association). Jariretundu Kozonguizi, SWANU's President, was already in London for the purpose of representing his organisation internationally, and had become involved in the activities of the Boycott Movement. In London, the group of leaders agreed in principle "to work together, to campaign together, and to act together in making approaches to individuals, organisations and governments on the issues of apartheid and South West Africa."³⁵

The inclusion of the Namibian movements into the SAUF (in January 1961 membership was extended to the South West Africa People's Organisation, SWAPO) seemed a logical step. On 10 December 1959 the South African police had opened fire on demonstrators in Windhoek and killed eleven people. UN reactions to this atrocity "foreshadowed those that were to follow the Sharpeville shootings some three months later,"³⁶ and very much put the South West African question on the international agenda. Another way in which the Windhoek massacre anticipated what happened in South Africa

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Make had been a member of the ANC Youth League and Treason Trial defendant. Arrested in 1957 and banished to the northern Transvaal after his release, he fled South Africa in 1958 and later became a PAC representative abroad. See Gail M. Gerhart and Thomas Karis, *Political Profiles, 1882-1964*, Vol. 4 of Karis and Carter (eds.), *From Protest to Challenge*, 68.

³⁵ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, "Notes and Observations."

³⁶ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 295.

as a result of Sharpeville is that it forced the African nationalist leadership into exile and into an armed struggle shortly afterwards. As Tambo explained to the UN General Assembly in October 1960 (which Sam Nujoma of SWAPO, Mburumba Kerina and Kozonguizi also addressed): “Namibians and South Africans fought the same struggle. Living on the two sides of the border, they suffered under the same government which was enforcing the same policies.”³⁷ However, the contribution of the Namibian liberation movements to the SAUF was marginal, and the activities of the SAUF ultimately centred on South Africa. Partly, this was because SWANU’s affiliation depended to a great extent on Kozonguizi’s personal relations with the ANC – of which he had been member. More crucially, Namibian involvement in the SAUF was soon overshadowed by the conflict between SWANU and SWAPO, which escalated around this time.³⁸

From London the group set out on a tour of African states “for the purpose of explaining the situation in South Africa and South West Africa, soliciting their support and discussing the establishment of offices.” First they went to Cairo, where they were able to enlist Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser’s support, and from there to Sudan, Nigeria, Liberia and Guinea. Tambo remained behind in Cairo “battling for a visa to enter the United States to undertake a speaking tour arranged by the American Committee on Africa.”³⁹ Because of the delay in granting the visa, Tambo eventually had to postpone the American tour and rejoined the rest of the South African exiles in Addis Ababa to attend the Second Conference of Independent African States. Talks of institutional cooperation between the various South African organisations were finalised during the Conference, which Mburumba Kerina, whom the Herero Chiefs’ Council had sent as a petitioner to the UN on

³⁷ Ronald Dreyer, *Namibia and Southern Africa: Regional Dynamics of Decolonization, 1945-1990* (London, 1994), 32.

³⁸ Ibid., 33.

³⁹ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

South West Africa, was also attending as adviser to the Liberian delegation.⁴⁰ Kerina was one of the nationalist leaders involved in the reconstitution of the Ovamboland People's Organisation into SWAPO in April 1960. According to Tambo's notes, in Addis Ababa Kerina was allowed to participate in the discussions in an individual capacity because of his involvement in the South West African question at the UN.⁴¹

The formation of the SAUF was officially announced at the Conference of Independent African States, held in Addis Ababa between 15 and 24 June 1960. A memorandum briefly outlining the current situation in South Africa and appealing for the economic and political isolation of South Africa, as well as for funds, was submitted to the Conference by a "South African Delegation" consisting of representatives of the four organisations – ANC, PAC, SAIC, and SWANU. The Conference welcomed the formation of the United Front and adopted measures which included a call to isolate South Africa diplomatically and economically, and the decision to assist "the victims of racial discrimination and furnish them with all the means necessary to attain their political objectives of liberty and democracy."⁴²

SAUF membership, organisation and structure

In the light of their missions to the various African states, the South African leaders, having returned to London after the Addis Ababa Conference, held further talks regarding the basis of the Front, its guiding principles, and policy matters. "These discussions resulted in a

⁴⁰ In November 1960 Liberia and Ethiopia took the issue of South Africa's occupation of Namibia to the International Court of Jurists by charging South Africa of failure to meet its UN mandate obligations.

⁴¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, "Notes and Observations."

⁴² Resolution adopted by the Second Conference of Independent African States, Addis Ababa, 24 June 1960, <http://www.anc.org.za/un/undocs1a.html#14>

formal document which cited the overthrow of white domination as the long term object” of the Front, “and the mobilisation of international support as the immediate objective.”⁴³ Membership of the Front was to consist of representatives of all the organisations which had taken part in the setting up of the Front – which so far included the ANC, PAC, SAIC, and SWANU. SWAPO, represented by Kerina, joined the union in January 1961. Theoretically, it was agreed that each organisation in the Front should have equal status and that the same principle should apply to individual representatives, none of whom exercised overall leadership functions. Although Tambo represented the most senior organisation in the group (as well as being the second most senior individual, the first being Dadoo), he “was careful not to impose the leadership of the ANC on the other organisations,” which, as he was well aware, could create frictions.⁴⁴

No organisation with white membership was part of the Front. This was, according to Tambo, simply because “there were no white groups to be included.” Around January 1961, however, Patrick van Rensburg applied to be admitted to the SAUF as a member of the Liberal Party, but was turned down. Tambo explained this decision in terms of the lack of official mandate from the Liberal Party of van Rensburg’s application. During a conference of all SAUF representatives in January 1961, the matter of how to handle applications by other South African political organisations was settled by the decision to deal with them individually if and when they were made. In his notes on the SAUF, Tambo categorically rejected the suggestion that the exclusion of whites from the Front was a concession to the PAC for having already agreed to include one non-African organisation, the SAIC. Rather, from Tambo’s point of view, the presence of whites in the SAUF was

⁴³ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

⁴⁴ Ibid.

“never even an issue.”⁴⁵ For Tambo and the ANC the participation of whites in principle may not have presented any ideological problem. For years the ANC had worked in close contact with the white COD. Although the PAC also cooperated, on a less public front, with the whites in the non-racial Liberal Party,⁴⁶ the same cannot be argued with certainty about the PAC. The ANC’s cooperation with whites and Indians, which was interpreted by the Africanists as a form of collaboration with the oppressor,⁴⁷ had in fact been one of the very reasons for the PAC’s breakaway. In any case, the absence of whites in the SAUF may have had less to do with ideological considerations on the part of the ANC or the PAC and more to do with the fact that the formation of the SAUF had been, after all, an African initiative, encouraged by Nkrumah and other African leaders.

The Front set out its immediate aims as follows. Internationally, it would lobby the UN for the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa and the transfer of the trusteeship mandate of South West Africa to the UN “as a first step towards the granting of complete independence to the territory.”⁴⁸ Secondly, a campaign against oil and oil products was planned to stop their supply to South Africa by industrial action. Third, the SAUF would secure “maximum and concerted action by all independent African states to refuse shipping, air landing facilities and air space to all South African aeroplanes.” Finally, it appealed to the people of all countries to continue and intensify the boycott of South

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See Chapter Three.

⁴⁷ See “Future of the Africanist Movement.” Questions and answers by R.M. Sobukwe, in *The Africanist*, document 38 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 507.

⁴⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Press Statement, South African United Front, London, 6 September 1960.

African goods, as “a very effective and useful weapon in exerting economic pressure on South Africa.”⁴⁹

To start with, offices would be opened in Cairo, Accra and London. Makiwane and ‘Molotsi were assigned to Accra, Make and Mzwandile Piliso⁵⁰ to Cairo, and Mahomo, Dadoo and Kozonguizi to London. Tambo, also provisionally based in London, had “a roving mission between offices to facilitate coordination.” Finally, Kerina was appointed as contact person for the Front in New York, the base of the UN headquarters.⁵¹ Another office was opened in Dar es Salaam in February 1961, with James Hadebe for the ANC and Gaur Rabede for the PAC.⁵² Representation in the various offices was uneven: SWANU and the SAIC were not represented anywhere else but London, and the ANC was unrepresented in Cairo – Tambo argued that Piliso did not officially belong to any organisation at the time he was brought into the Front, and only later joined the ANC.⁵³ Although this set up does not seem to have caused any serious difficulties in principle, it might have later turned into a contributing factor to the Front’s downfall.

In order to keep every SAUF office up to date on all decisions and activities, duplicate copies of all communications from one office to the other were sent to each of the other offices, which in turn could add comments and observations as they deemed necessary. This seemed to be fairly effective, as decisions could be speedily reached on matters that did not require the holding of a conference. Each office was also responsible for sending regular periodic reports on its work and sphere of activity. In Tambo’s view, this communication system was most important in keeping the Front together as well as in

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Piliso had just qualified as a pharmacist in London (see Chapter One) and offered his services to the SAUF.

⁵¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

⁵² *New Age*, 28 December 1961.

⁵³ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

helping maintain its coherence: “Numerous decisions were taken on a variety of matters through the machinery of inter-office reports, and many knotty issues were similarly resolved.”⁵⁴

In an article appearing in *New Age* and *Spearhead* after the breakdown of the SAUF, Yusuf Dadoo wrote:

United fronts in general demand a high degree of discipline and integrity from their participants. They call for absolute honesty and frankness, for a regular discussion of outstanding problems and difficulties and above all for unity in action. They forbid public attacks of one partner by another. They prohibit conspiracies and underhand schemes to undermine one or other partners in the front.⁵⁵

Given the frailty of ANC-PAC relations prior to the setting up of the Front, this kind of discipline applied to the SAUF all the more. During the Addis Ababa consultations, members of the Front had expressly agreed among themselves that they “would not indulge in attacking, misrepresenting, or otherwise undermining a member organisation of the Front.”⁵⁶

However, on accepting his appointment to the Cairo office in August 1960, Piliso expressed his concern that there was not “maximum HONESTY” among the Front’s members. Placing “individual organisations above the will of the people and their well being” would, Piliso warned, “retard the movement for many decades.” In order to prevent this from happening, he suggested introducing the swearing of an oath that members would not divulge details of the Front’s missions unless granted specific permission. In a final plea that the Front would “be built by confidence in each other,” Piliso put the following alternative before his colleagues: “we must choose whether our first love and devotion is in

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Yusuf Dadoo, “Why the United Front Failed,” *New Age*, 29 March 1962. The same article also appeared under the title “Disunited Front” in *Spearhead*, April 1962.

⁵⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

the FRONT or outside.”⁵⁷ Piliso’s remarks point to a fundamental problem in the union: from the very start, loyalty to individual organisations did in fact override their commitment to the Front, which, in turn, helped to foster divisions and suspiciousness amongst its members.

The SAUF in London

The formation of a United Front comprising all the various Southern African organisations turned out to be a useful move on tactical grounds. The existence of the Front helped in a number of ways: in the holding of joint press conferences (one joint conference could be made, instead of having to hold four separate ones); in the political lobbying of British MPs, the Commonwealth Office, and the UN; and, in more practical terms, in applying for political refugee status, or the in sharing of office premises and bills. In London, the SAUF was given an office at 31a John Adam Street, at the India League. Dr Dadoo’s presence in the Front was instrumental in obtaining facilities at the India League, whose founder, Krishna Menon, was a personal friend of Dadoo’s.⁵⁸

In Britain, the Front proved to be especially useful in the handling of relations between solidarity organisations and the South African liberation movements as it enabled groups such as the AAM and the Defence and Aid Fund to stand outside the divisions between the liberation movements and at the same time to offer their broad support for the anti-apartheid struggle.⁵⁹ On their arrival in the UK, members of the SAUF were able to establish immediate contact with British organisations campaigning against apartheid

⁵⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Mzwandile Piliso, Letter to the offices of the SAUF, 11 August 1960. Original emphasis.

⁵⁸ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 266.

⁵⁹ Personal communication with Dorothy Robinson, 17 November 2003.

through the group of South Africans already active in this country. Moreover, for a short while, Makiwane was both a member of the SAUF and Director of the Boycott Movement, then in the process of transforming itself into the AAM. On 20 April 1960, Yusuf Dadoo, who had just arrived in London,⁶⁰ was the guest at the first official AAM meeting where he “expressed appreciation, on behalf of the people of South Africa, for the work done by the Boycott Movement, and said it had been a tremendous inspiration and hoped the Anti-Apartheid Committee would continue.” Dadoo also emphasised the importance of outside pressure on South Africa and suggested a series of possible actions to be taken. One was to approach trade unions in Britain as well as African states and ask them not to handle oil for South Africa. Then, to lobby the forthcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference. And third, to solicit the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa at the UN.⁶¹

Through the help of British organisations, the AAM in particular, the SAUF was able to engage itself in a series of British campaigns and events from an early start. A press conference was organised by the AAM to publicise Tambo and Segal’s arrival in London in early May. In September 1960, Mahomo, Tambo and Dadoo attended the TUC Annual Conference, where they urged the TUC to bring their pressure on the British government to support measures for economic sanctions against South Africa and also called on the British workers to demonstrate their support for the anti-apartheid struggle by taking “some suitable form of industrial action.”⁶² The AAM also arranged a two-weeks tour during

⁶⁰ Dadoo travelled to the UK from Ghana separately from the others who remained in Ghana and only arrived in London some weeks later. See MSS AAM 2, AAM minutes, 20 April 1960, 30 April 1960, and 4 May 1960.

⁶¹ MSS AAM 2, AAM committee minutes, 20 April 1960.

⁶² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Press Statement, South African United Front, London, 6 September 1960.

which Mahomo, Tambo and Dadoo addressed a series of meetings aimed at educating the British public on the issue of apartheid in various UK centres starting from 9 September. These included Newcastle, Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol and Norwich. MCF, the Africa Bureau and AAM local groups and committees throughout the country were mobilised to help run the meetings.⁶³ A Central Hall Mass Rally Against Apartheid held under the auspices of the Africa Bureau, AAM, Christian Action, CAO, and MCF took place on 23 September to mark the end of the tour.⁶⁴

Towards the end of 1960 the SAUF London office was also involved in publicity work to revive public interest in the South African question. Sharpeville and its tragic aftermath had been widely covered by the British and international media, which in turn had been an important factor in provoking world-wide protests. But media interest in South Africa now appeared to have waned. In particular, the SAUF felt that scant attention was being given by the British press to the situation in Pondoland – not least because of the “complete blackout on news to the outside world” by the South African government. In November 1960 a press conference was held at Denison House where the SAUF issued a statement denouncing the South African government’s Bantustan policy and the unrest in Pondoland.⁶⁵ The success of the conference, however, was limited because of poor attendance and the preference of the press “for something more sensational.”⁶⁶

⁶³ MSS AAM 43, Minutes of the National Committee, 17 August 1960.

⁶⁴ See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Press Statement, South African United Front, London, 6 September 1960, and MSS AAM 2, National Committee minutes, 7 September 1960.

⁶⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, SAUF Press Statement, London, 18 November 1960. For a history of rural struggles in the early 1960s see Govan Mbeki, *South Africa: The Peasants’ Revolt* (London, 1964), and Sukude Matoti and Lungisile Ntsebeza, “Rural resistance in Mpondoland and Thembuland, 1960-1963,” in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, 177-208.

⁶⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, London reporting to the offices of the South African United Front Accra/Cairo/New York, 21 November 1960.

Relations with British organisations

In July 1960, representation was offered to two members of the SAUF on the Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Committee after the matter had been discussed internally.⁶⁷

However, as noted in Chapter One, by October 1960 the Coordinating Committee had virtually ceased to exist except in name. After Makiwane left London as a result of his appointment to the SAUF's Accra office in August, the front continued to hold a seat on the AAM Executive Committee.⁶⁸

Relations between the SAUF and the AAM were formalised at a meeting between Nana Mahomo and five members of the AAM Executive Committee on 4 November 1960. First, the question of possible misunderstandings arising out of simultaneous international boycott campaigns by different organisations was dealt with. At the meeting Mahomo insisted that the SAUF, as representative of the movements in South Africa, must be regarded as ultimately in charge of the international boycott campaign, which the AAM had initiated and now continued to organise and sponsor. The AAM undertook to make clear in all future correspondence that the campaign was being conducted by the SAUF. At the same time it would continue to encourage initiatives at all levels and to send information to organisations overseas. The meeting also agreed on "the desirability of fullest cooperation between Anti-Apartheid and the Front."⁶⁹ To this purpose, the SAUF was granted a permanent seat in an observer or adviser capacity on both the AAM's National and Executive Committees so as to allow maximum consultation between the two organisations

⁶⁷ MSS AAM 42, Anti-Apartheid Co-ordinating Committee minutes, 29 July 1960. From the AAM records it is unclear which SAUF member occupied this seat, which may have rotated between Dadoo, Mahomo and Tambo.

⁶⁸ MSS AAM 43, National Committee minutes, 3 August 1960.

⁶⁹ MSS AAM 93b, Letter from the AAM to the SAUF in London, 21 November 1960.

without, on the other hand, the SAUF having to be publicly associated with AAM decisions. Finally, the relationship between the two bodies was summed up as follows:

AAM had originally been formed in order to gain British support for the policies of the liberation movement in South Africa, and in particular for the international boycott. As the UF represented this movement, and as AAM had never regarded itself as an organisation with a policy separate from the policies of those struggling in South Africa, its broad policy (e.g. to work for an international boycott or not) would naturally bind up with the stand taken by the UF. However, it would not necessarily be committed by a tactical decision by UF (e.g. to call publicly for industrial sanctions).⁷⁰

This framework remained at the basis of the relations between the AAM and the South African liberation movements even after the dissolution of the SAUF. It proved to be especially important in allowing the AAM to continue to offer its broad support for the anti-apartheid struggle without having to openly advocate armed action (which could have alienated many of its British supporters) after the liberation movements' strategic turn in late 1961. Underpinning the relationship between the AAM and the liberation movements was the understanding that the AAM's "campaign to end British support for apartheid was part of a wider struggle with the people of Southern Africa as the main protagonists."⁷¹ Therefore, it was for the people of South Africa, of whom the liberation movements were the direct representatives, to decide on the strategies and tactics which they deemed as best to achieve their own liberation.

The South African Republic and the Commonwealth

From early 1961, most of the SAUF's and its international allies' efforts were taken up by the question of South Africa's continued Commonwealth membership. On 5 October 1960,

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Gurney, "In the heart of the beast," 29.

in a whites-only referendum, 52 percent of South African voters favoured the establishment of a Republic. Prior to the referendum, Verwoerd had announced that a South African Republic would apply for continued Commonwealth membership at the next Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London in March the next year.

In October 1960, Oliver Tambo and Vusumzi Make delivered a statement calling for economic sanctions at the UN. The statement also drew attention to the fact that in the:

[R]eferendum held to decide the basic structure of the country [...] the millions of Africans and other non-white people of that country did not have a say because the indigenous majority of South Africa are not voters. The significance of this referendum is that the 'electorate' of South Africa has not only endorsed the brutal policies of the South African Government but has also given the rulers of South Africa a fresh mandate to carry on their campaign directed at making Africans 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' in the land of their birth.⁷²

On 20 January 1961, in conclusion to a conference between its various offices, the SAUF held a press conference on the question of South Africa's admission to the Commonwealth after becoming a Republic. The press statement declared that the SAUF was "categorically opposed to the admission of South Africa to the Commonwealth," which would be "not only an embarrassment to the non-white members whose skin pigment is held in contempt by South Africa, but also an insult to human dignity." South Africa's continued membership would undermine the Commonwealth's "reputation as an organisation that will not tolerate racial discrimination." The SAUF also expressed the hope that South Africa's exclusion from the Commonwealth would finally dispel the idea that the Commonwealth had "some restraining influence on South Africa," which was the position adopted by the Conservative British government on the issue. The statement concluded with a reverberation of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's famous words to the South

⁷² Statement on behalf of the South African United Front, New York, October 1960, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1960s/pr600000.html>.

African Parliament of February 1960: “In these days of the ‘winds of change’ it is appropriate that the forthcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference should adjust itself accordingly.”⁷³

In the early months of 1961, SAUF delegations travelled to Asian (Ceylon, India, Pakistan and Malaysia) and African (Nigeria and Ghana) Commonwealth countries to ask them to take steps to exclude South Africa from the Commonwealth. Letters were also sent to all Commonwealth Prime Ministers with the same purpose. Julius Nyerere, soon to be the Prime Minister of independent Tanganyika, supported the SAUF’s call by announcing that should South Africa continue to be a member of the Commonwealth, he would withdraw his country from this organisation.⁷⁴

The Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference of March 1961 became the focus of much anti-apartheid campaigning in the UK. The AAM organised a silent seventy-two-hour vigil in Trafalgar Square, with six ‘eminent’ persons spending one hour each at the vigil. The demonstrators, who were not allowed to any banners or slogans, adopted the idea of wearing black sashes. Sixty-seven of them bore the word “Sharpeville” on them and two of them “Langa,” in commemoration of the victims of the police shootings in South Africa the previous year.⁷⁵ After three days of strong opposition by Afro-Asian countries and Canada during the Conference, on 15 March Verwoerd was forced to withdraw South Africa’s application. The Republic, he announced, would now be free:

[F]rom the pressure of Afro-Asian nations who were busy invading the Commonwealth. We are not prepared to allow these countries to dictate what our

⁷³ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, SAUF Statement on South Africa and the Commonwealth, London, 20 January 1961.

⁷⁴ *Contact*, 23 March 1961.

⁷⁵ Personal communication with Dorothy Robinson, 17 November 2003.

future should be ... Therefore, we go now forward alone. We are standing on our own feet.⁷⁶

The SAUF hailed the outcome of the Prime Ministers' Conference. From London, Yusuf Dadoo delivered a message to the South African people welcoming South Africa's forced withdrawal as "a historic step forward in the struggle against apartheid," opening up "vast possibilities [...] to make further inroads into the bastion of racialism and white supremacy"⁷⁷ by challenging the very foundations of Verwoerd's Republic, to be inaugurated in May. In South Africa, the liberal newsletter *Contact* reported that "a great part of the credit for the victory must go to the United Front."⁷⁸ Such victory, Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein concurred in *Fighting Talk*, had been made possible by the SAUF, which had acted as a "spectre" throughout the Premiers' Conference. "It was with this spectre that Verwoerd fought for the allegiance of Commonwealth premiers,"⁷⁹ who clearly chose to stand with the United Front against Verwoerd. Finally, Chief Lutuli spoke in favour of the expulsion and commended the SAUF for the success of its work.⁸⁰

The reaction of white South Africa to the news, on the other hand, was one of "hysteria, irrationality and flight from reality."⁸¹ A cheerful mob of fifty-thousand Nationalist South Africans assembled from all over the country to applaud Verwoerd's "triumph" as he stepped off the plane. A German correspondent at the time of Verwoerd's return wrote: "There is a stink of Nuremberg about South Africa."⁸²

⁷⁶ Quoted in O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 106.

⁷⁷ Yusuf Dadoo, Message from London to the South African people, March 1961, <http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-a.html#5d>.

⁷⁸ *Contact*, 23 March 1961.

⁷⁹ *Fighting Talk*, April 1961.

⁸⁰ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 360.

⁸¹ *Fighting Talk*, April 1961.

⁸² *Ibid.*

The United Nations and economic sanctions

As the previous chapter has shown, the termination of South Africa's mandate over South West Africa, the possibility of incorporation of the High Commission Territories, and the treatment of Indians living in the Union provided the three key issues around which UN intervention in South Africa was sought in the aftermath of the Second World War. By drawing the attention of the UN to these questions, ANC leaders hoped to raise the problem of Native policy inside the Union at the UN. In 1949, ANC policy towards the UN was made clear in its Annual Conference resolutions. The ANC countered Pretoria's claim that race relations in South Africa were a matter of domestic jurisdiction and stated "that U.N.O. has a right to intervene in this matter, which, unless dealt with in accordance with the principles of the U.N.O. Charter, will ultimately lead to armed conflict between the races."⁸³ UN recognition that South Africa's domestic policies were a matter of international concern came in the wake of the Defiance Campaign. In December 1952 the General Assembly resolved to establish a UN Commission on the Racial Situation in South Africa.⁸⁴ Although the ANC welcomed this UN decision, it soon found itself in total disagreement with some of the Commission's findings, which suggested that apartheid policy was being implemented with some degree of "gradualism and flexibility."⁸⁵ In 1959, the ANC submitted a memorandum to the UN on the "Question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the government of the Union of South Africa." This document, however, still confined itself to denouncing apartheid as a

⁸³ Minutes of the Annual Conference of the ANC, 15-19 December 1949, document 47 in Karis, *Hope and Challenge*, 295.

⁸⁴ A/RES/616 (VII), 5 December 1952,

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/079/59/IMG/NR007959.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁸⁵ See Report of the National Executive Committee, ANC Annual Conference, 16-19 December 1954, and Address by Professor ZK Matthews, ANC Annual Conference, 17-18 December 1955, documents 7b and 13b in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 216.

violation of the UN Charter and of the Declaration of Human Rights, and to urging the UN to call on the South African government to reconsider its policies.⁸⁶

The imposition of the State of Emergency in South Africa at the end of March 1960 led an emergency committee of the ANC to issue a statement which, as well as submitting a set of “urgent proposals” to the government, for the first time explicitly called “upon the United Nations to quarantine the racialist Verwoerd Government by imposing full economic sanctions against the Union of South Africa.”⁸⁷ From this moment onwards and over the next three decades, campaigning for economic sanctions against South Africa became one of the key areas of international anti-apartheid activity, both for the ANC and its foreign supporters. The question of sanctions was immediately picked up by the SAUF abroad. During the October 1960 General Assembly session in New York, the SAUF made the first direct call for economic sanctions at the UN. Tambo and Make delivered a statement on behalf of the Front “to alert the world of the dangers of the policy of the Government of the Union of South Africa and to appeal for speedy international intervention at the United Nations level” in the form of economic sanctions.⁸⁸

The SAUF scored an important diplomatic victory at the UN one month after South Africa’s exclusion from the Commonwealth when, on 15 April 1961, the General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the policy of apartheid as “reprehensible and repugnant to human dignity,” and calling on all states “to consider taking such separate and collective action” as was open to them “to bring about the abandonment of these

⁸⁶ Memorandum submitted by the ANC to the General Assembly of the United Nations, 1959, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/un/ancmem.html>.

⁸⁷ A statement by the Emergency Committee of the African National Congress, 1 April 1960, document 51 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 572.

⁸⁸ Statement on behalf of the South African United Front, New York, October 1960, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1960s/pr600000.html>.

policies.”⁸⁹ This was the first time the UK voted in favour of a resolution against South Africa; only Portugal voted against.

The passing of this resolution at the UN was the result of the concerted effort of the SAUF and its African and Asian allies, and India in particular. India had been the initiator of the debate over South Africa’s racial policies at the UN in 1946, when a complaint was lodged against the treatment of people of Indian origins in the Union. Since then, the Indian government relentlessly sought to achieve international condemnation of apartheid at the UN. India was the main sponsor of the 1961 General Assembly resolution, which had been drafted by the Asian states as a ‘safety net’ in case another resolution, sponsored by the African states, and calling for specific measures including economic sanctions, failed to be approved (which it did).

Tambo and Make went to New York to represent the SAUF while the General Assembly would be discussing apartheid. A memorandum signed by the SAUF was circulated to all delegations on the eve of the General Assembly voting, asking them to support – or at least not to oppose - the African resolution. Special attention was devoted by the SAUF to the Latin American states, in the attempt to win them over to the side of the Afro-Asian group.⁹⁰ Finally, the SAUF urged the Indian delegate to the UN to ensure Asian support for the African resolution to a degree consistent with Afro-Asian unity.⁹¹ Although India voted in favour of both resolutions, support for the African draft remained insufficient and the resolution was eventually withdrawn by its sponsors.

⁸⁹ A/RES/1598 (XV), 15 April 1961,

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/198/13/IMG/NR019813.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁹⁰ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, File C 4.46, Letter from the SAUF to Dr Luis Padilla Nervo, Permanent Representative to the UN, Mission of Mexico, New York, 12 April 1961.

⁹¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, File C 4.46, Letter from the SAUF to Mr C. S. Jha, Permanent Representative to the UN, Mission of India, New York, 12 April 1961.

In 1962, the General Assembly passed another resolution which this time requested member states to take specific measures against South Africa, including breaking off diplomatic relations, closing their ports and airports to South Africa, imposing a trade boycott, and an arms embargo. Moreover, it set up a Special Committee “to keep the racial policies of the Government of South Africa under review,” and to report to both the General Assembly and the Security Council.⁹² Over the next decades, the Special Committee against Apartheid, which began its work in April 1963, worked in close collaboration with the South African liberation movements (as well as individuals and solidarity organisations such as the AAM campaigning against apartheid) to promote effective action against South Africa at the UN.⁹³

The April 1961 UN resolution was to be the last achievement of the SAUF. In fact, events in South Africa during the next month were to give a severe blow to the tentative union between the ANC and the PAC abroad. Tambo later explained in his notes on the history of the SAUF that no attempt had been made to impose the United Front on the organisations in South Africa - nor was there ever any intention to do so. But the Front did ultimately suffer from the fact that its establishment was not a projection of a set-up which was obtained in South Africa and was not the deliberate creation of the organisations inside the country.⁹⁴ The events surrounding the May 1961 stay-at-home clearly prove this point.

⁹² A/RES/1761 (XVII), 6 November 1962,

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/192/69/IMG/NR019269.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁹³ See Special Committee against Apartheid, selected statements and other press releases, 1963-1983, compiled and edited by E.S. Reddy, <http://www.anc.org.za/un/sp-com-1.html>. Enuga Reddy was the Principal Secretary of the Special Committee from its inception and later became Director of the UN Centre against Apartheid.

⁹⁴ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

From the December 1960 Consultative Convention to the May 1961 stay-at-home

When the State of Emergency which had been imposed in South Africa after Sharpeville was lifted at the end of August 1960, and the opposition leaders released from prison, they were somewhat surprised to learn about the creation of the SAUF. Walter Sisulu, for instance, was not comfortable with such idea, as he could not see how there could be unity abroad when there was no unity at home.⁹⁵

Some attempts at African unity, however, were made when in December invitations to a consultative conference of African leaders were sent out by a group of individuals (among whom Chief Lutuli) formerly associated with the banned ANC.⁹⁶ The Conference took place in Johannesburg on 16 and 17 December 1960 and was attended by some thirty-six Africans, including members of both the ANC and PAC. Despite some criticism over the manner in which it was organised, the Conference agreed on “the urgent need for African Unity” and resolved to organise an All-In African Conference whose purpose would be to call for a National Convention representing all the people of South Africa.⁹⁷ A Continuation Committee with representatives from a broad political spectrum was appointed for the organisation of the All-In Conference. Cables were also sent to the UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammerskjold, urging him to meet African leaders during his forthcoming visit in January, and to Oliver Tambo expressing appreciation of the work of the United Front.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 179.

⁹⁶ For more details on the South African events described in the following paragraphs see also Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 353-364.

⁹⁷ Resolutions, Adopted by the Consultative Conference of African leaders, and Cables, Sent by the Conference to the United Nations and Oliver Tambo, December 16-17, 1960, document 54 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 626-629.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

In London, the SAUF backed up the Conference's endeavours by sending a further cable to the UN Secretary-General on the subject of consulting with the non-white leadership in South Africa.⁹⁹ As the date of the All-In Conference, which was to take place in Pietermaritzburg on 25-26 March 1961, approached, Yusuf Dadoo encouraged the South African people to "redouble their efforts and work with renewed energy in opposing every facet of Dr. Verwoerd's Government,"¹⁰⁰ and to back up with mass action the All-African Conference for its speedy and successful realisation.

However, the PAC soon pulled out of the Continuation Committee on the grounds that the All-In Conference "had shifted its aim from African unification to preparations for a multiracial convention"¹⁰¹ when "Africans alone," the PAC argued, could "solve the problems besetting South Africa."¹⁰² By the time the Conference took place "unity had already been shattered and the conference was predominantly an ANC affair."¹⁰³ The reasons for the breakdown of unity are complex and, as Gail and Gerhart have argued, the question "remains as to whether or not antagonism and suspicion were not already too strong in 1961 to be overcome."¹⁰⁴ The PAC and Liberal Party members on the Continuation Committee accused the ANC of trying to dominate under the façade of unity, and resorted to the old rhetoric of white communist control of the ANC. Paradoxically,

⁹⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, SAUF Press Release: Cable Sent to Dag Hammerskjold, Secretary General of the United Nations on His Visit to South Africa, signed by Nana Mahomo and Yusuf Dadoo, London, 3 January 1961.

¹⁰⁰ Yusuf Dadoo, Message from London to the South African people, March 1961, <http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-a.html#5d>

¹⁰¹ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 356.

¹⁰² *New Age*, 9 March 1961.

¹⁰³ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 355.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 357.

their withdrawal from the Continuation Committee had the effect of leaving the ANC with communist support only, thus strengthening their collaboration even further.¹⁰⁵

The ANC went ahead with the Conference, which was attended by 1,400 delegates. The ANC, however, clearly dominated in the end. The Conference's main resolution was the issuing of an ultimatum, to be met by May 31, the day South Africa was to become a Republic, demanding a multi-racial National Convention of elected representatives of all the people to draw up a new non-racial constitution for South Africa. Should the ultimatum not be met, country-wide demonstrations would be staged. A National Action Council (NAC), with Mandela as Secretary, was created for the purpose of organising the anti-Republican demonstrations. Mandela, whose ban had recently expired and who had not appeared on a public platform since 1952, addressed the conference and called on Africans not to cooperate if the government failed to meet the demand of a national convention. Mandela also renewed the appeal for unity and promised "militant campaigns" with the aid of "external pressures that would be generated by the SAUF abroad."¹⁰⁶

In mid-May the NAC announced that the anti-Republican demonstrations would take the form of a three-day stay-at-home on 29, 30, 31 May; the NAC flyers read: "No one who loves freedom should go to work on those three days."¹⁰⁷ The PAC leadership, however, stood opposed to the strike, which they thought was an irresponsible "misdirection" of the African people, side-stepping the "true" goal of "Freedom and Independence Now!" as set by Sobukwe.¹⁰⁸ Not only was the PAC against the strike, but

¹⁰⁵ Sampson, *Mandela*, 141.

¹⁰⁶ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 358.

¹⁰⁷ "Stay at Home," Flyer issued by the National Action Council, document 60 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 639.

¹⁰⁸ "Clarion Call to African Nationalists." Article in *Mafube (The Dawn of Freedom)*, No.1, Issued by "African Nationalists," May 1961, document 62 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 640-1.

also it became involved in actively sabotaging it. In the weekend before May 29, the PAC issued flyers calling on people to go to work and not to support the Congress Alliance with their move to a National Convention.¹⁰⁹

The attitude adopted by the PAC on the stay-at-home was not going to be easily forgotten by the ANC. By calling on people to go to work, the ANC argued, the PAC had taken the side of the South African government. In his review of the stay-at-home, written from underground, Mandela argued:

Differences between rival political organisations in the liberation camp on tactical questions is one thing and may be permissible. But for a political body, which purports to be part of the liberation struggle, to pursue a line which objectively supports Government that suppresses Africans is treacherous and unforgivable.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile in London, the SAUF, including its PAC members, had continued to publicise the idea of a National Convention, and to expose the South African government's military showdown in preparation to crush the opposition by force in a series of press releases throughout May.¹¹¹ In view of the anti-republican demonstrations planned in South Africa, the London branch of the SAUF also called on the British public:

[T]o observe May 31 as a day of solidarity by holding meetings and rallies and expressing support for the campaign of mass demonstration and national strikes of the South African people, by intensifying the boycott of South African goods and by demanding that the United Kingdom government stops immediately supplies of arms and tanks to South Africa, and that it refrains from entering bi-lateral agreements with the South African Government.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ "Poqo. Poqo. Poqo." Flyer issued by the PAC, document 61 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 639-640.

¹¹⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH07, Boxfile 3.2.2, Nelson Mandela, "National Action Council: A Review of the Stay-At-Home Demonstration May 29th, 30th, 31st, 1961."

¹¹¹ See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, ANC London Papers, Boxfile 1, Press release, issued by the South African United Front, London, 5 May 1961.

¹¹² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Press Handout for Conference at St Bride Foundation Institute, London, 11 May 1961, issued by the SAUF.

From Dar es Salaam Hadebe and Radebe of the ANC and PAC respectively were the signatories of a message to the movement in South Africa which said:

The SAUF congratulates the Continuation Committee of the people's conference held at Pietermaritzburg for organising demonstrations on the eve of the South African Republic which threatens to further oppress and persecute the people.¹¹³

Dissolution

After May-June 1961, documentary evidence of SAUF activity amounts to little if nothing.

In June 1961, a SAUF delegation sought an interview with the British Defence Minister, Mr Harold Watkinson, in connection with a visit by the South African Minister of Defence, Mr J.J. Fouché – to no avail. In the end, a letter was personally delivered by the delegation to the Ministry of Defence.¹¹⁴ The latest surviving piece of documentary evidence relating to the SAUF is a press statement issued in protest against Anderson Ganyile's kidnapping by the South African police in Basutoland.¹¹⁵ The freezing of joint action was most likely due to the sharp discrepancy between the position adopted by the PAC in South Africa and abroad during the May stay-at-home. A further reason might have been that by mid-1961 both liberation movements had embarked on their separate armed paths, and the focus of the leaders in exile had in part turned to trying to gain financial and military support for their respective military wings.

Members of the SAUF increasingly worked as representatives of their individual organisations, rather than on behalf of the Front, which continued to exist only nominally.

¹¹³ Quoted in Mandela, "National Action Council: A Review of the Stay-At-Home Demonstration May 29th, 30th, 31st, 1961."

¹¹⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, News release, issued by the SAUF, London, 27 June 1961.

¹¹⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Press statement on the case of Anderson Ganyile, issued by the SAUF, London, 18 January 1962.

In October 1961, the COD received a report from Yusuf Dadoo which stated that the SAUF was “no longer in existence except in name,” and that “the ANC representatives abroad were establishing their own offices in various centres.”¹¹⁶ Unity abroad had been made impossible, Dadoo conveyed, by “the constant undermining carried on by PAC over a long period,” and by “the differences between the organisations in South Africa.”¹¹⁷ Around this time the PAC had also opened a separate office in London, which had annoyed other Front members who “had scrupulously refrained from presenting any of their initiatives as exclusively their own.”¹¹⁸

The ANC, however, was worried about the popularity the PAC enjoyed among African states, and Nkrumah’s Ghana especially, and this might be the reason why the SAUF continued to exist for as long as it did. Because of the PAC’s withdrawal from the All-in Conference of March 1961 and its sabotage of the May stay-at-home, the SAUF convened a meeting in London around September/October to review the situation “and the members agreed to communicate with their respective organisations at home.” According to Callinicos, Mzwai Piliso in Cairo received a communiqué from home “stating that the United Front had served its purpose.” In view of the approaching Pan-African Movement for East and Central Africa Conference (PAFMECA) of February 1961, Tambo thought it would not be wise to make the news of the Front’s dissolution public and instead decided “to wait and see how things would develop” as he “was inclined not to tackle the PAC publicly,” given the “fair amount of prejudice against the ANC.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ 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.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 285.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 286.

The formal dissolution of the SAUF was first announced by the Dar es Salaam office and reported in South Africa in *New Age* on 1 February 1962. The break up was explained as the result of internal dissension within the PAC at the time of the anti-republican demonstrations in May, culminating with the expulsion of Philip Kgosana and Laurence Mgweba¹²⁰ from the ranks of the PAC abroad. The expulsion of Kgosana's 'rebel' group was the first of what became an almost endless series of internal conflicts which troubled the PAC throughout its exile period. Kgosana had been arrested on 30 March 1960. He was released on bail in November and at the end of the following month he crossed the border into Swaziland and eventually reached Tanganyika in March 1961, where he joined Mgweba and a small group of PAC members (totalling about fifteen people) who had also escaped from South Africa in January. In his autobiography Kgosana claimed that his departure had been sanctioned by Sobukwe, who had issued directives that ten thousand youths be sent abroad for military training in preparation of the next stage of the struggle.¹²¹ A crisis soon developed between the new PAC arrivals and Mahomo and 'Molotsi, who accused the former of taking unilateral action for leaving South Africa. Kgosana and Mgweba, on the other hand, demanded clarifications from Mahomo and 'Molotsi through a consultative conference, as it appeared to them "that the external PAC had joined hands with the Congress Alliance" in the SAUF, which, they believed, was dominated by the ANC.¹²² The crisis reached a collision when on 22 January 1962 Kgosana and Mgweba were expelled from the PAC on the grounds that they had defied the leadership by order of 'Molotsi, who announced the decision at a press conference in

¹²⁰ Both Kgosana and Mgweba had played a prominent role in the March 1960 anti-pass demonstrations in Cape Town.

¹²¹ Kgosana, *Lest We Forget*, 57.

¹²² Ibid., 72.

Accra. Copies of the expulsion order were also distributed at PAFMECSA the following month to dissuade African leaders from assisting the ‘rebels.’¹²³

The London office of the SAUF only resolved to officially dissolve on 13 March 1962.¹²⁴ The reasons for this delay are likely to be related to the ANC’s anxiety over African support, and its desire to dispel perceptions of disunity in black South Africa at the Pan-African Freedom Movement of Eastern and Central Africa (PAFMECA, hereafter renamed PAFMECSA to include Southern Africa) Conference of February 1962. Internal divisions within the PAC itself finally sealed the fate of the SAUF. Kgosana and Mgweba’s expulsion had led to a split of the PAC into two factions, each claiming to speak in the name of the organisation.¹²⁵ This had created doubts abroad as to the authority and political substance of the PAC, which the ANC did not want to be associated with. Furthermore, the PAC group opposed to Kgosana, and composed of Mahomo, ‘Molotsi and Raboroko had staged various attacks on the ANC via the Ghanaian radio programme the *Voice of Africa* and its monthly magazine.¹²⁶

Multi-racialism versus African nationalism

By the late 1950s, the ANC’s collaboration with its non-African allies in the Congress Alliance, and the white COD in particular, had given rise to allegations that the ANC “danced to the tune of the Communists”¹²⁷ by the Africanist group within the ANC. George Padmore’s influential *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, which included a section on

¹²³ Ibid., 74.

¹²⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, ANC London Papers, Boxfile 1, Press Statement by the SAUF, Signed by O. Tambo, N. Mahomo, Y. Dadoo, and J. Kozonguizi, London, 15 March 1962.

¹²⁵ *New Age*, 29 March 1962.

¹²⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

¹²⁷ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 244.

“Communism and Bantu Nationalism” in South Africa had been published in 1956, contributing to spread anti-communist feelings in Pan-African circles. South African communists were accused by Padmore of “spending their time and energies debating the various ideological brands of communism” instead of uniting before the common enemy. According to Padmore, in South Africa, communism was “simply helping to maintain disunity among the non-Europeans by creating the impression among the oppressed people that salvation will come from outside their own ranks.”¹²⁸

The ANC increasingly appeared out of step with developments on the rest of the continent. In December 1958, Ezekiel ‘Zeke’ Mphahlele, writer and academic, attended the All African Peoples’ Conference in Accra to submit a memorandum on behalf of the ANC. At the Conference, the ANC had difficulties in reconciliating its ideology of non-racialism and its policy of multi-racial cooperation based on the Freedom Charter with ideas such as the “African Personality” or “Pan-African Socialism” contained in the Conference’s “Call to Independence.” The ANC’s memorandum to the Conference presented by Mphahlele reviewed the ANC’s history and its vision of a “‘a democratic South Africa’ embracing all, regardless of colour or race who pay undivided allegiance to South Africa and mother Africa.” Although the ANC’s philosophy of struggle implied “a recognition of the concept of African Nationalism,” because of the unique economic, social, and political history and racial set-up in South Africa, the ANC had been “progressively developing the concept of an all embracing ‘Africanism’.” Therefore, the ANC argued, in Africa, the “liberatory organisations and movements which hold diverse political and social theories and

¹²⁸ George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism? The Coming Struggle for Africa* (London, 1956), 362-363.

principles,” although united in the common anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle, should not be forced “to adopt a common ideology and philosophy.”¹²⁹

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Chief Lutuli in 1961 seemed to give weight to the notion that the ANC was not ‘African’ enough and that it was controlled by whites. Despite the great symbolic significance and the international prominence the Prize gave the ANC,¹³⁰ Mandela was worried that the award “created the impression that he [Lutuli] had been bought by the whites,” and that he was a “white stooge.”¹³¹ Lutuli’s autobiography *Let My People Go*, published in 1962, had been dictated to Mary-Louise Hooper,¹³² a white woman from the American Committee on Africa,¹³³ and praised by white liberals such as Alan Paton. By contrast, as Mandela recorded in his travel diaries:

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.¹³⁴

Furthermore, the very nature of the criticism by the ANC about the PAC, Mandela learnt, had the opposite effect of making the Africanists “some sort of heroes,” as “[i]t does not discredit any politician in Africa to be called a racialist or anti-white.”¹³⁵

The PAC, on the other hand, had recognised the appeal of Pan-Africanism. The PAC contested the idea of South Africa’s exceptionalism, and argued instead “that South

¹²⁹ Notes for Delegates to the All African People’s Conference to be held in Accra, Ghana, December 1958, Issued by the ANC, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/boycotts/accra58.html>.

¹³⁰ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 279.

¹³¹ Quoted in Sampson, *Mandela*, 165.

¹³² For a short biography of Mary-Louise Hooper see <http://www.africanactivist.msu.edu/directory.php>.

¹³³ For a study of the American Committee on Africa and anti-apartheid activism in the USA see Donald R. Culverson, *Contesting apartheid: US activism, 1960-1987* (Boulder, 1999).

¹³⁴ Quoted in Martin Meredith, *Nelson Mandela: A Biography* (London, 1997), 213.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Sampson, *Mandela*, 165.

Africa is an integral part of the indivisible whole that is Afrika.” The Africanists also rejected multi-racialism as, in the words of Sobukwe, “a pandering of European bigotry and arrogance” and “a method of safeguarding white interests.” Instead, the PAC aimed at a “government of the Africans by the Africans, for the Africans,” which would not guarantee minority rights.¹³⁶ The PAC’s programme of action for freedom in 1963 shared the goal set by the 1958 All African People’s Conference and its vision of a continental government and of a union of African states, based on an “Africanistic Socialist democratic order” which in turn would favour the development of the “African personality.”¹³⁷ In South Africa Pan-Africanism had thus come to be equated with the PAC – whose flag, a map of Africa with a star where Ghana is, and emanating rays casting light onto the rest of the continent, is indicative of the inspiration the PAC drew from Ghana, “the Mecca of Pan Africanism.”¹³⁸ In April 1959, Nkrumah had cabled a congratulatory message to the PAC Inaugural Conference.¹³⁹

Mandela was taken aback on discovering how much support the PAC had gained abroad when he toured Africa in early 1962 to assess, *inter alia*, the disposition in the whole of Africa to the struggle at home which had taken on a new form.¹⁴⁰ Another purpose of Mandela’s trip at this particular moment in time may have been, as Lodge has suggested in his biography of Mandela, “to establish a fuller understanding with the ANC external mission.”¹⁴¹ The PAC was seen to share Ghana’s Pan-African approach and African leaders

¹³⁶ Robert M. Sobukwe, Opening Address, Inaugural Conference of the PAC, April 4-6, 1959, document 39a in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 516.

¹³⁷ See the Manifesto of the Africanist Movement, document 39b in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 517-524.

¹³⁸ Peter ’Molotsi, quoted in Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 264.

¹³⁹ Karis and Carter, *Challenge and Violence*, 314.

¹⁴⁰ Sampson, *Mandela*, 164.

¹⁴¹ Lodge, *Mandela*, 96.

were not accustomed to the ANC's approach on race and distrusted its relationship with Indians and white radicals, particularly communists. Throughout his trip, Mandela had a hard time in trying to explain and justify the ANC's non-racialism. This was a difficulty which Tambo had already encountered and immediately briefed Mandela on. Tambo had come to the conclusion that "the ANC had to appear more independent, taking certain actions unilaterally without the involvement of other members of the [Congress] Alliance," and Mandela agreed with him.¹⁴²

In Tanzania, Mandela's first stop, Nyerere even suggested that the armed struggle be postponed until Sobukwe was released from prison.¹⁴³ But Mandela and Tambo's possibly most frustrating visit was to Ghana, where they tried to see President Nkrumah, but instead got "lectured" by Foreign Minister Ako Ajei that "the ANC was a tribalist organisation," and were told that they could not see the President. On top of this, Mandela was left to pay for his hotel costs.¹⁴⁴

When Mandela arrived in London he and Tambo told Yusuf Dadoo and Vella Pillay "that the ANC must show itself as an independent force to be represented only by Africans at international conferences," they had a fall out. "Dadoo protested that Mandela was changing ANC policy," but the latter "insisted that it was a change of image only. The ANC had to appear genuinely African: it had got 'lost in a nebulous organisation representing everybody'."¹⁴⁵ As the crisis in the SAUF developed and the ANC prepared to

¹⁴² Mandela, *Long Walk*, 361.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Sampson, *Mandela*, 167.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 169.

establish offices of its own in various centres, it appears that the SAIC was also now considering opening an office in East Africa.¹⁴⁶

Around mid-July 1962, after he had just commenced a military training course in Ethiopia which should have lasted six months, Mandela was urgently recalled home by a telegram from Walter Sisulu. In his autobiography Mandela has attributed the decision to the needs of the internal armed struggle, which he claimed was escalating.¹⁴⁷ According to Lodge, it is more likely that Sisulu was concerned that Mandela's long absence would demoralise the rank and file of MK.¹⁴⁸ But a third, less acknowledged, reason for Mandela's hasty departure from Ethiopia could be that the leadership at home had become alarmed by rumours that while abroad Mandela had become an Africanist and had joined the PAC.¹⁴⁹ The nature of the discussions between Mandela and various leaders in South Africa which took place immediately upon his return seems to corroborate this.

During a secret meeting at Rivonia to report on his trip, Mandela proposed to the ANC Working Committee¹⁵⁰ that the Congress Alliance be reshaped so that the ANC would appear to be more 'African.' In his autobiography Mandela says that because of the seriousness of his proposition, the Committee urged him to consult Chief Lutuli and the rest of the leadership. Mandela, however, fails to comment on the specific reactions of his colleagues – and this may be a tactful omission on his part.¹⁵¹ Everyone in the Working Committee (except for Govan Mbeki, who was concerned about Mandela's safety) agreed

¹⁴⁶ 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.

¹⁴⁷ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 363.

¹⁴⁸ Lodge, *Mandela*, 100.

¹⁴⁹ See Mandela, *Long Walk*, 412, and Pogrund, *Sobukwe*, 176.

¹⁵⁰ Present at this meeting were Walter Sisulu, Moses Kotane, Govan Mbeki, Dan Tloome, J.B. Marks and Duma Nokwe. See Mandela, *Long Walk*, 369.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 369-370.

that Mandela should immediately set off for Durban. Here Mandela saw Monty Naicker and Ismail Meer of the Indian Congress, who met his proposal with a resistance similar to the one Mandela and Tambo had encountered in Dadoo in London. His next meeting was with Chief Lutuli in Groutville, who told Mandela that “he did not like the idea of foreign politicians dictating policy to the ANC.” Mandela countered this by saying that his plan “was simply to effect cosmetic changes in order to make the ANC more intelligible – and more palatable – to our allies.”¹⁵² The Chief did not give Mandela a final pronouncement, and the issue remained unsolved as Mandela was arrested a few days later.

Nevertheless, Mandela’s beliefs and proposed change of ‘image’ had profound implications. Mandela’s own defiant performance at his first trial – from the decision that no application for bail should be made, to his choice of the Xhosa *kaross* instead of a suit to publicly enhance the symbolism that he was a black man entering a white man’s court,¹⁵³ to his decision to conduct his own defence, to his suggestion that it should be the state, not him, that should be put on trial, to his indication that he did not feel morally bound to obey the laws made by a white parliament in which he had no representation – was a close reminder of Sobukwe’s own approach to the court in 1960, and can be viewed as an integral part of the promotion of a new ANC image (as well as of Mandela) during this period. Although they may have not affected so much the movement as a whole at home, which was in any case banned and thus unable to engage in any kind of public display, Mandela’s proposals had significant repercussions on the ANC external mission, which carried the flag of the ANC abroad. They resulted in a policy which came to be internally known as the “African image.” The “African image” became a major issue of debate within the movement in exile, as it will emerge in the next two chapters.

¹⁵² Ibid., 370-371.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 385.

Future unity

Still, the dissolution of the SAUF did not theoretically mean that future cooperation between the ANC and the PAC would be ruled out. After the decision to disband the Front had been announced, Tambo was quoted in *New Age* saying that the ANC abroad continued to support the principles of unity, joint action, and cooperation.¹⁵⁴ In practice, however, it was not until 1991 that the ANC and the PAC would work together again through the short-lived Patriotic Front.¹⁵⁵ Tambo's statement in support of unity might have therefore been one of convenience rather than principle, in the attempt to please African leaders such as Nkrumah and Nasser who had insisted on the creation of a united front in the first place.

The idea that the ANC and the PAC should unite in a common front was one that outlived the period of the SAUF. For the rest of the decade and beyond, pressure for the formation of a united front continued to be exerted by African leaders through the OAU, established by the African Summit Conference of Addis Ababa in May 1963. The OAU's Committee of Nine, or African Liberation Committee, a sub-committee in charge of channelling financial, military and logistical aid to liberation organisations, laid it down as a condition for recognition and support that different liberation parties in each given African country must come together in a common liberation front to direct political

¹⁵⁴ *New Age*, 22 March 1962.

¹⁵⁵ The Patriotic Front was launched in 1991 as a loose alliance of anti-apartheid organisations which included the ANC, the PAC, and 92 others, to work on a mutually acceptable programme for the negotiated transfer of power. The Patriotic Front's Conference held in Durban of 25-27 October 1991 agreed on the need to hold an All-Party Congress, which was then named the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), to set out the principles for a new constitution. However, on December 21 1991, the day of CODESA's first meeting, the PAC walked out of the meeting making allegations of collusion between the ANC and the South African government. See PAC Allegations, issued by the Department of Information and Publicity, PO Box 61884, Marshalltown 2307, 27 November 1991, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1991/pr1127.html>, and PAC Statement and Walkout, issued by the Department of Information and Publicity, PO Box 61884, Marshalltown 2307, 1 December, 1991, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1991/pr1201.html>.

activities. For the ANC this demand for unity presented a threefold dilemma. It was problematic in terms of first agreeing on objectives and, second, on methods to achieve them. But third, and most importantly, it posed a problem in terms of what would become of the multi-racial alliance between Africans, Coloureds, Indians and whites established in the 1950s through the Congress Alliance and consolidated with the creation in 1961 of MK, whose membership was non-racial from its inception. The ANC made clear in publicity and information material issued in the early 1960s that it was not prepared to forfeit a solid alliance based on years of political cooperation in order to come together with the PAC.¹⁵⁶ The fact that the ANC's collaboration with Indians and whites had been one of the principal grounds on which the PAC had broken away from the ANC in the first place in turn made it very unlikely that the PAC was ever going to accept working with the ANC and its allies.

Repeated statements by the OAU that the unity of the ANC and the PAC was a cardinal factor in the struggle of the people of South Africa throughout all of the 1960s and early 1970s were in vain. When, in December 1964, Z.B. Molete, PAC Secretary for Publicity, announced that the PAC and the ANC were holding talks with Mr Diallo Telli, the first Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), also participating, Oliver Tambo firmly rejected the existence of such talks as an attempt on the part of the PAC "to deceive and mislead for purely selfish ends."¹⁵⁷ In 1967, PAC representatives in Lusaka made contact with their ANC's counterparts with the purpose of holding exploratory talks between the two organisations. These contacts, however, failed to reach

¹⁵⁶ *African National Congress of South Africa*, Issued by the ANC South Africa, PO Box 2239, Dar es Salaam, 7 November 1963.

¹⁵⁷ Denial of talks between the ANC and the PAC, Press statement by Oliver Tambo, December 1964, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1960s/pr641200.html>.

higher leadership levels.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, although it was the PAC which had initially sought to establish contact, this was not a spontaneous PAC initiative but the direct result of a call by the OAU, on whose continued assistance the PAC now depended almost entirely.¹⁵⁹

The most serious call for a united front came in 1972, when the OAU Liberation Committee “expressed the view that there was a lull in the armed struggle in South Africa, and that this was due to the unwillingness on the part of the ANC and the PAC to form a united front,” after the PAC brought the issue before its Nineteenth Session.¹⁶⁰ A study group was appointed by the Liberation Committee to examine the situation in South Africa and assist the ANC and the PAC reach an agreement on the formation of a united front. The ANC took the matter very seriously. Internal discussions were held on to how to respond to the OAU in order to ensure that the nature of the Liberation Committee’s proposals about the South African liberation struggle would only be advisory in nature. The ANC was deeply irritated by the actions of the Liberation Committee, whose interference in the South African liberation movements’ policies were perceived as a threat to its independence as an organisation. During an internal meeting to discuss how to respond to the OAU Liberation Committee’s resolution calling for a united front with the PAC, Mark Shope complained of the “fixed attitudes” of African states, who assumed “the role of experts who have ready-made solutions” for the South African struggle.¹⁶¹ The ANC questioned the fact that the

¹⁵⁸ UCT, Manuscripts and Archives, Simons Collection (hereafter BC 1081), P 10.2, P.K. Leballo, Dar es Salaam, to O.R. Tambo, Morogoro, Letter dated 19 January 1971.

¹⁵⁹ See Opening Address by George Magombe, in Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (S.A.), *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting, Moshi, Tanzania, 19 to 22 September 1967*, Issued by the Department of Publicity and Information, PO Box 2257, Lusaka, Republic of Zambia. See also Chapter Four.

¹⁶⁰ UCT, Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P15.1, Statement on the Question of a United Front by O.R. Tambo Acting President of the ANC (S.A.) to the 20th Session of the OAU Liberation Committee [1972].

¹⁶¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 77, File C4.39, Notes of Meeting to Discuss OAU Liberation Committee Resolution Calling for a United Front with PAC [n.d.].

matter of a united front between the PAC and the ANC should be the subject of statements made to the Twentieth Session of the OAU Liberation Committee and argued that it was for the liberation movements themselves to “search for and find what would in effect be the answer to the overall problem.”¹⁶² The outcome of these discussions was a lengthy document submitted to the Twentieth Session of the Liberation Committee in which the ANC aimed at clarifying its stand on the question of unity once and for all.¹⁶³

ANC-PAC relations on Robben Island

The inability of the ANC and the PAC to achieve unity in the remainder of their exile histories was mirrored by the debates taking place between the two organisations on Robben Island, which was in many ways a microcosm of the world outside.¹⁶⁴ During his initial stay at Pretoria Central in 1962, Mandela had been eager to talk to other political prisoners, who were predominantly from the PAC and among whom was Sobukwe, because, he wrote in his autobiography, he “thought that in prison we might forge a unity that we could not on the outside.”¹⁶⁵ Although relations between Mandela and Sobukwe seem to have been cordial enough, the two leaders disagreed over the most basic questions, as for example with regards to fighting for the improvement of prison conditions. From the moment of his arrival at Pretoria Central Mandela complained about issues such as prison clothing and food. Mandela and other ANC leaders viewed such prison struggles as an extension of the struggle outside. Sobukwe and the PAC, on the other hand, were against

¹⁶² UCT, Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P15.1, Statement on the Question of a United Front by O.R. Tambo Acting President of the ANC (S.A.) to the 20th Session of the OAU Liberation Committee [1972].

¹⁶³ See UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, File C4.46, African National Congress (South Africa), The Call for Unity and a United Front, Mogadishu, 15 October 1973.

¹⁶⁴ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 32.

¹⁶⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 398.

any form of engagement with the prison authorities which, in their view, would imply a recognition of government's right to incarcerate them in the first place.¹⁶⁶

After political prisoners were moved to Robben Island, Mandela continued to make it his mission to “seek accommodation with our rivals in the struggle.” In *Long Walk to Freedom* he explained that he “saw Robben Island as an opportunity to patch up the long and often bitter differences between the ANC and the PAC.” If unity could be established between the two organisations on the island, Mandela thought, “that could set a precedence for uniting them in the liberation struggle as a whole.” During Mandela’s first stay on the island in 1963, the PAC greatly outnumbered the ANC but, after the Rivonia trial, the PAC-ANC ratio of prisoners started to invert. This seemed to disturb PAC prisoners, who saw the arrival of the Rivonia group and those who followed “as an encroachment on their territory.”¹⁶⁷ At various stages in the 1960s, Mandela held talks on the question of unity with Zeph Mothopeng, Selby Ngendane and Clarence Makwetu of the PAC. Yet, despite many “fruitful discussions,” nothing came of them. The PAC continued to view any sort of negotiations with the prison authorities as a betrayal. At the same time, this did not stop them “from taking advantage of the benefits that resulted from negotiations.” Moreover, Mandela complained that PAC prisoners often boycotted meetings which had no overt party affiliation. Finally, in prison the PAC men remained “unashamedly anti-communist and anti-Indian.”¹⁶⁸ As on the outside, these political differences ultimately proved to be too fundamental for the ANC and the PAC leaders in prison to bridge.

The ANC’s internal machinery on Robben Island, known as the High Organ, is something which the PAC and other organisations on the island, the Non-European Unity

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 523.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 523-524.

Movement in particular, also appeared to resent. In the early years, the High Organ would often act on behalf of all other political prisoners. At the insistence of Neville Alexander of the Unity Movement a new body, which later became known as “Ulundi,” was eventually created. This committee had representatives from all organisations. Even so, the ANC was perceived by others to attempt to dominate on the committee, and finding a common approach to problems continued to be a difficult task.¹⁶⁹

Conclusion

Was the breakdown of the SAUF inevitable? The view that the dissolution of the SAUF was the predetermined result of *a priori* ideological and political differences between the ANC and the PAC does not do justice to the history of the Front. Rather, it can be argued that its gradual dissolution after May 1961 grew out of a complex process of action and reaction which involved the assumptions, perceptions, and policies of the ANC and the PAC in South Africa and abroad, as well as the force of particular events.

The alliance that had brought together the ANC, PAC, SAIC, SWANU, and SWAPO overseas was essentially one of convenience. For this reason, the SAUF was always an improbable union. However, during 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. In this respect, as Tambo noted, the SAUF had “a most serviceable life.”¹⁷⁰ It did mobilise world opinion and succeeded in drawing governments into active participation in the application of various pressures on South Africa, as the results achieved at the Commonwealth and the

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 525-526.

¹⁷⁰ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 83, file C4.46, Tambo, “Notes and Observations.”

UN demonstrate. The Front also represented “a convenient machinery for African states and other organisations to work with,”¹⁷¹ as instead of having to choose from a number of South African organisations they could work with one United Front. Finally, at the time the SAUF was formed, there was a general lull in mass activity in South Africa as a result of the post-Sharpeville State of Emergency, in which thousands were arrested. The SAUF played an important role in catalysing the activities of South Africans abroad during this period and in keeping South Africa on the international agenda.

The brief moment of unity within the movement in South Africa established during the Consultative Conference of December 1960 helped strengthen the SAUF.¹⁷² However, the inconsistency between the PAC’s attitude towards the anti-Republican demonstrations of May 1961 in South Africa and abroad clearly pointed to the fact that the SAUF could not properly exist in isolation from the organisations at home.¹⁷³ The success of unity abroad ultimately depended on the situation in South Africa, which suggested not only an absence of unity, but active opposition to it on the part of the PAC during the May stay-at-home. Failure to cultivate mutual confidence among the SAUF members, and conduct which induced mutual suspicion further exacerbated ANC-PAC relations and eventually resulted in the breaking up of the Front.

The failure of African unity in the early 1960s, both in South Africa and abroad, ultimately resulted in the further consolidation of the alliance between the ANC and the SACP, which had announced its underground existence in July 1960 during the Sharpeville State of Emergency. The formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe in the second part of 1961 was a decisive step in this respect. The PAC, on the other hand, thanks to its successful

¹⁷¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

¹⁷² Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 351.

¹⁷³ *New Age*, 22 March 1962.

identification of interests with the African continent, continued to be the favoured organisation of African leaders, especially within the OAU. Riven by internal disputes throughout its history of exile, the PAC's survival became increasingly dependent on the OAU's support and sponsorship.

Despite repeated calls by the OAU and its African Liberation Committee, no unity between the ANC and the PAC was achieved again during the remainder of their exile histories. The experience of the SAUF must have influenced future considerations about unity on both sides, but, above all, from the ANC's point of view, was the fact that factionalism and internal squabbles had, by the late 1960s, turned the PAC into a "spent force"¹⁷⁴ which no longer constituted a serious threat to the ANC's international standing.

¹⁷⁴ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 77, File C4.39, Notes of Meeting to Discuss OAU Liberation Committee Resolution Calling for a United Front with PAC [n.d.].

CHAPTER THREE

The ANC and the PAC in exile, c. 1962-1965

The events of March 1960 had thrown the Nationalist government in “its then gravest ever crisis.”¹ The crisis, however, proved to be only temporary. In November 1960, grand apartheid’s architect Hendrik Verwoerd urged fellow National Party members that they would have to stand like “walls of granite” on every facet of apartheid policy. Political stability was firmly and quickly re-imposed through the centralisation of power – both within the National Party and government – in Verwoerd’s hands, and through the introduction of drastic measures, such as the 1962 General Law Amendment Act, under the new Minister of Justice John Vorster. In October 1961 the Nationalists were re-elected into power with an overwhelming 63.7 percent majority. The torture and murder of political detainees became the order of the day. Military expenditure was significantly increased, while heavy censorship was imposed on all surviving overt opposition. Dan O’Meara has suggested that this was “perhaps the bleakest period in South Africa’s dismal history.”² By the late 1960s, the South African economy was booming, white standards of living reached record heights, and the National Party seemed to be firm in power more than ever before. At least on the surface, apartheid had entered its “golden age.”³

While the internal forces of opposition were inexorably suppressed in the years between 1960 and 1964, the embryonic exiled movement abroad grew exponentially. This chapter will trace the reorganisation of the ANC and the PAC in exile from the breakdown

¹ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 100.

² Ibid., 110.

³ Ibid., 116.

of the SAUF in early 1962 to 1965. During this period, after having set up their separate external offices or missions, both Congresses had to re-orient their policies to the needs arising from the changed conditions of struggle in South Africa, notably the beginning of the armed struggle. The ANC and the PAC had to devise new international structures and gather support for the struggle at home in diplomatic, financial and now military terms. Moreover, they soon found themselves in the position of having to once again readjust their function as a result of the hammering received by the underground movement in South Africa in 1963-1964, a time when the full power of apartheid repression was starting to be felt.

As the locus of the struggle shifted from South Africa to the international arena, the South African liberation movements underwent radical transformation. For the ANC, this complex process did not entail the simple transposition of the relations that had existed between the organisation and its partners in the Congress Alliance in South Africa. In the early 1960s, competition over international support with the PAC, especially – and crucially – among African states, led the ANC to adopt the decision that its external form and structure should be shaped around a principle known as the “African image.” What this policy implied, and the development of relations with Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia by the ANC are analysed in the first half of this chapter.

The PAC started off at a relative disadvantage against the ANC in terms of international diplomacy. Being a relative newcomer on the international arena, the PAC could not rely on and benefit from the international links and relations which the ANC had been cultivating in the years prior to its banning. At the same time, the PAC was ideologically more attuned with African sentiments elsewhere on the continent, which meant that it was initially less preoccupied than what the ANC was with having to ‘prove’ its African credentials. However, the PAC still had to deal with its own set of problems in

the aftermath of Sharpeville, which saw the arrest and sentencing to prison of the majority of its leadership. In 1962, the first external headquarters of the PAC were established in Basutoland, which meant that for some time the PAC had the potential to mount a more effective challenge in South Africa itself thanks to the proximity of the external leadership to the underground Poqo movement. The failure to do so can be ascribed primarily to the political inexperience and lack of discipline of the PAC leadership, internal strife, and the absence of a carefully planned out programme or strategy. These problems, which had clearly emerged by 1965, would continue to plague the organisation throughout the rest of its time in exile.

The politics of multi-racialism in the 1950s

During the 1950s African resistance politics had gradually started to shift from a narrow ideology of African nationalism based on ideas of “self-determination” and “national freedom” as expressed in the 1949 Programme of Action,⁴ to a “gentler,” all-inclusive type of nationalism which took into account the multi-racial nature of the country and pointed towards unity with other minority groups and united action.⁵ The 1952 Defiance Campaign and Chief Lutuli’s election as ANC President in December 1952 played a significant role in bringing about this transition, at the heart of which was “a new awareness of South Africa as a multi-racial or multi-ethnic society.”⁶

In November 1952, the ANC and the SAIC had made a call on white liberals “to form an organisation which whites could join, and which would coordinate its activities

⁴ See “Programme of Action,” statement of policy adopted at the ANC Annual Conference, 17 December 1949, document 60 in Karis, *Hope and Challenge*, 337-339.

⁵ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 68.

⁶ Saul Dubow, “Thoughts on South Africa: some preliminary ideas,” in Stolten (eds.), *History Making*, 67.

with those of the Congresses.”⁷ A similar call was made on the Coloured leadership so that they would do the same for the Coloured community. The decision to form the COD and the Coloured People’s Organisation (renamed Coloured People’s Congress at the 1955 Congress of the People) to mobilise the support of the Coloured population and of progressive whites was thus an opportunistic one. Despite the fact that many would have preferred to join a unitary organisation open to all races, the ANC and its allies agreed on the need to have organisations with racially separate identities. There were practical reasons for such decision. First, geographical separation of the different racial (or ‘national’, as they were called by the liberation movement) groups into locations, ghettos, and homelands posed serious problems of organisation. Second, different problems affected different groups at different times, thus demanding different approaches. As Reginald ‘Reg’ September, one of the principal founders and General Secretary of the CPC, has explained:

We couldn’t take the question of limit between the different social groups for granted, it is something that you had to work for. You couldn’t for example take it for granted that the CPC would call a meeting against the imposition of pass laws in South Africa and expect the African community to participate in it. It didn’t work that way, it couldn’t work that way, because it wasn’t an issue for the Coloured people. If you called a meeting on the Group Areas Act, you couldn’t expect Africans to attend such a meeting [...] because it was an issue for them a long while ago. And Group Areas Act was very recent for us, at that time.⁸

The choice of a multi-racial alliance was influenced ideologically by the CPSA’s “two-stage” or “Native Republic” theory, which was in turn based on Stalin’s ideas on nationality.⁹ Formed in 1921, in its first few years of existence the CPSA concentrated on

⁷ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 69.

⁸ Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

⁹ According to Stalin’s definition, a nation is “a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.” Joseph V. Stalin, “Marxism and the national question,” in *Prosveshcheniye*, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1913, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03.htm>.

organising the white workers. In the aftermath of the white miners' strike of 1922, which the CPSA had supported, a shift in focus started to take place. At the 1924 Conference, the CPSA resolved to redirect its attention towards African workers and to build African trade unions. In 1928, South Africa featured for the first time on the agenda for debate at the Comintern. The situation in South Africa was discussed at the Comintern on the basis of a draft resolution by its Executive Committee, which suggested that the CPSA should work for the establishment of "an Independent Native Republic – with full guarantees for minority groups – as a stage towards a workers' and peasants government" in South Africa.¹⁰ The "Independent Native Republic" slogan was summed up in a document called "The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies" which was adopted by the 1928 Comintern despite remonstrations by the CPSA delegation (consisting of S.P. and Rebecca Bunting and Eddie Roux) who insisted on the pre-eminence of class, not national struggle in South Africa. (This debate on the relationship between the class and the national struggle, and in turn on the relations between the Party and the national liberation movements, is a problem that the Communist Party has been "almost obsessed with"¹¹ from the time of its formation up to the present day.) The 1928 Comintern document called upon the CPSA to "determinedly and consistently put forward the creation of an independent native republic, with simultaneous guarantees for the rights of the white minority, and struggle in deeds for its realisation." The "Independent Native Republic" or "two-stage" thesis was endorsed by the CPSA, despite a great deal of opposition, at its 1929 Conference.¹²

The CPSA disbanded in 1950 when it had become clear that its banning under the Suppression of Communism Act was imminent. In 1953 it re-emerged underground under a

¹⁰ Quoted in A. Lerumo (pseudonym of Michael Harmel), *Fifty Fighting Years: The Communist Party of South Africa* (London, 1971), 64.

¹¹ Karis, *Hope and Challenge*, 107.

¹² Lerumo, *Fifty Fighting Years*, 64-65.

new name, the SACP. David Everett has argued that the transformation of the CPSA into the SACP was not merely an unproblematic continuation, and that “the birth of the SACP occasioned a prolonged and intense debate on the relationship between class struggle and African nationalism.”¹³ Whereas the Cape Town-dominated CPSA had been wary of what was seen as essentially ‘bourgeois’ African nationalism, the Transvaal-dominated SACP was closer to the centre of African nationalism and the ANC (which had been undergoing a twin process of radicalisation – under the influence of the ANC Youth League – and of growing unity with other forces opposed to apartheid). Because of their different regional experiences, the Transvaal Party members “pressed for a closer relationship with the Congress movement and greater support for national struggle.”¹⁴ This shift of the Party’s headquarters from Cape Town to the Transvaal played a crucial role in influencing the formulation of the SACP’s theory of “colonialism of a special type” or “internal colonialism,” which became the “ideological glue” holding the alliance between the SACP and the ANC together over the next forty years.¹⁵ According to this theory, the situation in South Africa was that of a unique type of colonialism, where an independent “oppressing White nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them.”¹⁶ Through this notion, the SACP aimed at resolving the chronic class-colour debate. The “colonialism of a special type” and “two-stage” theories became enunciated in *The Road to South African Freedom*, the programme that was adopted by the Party’s Fifth Congress held underground in Johannesburg in 1962. In this document, the

¹³ David Everett, “Alliance politics of a special type: the roots of the ANC/SACP alliance, 1950-1954,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18 (1991), 20.

¹⁴ Ibid., 23.

¹⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹⁶ SACP, *The Road to South African Freedom: The Programme of the South African Communist Party* (London, 1964), 27.

SACP put forward as its immediate proposals the establishment of a “national democratic state” (not a socialist state) whose main content would be the national liberation of the African people within the framework of the Freedom Charter.¹⁷ The SACP’s 1962 programme, not only “has remained the backbone of communist theory in South Africa ever since,”¹⁸ but also had long-lasting implications in shaping the strategy and tactics of the liberation movement as a whole.

The multi-racial alliance between the ANC, SAIC, CPC, COD, and SACTU found ideological expression in the Freedom Charter, adopted on 26 June 1955 at the Congress of the People. The Charter, which stated that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, *black and white*” and that “[a]ll national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride,”¹⁹ essentially sanctioned the multi-national, multi-racial approach of the Congress Movement, which the SACP also endorsed.

It was precisely with the multi-racialism of the Freedom Charter that the Africanists in the ANC strongly disagreed with. To them, the policy of multi-racialism amounted to the forfeiting by the ANC of “the Africans’ inalienable right to full ‘ownership’ of South Africa.” Rejecting the premises of multi-racialism as implying “a recognition of some distinctive difference between members of the human species,”²⁰ they argued that there was only “one race: the human race.”²¹ The Africanists thus “proclaimed themselves ‘nonracialists’ (who recognised people as individuals, not as members of racial

¹⁷ See SACP, *The Road to South African Freedom*.

¹⁸ Simon Adams, *Comrade Minister: The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy* (Huntington, 2001), 43.

¹⁹ “Freedom Charter,” adopted by the Congress of the People, 26 June 1955, document 11 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 205-8. Emphasis added.

²⁰ Robert Sobukwe, quoted in *Azania News*, London, 1966.

²¹ See “Manifesto of the Africanist Movement,” document 39b, in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 517-524.

groups)” and “professed to accept individuals of all colors [*sic*] as future citizens.”²² Finally, they “resented the formal equivalence of African and non-African groupings” in the Congress Alliance, in which the ANC enjoyed the status of ‘first among equals.’²³ The incorporation of the concept of multi-racialism into African politics in the 1950s had thus been fundamental to the Africanists’ discontent and their subsequent decision to form the PAC in 1959.

Setting up the ANC external mission: the “African image”

When Tambo left South Africa in late March 1960, the initial intention had been to establish an ANC external machinery of some kind. This project, however, had been overshadowed by a series of events which led instead to the formation of the SAUF. In fact, at the time the decision to send Tambo out was taken, there had been “no anticipation of the PAC [arising] as a factor outside or for that matter inside the country.”²⁴ The Sharpeville killings had ensured the PAC “overnight recognition” despite the relatively poor popular response to its anti-pass call on a national scale. As Karis and Gerhart have argued, “if police had not shot into the crowd of demonstrators that gathered at Sharpeville location outside Vereeniging on March 21, 1960, the day might have marked just one more abortive campaign in the history of African protest.”²⁵ Following Sharpeville, the problems which the PAC’s newly gained notoriety presented were temporarily overcome through the setting up of the SAUF. However, as the crisis in the SAUF developed, the question of external

²² Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 65.

²³ Dubow, “Thoughts on South Africa,” 67.

²⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

²⁵ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 332.

representation emerged again. In South Africa, the ANC and member organisations of the Congress Alliance “engaged in a very thorough discussion as to what was required to replace the SAUF.”²⁶

ANC concerns over projecting a genuinely “African image” played a major role in the formal reorganisation of the Congress Movement abroad following the dissolution of the SAUF, just as they had influenced its formation. The “image” problem had been revived by Mandela’s extensive reports of his discussions with leading African statesmen during his tour of the continent in the first half of 1962. On 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.”²⁷

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).²⁸ After the banning of the ANC in 1960, the possibility of reproducing outside the country the same Congress Alliance machinery that existed inside the country (in which certain sections were now legal and others illegal)²⁹ was rejected, as was the idea that each organisation in the

²⁶ UFH, Liberation Archive, 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.

²⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

²⁸ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 82.

²⁹ 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

Alliance should set up its own external mission, which would result in a counterproductive dispersion of energies and resources. Instead, it was agreed that the external mission should reflect the fundamental fact that the essence of the struggle at home was the liberation of the African people, which would in turn introduce democratic rights for all.³⁰ As a result of the discussions taking place within the Alliance, it was unanimously decided that an external mission of the ANC should be set up “to serve as representative not only of the ANC but the whole progressive movement in South Africa.”³¹ This meant “the establishment, especially in African capitals, of ANC missions led by ANC personnel.”³² Although it was felt that the image that the movement should project outside the country was that of an essentially ‘African’ struggle, “it was also understood that all members of the Alliance would be integrated in the external mission whenever possible.”³³ In view of the fact that central to the external mission work would be “obtaining the assistance and alliance of the African states,” this type of machinery was thought to be the most suitable one for facilitating the achievement of the movement’s aims, without having “to win converts in the African states to our concept of non-racial unity.”³⁴ Finally, some of the

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.

³⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

³¹ UFH, Liberation Archive, 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.

³² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

³³ UFH, Liberation Archive, 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.

³⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

organisational weaknesses inherent in the structure of the Congress Alliance would avoid being reproduced in external work.³⁵ According to Reg September:

None of us [i.e. the other organisations in the Congress Alliance] had the kind of mass support that the ANC had. None of us had the sort of foundations that the ANC had. None of us could expect the kind of support in Africa that the ANC could get. The understanding thus was that we would be all working together under the aegis of the ANC, who would lead the movement.³⁶

Despite being the subject of “comprehensive and at times acrimonious” debate,³⁷ these decisions “were then taken by the leadership at home of the entire Congress Alliance in 1962,”³⁸ and confirmed at the Lobatse Consultative Conference of October 1962, the first ANC Conference since 1959. Although the ANC was now a banned organisation, the majority of the fifty or more delegates³⁹ came from South Africa and met with their comrades now living in exile. It was during this conference that the ANC officially endorsed the decision to organise and prepare for armed struggle.⁴⁰ Up this point, the ANC National Executive had not officially embraced the turn to violence, although it granted that individual “members who undertook such activity would not be subject to disciplinary action.”⁴¹ Any public identification between the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe had been

³⁵ As for instance with regards to the formal equivalence of the constituent bodies in the Alliance, which did not accurately reflect their individual memberships. The difference between the ANC and the other organisations was also big in terms of experience, the ANC being the oldest organisation in the Alliance.

³⁶ Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

³⁷ See for instance Dadoo’s disagreement with Mandela discussed in the previous chapter.

³⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

³⁹ Among the delegates to the Lobatse Conference, chaired by Govan Mbeki, were Oliver Tambo, Yusuf Dadoo, Moses Kotane, Alfred Kgokong, Walter Sisulu and Moses Mabhida.

⁴⁰ UFH, Liberation Archive, 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.

⁴¹ Nelson Mandela, Statement during the Rivonia trial, 20 April 1964, document 75 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 777-778.

carefully avoided for security reasons.⁴² This ambiguity, however, had at the same time created a “widespread confusion among ANC members as to what the organisation’s official policy was,” as well as “a security hiatus that allowed a level of infiltration that subsequently destroyed the domestic arm of MK.”⁴³ One of the purposes of the Lobatse Conference, thus, was to clear such confusion.

The Conference emphasised the growing importance of the external mission, which was assigned the role of arranging for military training and support, and of carrying out international diplomatic and solidarity work. It also confirmed Oliver Tambo’s mandate from the ANC executive to confront such problems.⁴⁴ At this stage, however, a relatively strong leadership was still active inside South Africa which could issue directives for the external mission to carry out. Even after Mandela’s arrest in August 1962, the ANC and MK continued to function underground under the guidance of leaders such as Raymond Mhlaba (who succeeded Mandela as MK’s Commander-in-Chief), Walter Sisulu, Joe Slovo, and Govan Mbeki.

The decisions concerning the external organisational apparatus of the Congress Alliance were also approved by the SACP at its Sixth National Conference of November 1962, which acknowledged the changing character of the Congress Alliance since the banning of the ANC in April 1960. The SACP was concerned that “continued stress in

⁴² The first explicit link between the ANC with MK was made by Robert Resha in a public speech in London in late 1962. According to Rusty Bernstein, Resha had already made the same speech during a visit by an ANC delegation to one of the African countries. It remains unclear whether the claim had been authorised or not, but the ANC chose not repudiate it either. See Slovo, *The Unfinished Autobiography*, 151; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 238; and Sifiso M. Ndlovu, “The ANC in exile, 1960-1970,” in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, 435.

⁴³ Bernard Magubane, Philip Bonner, Jabulani Sithole, Peter Delius, Janet Cherry, Pat Gibbs and Thozama April, “The turn to armed struggle,” in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, 135.

⁴⁴ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 275.

public work on the ‘Alliance’ would give the impression that the ‘Congress Movement’ now consisting only of the South African Indian Congress, South African Congress of Trade Unions and South African Coloured People’s Congress – had inherited the leadership of the national liberation movement.” According to the SACP, a “distorted presentation of our image abroad” had created a situation in which:

It is the alliance which has been seen abroad, increasingly as the Congress movement, and not the real national organisations, vastly unequal in size and in importance which make it up. The effect has been, in propaganda abroad, to eclipse the leading role and nature of the ANC; and to mute the leading aim which is the liberation of the African majority.⁴⁵

The SACP identified the projection of such “false” image as the main reason for the alienation of “some people,” “especially in Africa.” In keeping to the notion of South Africa’s exceptionalism, the SACP observed that in the rest of the continent “there have been no significant elements in the White and Asian minority communities uncompromisingly joining the Africans’ freedom struggle.” Because of this, the “multi-racial democratic alliance in the struggle for national freedom is not understood or supported” by African leaders, whose “undifferentiated hostility towards Whites and Asians leads them to suspect or despise the policy of the national liberation movement in this country.” The image projected abroad thus needed correction though a change in organisational set-up, in order to make it clear that “the leader of this movement is and has always been the African National Congress.” This would not imply, as Mandela had concluded too, any change in the “essence” of the alliance, that is the “consultation and unity between the various congresses” at all times.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ “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, 1997), 358-364.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Rivonia and implications

Conditions in South Africa, however, were soon to alter dramatically. The police raid on Liliesfarm, Rivonia, on 11 July 1963, which led to the capture of virtually the whole of MK's National High Command (NHC), severely crippled both the military and political underground movement. Although the ANC was trying to minimise the seriousness of the arrests by claiming that it would only "lead to a redoubling of efforts to bring down the Verwoerd regime of repression, plunder and tyranny,"⁴⁷ Rivonia was a major setback for the ANC. Anthony Sampson reported at the time:

The ANC is certainly not dead [...] But the individual African leadership which has been prominent for the past ten years is now effectively incapacitated inside the Republic.⁴⁸

Soon after the Rivonia arrests, a second NHC was established.⁴⁹ In the period between July 1963 and September of the following year, the new High Command "had reactivated MK structures and mobilised 600 people in the Transvaal alone."⁵⁰ However, the capture and trial of the second NHC, in what became known as the 'little Rivonia trial,' "were the final blows for the internal political and military structures," which left the task of maintaining internal structures largely to the remaining SACP leaders, notably Bram Fischer.⁵¹ The smashing of the virtually the whole of the underground movement at the Rivonia and 'little Rivonia' trials in effect transformed the ANC into an organisation in exile. The external mission now found itself in the position of having to assume responsibility for the fate of

⁴⁷ *South African Freedom News*, Dar es Salaam: African National Congress of South Africa, 12 July 1963.

⁴⁸ *The Observer*, London, 1 March 1964.

⁴⁹ The second NHC included Wilton Mkwayi (Commander-in-Chief), Mac Maharaj, David Kitson, Laloo Chiba, and John Edward Matthews.

⁵⁰ Gregory Houston, "The post-Rivonia ANC/SACP underground," in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, 602.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 618.

the entire movement, including “organising for internal work, which had never been its job when established.”⁵²

The Rivonia raid and the umpteenth sweep of arrests which followed it gave way to the second significant wave of political exile after Sharpeville, which further transformed the initial conditions under which the ANC had been given mandate to represent the Congress Alliance internationally. In keeping to the idea of the “African image” and in trying to dispel the perception amongst African leaders that the ANC was an organisation controlled by white and Indian communists, 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. On the other hand, the UK, and London in particular, became the place of refuge for the majority of the white, Coloured and Indian exiles. This pattern of political exile created a somewhat anomalous situation in London, where a substantial community of South Africans formerly associated with the Congress Alliance established itself, but was left in “organisational limbo”⁵³ as a result of the decision that only the ANC should open offices abroad.

The choice of the UK for many South African exiles was in part determined by the practical need of earning a living,⁵⁴ 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, as for example Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo, Ruth First and Michael Harmel, “had been declared prohibited immigrants in Tanzania and had consequently been obliged to operate from Europe.”⁵⁵ Until the 1970s, the only notable

⁵² UFH, Liberation Archive, 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.

⁵³ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 36.

⁵⁴ Interview with Brian Bunting, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 22 November 2004.

⁵⁵ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 326.

exceptions were Jack Simons and Ray Alexander, who half-settled in Lusaka in 1965,⁵⁶ and Ben and Mary Turok. The Turoks, however, encountered problems as they tried to settle in Africa when they left South Africa in 1966. After illegally crossing the border into Botswana, Ben Turok was fetched from Lusaka by Tennyson Makiwane. The Zambian immigration office, however, only granted him a 48-hour permit, after which Turok went to Kenya where he was joined by his wife and children. The Turoks then tried to remain in Kenya but despite letters of credentials from the ANC to Joseph Murumbi (Kenya's vice-President) and Tom Mboya (Minister of Labour) and their determination to stay, the Turoks still failed to obtain a visa and work permit.⁵⁷ Ben Turok recalls that in their dealings with the Kenyan authorities: "everyone was polite but adamant that there was no place for us in Kenya and that we should leave for Britain."⁵⁸ In October 1966 Ben Turok and his family finally managed to settle in Dar es Salaam, where he got a job in the surveying division of the Tanzanian government.⁵⁹ This is how Turok came to understand the prohibitions against white comrades from South Africa:

Already in the days of Kwame Nkrumah the PAC had persuaded Africa's leaders that the ANC multiracialism was a mechanism for domination by white communists. [...] In Africa, where there was no equivalent group to South Africa's white progressives, this explanation was accepted. And so throughout the continent, white South African meant communist, and they wanted none of it.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Initially, the Simons' spent half of their time in Lusaka and half in Manchester, where Jack got a fellowship at the University of Manchester in 1965.

⁵⁷ Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first President, had been a leading Pan-African in the years of the struggle against British colonial rule (in 1945 he had attended, like Nkrumah and other future African statesmen, the Manchester Pan-African Conference). After Kenya became independent in December 1963, however, Kenyatta adopted a rather conservative foreign policy. Although Kenya formally condemned apartheid South Africa and Southern Rhodesia's UDI, it did not provide any direct support to liberation movements and was perceived to be as "well to the right of the more militant attitudes adopted by Zambia and Tanzania." Guy Arnold, *Kenyatta and the Politics of Kenya* (London, 1974), 171.

⁵⁸ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 191.

⁵⁹ In January 1969 even the Turoks joined the majority of the white exile community in the UK.

⁶⁰ Ben Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 199.

There might have been further reasons for such hostility. First, as the newly independent African states inherited a colonial bureaucratic and military system, immigration officials in countries such as Zambia and Kenya tended to be friendly with the British, their former colonial power, especially in the first few years after independence.⁶¹ Second, the resistance of African states to having white South African leaders of the opposition settling permanently within their countries' borders may have been the reflection of a certain insecurity on their part, as the high visibility of their presence could invite retaliation by apartheid South Africa.

By February 1965, ANC offices had been established in London, Algiers, Cairo, Lusaka and Dar es Salaam, where the organisation's provisional headquarters were located. These were in fact and practice ANC offices led by ANC personnel responsible to the ANC National Executive. (The only exception to this model in the 1960s was the ANC Asian mission in New Delhi, which was officially opened on 14 November 1967 and was run by Alfred Nzo as chief representative alongside Maulvi Cachalia of the Indian Congress.) Members of other organisations in the Alliance also participated in the work of these offices although "not at policy-making or decision-making level, [...] irrespective of the political status of the non-ANC person involved."⁶² In almost three years of existence, the ANC external mission could proudly boast that a tremendous amount of work had been

⁶¹ Like the Turoks, the Simons' also found the immigration officers in Zambia to be un-cooperative. This may have been because although Zambia "was favourably disposed towards the ANC, [...] it had inherited from the British colonial authority a civil service that included supporters and even agents of the South African government." Shubin, *ANC*, 66. See also Ray Alexander Simons, *All My Life and All My Strength*, edited by Raymond Suttner (Johannesburg, 2004), 303.

⁶² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH07, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

carried out, “in particular in relation to the new phase of the struggle,”⁶³ with numerous freedom fighters being sent for military training to a number of countries, including socialist countries. The external mission also served all sections of the Alliance by providing facilities for travelling, documents, and training. Most importantly, close working contacts had been established with African states, especially Tanzania, thanks to the effective projection of the “African image.” This representation was thought to have been so successful that “the PAC attempt to portray itself as the only African organisation in South Africa has hopelessly failed and in fact politically and ideologically the PAC has suffered complete rout in Africa.”⁶⁴ Why the ANC felt it could make such a claim at this stage will emerge from the analysis of PAC activities in the period 1962-1965 later in this chapter. In order to understand the significance of the internal debate over the “African image” the state of ANC relations with other African states, especially Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia, during this period will be examined first.

The assistance of independent African states, especially the so-called front line states,⁶⁵ to the South African liberation movements was without doubt vital to the latter’s endurance throughout the long exile period. It is also indisputable that for their active support, which took the form of material, financial, military, and moral aid, all the front line states paid a heavy price.⁶⁶ However, the relationship between the liberation movements and African governments was by no means straightforward or free of trouble. Although countries like Zambia and Tanzania later gave their full support, when the ANC and the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ The front line states were, as one after the other attained full independence, Tanzania (1961), Zambia (1964), Angola (1975), Mozambique (1975) and Zimbabwe (1980).

⁶⁶ See for example Phyllis Johnson and David Martin (eds.), *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War* (Harare, 1986), and William Minter, *Apartheid’s Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (Johannesburg, 1994).

PAC first moved into exile there was a widespread perception that the ANC “was not genuine, that we’re a communist front, and therefore we are after a Soviet agenda.”⁶⁷ Moreover, as it has already been suggested, from an ideological point of view, African states came from a different ideological background from that of the ANC. They also each had their own set of ideas as to what they thought was the ‘correct’ political path which the south African liberation movements should follow. Thus, the next three sections will try to convey some of the complexities in the early relations between the South African liberation movements and the governments of Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia, which in the 1960s represented the three most committed African countries to South Africa’s liberation.

Relations with Ghana

The first sub-Saharan country to win independence from colonial rule in 1957, Nkrumah’s Ghana had set the rest of the continent on a pace of rolling independence which soon left as colonies in Africa only the Spanish and Portuguese territories, French Somaliland, and the white minority regimes of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Ghana had assumed “the status of a prototype – a road which all African territories must travel, a vanguard of the ‘African revolution’.”⁶⁸ Nkrumah’s continental impact and influence cannot be overstated. Until his overthrow from power in 1966 and even beyond, Nkrumah acted as the leading advocate of African liberation and Pan-African unity, which he saw as the ultimate goal of Pan-Africanism. Nkrumah had proclaimed that Ghana’s independence would be

⁶⁷ Interview with Aziz Pahad, Cape Town, 14 February 2005.

⁶⁸ Opoku Agyeman, *Nkrumah’s Ghana and East Africa: Pan-Africanism and African Interstate Relations* (London, 1992), 28.

“meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African Continent,”⁶⁹ and he therefore took it on as his duty to “commit all the resources and energies of Ghana towards achieving Africa’s independence and unity.”⁷⁰ This he did through a foreign policy of ‘diplomatic offensive,’ non-alignment, and through a series of initiatives aimed at promoting African unity, which can be viewed as the forerunners to the formation of the OAU in 1963.⁷¹

Under the rule of Nkrumah’s Convention Peoples’ Party, Ghana understood the situation in South Africa within this framework of African unity. In order for the new independent African states to avoid being drawn into neo-colonial structures, apartheid South Africa had to be confronted or else, as Nkrumah noted:

If the African nations were united, those who practise neo-colonialism (and support apartheid) would adjust themselves to the new balance of forces in exactly the same way as the capitalist world has in the past adjusted itself to any other change in the balance of power.⁷²

In the years immediately before independence, Ghana’s South African policy had been one of “cautious dialogue.” This was due to the fact “that before independence, Ghana was ruled by a diarchy in which Britain controlled foreign policy and, therefore, defined Ghana’s attitude toward South Africa.” Furthermore, “Ghana remained tied indirectly to South Africa through the operation of British firms.”⁷³ This approach was reflected in the first All-African People’s Conference in 1958, which expressed the preference for non-

⁶⁹ Kwame Nkrumah’s midnight pronouncement at Ghana’s independence celebrations on March 6, 1957, in Kwame Nkrumah, *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah* (London, 1980), 77.

⁷⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, quoted in Agyeman, *Nkrumah’s Ghana and East Africa*, 30.

⁷¹ See S.E. Quarm, *Diplomatic Offensive: An Overview of Ghana’s Diplomacy Under Dr Kwame Nkrumah*, (Accra, 1997).

⁷² Quoted in E.K. Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa: An African Response to Apartheid*, Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1991, 68.

⁷³ Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa*, 71.

violent methods of struggle, although it also condoned the use of violence where no alternatives were available.⁷⁴

By 1960, however, the formation of a more radical African – including South African – policy had begun, triggered, in part, by “the nonchalant attitude toward the South African issue”⁷⁵ adopted by the French-speaking West African countries which had been drawn into the French Union by De Gaulle. On the question of violence/non-violence, the weight had now shifted towards the acceptance of violence. The Positive Action Conference of April 1960 (organised by Nkrumah to discuss the next steps after the French nuclear explosions in the Sahara), sanctioned the move away from non-violence. Sharpeville was also included on the Conference agenda. As Nkrumah wrote in this respect:

South Africa is probably the biggest impediment to the liberation and unity of the African continent and it is a question we must face realistically. For some time now, we have tried a line of policy, namely that if only one was patient and negotiated and tried to understand the problems of South Africa, then the situation would gradually begin to improve and little by little, racial oppression would disappear. However [...] our experience has proved this policy to be false.⁷⁶

Why then, given Nkrumah’s commitment to the liberation of South Africa, had the ANC not been able to establish itself in Ghana as late as mid-1965? Following the short-lived experience of the SAUF, during which Tennyson Makiwane had worked on behalf of the SAUF in the Accra office, the ANC had in fact been left unrepresented in Ghana and West Africa at large. This was due to Ghana’s open preference for the PAC over the ANC. The ANC, on the other hand had been unwilling to open facilities elsewhere in West Africa. In September 1961, contacts had been made with the Nigerian government for the ANC to set

⁷⁴ See Notes for Delegates to the All African People’s Conference to be held in Accra, Ghana, December 1958, Issued by the ANC, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/boycotts/accra58.html>.

⁷⁵ Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa*, 72.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Ibid., 72.

up an office in the country with Robert Resha as representative.⁷⁷ The office, however was never opened. Clearly, such was Ghana's international prestige that "it would not have been in the best interest of the struggle in South Africa to have had the ANC operating from some small insignificant corner in West Africa."⁷⁸ The organisation's international standing, especially in Africa, would have been weakened had it "appeared ostensibly that Congress was unaccepted by a country which was virtually the leading state on the African continent."⁷⁹

Regional dynamics in West Africa may also have influenced the decision by the ANC not to set up offices in a West African country other than Ghana. In fact, Ghana and Nigeria were part of two opposing blocs within the region, the former being a member of the Casablanca Group, and the latter being part of the Monrovia Group. The Casablanca Group, led by Ghana and composed of Guinea, Mali, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, and the government in exile of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale, was committed to the total liberation of Africa and to continental unity through the creation of a United States of Africa. At a conference in Casablanca in 1961, following the experience of the Congo crisis, Nkrumah had proposed the establishment of a military African High Command to ensure a common defence strategy to safeguard independent African states against neo-colonial aggression and to "provide military assistance for nationalist fighters in dependent territories."⁸⁰ The Monrovia Group, on the other hand, was opposed to Nkrumah's idea of an African High Command, which, according to the Nigerian Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar

⁷⁷ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 37 file 133, Confidential Supplementary Memorandum by Robert Resha, 19 September 1961.

⁷⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, file 1, Joe Matlou, Notes on the West African Mission, Morogoro, May 1966.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa*, 158-9.

Tafawa Balewa, would only lead to an escalation of the arms race and “draw Africa in the East-West imbroglio.”⁸¹ This group, consisting of Nigeria Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Togo, and Tunisia, and the French Brazzaville States was more concerned “with issues of territorial integrity, sovereignty, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs and hence the preservation of the old colonial boundaries,”⁸² than unity.

Arrangements to open an ANC office in Accra were finally made with the Bureau of African Affairs (a Ghanaian government body) and its Executive Secretary Ofori Baah⁸³ following a visit by a Bureau’s delegation to East Africa in 1965. In a letter to Tambo, Baah admitted that the relationship between the ANC and the Bureau had been weak in the past, and proposed that both parties put the past behind them and work at repairing relations. He also told Tambo that the ANC would “now have a new lease of life in Ghana.”⁸⁴ Tambo, on the other hand, reassured Baah that the Bureau could “count on the full cooperation of the ANC.”⁸⁵

The Bureau of African Affairs had been conceived by Nkrumah to support the struggles in Africa’s unliberated territories. It was responsible for identifying the key leaders of the liberation movements and for bringing them to Ghana to undergo ‘ideological’ and military training. George Padmore, who was one of Nkrumah’s closest advisors, headed the Bureau, which, together with Flagstaff House (consisting of Nkrumah

⁸¹ Quoted in Ibid., 159.

⁸² Ibid., 163.

⁸³ Baah had temporarily replaced A.K. Barden as Director of the Bureau. See Sifiso M. Ndlovu, “The ANC and the world”, in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, 555.

⁸⁴ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, O. Baah, Accra, to O.R. Tambo, Dar es Salaam, 8 July 1965.

⁸⁵ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, O.R. Tambo, Dar es Salaam, to O. Baah, Accra, 3 August 1965.

and his advisors) was responsible for shaping Ghana's African policy, including Southern African policy.⁸⁶

The first ANC office in Ghana was thus only opened towards the end of August 1965 with Joe Matlou as chief representative, despite the fact that the ANC had for many years wanted to establish an office there in preference to other West African states:

It had to be so, because the Ghana of Kwame Nkrumah was a revolutionary state which held a central position in the onward march of the African revolution. Her powerful approach to the problems of African liberation, national independence, African Nationalism and Unity gave her comparative supremacy and noted pre-eminence in the eyes of Africa, over many African states. Naturally, the ANC took cognizance of this fact, so did many other freedom fighters-organisations.⁸⁷

Matlou reported that, from the time of his arrival in Accra, "it was easy to detect a spirit of resistance to the ANC with some officials." Thus, the ANC urgently needed to make itself "freely acceptable" through a "systematic plan of work," consisting of a "scheme for publicity and propaganda."⁸⁸ The plan was mapped out to start in Ghana but ultimately to cover the whole of West Africa.⁸⁹ James Hadebe, the ANC chief representative in Dar es Salaam, concurred with Matlou on the burning need to finally put the ANC on the map by "paint[ing] bold the ANC letters in West Africa."⁹⁰ In September 1965, Matlou, however, informed headquarters that the Ghanaian government had not yet been able to find suitable office facilities for the ANC and that the Bureau of African Affairs was experiencing

⁸⁶ The Africa Bureau also ran a radio station, Radio Ghana (which broadcasted to the whole of Africa in several languages), and published a monthly magazine, *The Voice of Africa*, which had in the past carried out attacks on the ANC, and which had a PAC member on its editorial board. See Ndlovu, "The ANC in exile," 432.

⁸⁷ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Notes on the West African Mission, Morogoro, May 1966.

⁸⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Supplementary Report [n.d.].

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, James Hadebe, Dar es Salaam, to Joe Matlou, Accra, 26 August 1965.

difficulties in making arrangements to invite additional ANC representatives. Matlou was at this time still operating from his private flat in Accra.⁹¹

Although the PAC representatives in Ghana appeared to Matlou to be “very much worried about our presence here in what they have always considered to be their stronghold,”⁹² feelings of hostility towards the ANC “became intensified after the [October 1965] OAU Summit Conference”.⁹³ As the ANC representatives missed the meeting of Foreign Ministers, “not much was really achieved”⁹⁴ in terms of improving the ANC’s position in Ghana and West Africa at large during the OAU Conference. So, although some progress was discernible, “a solid layer of resistance towards the ANC”⁹⁵ persisted. Only in early January 1966 was Matlou granted a meeting with President Nkrumah, on which all that Matlou could comment was that he had a “brief but most inspiring”⁹⁶ interview.

On 24 February 1966 a CIA-sponsored coup by the Ghanaian army and police deposed Nkrumah and his ministers and the country’s constitution was suspended. The 1966 *coup d'état* had the effect of bringing the work of the ANC (as well as of all other liberation movements) in Ghana to a halt. In the first couple of months after Nkrumah’s overthrow, a period of uncertainty followed in regard to the status of African liberation movements in Ghana. The new National Liberation Council (NLC) military government

⁹¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Accra, to James Hadebe, Dar es Salaam, 28 September 1965.

⁹² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Accra, to O.R. Tambo, Morogoro, 3 November 1965.

⁹³ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Supplementary Report [n.d.]. The October 1965 OAU conference decided to cancel OAU aid to the Zimbabwean liberation movements on disunity grounds.

⁹⁴ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Accra, to O.R. Tambo, Morogoro, 3 November 1965.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Supplementary Report [n.d.].

adopted “a rather retreatist philosophy and bankrupt internationalism in relation to Pan-Africanism.”⁹⁷ The Bureau of African Affairs was wound up and the NLC junta initially informed all freedom fighters that they had to leave the country. The government subsequently reversed this position but the question of financial support to the liberation movements based in Ghana remained uncertain. Matlou raised this matter in a letter to the NLC secretariat dated 12 April 1966.⁹⁸ Financial support notwithstanding, the ANC ultimately decided that the Ghana office would be closed down,⁹⁹ and Matlou was recalled to headquarters in Morogoro. After travelling around West Africa with the view of finding an alternative base, Matlou had a meeting with NLC Chairman General Ankrah in which he informed him of his executive’s decision.¹⁰⁰ This was to be the end of the ANC’s West African endeavour.

In London, Africa Unity House, whose facilities both the ANC and the PAC had kept using as an office base after the collapse of the SAUF, was also closed down sometime in 1966 as a result of the coup and the ANC relocated to Rathbone Street.

⁹⁷ Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa*, 98-99.

⁹⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Report to Headquarters, 21 April 1966.

⁹⁹ Nkrumah’s overthrow in 1966 was interpreted by many African states as a serious setback in the ‘African revolution,’ and more specifically in the liberation of Southern Africa by the leaders of the Frontline states. Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Nyerere of Tanzania, for example, never granted the NLC diplomatic recognition. Guinea, Mali, and Uganda (as well as the Soviet Union and China) also broke off diplomatic relations with the NLC military regime.

¹⁰⁰ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 1, File 1, Joe Matlou, Accra, to Duma Nokwe, Morogoro, 3 August 1966.

Relations with Tanzania

In May 1963 the OAU was established by thirty-two African states in Addis Ababa. Its formation reflected the tensions between the new African leaders about the kind of unity they wanted. In the end, it was the gradualist approach of the Monrovia Group which prevailed at the conference, and the OAU Charter “[f]ar from a political union [...] rather laid emphasis on principles that would preserve individualism.”¹⁰¹ Although the OAU did not adopt Nkrumah’s proposed scheme of an African High Command, it did in its stead establish an African Liberation Committee, whose function was to support and advise liberation movements. PAFMECSA had been previously responsible for carrying out such role, “[b]ut, as distinct from PAFMECSA, of which the liberation movements were themselves members, they had to face the Liberation Committee Officials as supplicants rather than equals.”¹⁰² The Liberation Committee had its operating base in Dar es Salaam and was presided over by the Tanzanian Foreign Minister Oscar Kambona. Thus, Tanzania, having achieved independence in December 1961, quickly “became one of the most important focuses of exile activity and the Tanzanian government the most important supporter of the South African organisations.”¹⁰³

Tanzania’s President Julius Nyerere shared with Nkrumah the vision of a united Africa under one continental government. The two leaders, however, differed fundamentally on how to achieve such goal. Whereas Nkrumah called for immediate continental unification, Nyerere envisaged a regional or ‘step-by-step’ process, which would allow African countries to come together at their own pace. This difference in approach had fostered a rivalry between Nkrumah and Nyerere for continental pre-

¹⁰¹ Quarm, *Diplomatic Offensive*, 47.

¹⁰² Shubin, *ANC*, 67.

¹⁰³ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 298.

eminence as symbols of African radicalism.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Nyerere advocated a kind of socialism which, unlike Nkrumah's class-based, scientific socialism, was non-racialist, non-Marxist, and based on traditional concepts of self-reliance and cooperation.

The difference between Nkrumah's radicalism and Nyerere's gradualism and the rivalry between the two leaders may help to understand why the ANC was from the start able to establish friendly and productive contacts with Tanzania but found it hard to be accepted by Ghana. Because of Nkrumah's radicalism and essential Pan-Africanism, Ghana tended to be suspicious of whoever did not totally support its same primary policies. As seen in the previous chapter, the PAC shared a lot of affinities with Nkrumah's Pan-African vision. On the other hand, the ANC's multi-racial approach appeared out of sync with such vision.

The Tanzania mission of the ANC was established in 1963. After a brief period in which London had been the main base for the ANC in exile, Oliver Tambo decided to move the organisation's headquarters to Tanzania, "which had offered land for training camps and an office for the ANC in Dar es Salaam." The move was prompted by the demands of armed struggle, which, after the arrest of the bulk of MK's leadership at Rivonia in July 1963, would now have to be directed and coordinated from outside, under a reconstituted High Command.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Tanzania represented, at this point, the southernmost base from which military operations could be carried out. James Hadebe, who had previously represented the ANC in the Dar es Salaam office of the SAUF, was appointed chief representative. Moses Kotane, who Tambo had "expressly requested [...] be sent out to assist him and the Mission in Exile" because of his "broad-ranging views and

¹⁰⁴ See Agyeman, *Nkrumah's Ghana and East Africa*.

¹⁰⁵ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 293.

international experience,”¹⁰⁶ J.B. Marks, Robert Resha, Duma Nokwe, Mendi Msimang, Ruth Mompati and Thomas Nkobi were among those who helped establish the Tanzania mission. Despite a slow and difficult start in the early years due to a lack of resources, the ANC opened a further office in Morogoro, in the southeast of the country, and a base in Mbeya (which was responsible for helping with the clearing of incoming consignments such as food, medicines, clothing, house material, motor vehicles, and military stuff). A number of military camps for the training of freedom fighters, the first being at Kongwa,¹⁰⁷ were also gradually set up. Generous donations of land by the Tanzania government in later years allowed the ANC to begin projects such as SOMAFCO (The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, named after the executed MK fighter and started in 1979) and the ANC Development Centre (begun in 1982) at Mazimbu and Dakawa respectively.¹⁰⁸

Although the ANC was able to establish a constructive relationship with Tanzania over the years, this does not mean that it was hassle-free. Aziz Pahad has aptly described the ambivalent relationship between the ANC and Tanzania – and the front line states more generally – as one of “love and hate.”¹⁰⁹ In early 1965, for instance, the ANC was forced to move its headquarters from Dar es Salaam to Morogoro as a result of the Tanzanian government’s decision in November 1964 that only four members of each liberation movement would be allowed to maintain an office in the capital. Shubin has argued that the ANC external mission suffered from the transfer of headquarters to Morogoro, “a provincial town in Tanzania far from any international activity.”¹¹⁰ Again, in 1967, during

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 308.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter Five.

¹⁰⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Tanzania Mission Finding Aid.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Aziz Pahad, Cape Town, 14 February 2005.

¹¹⁰ Shubin, ANC, 70.

the period of the Arusha declaration, which made Ujamaa (i.e. Nyerere's brand of socialism) the official ideology and policy of Tanzania, Ben Turok noticed that:

[C]onflicting signs came from Nyerere and the government. On the one hand we were given to understand that a revolution had been unleashed which would change the whole character of Tanzanian society. On the other hand, there was caution and moderation. This was also true about how the way Tanzania treated the liberation movements. On the one hand the ANC, PAC, Swapo, Zapu, Frelimo, MPLA and so on had offices in Dar es Salaam and enjoyed the protection of the Tanzanian government. At the same time the government was obviously anxious about the presence of so many revolutionaries and militants and often very critical of them. Sometimes we were referred to as 'revolutionaries' and at others as 'Wakimbizi' (refugees, or more literally, runaways) and subjected to derogatory comments in the official press and even by Tanu leaders.¹¹¹

As an example of this, Turok has told how, at a student symposium on the liberation movements which the ANC had been invited to address, the ANC eventually withdrew from the meeting because of an attack in *The Daily Nation* (Tanzania's national newspaper) "which portrayed the [liberation] movements as cowardly and content to enjoy the fruits of exile."¹¹²

Relations with Zambia

After independence in October 1964, under President Kenneth Kaunda Zambia was another country which became deeply committed to the liberation of southern Africa through the active support of the liberation movements. Anglin and Shaw have argued that Zambia's foreign policy was shaped by three ideological principles or values: Humanism, Pan-Africanism and positive non-alignment. Humanism advocated the establishment of a social order based on racial equality and respect. It was developed by Kaunda in direct response to the racism and racial inequality and conflict both domestically (as a result of Zambia's own

¹¹¹ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 202.

¹¹² Ibid., 203.

colonial experience) and in the region. Like Nkrumah and Nyerere, Kaunda was also a strong believer in continental cooperation, thus his insistence on the unity of the liberation movements in individual countries. This belief in African unity also meant that Zambia's foreign policy was influenced by the OAU and its decisions. Finally, non-alignment was seen as central to Zambia's economic disengagement from South Africa and Rhodesia and its development within the framework of an alternative economic order.¹¹³

The ANC, PAC, SWAPO, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola (MPLA), the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA), the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), and the Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique (COREMO) all established a presence – some only provisionally and others long term – in the country. Recognised liberation movements were granted administrative facilities at the African Liberation Centre, located on the outskirts of Lusaka and established in 1965.¹¹⁴ Sharing borders with Angola, South African occupied Namibia, Southern Rhodesia and Mozambique, Zambia was strategically positioned to offer a base for the liberation movements' military operations. Ronnie Kasrils summed up the country's strategic significance when in a letter to his wife Eleanor in 1978 he wrote that Zambia "is smack in the front line struggle against Rhodesia and Pretoria [...]. Geo-politically this country is placed at the strategic crossroads of the battle to liberate southern Africa, and Kaunda is four-square behind us."¹¹⁵ Although Kaunda expressed a preference for a peaceful solution

¹¹³ Douglas G. Anglin and Timothy M. Shaw, *Zambia's Foreign Policy: Studies in Diplomacy and Dependence* (Boulder, 1979).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 241.

¹¹⁵ Ronnie Kasrils, 'Armed and Dangerous,' *My Undercover Struggle Against Apartheid* (London, 1993), 181-182.

to Southern Africa's problems, he came to recognise that violence was not only inevitable but necessary because of the offensive waged by the white regimes to the South.¹¹⁶ However, because of its geography, its economic dependence on the South and its support for the liberation movements, Zambia was especially exposed to attacks and reprisals by white-ruled Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Zambia therefore granted freedom fighters transit rights through the country but forbid, at least until 1974, the establishment of military training centres (such as the ones set up in Tanzania) because of the internal and external security risks involved. Thus, apart from the designated liberation movements' officials, military personnel had no rights of residence and their permit to stay in the country was usually limited to a few days.¹¹⁷

Although both the ANC and the PAC were represented in Zambia in the beginning, Zambia completely severed relations with the latter. In August 1968 the PAC was banned in the country and forty-five of its members were deported to Tanzania for breaching regulations by which nationalist organisations had to abide, internecine strife, and their alleged involvement in a plot to assassinate Zambian ministers and to overthrow Kaunda.¹¹⁸ In September 1967, the PAC's internal squabbles and perceived inefficiency had prompted the Liberation Committee of the OAU to temporarily suspend all aid.¹¹⁹ It was only thanks to the intervention and support of the Tanzanian government that this was resumed and that the PAC was saved from the verge of collapse.

Ideologically, it could be argued that Kaunda's Humanism may have been closer to the ANC's ideology than to the PAC's. Acting on the principle of non-racialism, Zambia's ruling party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), had accepted whites as

¹¹⁶ See Kenneth David Kaunda, *On Violence*, edited by Colin M. Morris (London, 1980).

¹¹⁷ Anglin and Shaw, *Zambia's Foreign Policy*, 243-244

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 254. See also Lodge, *Black Politics*, 312.

¹¹⁹ The OAU also withdrew assistance to SWANU and Holden Roberto's FNLA.

members since the days of the fight for independence.¹²⁰ Still, in the early exile period, the South African question ranked rather low in comparison to the Portuguese territories and, most importantly for Zambia, the Rhodesian regime. It was only after Mozambique, Angola, and Zimbabwe won their independence that South Africa (and Namibia) became the centre stage of the liberation struggle and that the ANC emerged as the main liberation movement in Zambia. Until then, finding a solution in Rhodesia remained Zambia's top priority. Rhodesia in fact “was the country with which Zambia had had the closest associations in the past” and “initially appeared to be the most promising country for early independence.”¹²¹ This is further exemplified by the fact that Tanzania remained the base of the ANC’s headquarters until 1977. Only then was the ANC able to move its operational centre closer to South Africa by transferring its provisional headquarters to Lusaka.

Zambia’s uneasy geo-political position helps to account for the negotiations she entered with the white settler regimes at various stages. In April 1969, Zambia, Tanzania and twelve other states in East and Central Africa adopted (without prior consultation or knowledge of the liberation movements) the Lusaka Manifesto, which was later endorsed by both the OAU and the UN General Assembly. The Manifesto referred to South Africa as “an independent Sovereign state and a member of the United Nations” whose “internal affairs” were, from a legal point of view, “a matter exclusively for the people of South Africa,” and expressed preference for dialogue and peaceful change in southern Africa. The document also contained the ambiguous phrase that “even if international law is to exclude the active assistance to the South African opponents of apartheid, it does not demand that the comfort and support of human and commercial intercourse should be given to a

¹²⁰ Simon Zukas and Thomas Fox-Pitt were both UNIP members. See Zukas, *Into Exile*.

¹²¹ Anglin and Shaw, *Zambia’s Foreign Policy*, 16.

government which rejects the manhood of most humanity.”¹²² The moderate and conciliatory tone of the Lusaka Manifesto created for some time a climate of uncertainty in the continued support of the front line states and, more generally, of African states for the liberation movements in Southern Africa. Furthermore, “the failure to consult the ANC or the PAC was a humiliating exposure of their diplomatic weakness,” as well as of their dependence on the goodwill of African states, which meant that although the Manifesto was seen as a setback to the liberation struggle in southern Africa, the ANC and the other liberation movements could not afford to publicly criticise it.¹²³

The Lusaka Manifesto led to a cooling of relations between the ANC on one hand, and Zambia and Tanzania on the other. These two states had come under great South African pressure, and were starting to feel increasingly isolated in the region. According to Shubin, during this period, “ANC activities in African countries were faltering. After the failure in Zimbabwe,¹²⁴ Umkhonto lost its capacity to operate from Zambian territory. Some of the Tanzanian leadership looked with suspicion at the presence of non-Africans and communists in the ANC.”¹²⁵ In July 1969 the ANC was given a fourteen days notice by the Tanzanian authorities to vacate its military camp at Kongwa on the grounds that the continued presence of MK cadres had become a security risk. As a result, the ANC had to evacuate most of its army to the USSR before it was able to obtain permission for returning MK fighters to Tanzania.¹²⁶

¹²² The Lusaka Manifesto, reproduced in *Pro Veritate*, 13 (1975), 14-16.

¹²³ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 35.

¹²⁴ This is described in Chapter Five.

¹²⁵ Shubin, *ANC*, 97.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

The PAC/Poqo underground and moves to crush unity, c. 1960-1962

The imprisonment of Sobukwe alongside the bulk of the PAC's leadership in March 1960 had placed the Africanist movement "in a virtual state of suspense."¹²⁷ In December 1959, the national leaders of the PAC had largely underestimated the organisation's strength when they decided to launch an ambitious anti-pass campaign the following year. This became evident once the PAC and the ANC were outlawed in April 1960. If the ANC had been caught unprepared for the government's crackdown after Sharpeville, the PAC has been viewed as being even more ill-equipped for illegality.¹²⁸ Firstly, it should be noted that the banning came after barely one year of existence, and the party lacked the experience and organisational skills that the ANC had been able to build during almost five decades of existence. The teaching background of many PAC leaders has also been invoked as a factor in trying to explain some of the PAC's organisational shortcomings.¹²⁹ Secondly, the slogan of "No bail, no defence, no fine!" adopted by the PAC during the March 1960 anti-pass (or, as the PAC called it, Positive Action) campaign resulted in many of its leaders being served relatively long prison sentences. They included the PAC President Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, sentenced to three years imprisonment on a charge of incitement, General Secretary Potlako Kitchener Leballo, sentenced to two years, most of the national executive committee members, as well as a large number of national, provincial and regional organisers. The slogan responded to the PAC's belief that the leadership should lead the masses by heroic example and its criticism of the ANC leadership for having "too often been ready to choose safety over danger," as when they prematurely called off the

¹²⁷ Pogrund, *Sobukwe*, 183.

¹²⁸ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 341.

¹²⁹ As state employees, teachers were prohibited from taking part in organised politics. See Lodge, "The Pan-Africanist Congress," 106.

Defiance Campaign.¹³⁰ The leaders of the PAC however had not only underestimated the severity of these prison sentences, and but also they had taken “only the most desultory precautions to install a chain of command which could function in their absence.”¹³¹ The unfolding of events in the days immediately after Sharpeville initially encouraged the PAC leaders in prison to think that they were “creating history.”¹³² But as the regime struck back with all its might, the leaders of the PAC came to a more sombre assessment of the situation and even began to question whether they had adopted the correct tactic.¹³³ Thirdly, the PAC tended to rely on “inspirational leadership and appropriate slogans” rather than on political strategy.¹³⁴ This had left an aura of uncertainty as to what the future of the positive action campaign would be.¹³⁵ On 21 March 1960, PAC leaders were to show the way by turning themselves in for arrest at police stations throughout the country. Then the African masses, coiled like a spring and ready to unleash their revolutionary potential, would simply follow their example. By making the system unworkable, the campaign would lead to the abolition of the pass laws, and this would be a stepping stone on the way to independence. In his last instructions to PAC branches on the eve of the anti-pass demonstrations Sobukwe had spoken of the struggle ahead as being an “unfolding one, one campaign leading on to another in a NEVER-ENDING STREAM – until independence is won.”¹³⁶ However, other than this general notion that the campaign would trigger off a snowballing revolutionary process which would lead to freedom by 1963, the PAC had no

¹³⁰ Gerhart, *Black Power*, 230.

¹³¹ Lodge, “The Pan-Africanist Congress,” 108.

¹³² Pogrund, *Sobukwe*, 154.

¹³³ Ibid., 169.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 106-7.

¹³⁵ Gerhart, *Black Power*, 234.

¹³⁶ R.M. Sobukwe, “To All Regions and Branches of PAC,” document 50 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 570. Original emphasis.

clear political programme of how this would be achieved. When it was outlawed in April 1960 the PAC was thus left without much direction or leadership for its reconstitution, both underground and in exile.

Despite this lack of preparation, the PAC was nevertheless able to inspire “the largest active clandestine organisation of the 1960s,”¹³⁷ Poqo (meaning “pure” or “alone” in Xhosa). Poqo’s insurrectionism has been analysed in detail by Tom Lodge. A few general points about Poqo will be summarised here. Following Sharpeville, underground political mobilisation occurred especially in those regions where the PAC had enjoyed substantial support, i.e. the area known as the Vaal triangle, Pretoria, the Cape Peninsula and the Boland region. In particular, Langa (Cape Town) and Paarl emerged as the most dynamic centres of activity, and it was here that PAC supporters first identified themselves as Poqo.¹³⁸ The impetus for the initiatives which took place in the western Cape in this period came from ‘below,’ was largely autonomous and localised in nature, and, at least in the beginning, had no connection with either the remnants of the PAC leadership in South Africa or those who had started to regroup in exile.¹³⁹ In the Transvaal, on the other hand, the movement “was motivated less by local causes and social tensions and more by the strategic conception of those members of the PAC’s national executive who remained at liberty or who had been released from prison.”¹⁴⁰

In terms of political theory, Poqo had “no public statement of aims or ideology other than a reputation of a generalized support for Sobukwe and the PAC and an ‘all-out’

¹³⁷ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 241.

¹³⁸ For the usage of the word Poqo see Lodge, “The Poqo insurrection,” 179-180, and Plaatjie, “The PAC’s internal underground activities,” 678.

¹³⁹ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 341.

¹⁴⁰ Lodge, “The Poqo insurrection,” 183.

determination to smash white rule.”¹⁴¹ Poqo’s message had millenarian undertones and its rhetoric was often crudely anti-white. As Lodge has argued, the PAC’s Africanist ideology as it had been articulated in the 1959 Manifesto (for example its Pan-African outlook, its views on communism, and its stance on racial minorities) did not feature in Poqo’s message. With most of the party’s intellectuals now locked up in jail, the original ideology of the PAC had become stripped of its theoretical refinements. Africanism was reduced “to a set of catchphrases, those which resonated most strongly with the experience and preoccupations of men who had been forced off the land, whose families were subjected to all sorts of official harassment, whose children lived on the margins of starvation, and who experienced every relationship with authority in terms of conflict, whether at the work place, in the compound, or in the reserve.”¹⁴² A one-man government-appointed commission of enquiry into Poqo, the Snyman Commission, argued in 1963 that the ideological tenets of the PAC were fully comprehended only by the upper echelons of the PAC/Poqo leadership.¹⁴³ For the majority of Poqo militants, “a generation [...] to whom action proceeded political theory and operation superseded strategy,” the movement’s appeal laid in the immediacy of its aims and results, rather than in long-term planning based on a clearly understood political philosophy.¹⁴⁴

In the period between 1961 and 1963, the resentment and grievances of Poqo militants found expression in a series of outbreaks of violence which included the murder of suspected informers, policemen, and of those individuals perceived to be state collaborators (for example, those headmen and chiefs who were assisting the state in the

¹⁴¹ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 669.

¹⁴² Lodge, “The Pan-Africanist Congress,” 112.

¹⁴³ Muriel Horrell, *Action, Reaction and Counter-Reaction: A Brief Review of Non-white Political Movements in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1971), 54.

¹⁴⁴ Kondlo, “In the twilight of the Azanian Revolution,” 289.

implementation of Bantu Authorities). In late 1962, Kaiser Matanzima was the target of several (failed) assassination attempts because of his application to become Paramount Chief of Thembuland.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, from the beginning, Poqo was involved in the killing of whites and in its messages it often conveyed the idea that it was preparing for a war against whites. According to Mathabatha, talk that they were going to “kill the whites” was an important appealing factor in Poqo’s recruitment process.¹⁴⁶ The type of violence practiced by Poqo responded to the principle that “the last shall be first and the first shall be last” and, as Gail Gerhart has argued, performed a “cathartic” function in a Fanonian sense.¹⁴⁷ Fanon described the oppressed masses as having “an intuition that liberation can only be achieved by violence, for violence is the only thing capable of breaking the colonisers’ power. Moreover, the oppressed sense that their own emotional health can only be restored through violence.”¹⁴⁸

The most widely publicised attacks on white civilians occurred in November 1962, when a crowd of Poqo men killed two and seriously injured three white residents in Paarl, and in February 1963, when five people were murdered near the Bashee River Bridge in the Transkei. These acts of violence against the white civilian population were carried out without the prior knowledge or sanction of the PAC national structures, and have been interpreted by historians as autonomous responses to local problems on the ground.¹⁴⁹ Although the drive for striking against whites initially came from ‘below,’ the PAC leaders went along with this practice once they claimed Poqo as their own. That they did so can

¹⁴⁵ See Maaba, “The PAC’s war against the state,” 274-278.

¹⁴⁶ Mathabatha, “The PAC and POQO in Pretoria,” 311.

¹⁴⁷ Gerhart, *Black Power*, 14.

¹⁴⁸ Franz Fanon, quoted in *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ See Lodge, *Black Politics*, 244-5, and Maaba, “The PAC’s war against the state,” 285.

perhaps find ideological explanation in that the PAC viewed the white group as non-indigenous to South Africa – as opposed to the indigenous black majority.¹⁵⁰

Poqo's insurrectionist impulses from 'below' did however come to entwine with the PAC's apocalyptic vision of a general uprising that would be set off by "a few exemplary acts of heroism."¹⁵¹ By the end of 1962, PAC/Poqo cells in South Africa had become conscious of a plan of a country-wide uprising which would be directed from above by the exiled leadership now in Maseru.¹⁵²

How did this coordination come about? Immediately after the PAC's banning in April 1960 there followed a period of confusion among those leaders who had escaped arrest as to what the future role of the organisation would be. Prior to his release in September 1960, the PAC Secretary for Publicity and Information, Z.B. Molete, had been appointed Acting President by Sobukwe through the emergency powers accorded to him by the Presidential Decree adopted by the last PAC Conference in December 1959. The same decree authorised the appointment of Joe Molefi to act as National Treasurer.¹⁵³ Molete, now in charge of leading the organisation, communicated reports to and received instructions from the leaders in jail through visits and the smuggling of messages. Despite these measures, a high degree of uncertainty still reigned – not least, it would seem, because of Molete's indecisive style of leadership.¹⁵⁴ Both Molete and Molefi participated in the December 1960 Orlando Consultative Conference of African leaders and initially

¹⁵⁰ Lodge, "The Pan-Africanist Congress," 104-105.

¹⁵¹ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 246.

¹⁵² Ibid., 244.

¹⁵³ UFH, National Heritage Cultural Studies Centre, PAC Tanzania Office, Box 24, "Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa: Background to official appointments and policy statement," signed by P.K. Leballo and J.N. Poleka, Maseru, 20 June 1964.

¹⁵⁴ Lodge, "The Poqo insurrection," 184

agreed with the idea of an All-In Conference to be organised by a Continuation Committee with representatives from all organisations.¹⁵⁵

It was only after some PAC leaders were released on bail around the beginning of 1961 that the situation started to change. The decision that some PAC leaders should now apply for bail – which some members interpreted as a betrayal of the PAC’s “No bail, no defence, no fine!” slogan under which the Positive Action campaign had been launched¹⁵⁶ – stemmed from the realisation that in prison they had become completely isolated from their following outside. Where bail was not allowed, appeals were lodged to the Supreme Court (including for Sobukwe, although apparently without his prior knowledge). In any event, most of these appeals were turned down.¹⁵⁷ However, one member of the PAC executive, Matthew Nkoana, was released in early 1961 after paying his fine. Nkoana, who had served his sentence with Sobukwe, carried with him specific “instructions to crush moves to unity.”¹⁵⁸ This was because Sobukwe and other PAC leaders in prison believed that the political thinking behind the All-In Conference was of one of “pre-1960 tactics of demonstrations,” which the PAC had already surpassed with the launch of its Positive Action campaign.¹⁵⁹ Thus, it was the release of Nkoana that prompted the withdrawal of the PAC representatives from the All-In Conference. Moreover, Nkoana rejected an invitation by Mandela to join in the anti-republic protest and was responsible for orchestrating opposition to the May 1961 stay-at-home.¹⁶⁰ The PAC’s turnabout on its participation in

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ The decision to apply for bail by some PAC leaders fuelled a leadership conflict between Clarence Makwethu and Christopher Mlokothi in the Western Cape region. See Plaatjie, “The PAC’s internal underground activities,” 672-674.

¹⁵⁷ Pogrund, *Sobukwe*, 169.

¹⁵⁸ Matthew Nkoana, quoted in Lodge, “The Poqo insurrection,” 184.

¹⁵⁹ Driver, *Patrick Duncan*, 194.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 184-5.

the All-In Conference had severe repercussions on endeavours to create a degree of African unity in South Africa and, correspondingly, on the union established abroad between the ANC and the PAC through the SAUF.

Meanwhile, Mahomo and Molotsi, who had slipped out of South Africa on the eve of the anti-pass demonstrations with the task of raising funds for the organisation and of mobilising the international community, had been able to set up some rudimentary contact points for the PAC in Accra, London and Cairo thanks to the relations they established through the SAUF. No coordination, however, was in place between these various centres, which operated discretely and not under the direction of a central authority. This lack of centralisation remained a chronic problem for the PAC in exile even after the creation of more stable external structures – to the extent that there was sometimes a perception (even among its own members) that different PACs existed in different parts of the world.¹⁶¹

The PAC in Basutoland

British intelligence reports from the first half of the 1960s provide a detailed account of the activities of the PAC in one of Britain's Protectorates: Basutoland. These sources will be linked to the existing literature on the PAC/Poqo underground from 1960 to 1963. What emerges is a very clear picture of what the PAC was up to during this period – something which cannot be established with the same accuracy for the ANC (or for that matter for the PAC in the second half of the decade). Before turning to the PAC's activities in Basutoland, why and how the organisation arrived to stay in the Protectorate will be established.

¹⁶¹ Kondlo, "In the twilight of the Azanian Revolution," 128.

As the previous section has argued, Molete, Molefi, Nkoana and a few other leaders had provided some initial, limited guidance for the PAC's reorganisation underground after March 1960. In April 1962, the General Secretary of the PAC, P.K. Leballo, emerged from prison with several others. A more serious effort to bring together the various parts of the organisation into a unitary structure and to link the underground movement with the leaders in exile was now initiated under Leballo's leadership. After his release, Leballo had immediately been served with a banning order confining him to a remote area of Natal. Having been born in Basutoland, he successfully appealed to the South African government and was granted permission to leave the country.¹⁶² He arrived in Maseru in August 1962, where he joined the growing number of PAC refugees who had been arriving in Basutoland since the time of the organisation's banning. The PAC exile community in Basutoland had up until this point been loosely organised, little politically active, and their connections with the PAC/Poqo militants in South Africa limited.

That a substantial number of South Africa refugees had established themselves in Basutoland can be explained by virtue of the long-standing links between Africans in the two countries. Basutoland's economy depended on the massive export of its labour force (Halpern provided a figure of some forty-three per cent in 1965) to South Africa, where up to six-hundred and fifty-thousand migrant Basotho workers lived at any one time.¹⁶³ Moreover, it was quite common for the sons of chiefs and of middle-class Basotho to go to South Africa to continue their secondary studies, most notably at Fort Hare, the only African University College in the whole of southern Africa.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, during the 1940s

¹⁶² Karis and Gerhart, *Political Profiles*, 55. For Leballo's biographical details see also Lodge, "The Pan-Africanist Congress," 106, and Joel Bolnick, "Potlako Leballo – The man who hurried to meet his destiny," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29 (1991), 413-442.

¹⁶³ Jack Halpern, *South Africa's Hostages: Basutoland Bechuanaland and Swaziland* (1965), 135.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 141.

and 1950s, many Basotho had become involved in South African politics through the activities of the ANC and its Youth League either through their work or education. The President of the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), Ntsu Mokhehle, had been educated at Fort Hare and it was here that he had first come into contact with formal politics. He became a member of the ANC Youth League and established personal friendships with ANC leaders, including Tambo and Mandela. After returning to Basutoland Mokhehle founded the BCP (formerly known as the Basutoland African Congress) in 1952 to rally the Basotho for Basutoland's independence and against its incorporation by South Africa. It was with the help of the ANC, which provided initial political guidance as well as a model and source of inspiration, that the BCP gradually grew into being the strongest political Party in Basutoland.¹⁶⁵

As ANC and PAC refugees flocked to Basutoland to escape political prosecution in South Africa during the 1960 State of Emergency, they were initially all welcomed by the BCP. However, by September 1961, the BCP's attitude towards ANC refugees in Basutoland had changed into one of active hostility. Communism and Pan-Africanism were the two main issues of contention between the ANC and the BCP. After attending the 1958 All African People's Conference, Mokhehle had become a member of its Steering Committee and in the process had come under the powerful influence of Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism. As evidence of the close relations between Ghana and the BCP, in 1960 the BCP was invited to set up an office in Accra by the Ghanaian government. The BCP was also given another office at Unity House in London.¹⁶⁶ Just before the BCP Conference of December 1960, Mokhehle expelled fourteen delegates from the Transvaal claiming he had discovered a plot to murder him. According to Halpern, these were "mostly veteran BCP-

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 141-145.

¹⁶⁶ Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 116.

ANC members.”¹⁶⁷ Mokhehle now accused the ANC, which, like the PAC, he claimed was being controlled by the SACP, of trying to take over the BCP.¹⁶⁸ He denounced the leaders of the ANC in exile as “cowards,” attacked Mandela for “causing a mess” in South Africa (referring to the police round up of up to ten thousand Africans in view of the May 1961 stay-at-home),¹⁶⁹ and declared “I hate these so-called freedom fighters who are mostly communist inspired and are interested in crippling the nationalist movements by their tricks and infiltration.”¹⁷⁰ Having already gained a reputation for being anti-white, Mokhehle now became a fervent supporter of the PAC, whose leader Sobukwe he praised with admiration.¹⁷¹ The reason for the turnaround in BCP-ANC relations was, according to Mokhehle, a meeting between the BCP executive and four ANC leaders (Mandela, Sisulu, Kotane and Joe Matthews) in January 1961. Mokhehle claimed that the ANC leaders put forwards a number of requests at this meeting, including press support of the anti-Republican stay-away in May 1961, the setting up a printing press in Basutoland which would exclude PAC propaganda, the staging of parallel demonstrations in Basutoland, and the demand for immediate self-government. Mokhehle viewed these requests as an attempt to interfere in the affairs of the BCP and to undermine his authority within the organisation.¹⁷²

The PAC, on the other hand, enjoyed more than friendly relations with the BCP. Leballo’s Basotho origins and his personal links with the BCP were significant in ensuring this. Leballo was in fact a founding member and secretary of the Transvaal branch of the

¹⁶⁷ Halpern, *South Africa’s Hostages*, 156.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 161.

¹⁶⁹ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 363.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Halpern, *South Africa’s Hostages*, 161-2.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., 163. See also Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 107.

BCP.¹⁷³ Until December 1960, when dual membership became forbidden by the BCP, many BCP members in South Africa had also been members of the ANC or the PAC. The Transvaal BCP membership, under Leballo's influence, had taken an active part in the Africanists' break from the ANC and the events of March 1960. At the same time, the Transvaal branch of the BCP had aided the BCP's electoral victory in January 1960 through their postal votes as well as by making funds available to the BCP in Basutoland. The BCP thus found itself in a delicate position in its relations with the PAC. It felt obliged to assist the PAC in Basutoland because of the important support it had received from the Transvaal branch of the BCP. Moreover, it had to contend with the possibility that future elections in Basutoland would continue to include the expatriate Basotho (among them the pro-PAC Transvaal BCP members).¹⁷⁴

Unlike the PAC, which shared office facilities with the BCP in Maseru, the ANC was unable to set up a formal presence in Basutoland. The downside of the help the PAC received from the BCP was that this turned out to be instrumental to the PAC's survival in the country, and when the Basutoland National Party (BNP) won the next elections with the approval of the British colonial administration in 1965, the PAC was forced to abandon its Maseru headquarters. Moreover, as it will emerge, the PAC in Maseru got itself deeply involved in the local politics of Basutoland, largely to its own detriment.

The Presidential Council of the PAC and plans for a general uprising

After Leballo's arrival in Maseru in August 1962 the first external headquarters of the PAC were set up in Basutoland, and an office was opened in Bonhomme House under his

¹⁷³ Lodge, "The Pan-Africanist Congress," 106.

¹⁷⁴ Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 94, 97.

command. Leballo allegedly carried with him a letter dated 25 August 1962 which outlined new orders from the President (by the powers vested in him by the Presidential Decree) to form a Presidential Council from among the NEC members, Chairmen, and Vice Presidents who had survived arrest. Although Sobukwe's letter is mentioned in a statement issued by Leballo in 1964, there is no other proof of the existence of such a letter. Leballo took over from Molete the post of Acting President, and the latter was now appointed Secretary for Publicity and Information. The other office holders of the Presidential Council were John Nyathi Pokela (Acting Secretary), Elliot A. Mfaza (National Organiser), and Zephanaia Mothopeng (replacing Molefi as Acting National Treasurer). Other members included P.L. Gqobose and Templeton M. Ntantala. In accordance with the same Presidential Decree, the Presidential Council now assumed "absolute powers to rule, govern, direct and administer the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa during all the time the movement is banned and in revolution."¹⁷⁵ These powers in effect meant a suspension of the PAC constitution which removed democratic processes and from now on allowed Leballo to run the PAC "on a permanent state of emergency."¹⁷⁶

Leballo's instatement as Acting President, his (mis)use of emergency powers, and the appointment of the Presidential Council, were regarded by some PAC members as unilateral actions taken by Leballo. On the other hand, Leballo would invoke the Presidential Decree mentioned above to defend himself from what he perceived as threats to his leadership. In 1966 Matthew Nkoana wrote a long letter to Leballo in which he argued, among other things, that the taking on of absolute powers by Leballo was unconstitutional because:

¹⁷⁵ UFH, National Heritage Cultural Studies Centre, PAC Tanzania Office, Box 24, "Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa: Background to official appointments and policy statement," signed by P.K. Leballo and J.N. Poleka, Maseru, 20 June 1964.

¹⁷⁶ Plaatjie, "The PAC in exile," 710.

The special absolute powers you [Leballo] refer to [...] were conferred on the President [Sobukwe] in anticipation of a particular campaign [i.e. the Positive Action campaign]. The [December 1959 PAC] Conference took this extraordinary step purely as an emergency measure to enable the President to prosecute that campaign. We who were responsible for its passage never intended it as a permanent measure [...]. We said in the resolution that the President's invocation of these powers was subject to review at the next Annual National Conference.¹⁷⁷

Leballo's entrenchment at the top of the PAC had far reaching repercussions. From now on, it would be impossible to discuss the history of the PAC without making reference to Leballo, for Leballo came to symbolise the PAC and the PAC Leballo. As Nkoana put it, "you [Leballo] seem to think Leballo is the Party and the Party is Leballo."¹⁷⁸ The recognition accorded to Leballo and his faction by the Liberation Committee of the OAU, which will be discussed in the next chapter, can be held partly responsible for this development.

By late 1962, the PAC Presidential Council had firmly established itself in Maseru, from where it set out on a vigorous publicity campaign to regroup and build up the PAC in South Africa. Around this time PAC/Poqo branches in South Africa began receiving written orders from Maseru. Communication with cells in South Africa was maintained through the use of secret couriers. Branch leaders were also summoned to Maseru in December 1962 and again in February and March 1963. They were told to step up recruitment, with each branch having to enlist a target number of 1,000 new members. Furthermore, instructions were given out to stockpile weapons, collect materials for the making of rudimentary bombs, and wait for further commands when the start date of a nation-wide uprising would be revealed.¹⁷⁹ Finally, it was promised that military support

¹⁷⁷ Matthew Nkoana letter to P.K. Leballo, 2 December 1966, in Matthew Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution: A Special Report on the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa* (London, 1969), 41.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹⁷⁹ Lodge, "The Pan-Africanist Congress," 114.

from outside, especially from African states, would arrive on the day of the uprising. According to the plan, on the given day PAC cells and branches throughout the country would start their own revolt by simultaneously attacking strategic points such as police stations and power plants, thus making it impossible for the police and army to assert their control over a wide area. The insurgents were then to turn their attention to the white population and kill indiscriminately for the next four hours. Those whites who had survived would be allowed to stay if they were willing to pledge their loyalty to the new government that was going to be created. The date for the uprising was set for the weekend of 7-8 April 1963, “thereby fulfilling the earlier PAC prophecy of ‘independence’ by 1963.”¹⁸⁰

None of this, however, was to happen, and by the time the insurrection was to take place the South African police had arrested over 3,000 PAC/Poqo suspects. Several factors are responsible for the mass arrests. The first was the Paarl uprising of 22 November 1962, which, as Lodge has argued, “represents the occasion which came closest to the apocalyptic ideal of Poqo and many other movements before them: a black insurrection in the heart of the white cities of South Africa.”¹⁸¹ The Paarl uprising prompted the government to set up a Commission of Inquiry under Judge Snyman, known as the Snyman Commission. The Commission’s interim findings, published on the third anniversary of Sharpeville on 21 March 1963, concluded that the PAC and Poqo were one and the same, and urged the government to take severe measures against what was believed to be part of a Poqo’s country-wide conspiracy.¹⁸² The Paarl insurrection had not, however, been sanctioned by the PAC leadership in Maseru, and Leballo claimed afterwards that both the Paarl and

¹⁸⁰ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 247.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 254.

¹⁸² Lodge, “The Paarl insurrection: a South African uprising,” 97-98.

Bashee River killings had been “premature actions” carried out by Poqo members who had “jumped the gun.”¹⁸³

By March 1963 the South African police was closing down on the Poqo network, many of whose branches and cells had been infiltrated. Several men travelling from Cape Town to the Transkei on a mission to assassinate Matanzima had been arrested in the previous months. Some of the branch leaders returning from the Maseru meeting were also seized by the police in March. In late March, secret couriers had been sent out from Maseru carrying letters to be taken across the border and then posted to PAC/Poqo branches from Bloemfontein. The letters contained coded instructions announcing the start date of the insurrection. Thanks to a tip off from the Basutoland police to the South African Security police, two women messengers were arrested in South Africa on 29 March.¹⁸⁴ They were carrying about seventy letters which supplied the police with the addresses of many local activists, who were subsequently arrested. Leballo delivered a further blow to the organisation when at a press conference in Maseru on 24 March 1963 he claimed that the PAC had over 150,000 active members in South Africa who were ready for action and waiting for his signal to stage the final revolt. Leballo also confirmed that the PAC and Poqo were the same organisation.

The Maseru press conference has been widely commented on. According to Sobukwe’s biographer, Benjamin Pogrund, Leballo called the press conference “for no apparent reason except conceit.”¹⁸⁵ Pogrund’s view is supported by Lodge, who has written that “Leballo could not resist informing a startled press conference of his plans,”¹⁸⁶ and by Karis and Gerhart, who have accounted for the event in terms of Leballo’s inability

¹⁸³ Driver, *Patrick Duncan*, 225.

¹⁸⁴ Pogrund, *Sobukwe*, 182.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 181.

¹⁸⁶ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 247.

to “control an urge to boast about his grandiose plans.”¹⁸⁷ These interpretations are also in line with Joel Bolnick’s characterisation of Leballo “as a mesmerising orator who lived to dramatise” and as “an intelligent fabricator of information.”¹⁸⁸ In PAC circles (as well as outside), many saw Leballo’s erratic political conduct as an open provocation on the government so that it would take tough measures against Sobukwe and that Leballo could remain in charge of the organisation.¹⁸⁹ In fact, Leballo’s Maseru claims came shortly before Sobukwe’s three-year-sentence was due to end, and they may well have influenced the government to rush through parliament the General Law Amendment Act (better known as the ‘Sabotage Act’) which included the ‘Sobukwe Clause.’ This clause provided for any person who had been convicted for political offences under the Suppression of Communism Act to be detained for a further twelve months if suspected that he/she would commit further offences under the same act. The procedure could be renewed each year for an indefinite number of times by a resolution of parliament. Sobukwe was the first and only person to be detained under this law. On 1 May 1963, just two days before his sentence should have expired, the new law came into effect, thus making it possible for then Minister of Justice Vorster to announce that Sobukwe would remain locked up in gaol “until this side of eternity.” This was not far from the reality. Sobukwe spent another six years on Robben Island, where he lived alone in a separate quarter in complete isolation from all other prisoners. When he was finally released in 1969 his political quarantine continued as he was restricted to the Kimberley magisterial district until his death in 1978. In May 1963, Vorster described Sobukwe in parliament as a man of “considerable

¹⁸⁷ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 671.

¹⁸⁸ Bolnick, “Potlako Leballo,” 413.

¹⁸⁹ UCT, Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Q, C.L. Lakaye, “A statement concerning the dispute within the Pan-Africanist Congress (SA) to the African Liberation Committee.” See also Pogrund, *Sobukwe*, 184.

organising ability, a magnetic personality and a divine sense of mission.”¹⁹⁰ After his arrest on 21 March 1960, the South African government had effectively silenced forever the voice of one of South Africa’s most charismatic leaders.

According to journalist Jack Halpern, Leballo was responsible for causing a “furore” in South Africa and Britain. Although no official protests were made by the South African to the British government, the National Party Press “urged that South Africa should prevent such a situation on its borders ‘even at a very high price,’ and that South Africa could not be expected to tolerate the apparent impotence of the Basutoland authorities to ‘obstruct Leballo in his devilish work’.”¹⁹¹ Bernard Leeman, on the other hand, has downplayed the importance of the Maseru press conference in spurring the South African government into action to crush the PAC and Poqo. In his account, Leeman reported that the event was in actual fact a meeting between Leballo, Molete and one single journalist at the PAC’s Maseru office.¹⁹² That Leeman would take a stand defensive of Leballo comes as no surprise, for he became one of his close aides after the latter was finally ousted by an internal coup in 1979 and the PAC split into two opposing factions.

Whatever Leballo’s motivations, it is undisputable that his statements had disastrous repercussions. First and foremost, they coincided with the police clamp down on the clandestine activities of the PAC/Poqo both in South Africa and in Basutoland. Secondly, they marked the beginning of a process of estrangement for many in the PAC, as well as generally damaging Leballo’s public reputation and, by association, the PAC’s standing too. The ANC made use of the Maseru press conference to discredit Leballo – and the PAC – on the international political scene (especially in front of the OAU) by linking the event

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Ntloedibe, *Here Is a Tree*, 98.

¹⁹¹ Halpern, *South Africa’s Hostages*, 27.

¹⁹² Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 111.

to the police swoop that took place in South Africa shortly afterwards.¹⁹³ Within the PAC itself, the conference was evoked by Leballo's critics as evidence of his betrayal of the 'South African Revolution.' To PAC dissidents such as J.D. Nyaose "Mr Leballo ceased in March 1963 to be an accredited Leader [...] of the PAC."¹⁹⁴ Nkoana also blamed Leballo for the police round up of thousands of PAC activists in the following months, which meant that "three years of preparatory work for a general uprising in South Africa were thus completely wrecked by Leballo's indiscretions."¹⁹⁵

The most immediate consequence of Leballo's hasty claims was a raid carried out by the Basutoland Mounted Police on the office of the PAC and two private houses in Maseru (of which one was Leballo's) on 1 April 1963. A number of important documents were confiscated, which pointed to the existence of 119 branches or cells with 11,399 members inside the Republic. Two PAC branches were also active in Basutoland, one in Maseru (with 20 members), and one at Roma University (with 40 members), where experiments and training in the use of explosives were being undertaken. The documents confirmed that the PAC had been directing activities from Maseru since late 1962, from where large scale operations were being planned to take place in the Republic in April. Reports of visits of PAC members from South Africa to Maseru to attend secret nocturnal meetings so that they would receive instructions in sabotage and other organisational matters were also confirmed. Although no arms or ammunitions or proof of their presence in Basutoland were found during the police search, sketch maps showing the location of

¹⁹³ See African National Congress of South Africa, *The Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa – Whom does it serve?*, New Delhi: Asian Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa [1968].

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in ibid., 11.

¹⁹⁵ Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 10.

arms caches in South Africa were captured.¹⁹⁶ Finally, Molete, Elias Ntloedibe and Mfaxa were arrested.¹⁹⁷

There were widespread suspicions that the information obtained from the documents seized by the British colonial police in Basutoland, among them the list of PAC members in South Africa, was passed onto the South African authorities. John Poleka, on behalf of the PAC Presidential Council, wrote to the Colonial Secretary in London to express concern over the issue.¹⁹⁸ Proof of collaboration between the British and the South Africans can be found in intelligence reports of the time¹⁹⁹ – despite the official denial by both the British authorities in Basutoland and the British government in London at the time.²⁰⁰ Plain-clothes police from South Africa were also believed to have taken part in the raid. It was in fact common for South African police to ‘come and go’ from the Protectorates as they pleased – the kidnappings of Anderson Ganyile from Basutoland in 1961 and of Dr Kenneth Abrahams from Bechuanaland in 1964²⁰¹ were clear evidence of this. Mass arrests followed in South Africa, with over 3,000 PAC/Poqo suspects held in detention by June. Despite claims by a group of unidentified PAC members in an interview with *Die Burger* in May that the movement was far from broken,²⁰² the Basutoland Mounted Police raid on the PAC in Maseru delivered the organisation a serious blow from which it never recovered. The impact of the raid in Maseru on the PAC can be compared to that of the Rivonia raid on the ANC and MK a few months later, as both organisations’

¹⁹⁶ PRO: CO 1048/521: Basutoland Intelligence Report, April 1963.

¹⁹⁷ Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 111.

¹⁹⁸ PRO: CO 1048/521, J.N. Poleka (for the Presidential Council), PAC National Headquarters, Maseru, letter to the Colonial Secretary, HMG, London, 5 June 1963.

¹⁹⁹ See PRO: CO 1048/521.

²⁰⁰ Halpern, *South Africa’s Hostages*, 28-29.

²⁰¹ See Ibid., 3-18 and 37-47.

²⁰² *Die Burger*, 22 May 1963.

influence inside South Africa started to wane rapidly thereafter. In Kingwilliamstown and East London attempts were made to enact the uprising plan, but overall this had been averted by the arrests. Scattered Poqo groups continued to operate on a local initiative for the next few years, with the last instance of Poqo activity reported in Welkom in December 1968.²⁰³ “But despite the activities of these residual clusters of PAC followers the back of the movement had been broken with the mass arrests of April-June 1963.”²⁰⁴

Directly linked to the raid on the PAC in Maseru in April 1963 was the promulgation of the Prevention of Violence Abroad Proclamation Act by the British High Commissioner Sir Hugh Stephenson “in order to give an anticipated measure of control over such activities in Basutoland” with immediate effect from 26 July 1963.²⁰⁵ The act made it illegal for a person or an organisation to plot or incite violence against South Africa from any of the High Commission Territories. In other words, it made it impossible – or at least extremely difficult – for the PAC to continue to coordinate underground operations in South Africa from Maseru.

At the time of the Maseru raid, a warrant for Leballo’s arrest had been issued by the Basutoland police on a charge of incitement to public violence. However, Leballo somehow managed to disappear and to go into hiding. Leballo’s escape may have not been known to his colleagues, as several sources indicate that he was believed to be in the hands of the police.²⁰⁶ According to British intelligence sources, a second police search at the PAC Maseru office in May the following year led to the discovery of Leballo’s diary. It revealed

²⁰³ Lodge, “The Poqo insurrection,” 195

²⁰⁴ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 255.

²⁰⁵ PRO: CO 1048/521, Pan-Africanist Congress – brief early history, [marked secret], 2.

²⁰⁶ See PRO: CO 1048/521, J.N. Poleka (for the Presidential Council), PAC National Headquarters, Maseru, to the Colonial Secretary, HMG, London, letter dated 5 June 1963, and Memorandum from the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa [c. July/August 1963], in Drew (ed.), *South Africa’s Radical Tradition*, Vol. 2, 387.

that Leballo had spent “a great deal of his time in hiding in various places in the Republic, including the PAC regional headquarters in the Orange Free State, Johannesburg and Cape Town.”²⁰⁷ Leballo’s disappearance in April 1963 was later attributed to a warning he allegedly received about the impending raid from Hans Lombard, a South African spy claiming to be a journalist who had arrived in Maseru in 1962.²⁰⁸ “Within weeks,” Leballo had let Lombard – “a total stranger” – into the party’s “innermost secrets.”²⁰⁹ Many years later, Gordon Winter, another South African spy, claimed that through Leballo, Lombard was able to obtain a list of about 4,000 PAC underground activists who were then arrested in South Africa.²¹⁰ Although it is not possible to verify the extent to which Lombard was able to penetrate the PAC, Leballo’s dubious friendship with him further tarnished his name in the eyes of many PAC members. After the Maseru raid, for which Leballo was widely blamed, his legitimacy as the leader of the PAC was never properly restored.

On 12 September 1963, Leballo “made a dramatic appearance” in the spectators’ gallery of the Basutoland National Assembly in Maseru. Although not generally known at the time, the warrant for his arrest had been withdrawn the previous month.²¹¹ The withdrawal may have been prompted by a “stinging motion of no confidence in the Basutoland Government which had been moved a little earlier” by Mokhehle’s BCP – which had alerted the British government to the BCP’s dissatisfaction with the way the British authorities had handled relations with South Africa to curtail the activities of the PAC in Basutoland.²¹² On his return, Leballo ignored the threat of the Prevention of

²⁰⁷ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, 11 May 1964.

²⁰⁸ See Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 9-10.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

²¹⁰ Gordon Winter, *Inside BOSS: South Africa’s Secret Police* (Harmondsworth, 1981), 312.

²¹¹ *Ibid.* See also Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 112.

²¹² Halpern, *South Africa’s Hostages*, 31.

Violence Abroad Proclamation Act and began reviving the activities of the PAC in Basutoland. He addressed a series of BCP meetings, where he made “virulent anti-white” speeches. Despite severe financial difficulties, the PAC was able to reoccupy its Maseru offices in Bonhomme House on 1 October 1963. This was made possible by limited funding received through Anthony Steel, a British solicitor based in London who acted on behalf of the PAC, and former Liberal Party spokesman-turned-PAC-supporter Patrick Duncan.²¹³ Financial aid was also received from the American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO), which donated 5,000 U.S. dollars after receiving a memorandum from Nana Mahomo, who had begun a two months tour of the United States with Patrick Duncan in June 1963. The PAC used its anti-communism to encourage the AFL-CIO to give money and thus help “make the PAC in Basutoland a bastion of democracy against Communism and apartheid.”²¹⁴

Since Patrick Duncan was the first and only white person to acquire PAC membership in the 1960s, a brief digression on how he came to join the PAC seems appropriate. Moreover, since the involvement of white radicals (communists in particular) in African politics had been one of the reasons for the Africanists’ secession from the ANC, Duncan’s membership raises the question of whether this indicated a degree of transformation or change in the PAC’s ideology.

Patrick Duncan had been a white member of the Liberal Party of South Africa and editor of *Contact* (the Liberal Party’s mouthpiece) who had become close to the PAC

²¹³ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, October-November 1963.

²¹⁴ Memorandum from the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa [c. July/August 1963], in Drew (ed.), *South Africa’s Radical Tradition*, Vol. 2, 378.

during the time of Sharpeville.²¹⁵ After Sharpeville, some individual radical Liberals, among them Duncan, became disillusioned with non-violent methods of resistance.²¹⁶ Duncan escaped to Basutoland in May 1962 after being served with his second banning order. Like Leballo (whom Duncan helped out of South Africa and into Basutoland after his release) and the PAC, he was close to the BCP and was a friend of Mokhehle – but also of Leabua Jonathan of the BNP, both of whom he had known since the early 1950s when he had worked as Registrar of the Diocese of Basutoland for the Anglican Church. In mid-1962 Duncan opened two trading stores in Quthing (Basutoland) which he ran with the help of PAC men Joe Nkatlo and Ebrahim Abrahams (who had been one of Duncan's *Contact* assistants in Cape Town), to accommodate South African refugees and later to serve as military training grounds for PAC recruits.²¹⁷

In March 1963 Duncan resigned from the Liberal Party as he was no longer able to reconcile himself with the Party's policy of non-violence. A month later he signed a "Declaration of membership of the PAC." The declaration stated that he had been accepted into the PAC as an African, "one who owes his only allegiance to Africa and is prepared to accept the democratic rule of the African majority."²¹⁸ That Duncan was allowed to join the PAC, however, appears to have been another one of Leballo's personal rulings, and not something reached in consultation with fellow PAC leaders, who felt the matter was "too

²¹⁵ For an account of the relations between the PAC and Liberal Party see Randolph Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid: A History of the Liberal Party of South Africa, 1953-68* (Basingstoke, 1997), Ngubane, *An African Explains Apartheid*, and Pogrund, *Sobukwe*.

²¹⁶ A small group of white Liberals (including Ernest Wentzel, John Lang, Randolph Vigne, Neville Rubin, Adrian Leftwich and Eddie Daniels) was instrumental to the formation of the National Committee of Liberation (re-named African Resistance Movement in 1964) to perform sabotage acts. See Magnus Gunther, "The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/African Resistance Movement (ARM)," in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, 209-255.

²¹⁷ Driver, *Patrick Duncan*, 213.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

serious [for such a decision] to be made simply at the top.”²¹⁹ Duncan’s membership may not have contradicted in theory the PAC’s vision of a future non-racial society in which non-Africans would be absorbed in a new African government and society. But it did seem to run contrary to the principle that it was for the African people themselves – in fact, it was their “inalienable right” – “to determine and shape their own destiny.”²²⁰ Or, in Sobukwe’s words, “[t]he future of Africa will be what Africans make it.”²²¹ Moreover, although the Africanists were non-racialists in the sense that they refused to acknowledge the existence of racial or ethnic groups, they did make a distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous people in South Africa. In the end, Leballo’s decision to bestow PAC membership on Duncan appears to have been essentially opportunistic in nature, and not the outcome of a collective ideological effort. Because of this, it can be viewed as evidence of ideological dwindling and more generally of a deterioration of the PAC’s theoretical strength after 1960.

Thanks to his “unrivalled range of friendships and connections within the British and American political establishments,”²²² as well as African statesmen and nationalist politicians, Duncan was uniquely positioned to act as one of the PAC’s international ambassadors. Moreover, he was fluent in both Sesotho and French. In June 1963 Duncan was declared a prohibited immigrant in the High Commission Territories and left to tour the United States with Mahomo, after which he was in Europe, primarily in London, for some months. Being the PAC’s only French speaker, Duncan was appointed by Leballo as PAC

²¹⁹ Ibid., 224.

²²⁰ Manifesto of the Africanist Movement, Inaugural Convention of the PAC, 4-6 April 1959, document 39b in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 519.

²²¹ Opening Address by R.M Sobukwe, Inaugural Convention of the PAC, 4-6 April 1959, document 39a in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 513

²²² Lodge, “The Pan-Africanist Congress,” 116.

representative in Algeria in March 1964, where he was able to secure military training for PAC members. In July 1965, however, he was dismissed from his post and succeeded by Elias Ntloedibe. The reason given for Duncan's dismissal by Leballo was that he had "engaged in a one-man crusade against the People's Republic of China."²²³ By this time, the PAC had established close relations with China, which will be analysed in greater detail in the next chapter. According to Driver, Duncan's biographer, the true reason for his dismissal was actually a letter of congratulations Duncan wrote to Leabua on occasion of his electoral victory in Basutoland.²²⁴ In ANC circles, on the other hand, rumour had it that "the *baas* [Duncan] has been expelled because he treats Africans on the basis of master and servant."²²⁵

Final curtailment of PAC activities in Basutoland

The Prevention of Violence Abroad Proclamation Act of 1963 did not immediately deter the PAC from its resolve to maintain headquarters in Basutoland. Given the country's "unique strategic position" and its essential role as a "forward position" the PAC felt that it was from this base that "real and effective opposition to apartheid" could be waged.²²⁶ The Presidential Council of the PAC in Maseru now concentrated its efforts on organising a second uprising in the Transkei, which would begin with the assassination of Chief Matanzima at the opening of the Transkeian Parliament on 4 May 1964. The blueprint operation was moulded on previous insurrectionist plans. Elias Ntloedibe, the PAC

²²³ Quoted in Driver, *Patrick Duncan*, 250.

²²⁴ Ibid. 251.

²²⁵ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro papers, Box 4, File 36, Mzwai Piliso, Cairo, to all ANC offices, 29 September 1965.

²²⁶ Memorandum from the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa [c. July/August 1963], in Drew (ed.), *South Africa's radical tradition*, Vol. 2, 378.

representative in Ghana, described the new plot in a letter to headquarters dated 10 April 1964:

When you launch and attack Matanzima and Parliament, our forces must do it. Thereafter we must carefully plan mass slaughter of whites all over the country and whites in factories and mines must be mercilessly killed. After the attack [...] our forces must distribute leaflets to say POQO heats [sic] out again. [...] Forces must also purchase Police Uniforms so that when they attack certain areas like jails, they must be dressed as Police. Stations are armed and they should be the last to attack.²²⁷

On 5 April and the weekend of the 25-26 April 1964 two meetings of the Presidential Council took place in Maseru. The first meeting discussed the organisation's finances, whereas the focus of the second one, which was attended by ten PAC representatives from the Republic, was the planned uprising in the Transkei.²²⁸ The PAC's violent infighting, and its active participation in local politics through its affiliation to the BCP, however, were responsible for drawing much unwanted police attention to these events.

In November 1963 Joe Molefi had been expelled from the PAC by Leballo,²²⁹ probably as a result of Molefi's criticism of the latter. The dispute culminated with Molete being attacked at his home in Maseru by three other PAC men with a home-made panga and nearly losing his hand in April 1964. Molefi was found guilty of causing Molete Grievous Bodily Harm and was sentenced to six months in prison. In an attempt to re-assert his control over the organisation, Leballo also expelled Ellen Molapo and issued "by telegram a continuous stream of orders and directives" to PAC representatives abroad "couched in peremptory terms." He warned against the "communistic tendencies" of some PAC representatives, including Mahomo, Molotsi, Ntoledibe, Tsohlana, Nkoana, Leabile,

²²⁷ CULLEN HSTPAP, A2675, III, 594, Elias Ntloedibe, Accra, letter to Maseru, 10 April 1964.

²²⁸ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, April 1964.

²²⁹ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, November 1963.

Ngcobo and Ndziba. Moreover, fearing possible attacks on his person, Leballo employed two men, Kwenzile Hlabisa and Zibho Tshabalala, as his bodyguards.²³⁰

The bickering did not confine itself to the PAC in Maseru but spread out to other countries where PAC members were based. Until 1962, Mahomo and Molotsi had been the only PAC leading representatives abroad. Given the lack of contact with the rest of the PAC leadership (the majority of whom were in prison), the two men had been free to conduct the external affairs of the PAC virtually unchecked. The establishment of formal headquarters under Leballo in Maseru in 1962 soon led to the development of frictions with Mahomo and Molotsi over the handling of funds. In 1964 Mahomo and Molotsi, who had proved unwilling to relinquish their freedom of action, were both suspended on allegations of misappropriating PAC funds.²³¹

Meanwhile, both the South African and Basutoland police were keeping a close watch on the PAC in Maseru, as they expected further violence to erupt between warring PAC factions. They also had become aware of the plot to kill Matanzima. The South African government now asked Britain to take action against the PAC in Basutoland and threatened to close the border between Basutoland and the Republic to all African traffic.²³² Moreover, the British embassy in Pretoria had learned from their American colleagues of preparations for a South African joint police-army operation which would be put into effect if Britain failed to act against the PAC in Maseru.²³³ South Africa's blackmailing strategy succeeded in pushing the British colonial administration into action. On 4 May 1964 the

²³⁰ PRO: CO 1048/521, Extracts from Head of Special Branch meeting, 20 April 1964.

²³¹ For details about the dispute with Mahomo and Molotsi over funds see Lodge, *Black Politics*, 308-309; and "The Pan-Africanist Congress," 117.

²³² PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, May 1964.

²³³ PRO: CO 1048/521, Telegram from the British Embassy in Pretoria to the Secretary of State to the Colonies, 7 May 1964.

Basutoland police enforced a forty-eight hours roadblock on strategic roads to the north and to the south “with instructions to search for arms and hold anyone on slightest pretext.”²³⁴

A Bloemfontein-plated car was stopped by the Basutoland police cordon near the Tsupane border. The car had four whites in it believed to have been waiting for Leballo.²³⁵ Whatever the case, the Basutoland police action succeeded in forestalling any sort of movement by PAC.

At 2.20 on the morning of 6 May 1963 Leballo’s Land Rover blew up outside his Maseru home. Although Leballo himself escaped uninjured, his two bodyguards were wounded. Despite police investigations, the exact cause of the explosion remained unknown. The general opinion at the time was that the car was blown up by a PAC faction opposed to Leballo.²³⁶ Several houses as well as the PAC office were searched by the police two days later. Two men were arrested, including Hlabisa, Leballo’s bodyguard, on charges of unlawful possession of firearms, threatening language and obstruction of the police. No evidence however was discovered of the alleged plan in the Transkei, suggesting that the mainspring of the action forecast by the South African police perhaps was not the PAC in Maseru but PAC/Poqo cells still active inside the Republic. No registers, account books or other documents which the police expected to come across in the office of a politically active organisation were found either, and nor was any evidence of caches of arms uncovered.²³⁷ The car explosion incident prompted Sir A.F. Giles, the resident High Commissioner, to send a telegram to the Colonial Office in London requesting that a Public

²³⁴ PRO: CO 1048/521, Telegram from the Basutoland Resident Commissioner, Sir A.F. Giles, to the Secretary of State to the Colonies, 4 May 1964.

²³⁵ PRO: CO 1048/521, Telegram from the Basutoland Resident Commissioner, Sir A.F. Giles, to the Secretary of State to the Colonies, 8 May 1964.

²³⁶ This is what emerges from British intelligence records and from Halpern’s account.

²³⁷ PRO: CO 1048/521, Telegram from the Basutoland Resident Commissioner to the Secretary of State to the Colonies, 11 May 1964.

Order Proclamation Act be promulgated by the Secretary of State to the Colonies “as a matter of urgency.”²³⁸ The Act would allow the Resident Commissioner to proscribe the PAC in the country. Although no action was ultimately taken to ban the PAC in Basutoland, that such request was made suggests that the organisation’s presence in the country was perceived as a security threat both by the British in Basutoland and by the South Africans.

On 11 May 1964 a cyclostyled pamphlet entitled “Special release by the Presidential Council of the PAC” was distributed in Maseru. It blamed the events of the preceding days on the British and South African governments. Fingers were also pointed at “the Communists.”²³⁹ Relations between the PAC and the ANC/communist elements in Basutoland, which had been tense already, now deteriorated rapidly. The Communist Party of Lesotho (CPL) had been founded in October 1961. Although the membership of the CPL was secret, Joe Matthews, an ANC/SACP member who had escaped to Basutoland after being detained during the Sharpeville Emergency, had become closely associated with it. Mokhehle and the BCP were deeply wary of both the CPL and Matthews by way of their association with the SACP and the ANC. Moreover, Matthews’s involvement in the local politics of Basutoland did not go down well with Mokhehle, who had become convinced that Matthews wanted to undermine his leadership.²⁴⁰ Matthews was also believed to have been involved in the formation of the Marematlou Freedom Party. This was created in January 1963 in opposition of the BCP in view of the 1965 electoral contest.²⁴¹ In February

²³⁸ PRO: CO 1048/521, Telegram from the Basutoland Resident Commissioner to the Secretary of State to the Colonies, 8 May 1964.

²³⁹ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, May-June-July 1964.

²⁴⁰ Halpern, *South Africa’s Hostages*, 163-169. See also Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 104-105, 113-114.

²⁴¹ Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 113-114.

1963, a bomb was found underneath Matthews's car in Maseru, but police investigations were unable to shed any light on the matter.²⁴² Leballo's bodyguard, Hlabisa, was charged with the attempted murder of Joe Matthews later that year, although it is unclear from the records whether this was in relation to the bomb found under Matthews's car or to a separate incident. The charge was withdrawn in April 1964 as Matthews failed to attend the court hearing after being subpoenaed.²⁴³ The CPL retaliated to the PAC's pamphlet which blamed them for the explosion of Leballo's car by issuing a pamphlet attacking the PAC in return.²⁴⁴ PAC/BCP-ANC/CPL relations reached open conflict in June 1964, with the PAC/BCP engaging in a sort of political gangsterism to push the ANC/CPL out of the political scene in Basutoland. The General Secretary of the CPL, John Motloheloa, was the victim of an attempted murder on 2 June, which was followed by the stabbing of another leading CPL member, Nako Mefane. Physical assaults were carried out against several other communist and trade union leaders. Other violent methods used by the PAC/BCP included forced evictions by landlords, and discrimination from BCP-sympathising shop assistants.²⁴⁵

In June 1964 an attempt was made at restoring unity within the ranks of the PAC in exile, which had been suffering from fragmentation and leadership conflicts since Sharpeville, through the issuing of a statement on the background to official appointments

²⁴² Ibid., 164.

²⁴³ PRO: CO 1048/521, Extracts from Head of Special Branch meeting, 20 April 1964. Leeman also refers to this incident, although he inverts the chronology of events claiming that Leballo's car explosion occurred before the attempted murder on Matthews by the same means. See Leeman, *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania*, 113.

²⁴⁴ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, May-June-July 1964.

²⁴⁵ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, June 1964.

and policy.²⁴⁶ This aimed at clarifying how present official positions had come to be constituted within the organisation after its banning. The document also represents the earliest articulation of the tasks and goals of the PAC in exile to have survived on paper. By authority of the Presidential Decree, the Presidential Council was proclaimed the supreme organ of the party, responsible for “directing the struggle and administering the PAC.” Thus, “ORDERS and COMMANDS should emanate ONLY” from this body from its Maseru headquarters. All PAC representatives abroad were subordinate to the Presidential Council, to whom they owed absolute loyalty and should report on a regular basis, although they enjoyed equal status between themselves. Their duties were “to build the true image of our Party to the world, fearlessly putting across our message and justifying our cause; to procure money and any other help and assistance required [...]; to arrange scholarships for our party members, training for our technicians and revolutionaries or to execute any other matter in the interest of the Party or when delegated to do so by the P.C. [Presidential Council].”²⁴⁷ Members of the Presidential Council lost their executive powers when away from the Maseru headquarters. This was to avoid the creation of multiple bureaucracies “as it was in the days of Molotsi and Mahomo.”²⁴⁸ Since Basutoland had no direct air links anywhere but South Africa, this meant that PAC representatives were effectively denied their executive rights once they left Maseru.

On 21 August 1964 Leballo left Basutoland by chartered aircraft for Salisbury, where he boarded a second plane to Accra. Leballo travelled through South Africa on a

²⁴⁶ UFH, Centre for Cultural Studies, PAC Tanzania Office, Box 24, Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, Background to official appointments and policy statement, signed by P.K. Leballo and J.N. Poleka, Maseru, 20 June 1964.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

single-journey transit permit issued by the South African government.²⁴⁹ Gasson Ndlovu (head of the section dealing with military training) and Poleka were left in charge of the PAC in Basutoland in Leballo's absence. Leballo was never to return to Basutoland, where the position of the PAC became even more untenable after his departure.

The British colonial authorities in Basutoland were becoming quite alarmed about the number of PAC refugees arriving into the territory, who they continued to suspect of plotting acts of violence against South Africa. Moreover, the Basutoland police was aware that PAC supporters were being channelled into Basutoland where they registered as political refugees so that they could be educated in the manufacture and use of explosives, arms and ammunition, and then return secretly to South Africa.²⁵⁰ Between July and September 1964 alone a total of 136 refugees from South Africa (of whom 109 were thought to be PAC supporters) applied for residence permits to remain in Basutoland.²⁵¹ In October 1964 approximately twenty South African refugees were rounded up by the Basutoland police under the pretext that they had not complied with entry and residence regulations. Their arrest was followed by a police search of three boarding houses which "provided evidence of build up of local PAC strength under a form of discipline and indications that military training may be contemplated or taking place in the mountains." As no arms or explosives were discovered, the group of refugees was subsequently released.²⁵² One night in November 1964 a PAC official was stopped and searched by the police. The man carried a suitcase containing PAC documents which implicated leading members of the organisations into conspiracies to commit acts of violence in South Africa

²⁴⁹ See PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, October 1963 and July 1964.

²⁵⁰ PRO: CO 1048/521, Pan-Africanist Congress – brief early history [marked 'secret'].

²⁵¹ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, September 1964.

²⁵² PRO: CO 1048/521, Telegram from the Basutoland Resident Commissioner to the Secretary of State to the Colonies, 10 October 1964.

and the High Commission Territories. The PAC premises in Maseru were searched again, and so were the two trading stores which had been purchased by Patrick Duncan in the Quthing district. The Basutoland police came into possession of a shotgun, a loaded pistol and a number of home-made pangas which had been hidden at a boarding house in Maseru where PAC refugees lived. In the Quthing area ingredients for the manufacture of explosives and some metal containers were uncovered.²⁵³ This latest strike on the PAC in Basutoland took place roughly at the same time as an operation carried out by the South African security police in the township of Mbekweni, outside Paarl, in November 1964. The latter led to the arrest of twenty or more Africans belonging to a resurrected PAC/Poqo cell in the Paarl area, and to the discovery of documents linking this group with the PAC group operating from Basutoland. Chief of security police Van den Bergh remarked to the press that the men arrested were PAC and not Poqo. That such a distinction was made is interesting, since both the press and the authorities in South Africa had thus far tended to conflate the two. This suggests that some form of contact between the PAC in Basutoland and its supporters in South Africa had continued to take place despite the endless sequence of knock-backs the organisation had received since March 1963 as a result of police action in both countries.²⁵⁴

Following the capture of the suitcase filled with incriminating evidence in November 1964, Letlaka and Mfaxa of the Presidential Council and six other PAC members (Hlabisa, Rufus Fumanekile, Sipo Sobuza, Nikelo Faku, John Tway Ingana and M. Kambula) were arrested and put on trial for conspiracy to commit violence in contravention of the Prevention of Violence Abroad Proclamation Act. A second warrant for Leballo's arrest was issued under the same act. Leballo, who was at this time in Britain,

²⁵³ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, November 1964.

²⁵⁴ *Cape Argus*, 11 January 1965.

had in the meantime made another application for a transit permit to the South African authorities as he planned to return to Basutoland in January 1965. It was also reported that the PAC was now looking for an alternative base outside Basutoland.²⁵⁵ The trial of the eight PAC men, which started in December 1964, was a lengthy one. Two of the men were discharged and the remaining six convicted on 12 July 1965 with sentences ranging from one to three years. They appealed against their conviction and succeeded, the appeal being upheld by the Chief Justice on 2 September 1965.²⁵⁶ Meanwhile, a separate trial against Poleka and Qhobose was also initiated on similar charges.²⁵⁷

The PAC was now struggling to retain its Bonhomme House operational headquarters. The organisation was desperately short of funds, and depended entirely on the remittances it received from the BCP.²⁵⁸ Reuben Rigala, F. Ntozini and R. Xokolelo were put in charge of the day-to-day running of PAC affairs locally. Despite the enormous difficulties that the PAC faced as a result of the arrest and trial of many of its leaders, the Basutoland police suspected that the organisation was still involved in clandestine activity in the Protectorate. These suspicions were confirmed when another group of ten PAC members was detained in January 1965. When the police stopped them in the Mapoteng area – dressed in blue boiler suits, *velskoens*, matching greatcoats and blankets – they had been undergoing some sort of physical training under the leadership of Gasson Ndlovu. The latter was remanded in custody to join the other eight PAC men (Letlaka et al.) already on trial and was later released on appeal.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, December 1964.

²⁵⁶ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, January 1965 and July 1965.

²⁵⁷ PRO: CO 1048/521, Pan-Africanist Congress – brief early history [marked ‘secret’].

²⁵⁸ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, December 1964.

²⁵⁹ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, January 1964.

In February 1965, the Basutoland police uncovered yet more incriminating evidence. Seventy pounds of dynamite, forty pounds of gelignite and a quantity of detonators were recovered in the Quthing area. Moreover, PAC military training activities appeared to have now extended to the Youth League of the BCP, with a view of combining forces to intimidate non-BCP voters on election day in April or to take unconstitutional action after the election should they not agree with the electoral results.²⁶⁰ Relations between the PAC and the BCP however were beginning to show signs of strain. There had been allegations by Mfaxa of the Presidential Council that the BCP had been misappropriating OAU funds destined to the PAC, which was now anxious to leave Basutoland. Moreover, the split in the PAC in pro and anti-Leballo factions was reported to continue.²⁶¹

Several letters of appeal were sent to the British Colonial Office by the PAC, African governments and the British AAM regarding the treatment of PAC refugees in Basutoland by the British colonial authorities. In November 1964 the PAC in Maseru complained of the constant victimisation of its members in Basutoland. A letter was sent to the Colonial Office to appeal against the arrest of a group of PAC men who had been released from Robben Island on 1 August 1964 and entered Basutoland seeking asylum. The men had been arrested and charged with three months imprisonment. Their appeal to the High Court had been dismissed on the grounds that they had entered the country unlawfully.²⁶² In February 1965, Matthew Nkoana in London wrote to the Colonial Office asking for a meeting with Mrs Eirene White in view of her visit to the High Commission Territories to discuss the status and treatment of South African refugees, but his request

²⁶⁰ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, February 1964.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² PRO: CO 1048/521, Letter of Appeal sent by the PAC to the Colonial Office, signed by Reuben Rigalia, Justice Tshwili, Benjamin Matebe, Hitler Sonkwenye and Solly Koloi, Maseru, 18 November 1964.

was turned down.²⁶³ In July 1965, James Ndawo, another PAC representative in Maseru, again appealed to the Colonial Office that the British government define the status of refugees in the High Commission Territories, with specific reference to the practice by the Basutoland Mounted Police of arresting political refugees without travelling documents under the Entry and Residence Proclamation Act.²⁶⁴ Representations and appeals were also lodged by the governments of Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania for the release of Letlaka and the other PAC men at the start of their trial under the Prevention of Violence Abroad Proclamation Act in December 1965.²⁶⁵ After the conviction of six of the PAC men in July 1965 the AAM warned the Secretary of State to the Colonies, Anthony Greenwood, that the conviction of the PAC men under such an act “seriously undermines the whole principle of political asylum and renders the future of South African political refugees in the British High Commission Territories uncertain.”²⁶⁶ Although an AAM delegation (consisting of David Ennals, Vella Pillay, Joe Matthews and Abdul Minty) was granted a meeting to discuss the matter of South African refugees with the Colonial Office on 18 October, this did not seem to have had any impact on British policy towards the issue.

Far from it, the resident High Commissioner, Sir A. F. Giles, speaking on behalf of the Basutoland Commissioner of Police and Head of Special Branch, advised the Colonial Office that Britain “must continue by one means or another my earlier policy of leaning heavily on these gentlemen and making them feel that they cannot operate safely in

²⁶³ PRO: CO 1048/521, Matthew Nkoana, 73 Roseberry Gardens, London N4, to Mrs Eirene White, Colonial Office, 21 February 1965, and reply from the Colonial Office to Nkoana, 24 February 1965.

²⁶⁴ PRO: CO 1048/521, Letter from James Ndawo, PAC Maseru Office to the Colonial Office, 9 July 1965.

²⁶⁵ See PRO: CO 1048/552.

²⁶⁶ PRO: CO 1048/521, Letter from the Anti-Apartheid Movement (signed by S. Abdul [Abdul Minty]) to Anthony Greenwood, Secretary of State to the Colonies, 22 July 1965.

Basutoland.”²⁶⁷ In September 1965, the Basutoland Mounted Police again suggested to the Colonial Office that the PAC in Basutoland should be banned while more permanent legal measures against the threat posed by the subversive activities of the PAC could be laid down.²⁶⁸ The Colonial Office however decided not to ban the PAC “for the time being,” as not a strong enough case could be made for the identification between the PAC and a threat to law and order in Basutoland. Moreover, the Colonial Office was aware that the banning of the PAC would be viewed in the UK as evidence of the collusion between the British authorities, the BNP (which had won a majority of seats in the April 1965 elections) and South Africa. Moreover, it was thought that the banning was likely to be ineffective because of the wide distribution of PAC members throughout the country and because the PAC was likely to continue to operate underground.²⁶⁹

That the British authorities should think that the PAC no longer represented too big a security threat to Basutoland was largely due to the continuous harassment by the police of PAC refugees as well as to the April 1965 electoral results, which saw the BCP lose to the conservative BNP. The failure of the BCP at the elections came as a shock to the BCP and the PAC, who had both been confident the BCP would achieve an overwhelming victory. The PAC did not hesitate to show its opposition to the newly elected BNP government. A statement was issued by the PAC from Dar es Salaam which denounced the recent elections in all three Protectorates as being:

[F]raught with fraud and manoeuvres cooked up to prop puppet regimes of reactionary chieftainships to support Verwoerd apartheid regime against the African liberatory movements, thus turning the protectorates into allies against the liberation of Southern Africa and a realisation of a Union Government of all Africa.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ PRO: CO 1048/521, Extract of a Letter from Sir A. F. Giles to the Colonial Office, 23 September 1965.

²⁶⁸ PRO: CO 1048/521, Basutoland Intelligence Report, 17 September 1965.

²⁶⁹ PRO: CO 1048/521, Letter from A. Campbell to Mr Marnham, 25 October 1965.

²⁷⁰ PRO: CO 1048/521, PAC Statement, quoted in Basutoland Intelligence Report, July 1965.

On the other hand, the new BNP Prime Minister Chief Leabua Jonathan made clear that he would not allow Basutoland to be used as a base for subversive actions against South Africa by PAC refugees who had been given asylum. With the BNP, which “had made no secret of its hostility to the aspirations of the PAC in Basutoland,”²⁷¹ now in power, a chapter was closed in the history of the PAC in exile.

As the activities of the PAC in Basutoland were finally being constrained, its leadership had started to disperse to other countries. By late 1965, PAC offices, representatives abroad, or small clusters of PAC exiles were present in the following places: Dar es Salaam (where Leballo, Molete, Nyaose, and Ngcobo established new headquarters), Cairo, Accra, Addis Ababa, Lusaka, Algiers, Khartoum, Manzini, Francistown, London, and West Germany.²⁷²

Conclusion

When the ANC set up its external mission in 1962, the decision was taken that it should represent an “African image” and this was endorsed by other member organisations of the Congress Alliance as well as the SACP. Such decision was in tune with the strong Pan-African sentiments sweeping over the African continent, where Nkrumah’s Ghana had emerged as the champion of African independence and unity and where the PAC’s Pan-Africanism found more resonance than the Congress Alliance’s multi-racialism. The ANC was in desperate need of support from independent African states, and the “African image” was a tactical response meant to establish the ANC’s African nationalist character and to

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² PRO: CO 1048/521, Pan-Africanist Congress – brief early history [marked ‘secret’].

clear the widespread idea that the ANC was controlled by the Communist Party and the Indian Congress.

The imprisonment of the PAC leadership in March 1960 had led to a period of confusion in the PAC. From 1962, however, PAC leaders regrouped in Basutoland. From here, they succeeded in establishing a good degree of co-ordination with the clandestine Poqo movement that had developed after Sharpeville somewhat independently of the leadership. Basutoland offered a unique base from which the PAC could carry out its insurrectionist plan, which it came very close to enacting. However, the Poqo movement in South Africa was by and large broken by the police between April and June 1963. From April 1963, the activities of the PAC in Basutoland were gradually brought into check too through close police surveillance and legislative measures aimed at curtailing the PAC's freedom of action in the Protectorate. Despite the great tenacity with which the PAC tried to hold on to its Maseru base, in 1965, the PAC was in the end uprooted from Basutoland for good. By this time, a series of internal problems had emerged, most notably endemic conflict amongst its leaders, which persisted after the PAC moved out of Basutoland and established new headquarters in Tanzania, as the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER FOUR

Internal debates, c. 1965-1967

In the first half of the 1960s the ANC set up its first external structures according to the guiding principle of the “African image.” Although this principle seemed to serve the purpose of presenting an image that was both acceptable and appealing to the ANC’s potential supporters on the continent, by the mid-1960s this policy started to come under criticism, as the various parts of the former Congress Alliance in exile found themselves isolated from each other – and at times in conflict. This change was the result of several interlinked factors. Firstly, there were events in South Africa and the implications of Rivonia for the movement underground and abroad. Secondly, there were developments on the rest of the African continent and at the international level. And, finally, this chapter will argue that it was the conditions of exile in London which made the upholding of the policy of the “African image” increasingly problematic.

This chapter will analyse the case of Barney Desai’s dispute with the ANC external mission and his ultimate defection to the PAC. The controversy once again brings to the fore the question of the liberation movements’ multi/non-racialism. The PAC’s attempt at internal reconstruction in the period following the CPC merger will also be documented. In particular, the Moshi executive meeting of 1967 will be analysed to provide a comparison with the ANC’s first Consultative Conference held in Morogoro in 1969, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. Although Desai’s break with the ANC did not represent a significant threat to the ANC, the problems of representation that he raised were fundamental in the sense that they continued to be the subject of debate within the

movement in exile. In the second half of the decade, London emerged as the key centre in a process of discussions, which have also been referred to as the ‘London Debates.’¹

Criticism of the “African image”

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 described in the previous chapter than with the successful projection of the “African image” by the ANC. Nevertheless, some of the ANC’s supporters in exile now felt that the “African image” had been *too* effective. According to this group, 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, according to its critics, 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 outside the country. This was particularly true of London, where 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 or the World Campaign for the Release of South African Political Prisoners (started in November 1963) as seen in

¹ See Frederikse, *The Unbreakable Thread*, 99.

Chapter One. Finally, the funds collected were exclusively for the ANC while the other organisations at home still nominally legal apparently did not benefit.²

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.” At the same time, however, the ANC warned its critics about making serious and disruptive allegations against its officials, and called for “complete confidence in the integrity and political honesty of colleagues,”³ given the dangerous and delicate nature of their work. However, it was going to be another four years before the problems which were highlighted in 1965 were fully taken on board through a formal reorganisation of the movement at Morogoro in 1969.

Barney Desai’s clash with the ANC external mission

The case of Barney Desai and a few other CPC members’ defection to the PAC in 1966 is an example, although extreme in its final outcome, of the seriousness of the discontent within the ranks of the exiled Congress community. Problems of representation (or rather, what was perceived as lack of representation) in connection with the structure of the Congress Alliance at the international level (as a result of the adoption of the “African image” policy) had started to emerge as early as 1963, during a meeting between the CPC President Barney Desai and representatives of the ANC external mission in Dar es Salaam on August 8.

Desai had been co-opted to the Executive of the CPC in the mid-1950s and had become its President on George Peake’s resignation in 1961. During the anti-republican

² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

³ Ibid.

demonstrations of May 1961 he had been arrested and served with a five-year banning order. In 1962 he was elected to the Cape Town City Council but could not take office due to his banning. He arrived in Dar es Salaam around June 1963 “unannounced and unexpected,” having left South Africa by boat from Durban “in spite of the decision of his Executive [...] that he should go into hiding,” as “no immediate urgency attended on his departure.”⁴

On his arrival, Desai placed before the meeting with the ANC in Dar es Salaam a letter from the CPC executive dealing with what his future work would be. The letter invested Desai with power to “speak as the exiled representative of the organisation [CPC] and subject to the decisions of the executive,” and to “discussion with members of their sister organisation [ANC] nearest to him.”⁵ The letter also reported on the state of activities in South Africa, where the CPC was tackling local issues and, despite financial strains, was again pamphleteering, as well as producing a fortnightly newsletter, and hoping to produce a theoretical quarterly. Finally, the CPC requested financial help in order to facilitate internal work.⁶

To these points, Desai verbally added “that the ANC was neglecting to mention the position and role of minority groups in South Africa; that in its general propaganda the ANC did not always mention the fight and contribution of the minority groups.”⁷ Desai’s suspicions were confirmed after he arrived in London in 1964, where he was disappointed

⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Memorandum: Rissik Hiribai (Barney) Desai, A Political Biography, London, 18 September 1966. Desai’s decision to leave the country in defiance of a resolution of the CPC executive that he should go underground was only made public after his expulsion from the CPC described below. See also UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, CPC letter to Reggie and Hetty September, and Frank and Olive Landman, Cape Town, December 1965.

⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Memo on Coloured People Congress External Representation [n.d.].

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

by the “appalling lack of information about the position of the coloured people and their role in the liberation movement.”⁸ Members of the ANC, CPC and SAIC in exile should, Desai proposed, travel to those independent African states whose leaders had been outspoken against apartheid and ask them “to make statements calling upon the non-white minority groups in South Africa to throw their lot with the struggle of the African people.”⁹

In its response to Desai’s suggestions, the ANC external mission acknowledged in an undated memorandum the need to “approach the problems raised with sympathy and understanding,” but firmly rejected Desai’s views as “a retrogressive political step [...] contrary to the decision of the organisations at home.” The ANC appealed to the decisions of a joint meeting of the executives of the Congress Movement in 1962, according to which “as far as Africa and the outside world was concerned, the liberation movement in South Africa would be represented by the African National Congress.” Furthermore, it strongly maintained that:

This is very clear decision which could not be said to have been misunderstood by any of those who passed or endorsed it. All the other four congresses of the Alliance discussed it and endorsed it with clear understanding of its political and organisational implications and structure. Naturally as the organisation of the oppressed African majority, the ANC has put it in the forefront and dramatised the case of the African people; the Congress has however, never confined its representations to the Africans. It has always acted and is acting as the mouthpiece of the whole 13 million oppressed non-white people of South Africa.¹⁰

The mandate given to the ANC by the organisations in South Africa to represent the Congress Movement internationally could thus be revoked, the ANC claimed, only by the ANC at home, or by the joint meeting of the Executives of the five Congresses. Lastly, the CPC’s request for financial support was turned down on the grounds that the ANC had very

⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Barney Desai, letter to Reg September, 20 August 1964.

⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Memo on Coloured People Congress External Representation [n.d.].

¹⁰ Ibid.

heavy financial commitments (especially military), and that the CPC was not in any worse position than the rest of the organisations in the Alliance – the activities that the CPC was able to carry out proved that “if anything, it is much better off financially.”¹¹ At the same time, the ANC hoped that the CPC could be persuaded to abandon the intentions expressed by its President during the August 1963 meeting. To this purpose, it pledged to involve Desai in its external work in a greater way.

Relations between the ANC and Desai, however, continued to sour. In Dar es Salaam, Desai had started to work on the ANC’s news digest *Spotlight on South Africa* but was later put in charge of an ANC overseas mission which he, according to the ANC, deserted. It seems that the mission in question was a military training course in Moscow, and that Desai, as the most senior person, was put in charge of a small group of people sent to the Soviet Union for this purpose.¹² In Moscow, however, he requested permission to leave the mission to go to London and meet his wife and children who had also gone into exile. The ANC later complained that Desai’s urgency to move to London had been unfounded as his wife only arrived in the UK in late 1964. Back in Dar es Salaam, the ANC provided Desai with a ticket to London and Tanzanian travelling documents. As he faced problems entering the UK with the Tanzanian documents, Desai was subsequently able to produce an Indian document.¹³ The episode caused the ANC “acute embarrassment” with

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

¹³ Desai had studied in India in the late 1940s and had been Secretary of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress and later an executive member of the Transvaal Indian Congress in the early 1950s. UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Memorandum: Rissik Hiribai (Barney) Desai, A Political Biography, London, 18 September 1966.

the Tanzanian government and a serious reprimand from its Home Office, on whose benevolence the organisation very much depended.¹⁴

In June 1964, Desai was joined in London by fellow executive member and CPC Acting Chairman Cardiff Marney.¹⁵ Desai and Marney then called a meeting of Coloured South Africans in an attempt to organise them in London, despite instructions from the ANC London office that “there is no separate group that can act on its own here, except if it participates within the already existing structures.”¹⁶ The South African exile population in the UK had been growing steadily after Rivonia, and Desai and Marney were concerned that Coloured exiles in the UK were being left out of the work of the movement as a consequence of the ANC’s “African image” strategy. A London Committee of the CPC was thus formed, “the idea being to get the many Coloureds who have migrated to do some useful work.”¹⁷ As well as Desai and Marney, Frank and Olive Landman, Cosmo Peterse, Sonny Ramsdale, and James Phillips were part of the Committee.

In response to the ANC memorandum, Desai and Marney produced another document, which allegedly reflected the decisions taken by the CPC executive in Cape Town, and which Marney had communicated to Desai on his arrival in the UK. The new memorandum, regarded by the ANC as “insolent”¹⁸ and “provocative to the extreme”¹⁹ pushed forward a separatist line, but also honestly pointed to some very concrete unsolved

¹⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, unaddressed letter, London , 2 July 1965.

¹⁵ Cardiff Marney came from the Western Cape. He was close to Kenny Jordaan, a member of the Non-European Unity Movement. Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

¹⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 12, File 99, Raymond Kunene, letter to the ANC representatives in Dar es Salaam, London, 15 July 1964.

¹⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Barney Desai, letter to Reg September, London, 20 August 1964.

¹⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 12, File 99, Raymond Kunene, letter to the ANC representatives in Dar es Salaam, London, 15 July 1964.

¹⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, letter to Barney Desai, Dar es Salaam, 23 October 1964.

problems of representation. The CPC, Desai and Marney argued in their memo, had no recollection of the mandate referred to by the ANC that they should be the sole representatives of the Congress Movement internationally. Should this have been the case, and had the CPC in fact taken part in the decision, both the internal and external conditions of the liberation struggle had since changed to such an extent that they called for revision. In accordance with the CPC policy to pursue the ideal of a non-racial democracy the CPC had been prepared to “sink its identity in the ANC and disappear as a separate organisation,” an overture which the ANC rejected. The fact that the ANC at the same time discouraged the independent existence of the CPC, that it claimed to represent the CPC but was not making any representations on its behalf, and that it refused the CPC financial assistance was, “to say the least, inconsistent.” Desai and Marney went on to argue:

It is clear that the structure of the movement in the country is not monolithic and it would be false to represent it internationally as being so. The organisational structure of the Congress Movement [...] and the other organisations regarded as being within the broad framework of the liberatory movement of course makes this plain. No distorted picture can therefore arise internationally nor can the differences and separate organisations within the broad framework of the movement be a mark of incompetence. These are the products of the history of South Africa and of the ideas of the intelligentsia of the country.

The leadership will reveal its stature only by achieving unity in spite of differences and not by hiding them.²⁰

Finally, the memorandum complained of the “most cavalier fashion” of Desai’s treatment by the ANC, the proposals which were to enable him “to make a great contribution to the struggle” not having come to fruition, thus arousing the fear “that no member of CPC for that matter, no Coloured person will be enabled to play his proper role or make the contribution of which he is capable outside the country.” Still, “a burning desire to establish a proper working relationship” between the ANC and the CPC in exile was expressed in the

²⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Barney Desai and Cardiff Marney, Memorandum to the External Mission of the African National Congress – External Representation, London, 18 June 1964.

conclusion although, at this stage, it was also felt that the responsibility to achieve unity rested more heavily upon the ANC than the CPC.²¹

The ANC internally commented on the document in a letter from Raymond Kunene, the ANC chief representative in London at the time, to the ANC representatives in Dar es Salaam in July 1964. The ANC was alarmed by the “hysterical and almost immature statements” made in the memorandum, which from the ANC’s point of view, conveyed the impression that Desai and Marney’s battle for their separate identity was more important than the freedom struggle as a whole. Personal relations did not help, as Kunene pointed out that the situation in London had “radically changed” after Cardiff Marney’s arrival, whose attitude towards the ANC London office was described as one of arrogance. The letter concluded that Desai and Marney were pursuing a unilateral line, as the feeling of exclusion did not seem to be the worry of the Indian Congress, nor was it felt that they were shared by other CPC leaders such as Alex La Guma.²² James Hadebe, the chief representative in Dar es Salaam, concurred with Kunene that since the dissolution of the SAUF, the SAIC had always adopted what the ANC considered “a correct stand in matters affecting the mode of presenting our case to the outside world.”²³

No formal reply, however, was issued by the ANC, nor was a meeting called, adding to Desai and Marney’s disappointment and frustration.²⁴ In August, Desai and Marney held informal talks with Tambo during one of his visits to London (where the Tambo family had established a home), and the latter promised a formal reply from the

²¹ Ibid.

²² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 12, File 99, Raymond Kunene, letter to the ANC representatives in Dar es Salaam, London, 15 July 1964.

²³ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 12, File 99, James Hadebe, letter to Raymond Kunene, Dar es Salaam, 1 November 1964.

²⁴ See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Barney Desai letters to Reg September, 20 August 1964, 7 November 1964, 13 December 1964.

ANC “within weeks”²⁵ from his return to headquarters. A further letter was then written to the ANC in Dar es Salaam, “which was not even acknowledged.”²⁶ Three months later, Desai was complaining to fellow CPC member Reg September (in Dar es Salaam) that the June memorandum had still received no reply.

Matters got worse as Reg September got involved in the dispute. September was the CPC General Secretary, as well as being a member of the SACP. Before leaving South Africa in 1964, he had been in hiding “in pursuance with his executive’s decision.”²⁷ September and Desai had earlier stood trial together after they had been caught breaching their banning orders at a CPC meeting in Cape Town. After the preliminary hearing in which they were defended by Albie Sachs, a COD (and SACP) member, the CPC had decided that they should not stand trial. Bail was paid and separate arrangements were made for the two leaders to go to safe houses. After spending about five months in hiding, the CPC then decided that September should leave. The decision that he should go into exile stemmed from the realisation that he was not serving any useful purpose inside the country. The ANC, which had never been very strong in the Western Cape, was at a particularly low point in the years after Sharpeville²⁸ and even more so after Rivonia. The CPC, on the other hand, never was a mass organisation and was able to offer only few facilities for people to continue to operate underground. According to September, Desai had already left the country by this time. September was initially meant to leave South Africa by boat via Durban, but following Desai’s escape through this route, that passage had

²⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Barney Desai, letter to Reg September, London, 7 November 1964.

²⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Barney Desai, letter to Reg September, London, 13 December 1964.

²⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Memorandum: Rissik Hiribai (Barney) Desai, A Political Biography, London, 18 September 1966.

²⁸ See Lodge, *Black Politics*, 214.

become known and thus blocked.²⁹ September was then taken to Swaziland, but this escape route also failed following the abduction of Rosemary Wentzel by the South African police. In the end, September had to go back into South Africa from where he was finally able to cross into Bechuanaland.³⁰ From Francistown he then proceeded to the ANC headquarters in Dar es Salaam, where he was appointed to work on the publications side under Themba Mqota (aka Alfred Kgokong).³¹

By late 1965 the Tanzanian government had been growing concerned with the presence of increasing numbers of freedom fighters in the country's capital, where many liberation movements' headquarters were stationed. As a result, Tanzania decided to allow only four representatives of each national liberation movement to maintain an office in the capital. The ANC was thus forced to reduce its staff in the Dar es Salaam office and transfer its provisional headquarters to Morogoro in December 1965.³² Reg September recalls how the ANC external mission now started "spreading," as people were relocated to

²⁹ Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

³⁰ See Ndlovu, "The ANC in exile," 425.

³¹ September experienced some difficulties during his stay in Dar es Salaam, as Alfred Kgokong (who became a member of the Group of Eight in the 1970s) "complained bitterly" of not having a senior enough position and of the fact that September, a Coloured person, was the working directly under him. Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

³² The transfer of headquarters in compliance with the Tanzanian government's order prompted a reshuffling of official posts. The new provisional headquarters in Morogoro were manned by the following officials: O.R. Tambo (Deputy President), Duma Nokwe (Secretary-General), Moses Kotane (Treasurer-General), J.B. Marks (Director of Transport and Communications), Alfred Kgokong (Director of Publicity and Information), Ruth Mompati (Chief Liaison Officer for the Women's Section) and James Hadebe (Director of Youth and Students and Head of the Welfare Department). Hadebe had until then been the ANC chief representative in Tanzania. Mzwai Piliso was recalled for health reasons from Cairo, where he had been chief representative, and appointed to head the Dar es Salaam office as chief representative, the other members being Mandy Msimang (administrative Secretary), Z. Ngalo and B. Leinaeng. Hadebe's reallocation to Morogoro from Dar eventually caused him to resign from the external mission of the ANC in December 1967. See UCT, Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P8, Summary of the events in connection with Mr James Hadebe and his resignation from the external mission of the African National Congress of South Africa.

Morogoro, Lusaka, and London. September was assigned to London, where he arrived on 20 March 1965.³³

September and Desai, who had “worked closely for years,” although “not always easily,” had been in touch by correspondence prior to September’s arrival in the UK. When he learned of the June 1964 Memorandum by Desai and Marney while still in Dar es Salaam, September had expressed concern about his CPC colleagues’ views, which he felt were “certainly not a reflection of the relationship [between the ANC and the CPC] back home.” Although September agreed that the issues raised by Desai and Marney called for thorough discussion, he insisted that the CPC’s communication with the ANC must be polite and dignified at all times, and stressed the importance of unity at this especially difficult moment in time:

We need each other’s assistance and Comradeship, now more than ever before. This is not the time for sectionalism and division of ranks, for duplication of work. We need one publicity agency, we cannot but have one unit to handle traffic through and around South Africa. In spite of the difficulties, [...] a machinery is now there and it is working. It needs fullest assistance and it is for us to play our part.³⁴

September believed that the secret of the ANC, which unlike the PAC had so far been able to escape factionalism, was that it was guided by a cohesive group of people and therefore represented “an anchor” which the CPC needed.³⁵

Desai and Marney were far from impressed by September’s comments, which they received as “very near a studied insult of myself [Desai], Cardiff [Marney], and CPC.”³⁶ They also resented the decision that once in London September would be working in the

³³ Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

³⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, Letter to Barney Desai, Dar es Salaam, 23 October 1964. Original emphasis.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Barney Desai, letter to Reg September, London, 13 December 1964.

ANC office as Organiser of the Coloured Affairs Department, which they felt should have been discussed with them first.³⁷ The ANC's attitude to their memoranda, on the other hand, had confirmed Desai and Marney's "worst fears as to how things stood outside the country."³⁸ In particular they were concerned about the ANC's "African image," in which they could not see the CPC represented. On the other hand, they argued that the PAC, although once composed of "extreme nationalists," had now realised "that non-Africans have an important role in South Africa and its liberatory struggle."³⁹

Relations continued to deteriorate after September's move to London. A meeting of the CPC London Committee was held a week after the arrival of September who, however, was not invited to attend. Instead, Desai and Marney had a private talk with September, who "very nearly walked out" because of the "cold and unfriendly" atmosphere of the meeting, during which Desai indicated "that he was hoping to spearhead a unifying movement of all the political elements of South Africans in London."⁴⁰ Although the three men agreed to meet again, no further talks were in fact arranged, nor were further meetings of the CPC London Committee held. The CPC in London now appeared to have divided into two sections both claiming to speak on behalf of the organisation. The first one, extremely critical of the ANC (and now leaning towards the PAC), was represented by Desai and Marney and included Benny Bunsee (CPC Information Officer), Ebrahim Desai, as well as non-member Kenny Jordaan. The other one, pro-ANC, was represented by Reg September and included Kenny Parker, Joyce Moodley, Hetty September, Maud and James Phillips, and Frank and Olive Landman.

³⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, unaddressed letter, London, 2 July 1965.

³⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Cardiff Marney, Letter to Reg September, London, 18 December 1964.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, unaddressed letter, London , 2 July 1965.

Communication with home, where “the forces of resistance [were said to be] at their lowest” and the political situation “both specifically and in general” was described as “bleak,” had become increasingly difficult. In a letter to Reg September, Achmat Osman, a CPC colleague, reported from Cape Town that “all communication has broken down. By the time I get any news, it is so filtered, so distorted, so coloured that is almost unacceptable as a basis for reasoning or belief.”⁴¹ The breakdown in communication was partly responsible for allowing the dispute to go on unchecked until it was too late and for the ensuing confusion as to which CPC grouping (i.e. Desai’s or September’s) was the legitimate representative of the organisation at home.

The breaking point came in the summer of 1965 as a result of two actions carried out by the Desai group. First, on 1 July, the British AAM received a memorandum signed jointly by Matthew Nkoana as PAC European representative and Barney Desai as President of the CPC which, amongst other things, accused the AAM of favouritism towards the ANC.⁴² The memorandum was presented without prior consultation with the CPC London Committee or with September, who dissociated themselves from it shortly afterwards with the approval of the CPC executive at home.⁴³

By this time, a letter signed by the members of the CPC executive still active in South Africa had been sent to Desai and Marney in London. The letter confirmed September’s line of action and raised no objection to his working for the ANC external mission. It also stated that although the executive sympathised with Desai and Marney’s

⁴¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Achmat Osman, letter to Reg September, Cape Town, 17 May 1966.

⁴² See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Joint Memorandum of the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa and the South African Coloured People’s Congress to the Anti-Apartheid Movement, United Kingdom, June 1965. The Memorandum also complained that the AAM did not actively support the armed struggle in South Africa.

⁴³ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Letter to the AAM from the London Committee of the CPC, 11 July 1965.

fight against “the alleged black chauvinism of the ANC abroad” and thought it was “healthy to have discussions with the PAC and other organisations,” they could not see how their difficulties could be reconciled by siding with the PAC which, as far as the CPC was concerned, remained “the same racialistic organisation that it was in 1960 and before.” The courageous stand taken by the ANC leadership in the recent trials, on the other hand, had “filled the people with admiration”, making the ANC “the only organisation for which the ‘coloured people’ [...] have any respect.” The CPC was still part of the Congress movement, and its allegiance unequivocally stood with the ANC, with whom relations in the Western Province were described as being “extremely cordial and healthy.”⁴⁴ In an unaddressed letter (probably meant as internal communication between ANC offices) reporting on all of Desai and Barney’s activities, September was now in the position to warn his colleagues that “the continued right of Messrs. Desai and Marney to represent the CPC abroad is putting the movement in grave jeopardy.”⁴⁵

Second were the statements about an impending civil war in South Africa which Desai made during a visit to Stockholm on 10 August 1965. These were reported in the South African press, thus bringing the internal CPC split into the open for the first time, and were later criticised by the ANC in an editorial of *Spotlight on South Africa* as “half-baked amateurish attempts at political drama.”⁴⁶ Desai had been invited to Stockholm by the Swedish South African Committee. His statement included the claim that whites in South Africa no longer had a monopoly of arms, and that Coloured People organisations in South Africa were preparing for a full-scale civil war, which would not necessarily be a lengthy one. Desai’s “opportunistic and wholly erroneous speech” in Stockholm was

⁴⁴ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Letter from the CPC executive in South Africa to B Desai and C Marney, 1 July 1965.

⁴⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, unaddressed letter, London, 2 July 1965.

⁴⁶ *Spotlight on South Africa*, Dar es Salaam, African National Congress, 13 August 1965.

blamed as the prime reason for the arrest of eight executive members and four other members of the CPC in South Africa.⁴⁷ In London, the CPC group headed by September dissociated itself from Desai's actions in a press release, which unequivocally repudiated his statements "for their provocativeness, irresponsibility and inaccuracy," and which revoked Desai's right to speak on behalf of the organisation.⁴⁸ September was now acting as the accredited CPC representative abroad in accordance with the decisions of the surviving CPC executive in South Africa.⁴⁹ Desai, on the other hand, defended his Stockholm speech and called for an apology for the "insupportable and morally reprehensible allegations" which had been made against him by the ANC.⁵⁰ A last attempt to restore unity within the ranks of the CPC in exile was made by calling a meeting of the CPC London Committee. This took place on 9 October 1965, but Desai walked out with his supporters before full and proper discussion could take place, thus leading to a vote of no confidence from both the London Committee and the CPC executive⁵¹ and eventually to their expulsion from the party, announced in a circular to organisations dated 20 October 1965.⁵²

Despite their expulsion, Desai's faction continued to make statements on behalf of the CPC while pursuing a separate agenda. In September 1965, the Johannesburg *Sunday*

⁴⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, CPC letter to Reginald and Hetty September and Frank and Olive Landman, Cape Town, December 1965.

⁴⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Press release, signed by R. September on behalf of the London Committee of the CPC, 18 August 1965.

⁴⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, CPC letter to Reginald and Hetty September and Frank and Olive Landman, Cape Town, December 1965.

⁵⁰ Wits, Historical Papers, A2675, III, 688, Barney Desai, "On civil war in South Africa," reply to an editorial in Spotlight on South Africa, 13 August 1965.

⁵¹ See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Report on October 9, 1965, meeting of the London Committee of the CPC, and Circular to Organisations, signed by Reg September, London, 20 October 1965.

⁵² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Circular to Organisations, signed by Reg September (CPC General Secretary), London, 20 October 1965.

Times reported of talks between Nkoana and Desai to discuss a possible PAC-CPC alliance.⁵³ Talks between Desai and the PAC in London were further publicised in the *CPC International Bulletin* (which Desai's group controlled), which reproduced a congratulatory message from the Botswana Independence Party Secretary General Bishop Macheng to Nkoana.⁵⁴ On occasion of the Second Afro-Asian Conference in Algiers in November 1965, Desai released a press statement on behalf of the CPC which expressed the belief that "the destiny of the coloureds is indissolubly bound up with the oppressed Africans" and that a united organisation representative of all the "enslaved masses" should at long last be formed.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, the *CPC International Bulletin* attacked the ANC for "consciously pursuing racialistic policies."⁵⁶ And, finally, *The New African*⁵⁷ published an interview with Barney Desai which questioned the usefulness of the international boycott as a weapon in the struggle against apartheid.⁵⁸

The Desai clique's alliance with the PAC was formally announced in March 1966 and reported in several British newspapers.⁵⁹ A press statement signed by Benny Bunsee (Information Officer) and dated March 19 announced that "the CPC, one of the few militant non-white organisations still militant in South Africa, has dissolved," and that its President (Desai) and Chairman (Marney) had joined the PAC, thus digging "the final nail in the coffin of the Congress Alliance," which "had failed because it led to a sectional and

⁵³ *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 12 September 1965.

⁵⁴ *CPC International Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 3, London, 16 October 1965.

⁵⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Press Release: SACPC statement to the Heads of State on occasion of the Second Afro-Asian Conference, London 30 October 1965.

⁵⁶ *CPC International Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 5., London, 16 December 1965.

⁵⁷ Randolph Vigne of the South African Liberal Party was *The New African*'s editor in London.

⁵⁸ *The New African*, 11 November 1965.

⁵⁹ *The Sunday Times*, London, 20 March 1966, and *Daily Worker*, 21 March 1966. Whereas *The Sunday Times* described the merger as the "first real attempt to build a unitary, non-racial movement in the country," the *Daily Worker* article also included the CPC London Committee's rejection of Desai's claim (see below).

racialistic approach to South African politics which had played into the hands of Dr Verwoerd.” The ANC was blamed for setting “the South African masses against one another” and for “selling our country to the highest international bidder.”⁶⁰ The Indian community in South Africa was also called upon to consider following the same path as the CPC and dissolve their political organisations to join the PAC “as Africans and equals.”⁶¹

What the PAC’s views in regards to Indian participation may have been is difficult to establish. In his opening address to the Inaugural Convention of the PAC, Sobukwe thus spoke of the Indian minority in South Africa: “this group is an oppressed minority. But there are some members of this group, the merchant class in particular, who have become tainted with the virus of cultural supremacy and national arrogance. This class identifies itself by and large with the oppressor but, significantly, this is the group which provides the political leadership of the Indian people in South Africa. And all that the politics of this class have meant up to now is preservation and defence of the sectional interests of the Indian merchant class.” Moreover, Sobukwe and the PAC grouped the Indian with the white minority as “foreign” to South Africa – as opposed to the “indigenous African people.”⁶² However, in the early 1960s Ahmed Gora Ebrahim and Patrick Duncan had been admitted into the PAC in exile as its first Indian and white members. This apparent contradiction may be explained by the fact that the PAC’s ideals were in principle non-racial. In the non-racial society which the PAC envisaged, all people (including those from the white and Indian “foreign” minorities) who recognised and respected the inalienable

⁶⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, SACPC External Representation, Press Release, signed by B Bunsee (Information Officer), London, 19 March 1966.

⁶¹ CPC International Bulletin, 19 March 1966, London.

⁶² “Opening address” by R.M. Sobukwe, Inaugural Convention of the PAC, 4-6 April 1959, document 39a in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 515.

right of the African majority to govern “would be Africans and all would be guaranteed human rights as individuals.”⁶³

Several organisations and individuals in the UK, Europe, and Africa welcomed the union between the CPC and the PAC. In London, Johnny James of the Caribbean Workers Movement, Barbara Haq, MCF Secretary, and Faris Glubb, a representative of the Omani liberation movement and former MCF Secretary, supported the merger as “a wise act of statesmanship which will be of great benefit to the struggle of the oppressed people in South Africa.”⁶⁴ John Chipimbari of ZANU congratulated the PAC for having proved the “superiority” of its ideology. Various newspapers and broadcasting stations in Guinea, Mali, Congo Brazzaville, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Algeria and Egypt also released news about the merger.⁶⁵

The CPC London Committee, however, disclaimed the merger and reaffirmed that the CPC continued to struggle for full democracy in South Africa as enshrined in the Freedom Charter “in association with all forces sharing the same object.” Desai’s decision to join the PAC was dismissed as “an opportunistic move devoid of real significance as the PAC itself has disintegrated as a political force both inside and outside the country.”⁶⁶ Still, the CPC-PAC joint statement was printed in the CPC *International Bulletin*, copies of which made their way into South Africa where they were delivered under the doors of several homes. This was an indication that although the majority of the CPC executive in South Africa backed Reg September and the CPC London Committee, Desai still enjoyed the support of “some kind of committee” functioning on his behalf, and “with certain well-

⁶³ Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 317.

⁶⁴ Faris Glubb, quoted in *Azania News*, London [April?] 1966.

⁶⁵ *Azania News*, London [April?] 1966.

⁶⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Press Statement on behalf of the London Committee of the CPC, 20 March 1966.

known CPC elements on it.” CPC members as a whole, however, were reported to be either “unaware” of the merger, “indifferent or derisive.”⁶⁷

By June 1966, relations between the ANC and the remaining members of the CPC in exile had been fully restored, mainly because of Reg September’s intervention in the dispute and his determination that the CPC must stand by the side of the external mission of the ANC, in acceptance that the latter should “bear responsibility of representing our whole movement outside South Africa.”⁶⁸ The arrival of Alex La Guma, who had been acting as a link between September and the rest of the CPC executive at home, in Zambia towards the end of 1966 further substantiated September’s line of conduct.⁶⁹ Both September and La Guma were also members of the SACP. It thus seems that Communist Party membership was of crucial importance in keeping the non-African exiles united behind the leadership of ANC during this period. As Lodge has argued:

The defection of the CPC men to the PAC’s ranks was a reflection of the tensions which existed between SACP members and other exiles within the Congress Movement in London. The PAC offered to non-communist CPC men what the ANC did not: full membership and responsibility in an African nationalist organisation [...].⁷⁰

The issue of external representation within the movement in exile was not settled, however, with Desai’s breakaway, thus suggesting that SACP exiles were also affected by it. The difference between the two was that SACP members were, unlike non-communist exiles,

⁶⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Achmat Osman, letter to Reg September, 17 May 1966.

⁶⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, Memo on Budget for the SACPC, London, 16 June 1966.

⁶⁹ During a meeting of the joint Congress Executives in Morogoro in November 1966, Alex La Guma, who had just left South Africa on an exit permit after his release from prison earlier that year, and who was now acting as the main CPC representative abroad, repudiated the alleged affiliation of the CPC and the PAC. See Nhlanhla Ndebele and Noor Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference: a moment of self-reflection,” in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol. 1, 582.

⁷⁰ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 310-311.

bound to the ANC by virtue of the SACP's overarching commitment to unity with the national liberation movement. Even so, as the final section in this chapter will argue, the problem of fully incorporating all South Africans living abroad, and in London in particular, into the work of the ANC external mission continued to raise its head throughout the rest of the decade.

Desai, Marney and Jordaan were added to the executive of the PAC, which described the merger as an illustration of “the PAC viewpoint that multiracialism as practised by the so called Congress Alliance cannot – and never did – work in South Africa,” and as finally destroying any accusations of the PAC being a racialistic organisation.⁷¹ The PAC had always regarded Coloureds as Africans, and in principle the organisation had always accepted them within its ranks. Lionel Morrison, who had been the secretary of the Cape Town branch of the CPC in the 1950s and an accused in the Treason Trial, had become the PAC chief representative in Indonesia when he left South Africa after Sharpeville. Like Desai and the other CPC men after him, Morrison joined the PAC because he “alleged that the ANC, by insisting on the multiracial Congress Alliance [...], was in fact a racially influenced organisation.”⁷² Indeed, as Saul Dubow has pointed out, “the inter-racial configuration of the Congress movement mirrored the official racial categories of the apartheid state in uncomfortable ways.”⁷³ Although the ANC and its allies refused to engage in the linguistic coinage of apartheid ideologues, there was a “disquieting similarity in the discourse of government and liberation movement around issues like ‘groups’ and ‘peoples’,” based on the acceptance of the politics of multi-racialism by both

⁷¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, PAC South Africa, Press Release, signed by Lionel Morrison (PAC Representative in Indonesia), London 19 March 1966.

⁷² Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 326.

⁷³ Dubow, “Thoughts on South Africa,” 67.

sides.⁷⁴ On the one hand, Desai's clash with the ANC external mission suggests that the ANC continued to uphold a multi-racial – rather than non-racial – approach to liberation politics. On the other hand, as it has been noted in the previous chapter, the PAC espoused in principle a truly non-racial ideal which the inclusion of the CPC men in its ranks exemplified. In spite of the theoretical sophistication of the Africanists' views on race, however, the PAC's rhetoric placed heavy emphasis on a racially-defined black African identity as a mobilising factor. This meant that at a rank and file level, PAC membership always was almost totally black African. So there seems to have been a dichotomy between the leadership and the membership in the PAC, which *de jure* was a non-racial organisation, although *de facto*, except for its upper crust, remained essentially composed of black South Africans.

The PAC, c. 1965-1967

The new CPC arrivals were initially viewed with suspicion by Leballo and his Africa-based associates, as the union between the CPC and the PAC had been achieved by the London office of the PAC (led by Nkoana), which was run almost independently of the PAC headquarters in Dar es Salaam and was opposed to Leballo's leadership.⁷⁵ Leballo, however, quickly reversed his attitude and used the merger as an opportunity to strengthen his authority in the organisation. It would therefore appear that the newly recruited CPC leaders soon found themselves drawn into the power struggles between the various factions of the PAC in exile. Hence, as Karis and Gerhart have already noted, although the fusion of

⁷⁴ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁵ Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 56.

the CPC with the PAC might have temporarily boosted the PAC's propaganda, "whether or not it added to the organisation's strength seems doubtful."⁷⁶

From the start, the history of the PAC in exile had been riddled with problems of factionalism, which prevented the creation of "stable structures or a continuity of respected leadership."⁷⁷ The difficulties and contradictions experienced by the PAC in exile have been interpreted by one of its members, Mfanasekaya Gqobose, as "non-antagonistic" in nature. What is meant by this is that these contradictions were "not against the enemy which PAC had clearly identified, namely the White minority regime, its allies and supporters." Rather, they arose out of the difficulties of waging struggle against such enemy and took the form of internal disputes through periodical occurrences.⁷⁸ In other words, Gqobose's statements are a public recognition of the problems affecting the organisation internally by which, however, the PAC's fundamental tenets were never corrupted or compromised.

During the period 1962-1964, the first serious internal contradiction had taken place as a result of Leballo's Maseru press conference which has already been analysed in chapter three. This had brought about a big controversy among the PAC leadership which had relatively remained kept below the surface. In 1966, however, the PAC's internal conflicts sprung into the open after two of its executive members attended a UN Human Rights Seminar on Apartheid in Brasilia in August-September. The paper presented at the seminar by A.B. Ngcobo, the Treasurer, and Peter Raboroko set out a six-point programme inviting armed intervention in South Africa by UN military forces known as the

⁷⁶ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 47.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ UFH, National Heritage Cultural Studies Centre, PAC Tanzania Mission, Mfanasekaya Gqobose, "The internal contradictions in the PAC since its inception."

“Declaration of Principled Intervention in South Africa.”⁷⁹ The proposal led to a power struggle in the PAC couched in ideological terms which brought into focus a division between ‘rightist’ and ‘leftist’ members. The ‘leftists’ in the PAC criticised the Brasilia proposal as a serious deviation from the PAC’s basic principle that the emancipation of the African people would only be achieved by Africans themselves. Apart from the PAC’s policy of self-reliance, which was now strongly advocated by the PAC ideologues in the camps, the ‘leftists’ objected to UN intervention because they considered it “an imperialist dominated body” and “an instrument of imperialism,” which the PAC also sought to liquidate.⁸⁰

These different positions can be viewed as a reflection of developments that had been accomplished after 1964 as a result of the consolidation of relations between the PAC and China. A number of PAC military trainees, including the PAC’s military commander Templeton Ntantala, were sent to China between 1964 and 1967 where they had received military as well as political, or ideological, training. According to Gqobose, as socialist politics became incorporated into the PAC, its ideological character was qualitatively changed.⁸¹ However, Lodge has argued that the PAC’s alliance with China was ultimately an expedient one and that despite the “tendency of the protagonists to characterise any disagreement in polarised ideological terms,” the conflicts which arose in this period “really centred around the question of who controlled the movement and its resources.”⁸² In fact, Raboroko and Ngcobo, who were expelled from the PAC because of the Brasilia

⁷⁹ See Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 48-49.

⁸⁰ PAC, Public release: “Repudiation of the call for United Nation’s military intervention in Azania,” PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 36-37.

⁸¹ UFH, National Heritage Cultural Studies Centre, PAC Tanzania Mission, Gqobose, “The internal contradictions in the PAC since its inception.”

⁸² Lodge, *Black Politics*, 310.

representations, had been part of the first delegation of PAC members to travel to China in 1964.⁸³ Even so, during its reorganising conference in Moshi in 1967, the PAC outlined a programme in which a heavy Chinese influence can be detected, and which in many respects marks a significant departure from its previous approach to the armed struggle.

The Moshi Conference

The Brasilia incident was “but a symptom of an organisational mess.” As early as 1963 a number of PAC exiles “acutely felt the need to streamline the Party machinery.” Matthew Nkoana, then in Bechuanaland, and some twenty-four other PAC members submitted a memorandum to Leballo and the executive in Maseru which called for a “Special Conference to study developments and draw up plans for the future.”⁸⁴ Despite promises that a conference would be held soon, Leballo had thus far managed to avert this through the expulsion and suspension from office of the core of this group in 1965. More calls for a PAC conference and a general amnesty of expulsions and suspensions were made in early 1967 on Raboroko and Ngcobo’s initiative. The Tanzanian government and the African Liberation Committee of the OAU also got involved in behind-the-scenes efforts to bring together all PAC factions in a round-table conference, but Leballo had been able to resist them too.⁸⁵ The closure of the PAC office in Dar es Salaam by the Liberation Committee on 12 August 1967 as a result of an incident which involved an attempt by Raboroko and

⁸³ Ibid., 309.

⁸⁴ Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 42. See also UCT, Department of Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Q (1), C.L. Lakaye, “A statement concerning the dispute within the Pan-Africanist Congress (S.A.) to the African Liberation Committee,” Dar es Salaam, 17 November 1967.

⁸⁵ Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 51.

Ngcobo to assume its control finally made a reorganising convention inevitable, as the continuation of PAC activities and future assistance had come under serious threat.

On 15 August 1967, after consultation with the PAC leadership and the Tanzanian government in Dar es Salaam, the African Liberation Committee issued a communiqué which summoned a meeting of the members of the PAC executive, also to be attended by the Executive Secretary of the Liberation Committee, George Magombe. The meeting's purpose would be "to consolidate the PAC External machinery and streamline organisational operations"⁸⁶ so that "a lasting solution to the problem of disunity within the leadership" of the PAC could be found.⁸⁷ Previous calls for a convention had emphasised the need to include not only expelled and suspended members but also to have rank and file opinion represented by inviting delegates from groups and military units. Fearful that his leadership would come under fire, Leballo successfully manoeuvred against the participation of the general membership so that the meeting in the end was restricted to the PAC executive. The suspensions of membership of Mahomo, 'Molotsi and Nyaose were lifted in view of the conference, which took place in Moshi between 19 and 22 September 1967 with the full backing of the Tanzanian government and the Liberation Committee.⁸⁸

The main document adopted at the Moshi conference was entitled "PAC's revolutionary message to the nation." In it, the PAC laid down for the first time a written

⁸⁶ African Liberation Committee, "Communiqué," Dar es Salaam, 15 August 1967, in PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 2.

⁸⁷ George Magombe, "Opening address, PAC re-organisation conference, Moshi: September 1967," in PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 3.

⁸⁸ The participants to the Moshi conference were: P.K. Leballo, Z.B. Molete, J.D. Nyaose, T.T. Letlaka, P.N. Raboroko, T.M. Ntantala, B. Desai, K. Jordan, C. Marney, N. Mahomo and P. 'Molotsi. The Executive Secretary of the African Liberation Committee, George Mgombe, its Assistant Executive Secretary, L.S. Oyaka, and the Second Vice-President of Tanzania, Rashidi M. Kawawa, also attended the meeting as observers.

strategy of armed struggle through rural-based guerrilla warfare. The new strategic plan, which variously quoted Mao Tse-Tung and referred to several examples of socialist rural guerrilla struggles, can be viewed as evidence of the influence of socialist thinking on the PAC and stands in sharp contrast with the PAC's previous antipathy to Marxism as a "foreign ideology." Echoing the spontaneity which had been a central element of both the PAC and Poqo in the early 1960s (but also Che Guevara's theory of *foco*), the document stated that the purpose of the PAC's guerrillas would be to "spark off the all-embracing spirit of revolt that is simmering just below the surface."⁸⁹ The starting point of the oncoming conflict would be the countryside, where "from the ranks of the peasants in the reserves, who starve amidst plenty, and millions of landless labourers in thraldom, 'squatting' on white farms, [...] the guerrilla forces find their most eager support." It was therefore in the countryside that mobile units of trained guerrillas would first integrate themselves with the "suffering masses" and gradually lead to the development of an all out "people's war." The guerrillas would build their organisational capacity by dispersing the enemy's forces over a vast area and by conducting intensive political and military education among the peasants and the farm workers who would be given arms and organised into bands of guerrillas. Their first targets would be "the unprotected, isolated settler farmers," whose land would be taken over to become the supply centres and safe bases for the fighting guerrillas. The rudimentary organs of the new state would also be set up in these liberated areas.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, sabotage of lines of communication and power supplies on a country-wide scale would weaken the enemy's degree of mobility to the advantage of the guerrilla forces. A second front would then be opened up in the urban

⁸⁹ "PAC's revolutionary message to the nation," in PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

areas, where workers would be organised in illegal trade unions to engage in sabotage operations, strikes and go-slows, culminating in the capture of factories and government institutions. Because of the enemy's military superiority, the PAC now predicted "a prolonged protracted struggle." This recognition marks a significant departure from the earlier immediacy of the PAC and Poqo's aims. It also implicitly points to the failure of the PAC's initial goal of freedom by 1963. Despite the enemy's military and economic strength, white South Africa was described as a "paper tiger,"⁹¹ as the country's economy would not be able to endure a prolonged conflict without collapsing, which in turn would lead to the disintegration of the organs of repression.

Three revolutionary principles or objectives were set out as the basis for the mobilisation of popular forces in South Africa (now re-named Azania):⁹² "the establishment of a non-racial socialist democracy," the nationalisation of the country's resources (including mines, land, factories and banks), and the "pursuance of positive policies with the world-wide anti-imperialist movement." By representing aspirations which linked up the question of racial oppression with that of class exploitation, these objectives formed a basis around which a "broad alliance of patriotic forces" could be mobilised.⁹³ Like in its original manifesto the PAC made the point of rejecting the racial and ethnic divisions imposed by the apartheid government and spoke about the people's aspirations as human beings. However, the PAC's original emphasis on African nationalism and its Pan-Africanist vision were both lost and were now replaced by socialist-oriented jargon and goals rooted in the PAC's alliance with China.

⁹¹ Ibid., 17.

⁹² See Lodge, *Black Politics*, 310.

⁹³ "PAC's revolutionary message to the nation," in PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 23.

Another departure from previous ideological positions was with respect to white liberals and leftists. In its early days, the PAC had completely rejected the inclusion of whites on the grounds that if they appeared to be sympathetic to the demands of the African people, it would only be in so far as to ensure their privileges would not be threatened. According to Sobukwe, “if they (the privileged) offer assistance, it is only for the purpose of ‘directing’ and ‘controlling’ the struggle of the underprivileged and making sure that it does not become ‘dangerous’.”⁹⁴ In contrast, a place was now accorded to “the white liberal who, disgusted with the brutality of the system of apartheid, completely identifies himself in word and deed, with the aspirations of our people.”⁹⁵

In the conference resolutions the PAC announced its conviction that “only an armed struggle, anchored firmly in the masses can achieve liberation.” Hence it vowed to give priority to military over diplomatic requirements. The Presidential Council was replaced by a Revolutionary Command in order to give direction to the armed struggle and provide for its exigencies.⁹⁶ The *Brazilia* papers, which advocated UN military intervention in South Africa, were repudiated and the principle of “revolutionary self-reliance”⁹⁷ was proclaimed as the precondition for all outside military and financial assistance. Finally, the merger of the CPC was ratified at Moshi and, upon the insistence of the African Liberation

⁹⁴ “Future of the Africanist movement.” Questions and answers by R.M. Sobukwe, in *The Africanist*, January 1959, document 38 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 508.

⁹⁵ “PAC’s revolutionary message to the nation,” in PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 25.

⁹⁶ Resolutions, in PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 39-42.

⁹⁷ “Revolutionary self-reliance in a protracted revolutionary war means two things: to capture weapons from the enemy in order to promote partisan warfare; and to manufacture weapons, where none are available, for the purpose of building up the people’s armed strength.” “PAC’s revolutionary message to the nation,” in PAC, *Report of the National Executive Committee Meeting*, 27-28.

Committee, the idea of creating a united front with other liberation movements in South Africa was also accepted in principle.⁹⁸

Despite what the stated intentions of this executive meeting had been, the Moshi conference only temporarily resolved the PAC's internal problems. Although the conference resolutions had called for a review of all suspensions and expulsions, A.B. Ngcobo's suspension was confirmed and a commission of enquiry set up to investigate his past activities as Treasurer General. Moreover, although it was claimed that Moshi represented a moment of "rigorous but healthy self-criticism" in which "all causes of misunderstandings were thoroughly examined," because of the exclusion of the rank and file, "the conference mainly served to endorse the actions and behaviour of the PAC leadership."⁹⁹ Not even two months after the Moshi executive meeting, Charles Lakaje,¹⁰⁰ who had been a PAC representative in Dar es Salaam, wrote a memorandum to the African Liberation Committee explaining why the Moshi conference was fundamentally flawed. He argued that "the non-participation of the general members in the Moshi conference, members in particular who had tabled grievances before the leadership, has caused great anxiety and uncertainty in the ranks of the Pan-Africanist Congress." Therefore, a meeting of the general members was still – if not even more – needed in order to remedy the situation.¹⁰¹ Absent from the Moshi meeting was also the wish of the leadership to seek a fresh mandate from the general membership, which resulted in a widening of the gap

⁹⁸ This resulted in the half-hearted effort by the PAC to try to hold unity talks with the ANC which has been mentioned in Chapter Two.

⁹⁹ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 311.

¹⁰⁰ Lakaje had arrived in Tanzania in July 1965 and was dismissed by Leballo in May 1966 over financial matters.

¹⁰¹ UCT, Department of Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Q (1), C.L. Lakaye, "A statement concerning the dispute within the Pan-Africanist Congress (S.A.) to the African Liberation Committee," Dar es Salaam, 17 November 1967.

between the lead and the led, instead of narrowing the rift between the two. Because of the exclusion of rank-and-file opinion, the Moshi conference in effect “mainly served to endorse the actions and behaviour of the PAC leadership” under Leballo’s personal authority. As Lodge has observed, “the Moshi Conference presents an interesting contrast to the ANC’s own efforts at internal reform at Morogoro two years later,” which will be discussed in the next chapter.¹⁰²

Despite the adoption of a new strategic plan of a protracted rural-based guerrilla war by the PAC, the Moshi conference did little to address the problems experienced by its soldiers on the ground. Gross neglect of those guerrillas who had completed their military training and disenchantment with the leadership had led to a scattering of PAC military cadres throughout Africa. In November 1967, Lakaje notified the OAU that the PAC could not “boast of more than forty trained chaps under the control of the party,” while more than two-hundred members were strewn all over the world – with about thirty members in Nairobi, twenty in Addis Ababa, thirty in Botswana and another fifteen scattered around a few more African countries. Over one hundred members lived in the US and about twenty in Europe.¹⁰³ Although the accuracy of these figures cannot be verified, they are supported by Nkoana, according to whom in the Moshi aftermath, “80 per cent of the PAC’s militarily-trained cadres are disaffected, and are now scattered around the world.”¹⁰⁴ After completing their training in military camps in Africa, these PAC members had been driven away by the upheavals of the leadership in exile – although they voiced their preparedness to return once the party’s machinery had been streamlined. Moreover, from 1967 the

¹⁰² Lodge, *Black Politics*, 311.

¹⁰³ UCT, Department of Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Q (1), C.L. Lakaye, “A statement concerning the dispute within the Pan-Africanist Congress (S.A.) to the African Liberation Committee,” Dar es Salaam, 17 November 1967.

¹⁰⁴ Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 60.

African Liberation Committee of the OAU made it a requirement of financial assistance to liberation armies in exile that they provide proof of new recruits. Because of the shortage of recruits, PAC cadres were allegedly being sent twice to the same training camp to give the impression that the PAC had more men to train – thus adding to the frustration of PAC guerrillas.¹⁰⁵

In August 1965 the ill treatment of PAC military cadres in the camps had resulted in a suicide by a man in Mbeya. After this death, the man's wife in Lusaka twice attempted to commit suicide. Still nothing had been done to find out the causes of these suicide attempts. In 1966 the dissatisfaction of the rank and file at PAC camps in Tanzania reached another low. The cadres at a camp in Mbeya requested a meeting with the leaders in Dar es Salaam through Ntantala, who was in charge of the men. However, only Leballo went to Mbeya, with no explanation given for the absence of the other leaders. A meeting was scheduled with the cadres which Leballo went on to address without observing the meeting procedures in use in the camp and without even inquiring about the cause that had necessitated the calling of the meeting in the first place. As a result, most of the cadres present left the meeting. Shortly afterwards, three PAC members were declared prohibited immigrants in Tanzania because, it was suspected, the PAC leadership must have made such a recommendation to the authorities. Some PAC cadres then notified the Area Commissioner in Mbeya of their determination to join a group of their colleagues in Tunduma, near the Zambian border, expressly to draw the attention of the Tanzanian government to “the illtreatment to which members are subjected by the leadership.” Representatives from the African Liberation Committee and Tanzanian Home Affairs met

¹⁰⁵ UCT, Department of Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Q (1), C.L. Lakaye, “A statement concerning the dispute within the Pan-Africanist Congress (S.A.) to the African Liberation Committee,” Dar es Salaam, 17 November 1967.

the PAC men in Tunduma, where their grievances were disclosed. In particular they complained about the preferential treatment accorded to certain cadres by the leadership, including the cover up of petty crimes by some members, better medical treatment, the giving of monies on the sly, and the appointment to positions of trust. ‘Tribalism’ was perceived to be at the root of the problem with special treatment given to a group if cadres from the Cape (who, incidentally, came from the same area as those regional heads Leballo had appointed to the Presidential Council) to the detriment of cadres from the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and Natal.¹⁰⁶

Far from bringing an end to it, the internal feuding in the PAC became intensified after Moshi. In December 1967 the PAC’s headquarters were moved from Tanzania to Zambia in order to carry out infiltration attempts from this base. The Liberation Committee had in fact threatened to suspend financial assistance if the PAC did not demonstrate some military operational effectiveness. After the aborted 1963 uprising, no military action had in fact been planned or staged by the PAC. In April 1968 a small unit of guerrillas of the newly designated Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA) accompanied by Coremo forces went into Mozambique with the purpose of crossing into South Africa. They were however intercepted by the Portuguese and most of the PAC men were either killed or captured.¹⁰⁷

Gqobose has argued that divergences within the PAC grew wider after Moshi because the majority of the APLA cadres in Zambia had become influenced by leftist politics after receiving Chinese training. They became so critical of the leadership based in Tanzania that this eventually “affected the relations between the PAC and the Zambian government to such an extent that the government threw the entire PAC membership out of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 312.

its country back into Tanzania.”¹⁰⁸ Lodge, however, has argued that the PAC’s expulsion from Zambia was the outcome of the increasing disaffection of the rank and file with the leadership as a result of the failure of the Mozambique expedition. Moreover, the Zambian government claimed that the PAC had been involved in plotting against President Kaunda. The PAC’s expulsion from Zambia also resulted in the loss of OAU recognition as a liberation movement for a year.¹⁰⁹ In 1970, Leballo managed to once again secure the backing of the Tanzanian government after he appeared as state witness in the trial against Oscar Kambona and training of APLA men was resumed at a camp in Chunya (north of Mbeya) later that year. “From then onwards, Leballo could depend on the Tanzanian government’s support in suppressing any resistance to his authority.”¹¹⁰

The ‘London Debates’

Some steps towards strengthening liaison between the ANC external mission and the other organisations in the Congress Alliance were 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 (composed of Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo and Joe Matthews) to draft proposals for submission to the ANC external mission’s headquarters.

In November 1965 this informal committee produced a memorandum identifying a twofold problem. First was the problem of maintaining a close liaison between the leadership of all organisations in the Alliance, namely the SAIC, the SACPC, SACTU and

¹⁰⁸ UFH, National Heritage Cultural Studies Centre, PAC Tanzania Mission, Gqobose, “The internal contradictions in the PAC since its inception.”

¹⁰⁹ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 312.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 314.

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 was nevertheless a start to fill some of the existing gaps in the external machinery of the ANC.¹¹¹

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.”¹¹² 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.¹¹³

¹¹¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Proposals for strengthening liaison between the External Mission of the ANC and other organisations in the Congress Alliance, November 1965.

¹¹² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC London Papers, Box 5, File 34, ANC Newsletter published by the ANC Office, 3 Collingham Gardens, London SW5 [1965].

¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴

The set of proposals, however, met no response from headquarters.¹¹⁵ In May 1966 Reg September wrote to Tambo that “London needs to be put on a proper foundation organisationally.”¹¹⁶ September warned of a “new and dangerous development” which was beginning to show itself in London: the emergence of numerous Congress groups (an ANC, a CPC and a SAIC group), 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.”¹¹⁷ For example, the SAIC and the CPC, although theoretically in the same Congress Movement, occupied separate offices in different parts of town,¹¹⁸ to the effect that “one office does not know what the other one is doing.”¹¹⁹ He 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,

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

¹¹⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, London, to O.R. Tambo, Morogoro, 5 May 1966.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ The SAIC had a small office at the India League at 1 John Adams Street, while 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.

¹¹⁹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Reg September, London, to O.R. Tambo, Morogoro, 5 May 1966.

new arrangements had be made so that all Congress elements could be readily marshalled at once whenever necessary, and not on a separate basis.

On the ANC's request,¹²⁰ a new memorandum was sent to Dar es Salaam by the Congress Committee in London 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."¹²¹ This was because, as Joe Slovo explained in later years, "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."¹²² Slovo also 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."¹²³ Shubin has claimed that by 1965, 85 per cent of ANC funds came from the Soviet Union and the socialist countries,¹²⁴ rather than from African countries. The question of African support is an important point which has to be emphasised, given that in the early 1960s the ANC had worked hard to make itself acceptable to independent African states so that it could become a beneficiary of their aid. The whole "African image" policy had been

¹²⁰ See UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Duma Nokwe, Dar es Salaam, to Yusuf Dadoo, London, 24 May 1966.

¹²¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

¹²² Joe Slovo, "South Africa – No Middle Road," in Basil Davidson, Joe Slovo and Anthony R. Wilkinson, (eds.), *Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution* (Harmondsworth), 1976, 190.

¹²³ Joe Slovo, "The sabotage campaign," *Dawn*, Souvenir Issue, 1 January 1986, 24.

¹²⁴ Shubin, ANC, 68.

centred around this issue. Early expectations that South Africa would be politically isolated by the world community of nations had 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.

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.¹²⁵ 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.¹²⁶

The proposal of a Council of War (which can be viewed as a forerunner of the Revolutionary Council which was established at the Morogoro Conference in 1969) implied the recognition by the London group that armed activity was the most important strategy by which the struggle could now be advanced. Howard Barrell has argued that armed struggle emerged as the central feature of MK's operational strategy at a very early stage, and that in fact the sabotage campaign was intended as a transitional phase towards

¹²⁵ Such an assessment was very idealistic. Although MK fighters became engaged into battle against South African forces during the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns (discussed in Chapter Five), 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. The ANC, however, spoke of its forces as if they were already at war with the enemy.

¹²⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

“the development of an armed force eventually mounting a broad revolutionary assault.”¹²⁷

This view is supported by Shubin, according to whom “by the beginning of 1963 the Umkhonto High Command was not merely planning isolated acts of sabotage, but was working on strategies and tactics for a revolutionary war, an armed uprising in reply to armed repression by the government. The overthrow of the government by armed struggle [in other words, armed revolution] was the stated goal.”¹²⁸ Whether this understanding was being given expression at the organisational level, is what was being questioned by the London Committee.

Moreover, following the arrest of the first and second NHC, MK’s leadership had in effect passed on to the ANC external mission, which had inherited part of MK’s leadership. An ANC committee known as the Planning Council was set up under Tambo’s overall leadership to replace the old NHC to give direction to MK and its operations. However, in exile, non-African communist leaders such as Joe Slovo who had played a prominent role in MK’s formation and initial sabotage plans now found themselves cut off from the management of MK. And lastly, 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.

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

¹²⁷ Howard Barrell, “Conscripts To Their Age: African National Congress Operational Strategy, 1976-1986,” D.Phil thesis, St Anthony’s College, University of Oxford, 1993, http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/barrel_thesis/CHAPT1.htm.

¹²⁸ Shubin, ANC, 51.

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 then (i.e. from non-violent tactics to armed struggle); despite this, 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.”¹²⁹

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.¹³⁰ The Sub-Committee asked the London comrades to spell out more clearly the idea of a 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

¹²⁹ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

¹³⁰ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 6, File 53, Report of the Sub-Committee on Problems of the Congress Movement [1966].

incorrect as it ignores the decided policies of the various constituent organisations of the Congress Alliance.¹³¹

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 expanding the present Planning Council, 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.”¹³²

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 last thread of

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

contact with home was severed. Nevertheless, during his time underground, Fischer had been communicating with a group of Central Committee members in London operating from a small office in Goodge Street under the leadership of Yusuf Dadoo and Joe Slovo.¹³³

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.¹³⁴

In early 1965, the SACP leaders in London started receiving requests that they take over the whole leadership of the Party. The SACP group in London accordingly put forward to their colleagues¹³⁵ 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 and organisational leadership and want us outside to take over that responsibility."¹³⁶ Uncertainty was also expressed regarding the question of the relationship between the SACP and the rest of the 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

¹³³ See Kasrils, 'Armed and Dangerous', 100.

¹³⁴ 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 Brian Bunting, "The African Communist," <http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/journals/African%20Communist.htm>.

¹³⁵ Notably the SACP General Secretary Moses Kotane and its Chairman J.B. Marks.

¹³⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, "The mission to Hull" [1965?].

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.¹³⁷

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.¹³⁸ 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.”¹³⁹ Although members of the Central Committee in exile had met in Prague and then Moscow some time in 1963 and again in 1964,¹⁴⁰ according to 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.”¹⁴¹ The Secretariat, to

¹³⁷ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, “Matters which cannot be solved without get together” [1965?].

¹³⁸ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, “The mission to Hull” [1965?].

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, London Secretariat, letter to Moses Kotane, 12 April 1965.

¹⁴¹ Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 11.

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."¹⁴²

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 pleased them and insisted that they were giving the ANC a loan."¹⁴³ 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

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, London Secretariat, letter to Moses Kotane, 12 April 1965.

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.”¹⁴⁴

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.”¹⁴⁵ The pattern of political exile which had emerged by the mid-1960s, whereby the majority of the SACP members in London (where by 1966 both the editorial of the *African Communist* and the Party Secretariat were based) 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.”¹⁴⁶ 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.”¹⁴⁷ On leaving Dar es Salaam for London in January 1969, Turok wrote to Tambo and the ANC executive to express his concern at the failure of the ANC to integrate him into the work of the organisation, which he came to interpret in racial terms:

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 211.

¹⁴⁶ Ndebele and Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference,” 585.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 584.

During the first nine months of our stay in Dar es Salaam we were in fact treated with so much reserve that we got the impression that we were suspected on security grounds. Direct offers of total involvement were made to both Comrade Tennyson Makiwane in Kazungula and Comrade Tambo in Dar es Salaam but nothing resulted from them.

[...] It gradually became clear to us that the reason for the estrangement was our whiteness and nothing else. The question arises as to whether the individual leaders of the ANC with whom we worked in such harmony at home have changed their political outlook or whether they have been influenced in their attitudes by other considerations.¹⁴⁸

Central to understanding why these differences manifested themselves on the axis of geography and 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.¹⁴⁹ This meant that "by 1966, only London had organised Party formation in exile."¹⁵⁰ 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."¹⁵¹ 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."¹⁵² 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. This had been raised at the SACP's 1958 Conference and Kotane (and others) had successfully opposed it

¹⁴⁸ Ben Turok, Confidential letter to the President and Members of the National Executive Committee, ANC, January 1969, reproduced in Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 216-217.

¹⁴⁹ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 301.

¹⁵⁰ Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 15.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 17.

¹⁵² Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 211.

for fear that a premature announcement of the existence of the SACP may prejudice the work of the liberation movement as a whole.¹⁵³ 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,” as well as by an “overriding desire to maintain the unity and cohesion of the national movement.”¹⁵⁴ Moreover, Chris Hani explained that Kotane probably “felt that he himself was representing the Party in the ANC and that therefore there was no need for the Party itself. In a way he succeeded, he achieved the respect of OR [Tambo] and indirectly OR’s recognition of the Party is mirrored in Moses [Kotane].”¹⁵⁵ This decision was taken not only to antagonise African host countries, but also to avoid creating tensions in the camps. Since recruitment in the SACP was at the time still secret (party 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 conspiratorial 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.¹⁵⁶

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.”¹⁵⁷ During

¹⁵³ Interview with Brian Bunting, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 22 November 2004.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Shubin, *ANC*, 112-113.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Shubin, *ANC*, 112.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Essop Pahad, Cape Town, 9 February 2005.

¹⁵⁷ Joe Slovo, quoted in Shubin, *ANC*, 113.

the first formal meeting between the ANC and the SACP held after the Morogoro Conference, 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.”¹⁵⁸ 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.”¹⁵⁹ The question of establishing operative contact between the Central Committee of the SACP and the members of the Party in the army, as well as between the leaderships of the SACP and the ANC will be further analysed in the next chapter.

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, emerged more clearly 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 the meeting essentially centred on 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.¹⁶⁰ The Africanists within the ANC

¹⁵⁸ 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.].

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Essop Pahad, Cape Town, 9 February 2005.

¹⁶⁰ 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.

(and the SACP) attacked the idea of forming a Council of War. Robert Resha and Mzwai Piliso 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 leadership of this struggle by some of our colleagues.”¹⁶¹ One of the few people expressing sympathy with the London comrades and their problem was Flag Boshielo who argued that “we are all refugees and should not stick to the Constitution. We should accept members of other groups as we accept members of the ANC.”¹⁶²

The non-African comrades, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of mobilising all racial groups in South Africa in order 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.¹⁶³ 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

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

done before, that people in London, which represented a key area, had to be taken command of.¹⁶⁴

Yusuf Dadoo showed signs of impatience with his African colleagues' insistence on the Indian people being non-violent, an idea which he wished to rid the ANC of. During the time of the Rhodesian campaigns of 1967-1968, SAIC leaflets were distributed in South Africa which publicly asked the Indian people to support the armed struggle. 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."¹⁶⁵ During an interview in 1968, Dadoo reconciled the tradition of passive resistance of the SAIC with support for the armed struggle by arguing that: "Passive resistance was never the ideology of the organisation [i.e. the 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." Finally, Indians readily responded to MK's call after its formation in 1961, and actively participated in its

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ CULLEN HSTPAP, A2675, III, 688, "Forward to Freedom!: we call the coloured community..." Leaflet in English and Afrikaans issued by the SACPC [1968].

activities.¹⁶⁶ SAIC members Ahmed Kathrada, Mac Maharaj, George Naicker, Indres and Steve Naidoo, Abdullhay Jassat and Laloo Chiba, 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 vacuum and were looking up to the leadership outside for guidance.¹⁶⁷ Joe Matthews came in his support by arguing that full participation of other racial groups was not only necessary but indispensable to the struggle. This could only be achieved, not by forming a Council of War or similar Committee, or by extending the present Planning Council, but “by the full participation of our comrades in the work which the struggle demands of them.”¹⁶⁸

In the end, the meeting 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.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH05, Y. Dadoo, “The role of the Indian people in the South African revolution,” An interview in 1968.

¹⁶⁷ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 8, File 68, Notes on a meeting of the joint Congress Executives, 26-28 November 1966.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ndebele and Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference,” 585.

Another step forward towards the full mobilisation of all oppressed groups was the creation, after the 1966 Morogoro meeting, 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.”¹⁷⁰ 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”¹⁷¹ 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 took almost another three years and the almost total disenchantment of the rank and file with the leadership for the ANC to give in to pressure to finally review its strategy and tactics.

Conclusion

As the external mission came to assume the leadership of the entire movement after Rivonia, the ‘African image’ proved to be unable to accommodate for the new conditions of struggle. The pattern of political exile which had emerged by the mid-1960s posed a challenge to the ‘African image’ as this failed to incorporate the growing number of South

¹⁷⁰ Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 16.

¹⁷¹ 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.

Africans political exiles in London. Barney Desai's dispute with the ANC external mission was indicative of the state of the movement in London, where, because of the "African image" policy, a large number of people were not being drawn into the work of the ANC office.

The inability to find a compromise solution to the problems of representation raised by Desai can be ascribed to several factors. First, the ANC continued to insist on the constitutional legitimacy of the "African image" policy. With most of the leadership imprisoned on Robben Island and Chief Luthuli restricted to his Groutville home in Natal, the external mission was wary of taking any bold decisions which it felt could be "effected and mandated only by a national conference held within South Africa's borders."¹⁷² This partly accounts for the slowness of the ANC leadership in exile in addressing the problems arising in this period. Second, personal relations and jealousies seem to have played a factor. Desai had a very charismatic, flamboyant and forceful personality; because of this he may have been perceived as a threat by some of the ANC colleagues who held leadership positions in the ANC external mission.¹⁷³ Desai, for his part, probably expected to be accorded a more senior position when he entered the exile political scene. Finally, the failure to achieve an agreement was partly the result of poor communication within the movement – both between the movement abroad and home, and within the movement in exile (i.e. between the London-based and Africa-based movement). The serious breakdown of communication with home during the years of 'the lull' is central to understanding the long and arduous road ahead of the movement, which greatly suffered from "the lack of

¹⁷² Ndlovu, "The ANC in Exile," 446.

¹⁷³ Interview with Reg September, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 15 February 2005.

cross-fertilisation between the ideas that emerged from this re-think outside South Africa and from the re-evaluation that was taking place inside the country.”¹⁷⁴

Underlying the debate around the “African image” was an enduring ideological tension between non-racialism and African nationalism within the ANC, which both preceded the exile history of the organisation, and was not resolved with the CPC men’s defection to the PAC, nor with the opening of membership at Morogoro in 1969, which will be analysed in the next chapter. The ‘London Debates’ can be viewed as evidence of a 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, a change which was further complicated by the “African image” strategy.

The merger with the CPC and an attempt to restore unity within its leadership at Moshi only defused the problems of factionalism the PAC had been suffering from since 1963 and which had sprung into the open in Brasilia in 1966. The non-inclusive nature of the Moshi meeting, which “ended without any discussion of the grievances and demands of the rank and file,”¹⁷⁵ can be viewed as the main reason for this. Because of this fundamental shortcoming, the ideological reorientation of the PAC from Lembedeist ideas to a Maoist-oriented approach to the armed struggle was of little help in lifting the fortunes of the organisation.

¹⁷⁴ Frederikse, *The Unbreakable Thread*, 102.

¹⁷⁵ Nkoana, *Crisis in the Revolution*, 61.

CHAPTER FIVE

Unrest, crisis, and resolution

The problems of representation discussed in the previous chapter signal a slow process of ideological as well as structural change within the exiled liberation movement. During the first decade of exile, a transformation started to take place from the multi-racial alliance of Congress Movement of the 1950s, to the creation of a unitary, non-racial liberation front. At the heart of the debates between the ANC and its allies was the full incorporation of all South African exiles previously associated with the Congress Movement into the structures of the ANC external mission. Closely related to the question of non-racialism was the gradual adjustment of the ANC to the armed struggle, which was made difficult by the separation of political from military structures. The development of the armed struggle during the 1960s became one of the very reasons why by the end of the decade the movement was faced with the urgent necessity to reconsider and revise its structure, strategy, programme and aims.

The turn to armed struggle

Before the opening of ANC membership at Morogoro in 1969, the transition from multi-racialism to non-racialism had partially been achieved through Umkhonto we Sizwe. MK had been launched in December 1961 as a separate organisation from the ANC to carry out acts of sabotage. The new organisation relied on the ANC for political guidance and leadership (which was ensured by having ANC representatives serving on the NHC) and financial support, but carried on its independent recruiting and activities. The creation of a special body was made necessary by the need to “preserve secrecy over the new forms of

activity.” Because sabotage did not rely on the participation of the mass of the people but could be carried out by small groups of trained men and women, MK decided that it need not “involve the whole ANC organisation and its membership.” Furthermore, the establishment of sabotage groups by other organisations, the SACP in particular, had made coordination under a unitary structure necessary.¹ Since its birth in December 1961, MK accepted within its ranks people of all origins and functioned as a single non-racial organisation.² As Magubane and others have argued:

Although MK retained its own distinct structure and autonomy in order to protect its parent bodies, there was no doubt that a new conceptual and political boundary had been crossed in the race/class divide that had characterised the alliance [between the ANC and the SACP]. This practice attained full realisation at the Morogoro conference, where ANC membership was opened for the first time to members of the other congresses.³

MK’s initial programme of action had been a campaign of selective sabotage whose aim was “to bring the Government and its supporters to their senses,” before the country would spiral into a bloody civil war.⁴ By targeting government and military installations, power plants, telephone lines and transportation routes, MK hoped not only to weaken and hamper the enemy’s war effort and fighting potential, but also to “frighten National Party supporters, scare away foreign capital, and weaken the economy,” thus forcing the government to the negotiating table.⁵ This cautious approach may in part be attributed to the deep impact of the long years of non-violent, extra-parliamentary, constitutional

¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 14, File 113, Report of the Sub-committee on our perspective [n.d].

² In practice, however, “conditions on the grounds forced the [MK] units to operate along racial lines.” Magubane et al., “The turn to armed struggle,” 113.

³ Ibid., 126.

⁴ “Umkhonto we Sizwe” (Spear of the Nation). Flyer “issued by command of Umkhonto we Sizwe” and appearing on December 16, 1961, document 66 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 716-717.

⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 336.

struggle which persisted even after the ANC was banned and after the decision to resort to armed resistance was taken. It also reflected the fact that the ANC leadership was at this stage not united on the issue of violence.⁶ From a practical point of view, sabotage was adopted as the first of several stages towards a people's war and its aim, Joe Slovo later explained, was to help bridge the "gap between the people's disenchantment with exclusively non-violent methods, and their readiness and capacity to storm the citadels of the enemy."⁷ In other words, sabotage was never envisaged as an end in itself, nor as a sufficient form of pressure which could on its own achieve the defeat of the enemy. Sabotage was to be employed as an auxiliary to other forms of military action while preparations (in the form of the training of an army) were being made for the beginning of the armed struggle proper. Although "the process by which this evolution [from sabotage to armed struggle] was never very clear," as Rusty Bernstein wrote in his memoirs, "what was clear was that preparations for that next stage should begin even while sabotage was the only action on the agenda."⁸ The principal purpose of Mandela's tour the continent in early

⁶ ANC President Chief Luthuli was one of the main opponents of violent tactics and "it is unlikely that Luthuli ever fully reconciled himself with the decision." Magubane et al., "The turn to armed struggle," 89. Although Mandela wrote in his autobiography that he was eventually able to convince the Chief to at least not condemn the decision, the timing of MK's launch (six days after Luthuli received his Nobel Prize for Peace in Stockholm) must have been, in Mandela's words, "awkward" at the least for the both Luthuli and the ANC. Mandela, *Long Walk*, 336-7. Tambo, who accompanied Luthuli to Stockholm, must have felt the same way. Callinicos claims that Tambo "was neither disturbed nor surprised by the turn of events" inside South Africa. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 281. Joe Matthews, however, painted a rather different picture when he said in an interview with Peter Delius that: "Tambo was very upset by the decision to embark on armed struggle" to the point that "I think he actually wrote a letter... to the leadership inside the country... questioning this approach... It's only when Mandela toured and met Tambo outside the country that... the strategy eventually was accepted by Tambo." Joe Matthews, quoted in Magubane et al., "The turn to armed struggle," 90.

⁷ Slovo, "South Africa – No Middle Road," 185.

⁸ Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 233. Original emphasis.

1962 had in fact been to secure the provision of military training facilities by independent African states.

The quest for outside military support must have started even before Mandela's trip, as the first group of recruits⁹ sent abroad for military training left South Africa for China on 31 October 1961, that is, before the actual launch of MK's sabotage operations on 16 December 1961.¹⁰ These trainees were in fact members of SACP (rather than MK) proto-military cells, and were incorporated into MK only on their return from China. Magubane and others have established that the SACP took a formal decision to embark on new methods of struggle long before the ANC did, and that the SACP's contribution to the initial formation of MK structures was very significant. When the state of emergency imposed during the post-Sharpeville crisis was finally lifted at the end of August 1960 and the thousands of people detained released from prison, the discussion of new methods of struggle was already under way within the Party. In August 1960, a paper by Michael Harmel entitled "South Africa: What Next" was circulated internally by the SACP's Central Committee.¹¹ The SACP's formal decision to turn to alternative methods of struggle can be pinned down to as early as the December 1960 Party Conference.¹² At the conference, however, little time was devoted to the question of armed struggle in actual discussions, as the event ended up being taken over by external developments in the international communist world, notably the coming into the open of Sino-Soviet hostilities¹³ at the November 1960 international meeting of Communist Parties in

⁹ Raymond Mhlaba, Steve Naidoo, Wilton Mkwayi, Andrew Mlangeni, Joe Gqabi and Patrick Mthembu were in this group.

¹⁰ Elias Motsoaledi, quoted in Magubane et al., "The turn to armed struggle," 84.

¹¹ Magubane et al., "The turn to armed struggle," 81.

¹² Ibid., 82-83.

¹³ The split had become public during the June 1960 Congress of the Romanian Communist Party.

Moscow.¹⁴ The SACP and the ANC thus initially went on “separate, quasi-armed paths” and, although they “were moving in the same direction,” they were “not quite on parallel tracks.”¹⁵ Once the decision to form MK was taken by a group of the ANC and SACP leaders, the embryonic quasi-military units organised by the SACP (which had thus far worked within the overall Party cell-structure) were merged into the newly established MK regional and national structures.¹⁶

It was planned that the armed struggle would initially take the form of guerrilla warfare, which would be followed by a general uprising. The plan was outlined in detail in a draft document, Operation Mayibuye, which became the most incriminating piece of evidence at the Rivonia trial. Operation Mayibuye contained the pragmatic observation that “very little, if any, scope exists for the smashing of white supremacy other than by means of mass revolutionary action, the main content of which is armed resistance leading to victory by military means.” As in the Cuban model, the launching of the armed struggle would have to be “sparked off” by guerrilla operations (concentrated mainly in the rural areas) carried out by small groups of trained men who would be infiltrated back into the country.¹⁷ The Cuban revolution provided a fresh and powerful model of a guerrilla campaign which had succeeded against all odds. In Africa, Algeria represented another

¹⁴ The SACP was represented in Moscow by Yusuf Dadoo, Vella Pillay, Joe Matthews, and Michael Harmel. Here the South Africans raised the question of armed struggle and possible support among socialist countries for the first time. After Moscow, the group proceeded to visit China, where training for the first group of cadres who left in October 1961 was probably secured. Harmel then returned to South Africa just in time to attend the SACP Congress at the end of that year. See Magubane et al., “The turn to armed struggle,” 81, and Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 225-226.

¹⁵ Ibid., 227.

¹⁶ This was achieved not without problems. See Magubane et al., “The turn to armed struggle,” 90-125, and Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 230-1.

¹⁷ “Operation Mayibuye,” document found by the police at Rivonia, 11 July 1963, document 73 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 761.

important source of inspiration for South African nationalists and communists alike.¹⁸ Meanwhile, popular resistance in Pondoland highlighted the potential of rural struggles for starting a general insurrection in South Africa itself (arguably, however, the nationalist leadership overestimated such potential while underestimating the capacity of the state to crush these revolts).

Although the defence at the trial maintained that Operation Mayibuye had not yet been approved – and thus implemented – the turn to armed struggle was also a turn to revolutionary strategy which in many respects involved a rupture from the past and not simply a transition or evolution. Whether or not all three bodies (i.e. the ANC, the SACP and MK) had formally approved Operation Mayibuye by the time the plan was confiscated by the police at Rivonia,¹⁹ its main guidelines (i.e. guerrilla warfare) must have at least been approved in principle. Some weeks before the Rivonia raid, Joe Slovo and J.B. Marks had in fact left South Africa to take the new plan outside the country and discuss its contents with Tambo and the ANC external mission, and its needs with African governments.²⁰

The decision to embark on guerrilla warfare, whose ultimate aim was the overthrow of the South African government by armed revolution, from around mid-1963 made the continued separation of political from military structures increasingly problematic. By

¹⁸ See Martin Legassick, *Armed Struggle and Democracy: The Case of South Africa* (Uppsala, 2002); and “Armed struggle in South Africa: consequences of a strategy debate,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 21 (2003), 12-16.

¹⁹ According to Bernstein, Sisulu and Kathrada, and contrary to Mbeki and Slovo, Operation Mayibuye had only received the approval of MK’s NHC and the document was met by a great deal of criticism from outside its ranks. Within the SACP Central Committee, Slovo, Mbeki, Goldreich, and Mhlaba were strong supporters of the plan, whereas Bernstein, Kathrada, and Bram Fischer were against it. See Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 250-2.

²⁰ Joe Slovo, “The sabotage campaign,” *Dawn*, Souvenir Issue, 1 January 1986, 24.

1965, if not earlier,²¹ MK had come to be openly regarded as the armed wing of the ANC, which had assumed its leadership.²² The ANC/MK leadership in exile understood in principle that the dual form of organisation and recruiting which had been employed during the sabotage period had become unsuitable for the implementation of the next operational stage. Unlike sabotage, guerrilla warfare could not be just the affair of a small group of “courageous, selfless and dedicated men.” Being envisaged as “a popular people’s war against a people’s enemy,” its success would rely on the extent of the participation of the masses. People would therefore have to be prepared politically as well as psychologically for the war effort and “the hardship and suffering that accompany such a war.” Most of all, they would have to be “made to feel that it is they who have declared war against the enemy.” Political work among the masses could only be carried out under the political programme of a political organisation, the ANC, which in turn must be involved *as a whole* in the military struggle.²³ As a result of this understanding, MK structures had thus become subordinate to the overall political leadership of the ANC external mission. Yet, the military and political aspects of the struggle continued to be kept in practice as separate units, which still operated, in some respects, independently from one another. This meant that the ANC had not geared itself *as a whole* towards revolutionary strategy and tactics – the army leadership concerned itself with military work, whereas diplomatic work continued to be the main focus of the political leadership.

²¹ As early as April 1963, the ANC executive at the time still active in South Africa had issued a written statement in which Umkhonto was publicly declared to be the “specialised military wing” of the “mass political wing of the struggle, spearheaded by the ANC.” See “The people accept the challenge of the Nationalists,” statement “issued by the National Executive of the ANC,” 6 April 1963, document 69 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 749.

²² Shubin, ANC, 66.

²³ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 14, File 113, Report of the Sub-committee on our perspective [n.d].

The separation of the military from the political movement also had a theoretical dimension, as the creation of MK in the first half of the 1960s had marked, “a change over from legitimate extra-parliamentary struggle to violent revolutionary struggle” which had not, however, “been accompanied by a similar qualitative change in our thinking – in our political strategy and objectives.”²⁴ The Freedom Charter had been drawn up during the days of legitimate, extra-parliamentary struggle and “drafted with a view to providing the broadest possible basis for a meeting point – a meeting between the White minority and the disenfranchised majority.” The document, which had been written “without a revolutionary mind,” had nevertheless remained at the basis of the movement’s political objectives even after the turn to armed struggle.²⁵ So, although the ANC had by the mid-1960s “adopted a truly revolutionary method,” at the same time it had not changed its programmes, “attitude and state of mind to correspond to the new phase” of the struggle. In other words, it had been “conducting a revolutionary War without a revolutionary theory.”²⁶

As a result of this contradiction, the ANC experienced potentially disintegrative internal strains and disputes, which by the late 1960s had reached the point of threatening to destroy the organisation, and which can be viewed as the main thrust behind the call for a consultative conference in Morogoro in 1969. At a leadership level, these tensions, which have been described in Chapter Four, concerned issues of representation and structural change and, ultimately, political strategy. At a rank and file level, they were the result of a growing frustration in MK camps (which was primarily due to inaction and the inability to engage directly with the enemy) and of a crisis of confidence in the leadership in the aftermath of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns. The Morogoro Conference of 1969

²⁴ UCT, Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P8, Internal Position [n.d.].

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

marked the culmination of a process of reassessment of the movement's strategy, tactics and organisational structure, and has been interpreted by historians and participants as one of the most critical cross-roads in the history of the South African liberation struggle.²⁷

The Morogoro conference of April-May 1969 can be viewed as the climax of the discussions and exchanges that had been taking place between the political leadership of the ANC external mission and members of other Congress organisations in London throughout the second half of the 1960s. The demands of the supporters of the former Congress Alliance for participation in the ANC were in fact 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 ultimate catalyst behind the decision to convene a consultative conference, however, did not originate in London, but from within the ANC itself, and more specifically within MK, which by the end of the decade had reached a state of desperate crisis.

Strategic problems

Once the decision to embark on guerrilla warfare was taken, MK's leadership identified a series of problems which would make the armed struggle a prolonged and difficult one. These were outlined in a strategic document which can be dated to about 1964. The first of the disadvantages faced by MK was that its enemy had at disposal of the "most powerful modern army in the Continent" with 250,000 armed men and women ready for action at a moment's notice.²⁸ On top of this, they possessed a highly developed intelligence

²⁷ Maloka, for instance, has argued that the conference was "a watershed in the history of the liberation movement in exile." Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 21.

²⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 14, File 113, Report of the Sub-committee on our perspective [n.d].

machinery, they enjoyed the support (overt or tacit) of the major Western powers, and received training in counter-guerrilla tactics which the U.S.A. provided to all friendly countries, South Africa included. On the other hand, in the period between the arrest of the first NHC at Rivonia and of the second NHC just over a year later, MK could still count on a force of approximately 300 men and women outside South Africa who had been trained in varying degrees for guerrilla warfare, and on 1,000 people inside trained for sabotage.²⁹ The number of people recruited for military training outside increased in the next few years, and it has been suggested by Shubin that by the mid-1960s Umkhonto “had about 500 well-trained fighters at its disposal.”³⁰ This was partly to the detriment of MK’s internal structures, as the cadres that were sent out for training could no longer play the roles they had been assigned to inside the country.³¹ Membership inside was further decimated by a second series of mass arrests starting in July 1964 which led to the apprehension and conviction of the second NHC in the ‘little Rivonia’ trial. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of the oppressed people in South Africa were both unarmed and untrained in modern warfare. Finally, MK’s own intelligence system had at this stage yet to be developed.³²

From the point of view of logistics, most of South Africa’s terrain consisted of “flat and barren land except for isolated areas.” Despite the presence of some mountains, and a few dense forests, these were not sufficient to provide the guerrillas with ideal cover or potential bases to be set up by the guerrillas. Secondly, water being “a basic requirement for a guerrilla unit,” a water problem was identified in the country. Drought was a common

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Shubin, ANC, 65. This number presumably refers to MK members outside South Africa.

³¹ Houston, “The post-Rivonia ANC/SACP underground,” 613.

³² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 14, File 113, Report of the Sub-committee on our perspective [n.d].

phenomenon throughout South Africa, where the rivers were few and not navigable, as they tended to flood in the rainy season and had little or no water in the dry season.³³

But possibly the greatest military problem faced by the ANC throughout the 1960s (a problem which persisted well into the next decade and beyond) was a geographical or physical one: the lack of friendly border countries in which MK could establish rear bases. Until the mid-1970s, when Frelimo and the MPLA freed Mozambique and Angola from Portuguese colonial rule, South Africa remained protected by a cordon *sanitaire* of colonial territories and friendly states. In the 1960s, South West Africa (today independent Namibia) was under illegal South African occupation, while Angola and Mozambique were still Portuguese colonies. Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) unilaterally declared independence (UDI) from Britain on 11 November 1965, and its racist white minority regime headed by Ian Smith became allied to its South African counter-part.

Given these internal and external constraining factors, there had been an early recognition that the idea of sending a task force invading from outside was unrealistic. However, trained MK cadres would still have to return to South Africa to organise, train, and arm the people for guerrilla warfare.³⁴ The problem of infiltrating trained guerrillas into South Africa had been made more even more difficult by the arrest of the second NHC, followed by that of Bram Fischer in 1965, which marked the final blow to the fragile internal underground apparatus. Meanwhile, after completing their military training in African and socialist countries, MK recruits were being sent back to the camps in Tanzania and Zambia, where they were sitting around “sweltering in the hot sun of tropical Africa”³⁵ and growing more and more impatient.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Shubin, ANC, 126.

With its forced withdrawal from the Commonwealth in May 1961, South Africa had forfeited any dim chance it may still have held that the British Protectorates of Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland would one day be brought under its ‘wing.’³⁶ Four principles came to govern South Africa’s policy of what Verwoerd’s successor, John Vorster, called “good neighbourly relations” with the former High Commission Territories. First, not to interfere with one’s neighbour; second, to avoid aid which violated the receiver’s “self-respect;” third, to always put South Africa’s interests first; and, finally, there was the notion that different nations developed at different rates of progress.³⁷ These principles were translated into Vorster’s pragmatic policy of détente with independent black states in the region, the first example of which was his meeting with future Prime Minister Chief Leabua Jonathan of the BNP on the eve of Lesotho’s independence.³⁸

Although Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland were all independent by the end of 1968,³⁹ they “were nevertheless too economically reliant on South Africa to provide secure bases for exile South African organisations.”⁴⁰ As South Africa’s Minister of Information C.P. Mulder bluntly put it during a parliamentary debate on 21 September 1966:

Economically we are so powerful that these countries cannot afford to become involved in a struggle with us. [...] We will not try to compete with any other country to buy the favour of these states. We believe unambiguously, because of the graphic and strategic situation of those states in relations to South Africa and South

³⁶ In 1963, Verwoerd had again put forward the idea of incorporating the High Commission Territories, and the “offer” was renewed once again by Vorster in 1966. The British government, however, never treated these invitations as serious declarations of intent. See PRO: DO 212/4.

³⁷ PRO: DO 212/4, Republic of South Africa, House of Assembly Debates, First Session, Third Parliament, 19-23 September 1966, 2554-2557.

³⁸ See Terry Bell in collaboration with Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth* (Cape Town, 2001), 55.

³⁹ Botswana was the first Protectorate to become independent on 30 September 1966, followed by Lesotho on 4 October of the same year, and Swaziland on 6 September 1968.

⁴⁰ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 295.

Africa's situation in relation to them, that there will always be from their side as well as from our side a permanent desire for friendly relations.⁴¹

As described in Chapter Three, the British High Commission government had actively and repeatedly obstructed the PAC in its efforts to establish headquarters in Basutoland between 1963 and 1965. The possibility of using Botswana as a route for infiltration was also tested without success. Two two-member MK units, as well as a few ZAPU guerrillas, crossed the border into Botswana in August and September 1966 but were all intercepted and arrested by the local police. Following their deportation to Zambia, the Botswana government made clear that it would not tolerate its territory being used, be it for overt or covert military operations against South Africa.⁴² The victory of the South Africa-friendly BNP, the rival organisation to the PAC-allied BCP, in the April 1965 elections, coupled with the threat of retaliation by the powerful apartheid state, terminated any residual hopes the South African liberation movements may still have held of establishing safe rear bases in independent Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.

This meant that the South African liberation movements had no contingent borders from which they could operate, nor were there any established routes through which their armies could be infiltrated in significant numbers, which rendered the external military threat posed by their armies almost negligible for a long time to come. Despite the objective

⁴¹ PRO: DO 212/4, Republic of South Africa, House of Assembly Debates, First Session, Third Parliament, 19-23 September 1966, 2565-2567. Although Mulder was referring to diplomatic relations with the Protectorates in this speech, the quote nevertheless seems apt here.

⁴² Rendani M. Ralinala, Jabulani Sithole, Gregory Houston, and Bernard Magubane, "The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns," in SADET (eds.), *The Road to Democracy*, Vol., 1, 484-486.

difficulties it faced, the ANC continued to insist that armed struggle in the form of guerrilla warfare was the correct and only viable tactic to adopt.⁴³

Discontent in MK camps

In mid-1964 the government of Tanzania granted the ANC a tract of land on which to establish a military camp near the town of Kongwa, in the Dodoma region of central Tanzania. ZAPU, Frelimo, SWAPO and the MPLA's armies also established their own camps in this region shortly after. Archie Sibeko (aka Zola Zembe), who was deputy camp commander (and later camp commander)⁴⁴ of the first group of MK freedom fighters to arrive at Kongwa, described the facilities, which had been part of the British colonial government's post-war ground nut scheme, as consisting of "two deserted buildings. Inside was a kitchen, toilets and showers, all in need of cleaning and repair."⁴⁵ For the first few months the recruits worked on getting the camp up and running with the equipment and provisions donated by African and socialist countries and supplied through the OAU. Land was cleared for the cultivation of agricultural produce, an aqueduct system was developed to supply the camp with clean water, and a health clinic was established for the medical care of the camp inhabitants and in later years catering for the local population as well. Cultural and leisure activities proliferated at Kongwa (such as study and discussion classes,

⁴³ For an in-depth analysis of this tactical decision see Barrell "Conscripts to their Age," http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/sources/barrel_thesis/CHAPT1.htm; *MK: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Johannesburg, 1990).

⁴⁴ Ambrose Makiwane was Kongwa's first camp commander, Joseph Jack deputy commander (alongside Archie Sibeko), Chris Hani camp commissar, Mjojo chief of staff, Isaac Makopo chief of logistics, Walter Mavuso chief of communication, and Albert Moloi chief of intelligence. Makiwane was replaced for a short period by Joseph Jack. When the latter was recalled to Morogoro, Archie Sibeko took over the post. See Archie Sibeko with Joyce Leeson, *Freedom in Our Lifetime* (Durban, 1996), 81, 84.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 81.

football matches, music, concerts and singing) in which other liberation movements in the area also participated. Great emphasis was placed by the ANC, through its department of public relations (established in 1967 and based in Morogoro), on the need to promote and foster friendly relations and mutual understanding with both the local community and the Tanzanian government and its civil servants.⁴⁶

Despite these achievements, Kongwa was far from being a ‘garden of Eden.’ The limited evidence that is available suggests that by 1966 the ANC “faced tremendous resentment from people in the camps”⁴⁷ resulting in a series of rebellions, desertions or what could be interpreted as small mutinies, knowledge of which has since been buried by the ANC. These incidents are only mentioned in brief by commentators and their exact date and number remains uncertain. According to Sibeko one occurred in 1966, shortly before he left for Cuba to represent the ANC at the May Day celebrations in Havana that year.⁴⁸ Journalist Terry Bell has dated another mutiny to 1964 and has included Amien Cajee among the mutineers.⁴⁹ As Kongwa was only established in mid-1964, it is unlikely that a defection would have happened at such an early stage. Moreover, Amien Cajee was part of a group of deserters who escaped from Kongwa after the Wankie campaign and found asylum in Kenya, where they made their grievances public in 1969.⁵⁰ Lodge has also spoken about a group of defectors who fled to Kenya in 1968.⁵¹ These different accounts suggest that the mutiny Cajee was involved in, which Bell has also referred to, is likely to

⁴⁶ See Ibid., 81-84, and Ndlovu, “The ANC in exile,” 463-466.

⁴⁷ Interview with Terry Bell, Muizenberg, Cape Town, 19 February 2005.

⁴⁸ Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 85. This incident is also described in Ralinala et al., “The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns.” 483.

⁴⁹ Bell, *Unfinished Business*, 228-229.

⁵⁰ *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 6 July 1969.

⁵¹ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 300.

have happened in 1967-1968. By early 1969 the number of MK refugees in Kenya could have been as high as eighty.⁵²

After being given conventional training in guerrilla warfare in various African countries,⁵³ about forty MK recruits “selected on the basis of their having, as much as possible, passed metric [sic], or who really could write, read and understand instructions”⁵⁴ were sent for further training to the Soviet Union in mid-1963. There had in fact been “a realisation that there was a need to train people in urban guerrilla warfare,” because the training offered by African states, Egypt in particular, only imparted skills in conventional combat. Mark Shope, Chris Hani, Lambert Moloi, Archie Sibeko, and Mavuso Msimang were among the MK activists who were trained in Moscow for six months.⁵⁵ Another small group of seven MK men went to Czechoslovakia in 1963-4. Among them were Joe Modise, Raymond Mhlaba⁵⁶ and, according to Bell, Amien Cajee.⁵⁷ Like the Moscow group, they were also taught in “fighting from the kitchen sink” by old Czech partisans who had fought in the urban resistance against the Nazis during the Second World War.⁵⁸ These various cohorts of MK recruits, who were the first to have received training in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, converged as they were all assigned to Kongwa. Once back in Tanzania, disagreements started to develop as they became aware that orthodox combat skills (which

⁵² *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 27 January 1969.

⁵³ Mandela and Tambo’s visit to African countries in 1962 had secured training facilities from Ethiopia, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.

⁵⁴ Mavuso Msimang, quoted in Ralinala et al., “The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns,” 481.

⁵⁵ Ibid. See also Ndlovu, “The ANC in exile,” 458-9, and Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 79-81.

⁵⁶ Shubin, *ANC*, 65.

⁵⁷ Interview with Terry Bell, Muizenberg, Cape Town, 19 February 2005.

⁵⁸ Bell, *Unfinished Business*, 228.

was the type of training the majority of MK recruits were imparted at this stage) were “of no use in an urban underground environment.”⁵⁹

Disputes also arose out of the different type of training MK recruits had received depending on whether they had been trained in the Soviet Union or China, and “reflecting the current political position of their trainers.”⁶⁰ The impact of the Sino-Soviet split on MK may have been more divisive than it is conventionally acknowledged. Although the ANC, unlike the SACP, tried to steer clear of the Sino-Soviet dispute, it nevertheless found itself entangled in it by way of its connection with the SACP and its unequivocal pro-Moscow sympathies. In 1967 the Central Committee of the SACP issued a resolution rejecting the “departure of the Mao Tse-Tung leadership from the principles of scientific socialism” and criticising China for undermining the unity and impeding the progress of the anti-imperialist front through factional and disruptive activities in the trade union, national liberation, peace and other international organisations. In terms of the South African freedom struggle, China was accused of “opportunism and lack of principle” for its backing of the PAC and other smaller groups which were “known to all, including the Chinese government, for their racialism, anti-communism and disruption of the liberation struggle.”⁶¹ By the time of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the ANC had also come to openly side with the Soviet Union within the international communist movement.⁶² A cooling of relations between the ANC and China had started to show towards the end of 1963, and according to Shubin all assistance from China ceased by

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 82.

⁶¹ UCT, Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, O8.5, South African Communist Party, Central Committee resolution on the international communist movement, 1967.

⁶² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC London papers, Box 2, file 11, Statement by the ANC (SA) on the situation in Czechoslovakia, signed by Secretary General Duma Nokwe, 19 September 1968,

1965.⁶³ In MK, those fighters who had received early training in China were now “looked upon with scorn and mistrust” by fellow guerrillas, while anyone who dared criticise the Soviet Union was “branded as a deviate Maoist and revisionist, or alternatively, an imperialist and branded a fifth columnist who was against the liberation of South Africa.”⁶⁴ The leadership attempted to settle the ideological conflict between those MK members who took a Soviet and those who took a Chinese position by sending Kotane to Kongwa to remind the guerrillas “that the camp was an ANC rather than a SACP one.”⁶⁵ The incident is likely to have had some influence in convincing Kotane that the SACP should not establish its own independent presence in MK. Moreover, from now on, all Marxist literature and discussion classes were banished in MK camps.⁶⁶

The atmosphere at Kongwa was becoming one of growing discontent, as MK trained guerrillas now found themselves stranded and without any foreseeable prospect of going back to South Africa to fight the enemy. By 1965, between four and five hundred people had come to be indefinitely stationed at Kongwa, which had only been intended as a transit camp for people en-route to South Africa.⁶⁷ As it gradually became clear that they “were in for a long wait” before they could return ‘home,’ the guerrillas’ morale started to sag. According to Sibeko, these difficulties “in every aspect were made worse because we

⁶³ Shubin, *ANC*, 68.

⁶⁴ Statement by Amien Cajee, Omar Bamjee, Hoosain Jacobs, and Maurice Mthombeni, quoted in *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 6 July 1969.

⁶⁵ Thula Simpson, “The People’s War of Umkhonto we Sizwe, 1961-1990,” Ph.D thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London (2007).

⁶⁶ Ibid. According to Stephen Ellis, however, the ban in MK camps was only on Maoist (and not Marxist in general) literature. He has also claimed that MK trainees were withdrawn by the ANC from Chinese military academies around 1964. This, he has argued, was the work of the SACP, which led the ANC to side and form alliances with other pro-Soviet liberation movements, such as ZAPU, the MPLA and Frelimo, in the region. Stephen Ellis, “The ANC in exile,” *African Affairs*, 90 (1991), 442.

⁶⁷ Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 82.

[the leadership] did not adjust our tactics sufficiently to changing circumstances,” the most obvious being “that there were likely to be delays infiltrating people into South Africa.”⁶⁸ Although every effort was made to run the camp on a permanent alert so that the guerrillas would stay out of trouble, loitering inevitably created problems. Among these were boredom and financial difficulties experienced by individuals, which in turn led to breaches of security and discipline, alcohol and cannabis abuse and theft. Although relations with the Tanzanian locals have been remembered as good and “generally amicable, there were cadres who acted irresponsibly and committed petty crimes,” with a few cases of assault against the local community occurring.⁶⁹ Sexual relationships with local women also created problems, as “MK cadres smuggled women into the camp whenever an opportunity presented itself” where they would then make use of the water supply because of its scarcity in the area.⁷⁰ Lastly, ethnic or tribal differences sometimes developed into enmity between different groups, with cadres of Zulu-Sotho origins feeling they were being discriminated against by the predominantly Xhosa leadership.⁷¹

Although transcending ethic or tribal factional differences had been one of the main aims of the ANC since its founding, its stereotyping as a Xhosa-dominated organisation has been a common instrument of criticism against the organisation throughout its history. The ANC leadership has persistently rejected such allegations and has always been careful in having other ethnic groups represented at a senior level (for instance through Chief Luthuli’s election as ANC President). But it was true that the large majority of the ANC’s high-ranking officers had historically come from a Xhosa background. The question therefore arises as to why, during certain times of crisis, the way in which problems would

⁶⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁹ Ndlovu, “The ANC in exile,” 466, 468.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 468.

⁷¹ *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 6 July 1969.

be experienced and explained by some of the non-Xhosa ANC members was along the lines of ethnicity.

The transfer of headquarters from Dar es Salaam to Morogoro in 1965 had caused a prolonged series of difficulties between James Hadebe and the remaining executive of the ANC which ultimately resulted in Hadebe's resignation in December 1967. Hadebe had been removed from the post of chief representative in Dar es Salaam and relocated to Morogoro as Director of Youth and Students and Head of the Welfare Department, something he had resented as "a subtle transfer amounting to me being deposed without being told." In a letter to a Commission of Enquiry set up by the ANC in order to investigate his problems and recommend an appropriate solution, Hadebe, who was of Zulu origins, complained of "favouritism closely bordering on tribalism," particularly Xhosa vs. Zulu, in the Dar es Salaam, Lusaka and London offices.⁷²

A power-rivalry with ethnic undertones had also developed between Ambrose Makiwane and Joe Modise. Modise, whose origins were Sotho, had been appointed Army Commander in 1965 following the arrest of Wilton Mkwayi (the last of MK's commanders to operate internally) – a decision Makiwane was unhappy with. Makiwane's arbitrary dispensation of corporal punishment has been quoted as the issue over which the two eventually had a fall-out. The dispute between Makiwane and Modise was only resolved through the intervention of Tambo, JB Marks and Kotane and with Makiwane's removal from the army and his transfer to Cairo as ANC chief representative in Egypt.⁷³

The complaint that the ANC was dominated by Xhosa-speakers was, like some other debates which emerged during the exile period, repeated on Robben Island. The

⁷² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 15, File 122, James Hadebe, Issues influencing my thinking at present, Dar es Salaam, 21 February 1967.

⁷³ See Ndlovu, "The ANC in exile," 466-467 and footnote 183, and Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 83.

ethnic composition of the High Organ was the source of some controversy among political prisoners on the Island as all four of its permanent members (Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and Raymond Mhlaba) were of Xhosa background. According to Mandela:

This was a matter of coincidence rather than design; the senior ANC leadership on the island, the only four to have served on the National Executive Committee, happened to be Xhosa. It would not have been proper to take a less senior comrade and put him on the High Organ simply because he was not a Xhosa. But the fact that the High Organ was Xhosa-dominated disturbed me because it seemed to reinforce the mistaken perception that we were a Xhosa organization.⁷⁴

In order to remedy such perception the decision was eventually taken to have a fifth, rotating member on the High Organ. This would usually be a non-Xhosa person.⁷⁵

Problems of discipline were by no means confined to the rank and file. In 1969 the corruption and inefficiency of the ANC leadership at training camps was revealed publicly through several reports circulated by the South African police which appeared in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*.⁷⁶ They talked about “a widening rift in the ANC between rank and file and the leaders” caused by the latter’s luxurious living.⁷⁷ One article, based on extracts from a statement by Amien Cajee, Maurice Mthombeni, Omar Bamjee and Hoosain Jacobs (who had deserted MK and were now based in Kenya) described life at Kongwa as “farcical.” The guerrillas were said to be enduring shortages of food, cigarettes and medical supplies and to be going about in “rags” because, it was discovered, “the leaders were doing a thriving business in the People’s Bazaar, a shop in Dar es Salaam, with clothes and provisions” which had been sent from foreign countries and which should

⁷⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk*, 526.

⁷⁵ Ibid. See Also, Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 195.

⁷⁶ *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 27 January, 2 February, 6 July 1969

⁷⁷ Brigadier P.J. Venter, quoted in *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 2 February 1969.

have been destined to the men in the camps.⁷⁸ Ambrose Makiwane, Kongwa's first camp commander, is variously remembered for being drunk on duty, as a result of which he would give unfair orders and gratuitously administer harsh treatment to his soldiers, including corporal punishment in the form of beatings and lashings.⁷⁹ Female recruits had started to arrive in small groups to join the men at Kongwa. Following their arrival, a woman soldier was allegedly raped by a visiting member of the executive, and the cover up of the abuse fuelled the guerrillas' bitterness towards their leaders.⁸⁰

Some of these problems were not unique to MK but troubled other national liberation armies as well. In her account of the mutinies surrounding the assassination of ZANU's National Chairman Herbert Chipeto in 1975, Luise White has spoken about shortages of essential commodities (such as food and clothing) and war material in the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). Other complaints by ZANLA's rebel groups included the neglect of guerrillas on the front by the leadership, corruption, tribalism, preferential treatment and unjust punishment.⁸¹

In February 1966 the ANC Executive had made a first attempt at dealing internally with some of the difficulties of exile. On 27 February 1966, a meeting of the Executive Committee was held at headquarters "to rid the organisation of certain weaknesses and tendencies," and to rectify the present state of "looseness and laxity" which was corroding

⁷⁸ Mthombeni's statement, quoted in *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 6 July 1969.

⁷⁹ *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 6 July 1969. The allegations against Makiwane are also confirmed by Archie Sibeko. See Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 83.

⁸⁰ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 321.

⁸¹ Luise White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chipeto: Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington, 2003), 20.

the organisation.⁸² A list of problems was identified, beginning with an alarming freedom of action, with members undertaking missions on their own initiative and moving from their allocated area without reference to the executive.⁸³ This had been possible because individual members of the ANC external mission had so far been able to work with little supervision and control. Callinicos has argued that Deputy President Oliver “Tambo, in fact, was not at that time necessarily regarded as the top leader. He was one among equals in a culture of collective leadership.”⁸⁴ Nor were Tambo’s personality and approach towards his colleagues ever authoritarian in style – and the downside of this was that indiscipline tended to be punished sparingly. An attempt was henceforth made to reassert Tambo’s authority as “Commander, director and controller of the organisation.”⁸⁵ Chief Luthuli’s death later in the year, however, was to reopen the question of succession, and rather than “the natural heir” of Luthuli, Tambo continued to be seen as “the diplomatic representative, chief of the [external] Mission.”⁸⁶ Secondly, the image of the ANC was being damaged by the “unhealthy behaviour” of some of its leading members, in the form of drunkenness and “destructive gossip and rumour-mongering.”⁸⁷ Finally, the leadership’s attitude to funds had to be corrected. Given the severe conditions under which the struggle was now being conducted internally, a resolution was passed to ensure adequate financial provision for the struggle at home. Moreover, it would from now on be “the duty of all

⁸² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 16, File 134, Resolutions Adopted by the Executive of the African National Congress (SA) [1966]. This meeting is also discussed in Ndlovu, “The ANC in exile,” 448-450.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 325.

⁸⁵ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 16, File 134, Resolutions Adopted by the Executive of the African National Congress (SA) [1966].

⁸⁶ Ben Turok, quoted in Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 325.

⁸⁷ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Morogoro Papers, Box 16, File 134, Resolutions Adopted by the Executive of the African National Congress (SA) [1966].

members [of the external mission] to strictly conserve the funds of the organisation and to spend with thrift.”⁸⁸ The problems here identified, and which the ANC executive attempted so resolve (although not very effectively) in February 1966, were however limited to the political leadership, and did not include an analysis of the state of affairs in the army, which was deteriorating rapidly.

Frustration over returning ‘home’ led a small group of MK recruits from Natal to steal some trucks and drive off from Kongwa in early 1966. Whether their intention had been “to make their own way home,”⁸⁹ or “to discuss their grievances with the leadership” in Morogoro,⁹⁰ they were nevertheless intercepted by the Tanzanian authorities within eighty kilometres of Kongwa and taken back to the camp.⁹¹ Joe Modise set up a formal commission of enquiry with charges of desertion and theft. Moses Mabhida, MK’s national commissar, disagreed with Modise, arguing that since they were trying to go back to South Africa, the cadres were not deserters.⁹² During his career in MK, Modise gained a reputation for his militarism, which some attributed to his *tsotsi* past as a youth in Sophiatown.⁹³ In the end “nothing happened about the incident,” and after being reprimanded by the leadership, the rebel men were relocated to Zambia.⁹⁴ This may have very well been in view of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 85.

⁹⁰ Ralinalala et al., “The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns,” 483.

⁹¹ Ibid., and Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 85.

⁹² Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 85.

⁹³ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 345. See also Ellis, “The ANC in exile,” 443.

⁹⁴ ‘Gizenga’ Mpanza, quoted in Ralinalala et al., “The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns,” 483.

The Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns

Despite its hopelessness, the truck incident was symptomatic of the degree of ferment in MK camps, and may have been a factor in the ANC's decision to form an alliance with Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in 1967.⁹⁵ One of the 1966 truck incident survivors later noted: "the leadership became conscious that something had to be done regarding our eagerness to go home and fight."⁹⁶ After Rhodesia's UDI, ZAPU had also taken up the armed struggle and set up an armed wing, which, like MK, had a base in the Kongwa area. In 1967-8, MK-ZAPU combined forces embarked on a series of military incursions by crossing the Zambezi River from Zambia into Rhodesia.⁹⁷ Prior to this, a small MK unit linked with Frelimo had been sent into Mozambique from Tanzania in May 1967 to explore the possibility of infiltrating South Africa through its north-eastern corner. Although Frelimo had liberated some parts of Mozambique in the north, there were, however, no liberated areas in the south of the country. The plan of reaching South Africa through this route was soon abandoned,⁹⁸ thus leaving Southern Rhodesia as the only practical option still open.

The 1967-8 Rhodesian campaigns were launched in a climate of pressures from the OAU Liberation Committee and the governments of Zambia and Tanzania, who were demanding the liberation movements action, and of increasing discontent in MK camps.

⁹⁵ Talks about establishing a military alliance between the ANC and ZAPU had started in 1966 and a group of MK and ZAPU activists was given the task of undertaking reconnaissance work into Rhodesia. See Ralinalala et al., "The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns," 486; Nicole Van Driel, "The ANC's first military operation: the Luthuli detachment and the Wankie campaign," MA thesis, UWC, 2003, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/vandriel-thesis/chapter-two.htm>.

⁹⁶ 'Gizenga' Mpanza, quoted in Ralinalala et al., "The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns," 483.

⁹⁷ For a full account of these campaigns see Ralinalala et al., "The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns," Nicole Van Driel, "The ANC's first military operation," <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/vandriel-thesis/menu-index.htm>; and Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 87-93.

⁹⁸ Ralinalala et al., "The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns," 487.

The first incursion, which lasted from August to September 1967, and is generally referred to as the Wankie campaign, was announced on 19 August 1967 in a joint statement signed by Oliver Tambo and JRD Chikerema, ZAPU's Vice-President. "Furious fighting" was reported in the Wankie Reserve area after MK and ZAPU freedom fighters had "marched into the country [Southern Rhodesia] as comrades-in-arms on a common route, each bound to its destination."⁹⁹ A second MK-ZAPU incursion took place between December 1967 and June 1968, and a third one in July 1968. These attempts became known as the Eastern Front, or Sipolilo campaigns. The ANC's aim was a double one. The first was to establish a secure base in Rhodesia for future transit; the second was to create a route, "a Ho Chi Minh train to South Africa,"¹⁰⁰ through which MK cadres could be infiltrated back in the future. The idea was that the MK-ZAPU detachment would split into two, with a small unit of MK members heading for South Africa, where each of them would have to reach a specific region he had been assigned to in order to help with the political mobilisation of the people inside.¹⁰¹ It was also hoped that if South Africa became involved in counter attacks actions, Britain could no longer refrain from directly intervening in the Rhodesia, whose external relations she was responsible for. The British government did register a formal protest with Pretoria arguing that it should have sought Britain's consent before entering Rhodesia, but no further action was taken.¹⁰²

Although the intention had been to avoid contact with civilians and most of all confrontation with Rhodesian forces, the guerrillas' presence in Rhodesia was soon

⁹⁹ ANC-ZAPU Alliance, Declaration by Oliver Tambo, Deputy President of the African National Congress, and JRD Chikerema, Vice-President of the Zimbabwe African People's Union, 19 August 1967, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or67-6.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Chris Hani, "The Wankie campaign," in *Dawn*, souvenir issue, 1986, 35.

¹⁰¹ Van Driel, "The ANC's first military operation," <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/vandriel-thesis/chapter-three.htm>.

¹⁰² PRO: FCO 25/512.

detected by the authorities and several armed clashes ensued. By mid-August 1967 the South African Security Police had also become involved in the anti-insurgency operations. On 8 September, Vorster admitted in a public speech that South Africa had decided to send police units to Rhodesia with the approval of the Salisbury government, and that South Africa would “act in any country where we are asked to act by the Government of that country.”¹⁰³ According to British government sources, South Africa had sent eighty members of its police force to the Wankie Reserve area as well as equipment – three police helicopters and three or four Saracen armoured cars – to assist the Rhodesian authorities. There were also some fears that, should guerrilla activity continue and intensify, Salisbury might retaliate against Zambia for providing a base for guerrilla operations, for instance through an air strike or some other form of military action, possibly with South African help.¹⁰⁴

The campaigns, which produced MK’s first heroes and martyrs to have fallen in battle, came to occupy a powerful symbolic place in MK’s popular history. The Wankie and Sipolilo fighters were “pioneers,” as they attempted to open a corridor leading into South Africa for the first time.¹⁰⁵ They laid the “foundation stone”¹⁰⁶ of MK’s “perennial” preoccupation, i.e. to send trained cadres back to South Africa to reconstruct the political underground and resuscitate the struggle inside the country.¹⁰⁷ Wankie also marked the beginning of the armed struggle proper, as, for the first time in the history of MK, and indeed for the first time since the crushing of the Bambata rebellion of 1906, black South

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ See *Dawn*, souvenir issue, 1986; and Van Driel, “The ANC’s first military operation,” <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/vandriel-thesis/chapter-five.htm>.

¹⁰⁶ Hani, “The Wankie campaign,” in *Dawn*, souvenir issue, 1986, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Shubin, ANC, 101.

Africans engaged in armed combat against their white rulers. To MK veteran James April, who took part in campaign, “the bravery of the Wankie guerrillas meant that oppressed people around the world could once again hold their heads high.”¹⁰⁸ As MK leader Joe Slovo admitted years later, “Umkhonto never had possessed the fire power to win a full scale war: its purpose was to show Africans that they didn’t have to be victims but could contest and fight.”¹⁰⁹ In this sense, Wankie and Sipolilo performed an important psychological role in the minds of black South Africans (both in MK and among the country’s population at large) against the might of the South African state.

But the immediate effects of the Rhodesian campaigns were disastrous. These attempts at getting back via Rhodesia failed in both their missions, and resulted in several casualties and the imprisonment of many guerrillas, some of whom had retreated to Botswana and ended up being sentenced from three to six years in prison. Among them was Chris Hani, the political commissar of the Luthuli detachment (named in honour of the ANC President who had died on 21 July 1967 just before the Wankie invasion was staged), who spent almost two years in Gaborone’s maximum security prison. The Wankie and Sipolilo military debacles led to further demoralisation, not only within MK, but also in the movement as a whole.¹¹⁰ Archie Sibeko captured the mood of the time when he wrote that, in the period following Wankie, “the armed struggle seemed to be in a lull, trained MK people were being neglected and a gulf seemed to have developed between most of the leadership and the rank and file. Even Kaunda noticed something was wrong and referred

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Van Driel, “The ANC’s first military operation,” <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/vandriel-thesis/introduction.htm>.

¹⁰⁹ Gillian Slovo, *Every Secret Thing: My Family, My Country* (London, 1997), 154.

¹¹⁰ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 214.

publicly to ANC leaders, who were usually seen in hotel restaurants, as ‘chicken-in-the-basket freedom fighters’.”¹¹¹

Terry Bell has interpreted Wankie as “a suicidal venture,” and claimed that many of those who fought in the campaign, including Chris Hani, became “convinced that they [the leadership] had basically deserted them, that they had sent them there to get killed.”¹¹² A number of desertions occurred during the period of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns as several MK guerrillas abandoned the camps when they learned that their names were on the list for Rhodesia.¹¹³ Among them was Gerlad Sisulu, Walter and Albertina Sisulu’s nephew, who claimed that operation in Rhodesia “was never properly explained to us [i.e. MK fighters]. We just got everything through the grapevine. We were told that all the guys who were fighting there had been wiped out.” For this reason Sisulu decided he “wanted no part” in the plan and went AWOL in Dar es Salaam where he was picked up by the police and jailed.¹¹⁴ Stephen Ellis has also argued that some of the Wankie survivors who “were highly critical of the leaders who had sent them into Wankie badly prepared and supported” were detained by the ANC in Tanzania.¹¹⁵ Among those who managed to flee to Kenya (where ANC activities were restricted by the government) were Cajee, Mthombeni, Bamjee and Jacobs, who in 1969 issued a statement (consisting of one joint and four individual statements) which was sent to several Western organisations (including the British AAM,

¹¹¹ Archie Sibeko, *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, 95.

¹¹² Interview with Terry Bell, Muizenberg, Cape Town, 19 February 2005.

¹¹³ This contradicts the generally accepted view that those MK soldiers who took part in the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns were all volunteers. See Ralinala et al., “The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns,” 492. Stories of coercion also appeared in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* in January 1969. The extent to which these articles can be regarded as a reliable source is of course questionable as the South African Police was involved in circulating the information. See *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 27 January 1969.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 221.

¹¹⁵ Stephen Ellis, “Mbokodo: security in ANC camps, 1961-1990,” *African Affairs*, 93 (1994), 286.

the Dutch Committee on Africa, the World Council of Churches, and the UN Committee for Relief of Political Refugees).¹¹⁶ In the document the four men criticised Wankie as an operation staged “to get rid of unwanted dissenters,” and especially those critical of the “Tambo, Kotane, Nokwe, Modise clique,” who they accused of treating “the lives of freedom fighters as a cheap commodity.” The Rhodesian campaigns, they claimed, were nothing more than a ploy in which dedicated men were deliberately sent down for the ANC’s “own prestige and material benefit.”¹¹⁷ Twenty years on, however, Hani defended the Wankie campaign as the correct thing for the movement to do at the time from those who criticised it as “an exercise in adventurism and a glaring example of desperation.”¹¹⁸ It could therefore be argued that rather than the Rhodesian campaigns *per se*, it was the failure of the leadership to deal with their aftermath which became the subject of bitter criticism from MK’s rank and file.¹¹⁹ According to Joe Matthews, when those who survived the campaigns went back to Zambia and Tanzania, “there were no medals; there was no official ceremony for the returning heroes. They just returned and the same routine of the camps carried on, with no acknowledgement of their role.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 6 July 1969.

¹¹⁷ Statement by Amien Cajee, Omar Bamjee, Hoosain Jacobs, and Maurice Mthombeni quoted in *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 6 July 1969.

¹¹⁸ Hani, “The Wankie campaign,” *Dawn*, souvenir issue, 1986, 37.

¹¹⁹ See Ndebele and Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference,” 586-590.

¹²⁰ Joe Matthews, quoted in *Ibid.*, 587.

The Hani memorandum

On their return to Zambia in late 1968, Hani and six other MK commissars and commanders who had been involved in the operations in Rhodesia¹²¹ found that “there was a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction in the movement and that there was an urgent desire for radical changes in organisation, policy and strategy.”¹²² Acting “with the sole intention of invigorating the movement with a new spirit,” and driven by an “immediate concern to return to our country in order to confront the enemy” and “to create a feeling of urgency that would lead to a renewal of the offensive against the enemy,” they voiced their criticism to the leadership. They first put together a list of critical points of discussion, which was presented by a delegation of three of their members to the ANC General Secretary, Duma Nokwe. Although Nokwe “took up a hostile attitude” and dismissed the points raised as “trivial,” an interview was granted with the executive in Lusaka. At this meeting, which was attended by six members of the executive, Hani and his comrades were asked to type up the draft statement they had prepared and to provide all members of the executive with copies.¹²³

¹²¹ Hani and a second man had taken part in the Wankie invasion as political commissar and section commander respectively, and were among those who were served with terms of imprisonment in Botswana. Another member of the group was a deputy leader of communication in Lusaka. A fourth had been in charge of medical supplies and taken part in medical missions during the fighting in Rhodesia. And a fifth man who worked for the Commissariat also went into Rhodesia on several occasions. See UCT Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P7, Grounds of appeal and addendum thereto in the matter of expulsion from the African National Congress of Jeqa Buthelezi, Wilmot Hempe, Alfred Khombisa, Wilson Mbali, Jackson Mlenze, Chris Nkosana [pseudonym of Chris Hani], Bruce Pitso, March 1969 (hereafter ‘Grounds of appeal and addendum’).

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

Hani and his comrades then drew up a memorandum,¹²⁴ known as the Hani memorandum, which “made serious allegations about the way the struggle had become stalled and about deficiencies in the leadership,” and called “for the creation of a new leadership, which would be younger and bolder in planning return home.”¹²⁵ The document fiercely criticised the leadership for neglecting those guerrillas who had taken part in the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns and for its failure in giving information about “the fate of our most dedicated comrades in Zimbabwe.”¹²⁶ This was attributed to the fact that MK was “being run independently of the political organisation,” to the point that the political leadership was said to be “[un]aware of activities and the plans of MK.”¹²⁷ As Callinicos has argued, the memorandum “had hit out at the gross contrast between the political and military wings of the organisation.”¹²⁸ Its authors rejected “the careerism of the ANC abroad, who have, in every sense, become professional politicians rather than professional revolutionaries.”¹²⁹ The weaknesses complained of in the memorandum were attributed specifically “to wrong policies and to personal failures of some of the leaders.”¹³⁰ Joe Modise and Duma Nokwe were accused of living luxuriously in exile in sharp contrast with

¹²⁴ The memorandum is variously referred to in the secondary literature (Lodge, *Black politics*, Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and resurgence*, Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, Turok, *Nothing but the truth*, Ndebele and Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference: A moment of self-reflection”). Only Shubin, however, quotes directly from the memorandum.

¹²⁵ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 214.

¹²⁶ Chris Hani’s memorandum, 1969, quoted in Shubin, *ANC*, 86.

¹²⁷ Ibid. Shubin has argued that this was an unjust accusation. However, the relationship between the military and the political counter part, and the question of creating a central leadership were among the central issues discussed during the Morogoro Conference.

¹²⁸ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 324.

¹²⁹ Chris Hani’s memorandum, 1969, quoted in Shubin, *ANC*, 85-6.

¹³⁰ UCT Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P7, Grounds of appeal and addendum.

the harsh conditions of life in MK camps; Moses Kotane was also singled out for “giving priority to exile over ‘home’.”¹³¹

The Hani memorandum can be viewed as expression of the dissatisfaction which had been growing for some time within the ANC in exile; the grievances it raised “went much further than the outburst of the seven rebels emerging from Botswana’s prisons. Underlying the anger was the deep unease that the struggle, after almost a decade in exile, had failed.”¹³² It was supported by another memorandum submitted to the ANC by Ben Turok.¹³³ Turok had got first hand experience of the crisis that was affecting the movement since his arrival in Tanzania in 1966. On initial contact with the formal structures of the movement in exile, he found that the ANC office in Dar es Salaam was in a state of “disarray” and that generally “the organisation was not in good shape.”¹³⁴ Turok gradually came to the conclusion that the ANC’s reluctance in getting him involved in the work of the external mission was to some extent “due to an unwillingness to reveal to us just how deep the malaise was.”¹³⁵ He also observed “that one of the problems was the looseness of ANC structures and the lack of political coherence,” which he partly attributed to the lack of Communist Party structures in the region.¹³⁶ Just before leaving Dar es Salaam for London in January 1969, Turok finally voiced his criticism in a “blistering” memorandum which, together with the Hani memorandum, “convey[s] the complex interplay of material,

¹³¹ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 34. See also Ndebele and Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference,” 587-588.

¹³² Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 322.

¹³³ See Ben 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.

¹³⁴ Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 198.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 210.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 211.

diplomatic, political and psychological problems facing the ANC in exile".¹³⁷ Turok complained of maladministration, authoritarianism, and drunkenness on the part of ANC officials. But it was the rise of elitism and the attitude displayed towards MK soldiers which angered him the most:

Perhaps the most deplorable aspect of the work of the movement in Dar es Salaam is the treatment meted out to our military comrades. A number of officials working at political posts have openly shown the most appalling contempt for the army men, failing to exercise common courtesy let alone according them the honour they deserve.¹³⁸

Joe Matthews has claimed that the ANC leadership did not officially discuss the Hani memorandum, and that rather than responding specifically to the document, Tambo proposed that a consultative conference be convened instead.¹³⁹ This, however, does not seem to be entirely accurate. The immediate response of the ANC to the criticism of Hani and fellow signatories was in fact quite severe. At the next meeting between the seven disaffected men and the executive, members of the military headquarters were also present without prior knowledge of the former, on the grounds that the memorandum had been distributed to other MK members without permission from the leadership. After this meeting, orders were given out for the arrest of Hani and his comrades, which was halted by Tambo's intervention, and a military tribunal (composed of three members of the military and two members of the NEC) was set up instead. The charges against the signatories of the memorandum were that they had drafted and circulated a document without prior permission, and that they had communicated military or classified information to unauthorised persons.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 35.

¹³⁸ Turok, "What Is Wrong?", in *Nothing but the Truth*, 293.

¹³⁹ Joe Matthews, quoted in Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 34.

¹⁴⁰ UCT Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P7, Grounds of appeal and addendum.

Hani observed in retrospect that “people generally were not used to being criticised,”¹⁴¹ and this may have been why the memorandum was met with such offence by the leadership. The seven authors of the memorandum were expelled from the ANC by the military tribunal in Lusaka on 25 March 1969, and the decision was ratified by headquarters in Morogoro on 28 March.¹⁴² For some within the leadership (among them Joe Modise), infuriated by the criticism levelled against certain individuals, and especially Kotane who had recently suffered a stroke and was still under medical care in Moscow, the men’s actions amounted to treason. Accordingly, they demanded that the authors of the memorandum be executed.¹⁴³ It was only thanks to what Hani later described as Tambo’s “intelligent leadership”¹⁴⁴ and inclusive approach that this was avoided in the end.

Following their expulsion by the tribunal, the men appealed to the forthcoming national conference to be held in Morogoro, asking for their convictions and sentences to be overruled. In their defence, they claimed that the events leading to their expulsion “arose out of differences of opinion concerning policy and out of criticism of various ANC leaders.” Because the complaints voiced in their memorandum were of a “political nature” they should have been dealt with, the seven men claimed, “in a comradely manner as a political issue.” Instead, the leadership had “transformed the issue into a matter of military discipline, and thereby obscured and diverted attention from the political questions involved.” They further argued that the proceedings in the trial had been unfair. Various senior comrades, among them Joe Modise¹⁴⁵ and Duma Nokwe, were said to have been

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 325.

¹⁴² UCT Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P7, Grounds of appeal and addendum.

¹⁴³ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 326.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Ibid., 325.

¹⁴⁵ An ethnic or tribal divide had emerged between the supporters of Chris Hani and Joe Modise. Hani’s group came to be known as the “Cape men;” its followers were Xhosa speakers, and it included most of the ANC

hostile and to have shown “strong prejudice” against them even before the tribunal was constituted. The charges had been vague and at no time presented in writing. The composition of the tribunal was questioned as biased, as it included members of the very executive whose quality of leadership was under challenge; the proceedings of the trial, where they accused were summoned to appear individually and not collectively, and where the witnesses testifying against appeared in the absence of the accused, were rejected as irregular and “contrary to the principle of justice.” Finally, the men pledged their unwavering loyalty to the ANC, and argued that political differences ought to be resolved “not by punitive action but by a frank exchange of views for the purpose of arriving at a correct revolutionary strategy.”¹⁴⁶

Shubin has acknowledged that despite the “excessively dramatic language” of the Hani memorandum, “the problem raised in it had hampered ANC activity and threatened the very existence of its military wing.” Furthermore, “in the opinion of Hani himself, it was due mainly to this memorandum that the ANC conference, convened in April 1969, included the participation of not only leaders and high-ranking commanders but rank and file from the camps as well.”¹⁴⁷ Probably, it was also as a result of the memorandum that Hani gained the reputation of being “impatient with exile politics, submission to problems and inactivity.”¹⁴⁸ The signatories of the Hani memorandum, however, did not take part in the conference because of their expulsion, so “the leadership’s claim that it had convened a

leadership and Tambo himself. On the other hand, Modise, who was renamed “Commander of the Sothos” by his opponents, attracted the support of urban Transvaalers who felt discriminated against as a result of the leadership’s bias in favour of fellow Xhosa-speakers. See Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 345-346.

¹⁴⁶ UCT Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, P7, Grounds of appeal and addendum.

¹⁴⁷ Shubin, *ANC*, 88.

¹⁴⁸ “Chris Hani, a drawing by a close political activist,” *Dawn*, souvenir issue, 1 January 1986, 39.

fully representative forum was somewhat undermined.”¹⁴⁹ After Morogoro, all of the men were fully reinstated in their positions and their expulsion cancelled.

Morogoro preparations

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.”¹⁵⁰ 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.¹⁵¹ 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.”¹⁵² 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. In other words, the conference represented an important exercise in democratic participation within the ANC and between the ANC and its supporters, the idea being of “bringing into the discussion process the political and military movement, including external offices,

¹⁴⁹ Ndebele and Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference,” 590.

¹⁵⁰ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 330.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, Duma Nokwe, Directive concerning preparation for Conference, Morogoro, 18 February 1969.

members and supporters of the ANC and the Congress Alliance in South Africa and in exile, publicity and research sections, MK units, and individual experts.”¹⁵³ Among the central issues to be discussed were “the consolidation of the various national groups and progressive organisations in the revolution,” “the structure of our movement,” and “the relationship between the political movement and the national liberation army – Umkhonto We Sizwe.”¹⁵⁴

Amongst the “veritable torrent”¹⁵⁵ 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 (see Chapter Four).¹⁵⁶ The Commission’s findings strongly reminded of the criticism already raised by the memoranda by Hani and Turok, 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.¹⁵⁷

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,

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Joe Matthews, quoted in Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 35.

¹⁵⁶ Ndebele and Nieftagodien, “The Morogoro Conference,” 586.

¹⁵⁷ UCT Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Commission on the Congress Alliance, Report of the meeting held on the 23rd March 1969.

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. Ben Turok’s experience was an example of this. 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.¹⁵⁸

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 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.”¹⁵⁹

Other submissions to the Morogoro Conference Preparatory Committee included the memorandum by Ben Turok, discussed earlier, and contributions from Joe Slovo, the London Committee of the CPC, and the South African exile community living in Ireland. Once again, “most of the concerns echoed the contents of ‘Chris’s [Hani]

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ UCT Manuscripts and Archives, BC 1081, Commission on the Congress Alliance, Report of the meeting held on the 23rd March 1969.

Memorandum,”¹⁶⁰ and proposed as a solution to these problems 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. The CPC London Committee, for instance, proposed that the ANC should assume the role of a National Liberation Committee of South Africa in exile by assuming the functions of the leader of the whole revolutionary movement and not merely of the continued activities of the ANC abroad.¹⁶¹ Since London, where a cross-section of supporters lived, was identified as the main centre of activities and support for the ANC abroad and outside of Africa, it was proposed that “an organisation on a unitary membership basis should be established” while existing committees of the CPC and other Congress groups in London should be abolished and taken over by the proposed organisation.¹⁶²

South African exiles living in Ireland¹⁶³ urged similar structural changes. Historically, they claimed, the objective conditions in South Africa had made it necessary to mobilise people on the basis of national groups, as it had been in the Congress Movement. However, the development of the armed struggle, the effective mobilisation of the people, the protection of the South African revolution against sectarianism, ‘tribalism,’ and discord between different national groups, and the need to present to the world a united people under a single organisation, called for the following change:

¹⁶⁰ Shubin, ANC, 89.

¹⁶¹ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH70, London Committee of the CPC, Resolution, London, March 1969.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ A small community of South African exiles established itself in Ireland in the 1960s. Among them were Kader and Louise Asmal, who, after playing an important role in the birth of the British AAM in 1960, moved to Ireland in 1964 where they founded the Irish AAM.

That the Congress Movement outside South Africa with the exception of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, be merged into one single organisation, namely the African National Congress of South Africa.¹⁶⁴

In order to remedy the atmosphere of crisis prevailing in the movement, Turok also proposed “that comrades of all races be admitted to full membership of the ANC outside South Africa, on the condition that the African comrades predominate and are seen to predominate on all committees and in the general work of the organisation.”¹⁶⁵ In a detailed response to his memorandum, Joe Matthews welcomed the proposal for integration of all personnel in the ANC external mission as “a tremendous step forward which could galvanise the whole movement,” and predicted that “something along these lines will emerge from our conference.”¹⁶⁶

In a document entitled “Thoughts on the future of the [Congress] Alliance,” Joe Slovo argued that, in the post-Rivonia situation, “[t]he Congress Alliance in the form in which it was moulded in the fifties [had] ceased to exist.” Between the time of Rivonia and 1966 the only two organisations which had continued to operate collectively, although independently from one another, were the ANC and the SACP, whereas the CPC, the SAIC, and SACTU, although still formally legal, had stopped functioning “either inside or outside the country in the sense of a defined and functioning national leadership with the organised allegiance of the rank and file.”¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Slovo believed that Indian and Coloured people had an integral role to play in the fight against white supremacy, which called for united action. The November 1966 Morogoro consultative meeting of the

¹⁶⁴ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC London Papers, Box 35, File 116, Memorandum submitted by South Africans in Dublin, Ireland [1969].

¹⁶⁵ Turok, “What Is Wrong?”, in Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 299.

¹⁶⁶ Joe Matthews, Reply to document entitled “What is Wrong?” by comrade Ben Turok, reproduced in Turok, *Nothing but the Truth*, 311.

¹⁶⁷ UWC Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Joe Slovo, Thoughts on the future of the Alliance, April 1969.

Congress Alliance and its resolutions had been a first move towards achieving such unity.

In order to advance from this point, Slovo believed that:

The apparatus which is created and the other steps which are taken must once again begin to give public expression to the true character of the revolutionary front in South Africa and to the non-racial content of our struggle. It must in the first place not detract from the leading role of the majority group in our struggle and partly for this reason it should not revert to the NCC [National Consultative Council, the head of the former Congress Alliance] type of alliance with a multi-racial image and representation from the various bodies on the basis of parity. But in the second place it must publicly give expression to top level full acceptance and participation in our revolutionary struggle of the other groups and of non-African revolutionaries at policy making and leadership levels.¹⁶⁸

This could be achieved, Slovo suggested, through the selected integration of non-Africans, both inside and outside the country, into full ANC membership, which implied the repetition of “the pattern which has partly established itself in MK,” and would avoid drawing “an unwarranted division between armed and non-armed revolutionaries.” It was also important that a formal working relationship be established between the Communist Party and the ANC to achieve “the closest possible collaboration on the whole conduct of the revolution.”¹⁶⁹ This was to become finalised during a meeting between the ANC and the SACP immediately after Morogoro. Finally, “[t]here must above all be no rigidity,” because only “[f]lexibility and continuous review” of existing structures as demanded by the political reality of the time would ensure the mobilisation of the maximum number of forces, both now and in the future.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Original emphasis.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Morogoro resolutions

Slovo's "Thoughts on the future of the Alliance" formed the basis of "Strategy and Tactics," arguably the most important document adopted by the Morogoro Consultative Conference, which took place between 25 April and 1 May 1969, and was attended by "over 70 delegates representing regions and training camps [...], including 11 invited representatives from allied organisations – five Indians, three whites, and three Coloureds."¹⁷¹ In "Strategy and Tactics," which was "drafted by Slovo with some amendments by [Joe] Matthews and Duma Nokwe,"¹⁷² the ANC reiterated the 'national' character of the liberation struggle within the new "international context of transition to the Socialist system, [and] of the breakdown of the colonial system." This kind of nationalism, which was proclaimed to go hand in hand with the principle of internationalism, was carefully distinguished from the "chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch," understood as "the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass."¹⁷³

In the document, the ANC declared that revolutionary armed struggle was now "the *only* method left open" for the winning of freedom in South Africa. It 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*."¹⁷⁴ Therefore, it was only at Morogoro that the ANC external mission fully committed itself – at least in theory – to a revolutionary path. 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,

¹⁷¹ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 35.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ "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>.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. Emphasis added.

and whose aim had been to win rights for the African people by trying to bring the government into constitutional dialogue. The “tactical circumspection” and pragmatic restraint displayed by ANC leaders including Mandela during the 1950s – as opposed to more militant currents, including that of the Africanist movement – was rooted in an inherent belief that racial conciliation in South Africa *was* possible.¹⁷⁵ 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.”¹⁷⁶ The legacy of the new revolutionary strategy gradually developed by the ANC and its allies during the course of the 1960s and finally sanctioned by the Morogoro Conference in 1969 was long lasting. The armed struggle continued to be regarded as an indispensable condition for liberation until the end of the 1970s. It was only in the 1980s that the ANC widened its strategic focus and returned to be closer to the image of a “broad church” which had characterised the organisation up until 1961 – and which no doubt had remained a current within the organisation despite the momentous decision to take up arms.

The unique system of oppression in South Africa was described in “Strategy and tactics” as a double one, i.e. both racial and economic. Political emancipation was said to be inextricably linked to economic emancipation, for “to allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation.”¹⁷⁷ In “Strategy and tactics” the ANC addressed for the first time the class content of the national struggle by according a special role to the

¹⁷⁵ See Lodge, *Madela*, 61-63.

¹⁷⁶ See “Manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe,” Leaflet issued by the Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe, 16th December 1961, document 66 in Karis and Gerhart, *Challenge and Violence*, 716-717.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

working class because of what was now recognised as its exceptional militancy and revolutionary character. In Chris Hani's view, the fact that "the ANC began to say the working class is the backbone of the struggle – of course, working with other classes and strata," was the most important achievement of the Morogoro Conference.¹⁷⁸ Through its analysis of the South African situation in terms of a double system of exploitation, and of the working class as the most dynamic force in the struggle for national liberation, the ANC implicitly adopted the 'colonialism of a special type' formula which the SACP had developed. The implications of this were far-reaching. 'Colonialism of a special type' provided the ANC with the theoretical instruments for the development of a theory of national liberation specifically within the South African context.¹⁷⁹ The SACP had already come to this theoretical conclusion in its 1962 programme, which translated in practice into "the party's commitment to help build a powerful ANC as head of the entire national democratic struggle."¹⁸⁰ By formally accepting the notion of 'colonialism of a special type' at Morogoro, the ANC put the final seal to its alliance with the SACP. Evidence of this is the fact that the first official meeting ever to take place between the ANC and the SACP was held soon after Morogoro in order to chart the way forward in regards to the relationship between the two organisations.¹⁸¹

The ANC's commitment on non-racialism was also re-affirmed in "Strategy and tactics," which stated that:

¹⁷⁸ Chris Hani, quoted in Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 361.

¹⁷⁹ Dirk Kotzé, "The role of the SACP in the struggle for liberation," in Liebenberg et al. (eds.), *The Long March*, 49.

¹⁸⁰ Joe Slovo, "Beyond the stereotype," in Liebenberg et al. (eds.), *The Long March*, 37.

¹⁸¹ See 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.].

Our policy must continually stress in the future (as it has in the past) that there is room in South Africa for all who live in it but only on the basis of absolute democracy.¹⁸²

The document also called for unity in action between all three oppressed groups, which needed to be given structural expression through the full integration of “those belonging to the other oppressed groups and those few White revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common cause with our aspiration.”¹⁸³ Non-racialism represents the second most important theoretical contribution the SACP brought to the ANC. Once again, this had important consequences in terms of revolutionary practice. Communists in South Africa had undoubtedly been “the undisputed pioneers of a genuine non-racial political organisation.”¹⁸⁴ The formation of MK had marked the next step in the formal integration of communists in the structures of the national liberation movement. At Morogoro, the integration of ANC/SACP membership was completed with the incorporation of non-Africans in the ANC on the basis of individual equality.

In practice, then, “Strategy and Tactics” allowed the opening of the ANC to non-Africans. The decision, which was approved unanimously at Morogoro, 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.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the composition of the NEC, its membership having resigned *en-bloc* as a result of the criticism which had been levelled against it, remained restricted to Africans only. As Shubin has noted, “these limitations to the ANC external structure were obviously

¹⁸² “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>.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Slovo, “Beyond the stereotype,” 37.

¹⁸⁵ UWC, Mayibuye Archives, MCH02, Joe Slovo, Thoughts on the future of the Alliance, April 1969.

aimed at satisfying those who thought that the most important decisions should be taken inside the country.”¹⁸⁶ Callinicos has remarked that “interestingly, on Robben Island, the decision had [already] been taken to operate only one organisation, one alliance to which all Congress Alliance and SACP prisoners belonged, and that was the ANC.”¹⁸⁷ Moreover, the leadership on the Island was in some respects ahead of the leadership in exile in that the composition of their executive body, the High Organ, was non-racial.

A new, leaner NEC, reduced from eighteen to nine members, was elected at the conference.¹⁸⁸ Oliver Tambo, who had also resigned during the conference proceedings, was confirmed in his position of Acting President, which he had taken up on Chief Luthuli’s death in 1966, but which had never received official sanction. The position MK’s commander in chief was abolished and replaced by that of chief of operations, to which Modise was transferred, thus retaining his place in the military despite the criticism he had been the target of. This decision may have had to do with Tambo’s desire not to upset “ethnic susceptibilities”¹⁸⁹ and to avert accusations that the ANC was Xhosa-dominated. Finally, 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.”¹⁹⁰ The Revolutionary Council, which answered directly to the NEC, was chaired by Tambo with Joe Matthews as Secretary and, unlike the NEC, was multi-racial in composition and 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.

¹⁸⁶ Shubin, ANC, 335.

¹⁸⁷ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 336.

¹⁸⁸ For the composition of the old and new National Executive Committee see *ibid.*, 91-92.

¹⁸⁹ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 348. See also Shubin, ANC, 92.

¹⁹⁰ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 36.

Eligibility to the NEC of the ANC only became accessible to non-Africans at the next ANC National Consultative Conference held in Kabwe, Zambia, in 1985. Although the Kabwe Conference is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to note that the debate at Kabwe resembled in many ways the controversy over the status of non-Africans in the ANC in the debates that had preceded Morogoro. The main question at Kabwe was what the impact of the decision to open the NEC to non-Africans would be on the movement in South Africa itself. Once again, SACP members found themselves at opposing ends of the debate (Brian Bunting, for instance, voted against it, while Joe Slovo was strongly in favour).¹⁹¹ In the end the conference resolved that since “by and large the leadership of the Movement devolves on our shoulders” and “despite the fact that the majority of our members are inside the country, the National Consultative Conference can take decisions on the question and explain to the rest how we came to such conclusions. In Morogoro we could not take a decision, but now think we should open membership to all.” The matter was put to the vote with an overwhelming majority (225) voting in favour, and only two votes against and three abstentions.¹⁹² The post-1976 generation who had swelled the ranks of MK after the Soweto uprising was a major force in pushing the ANC to open its leadership to all races. The Soweto generation who came out of the Black Consciousness Movement in fact made no distinction between Africans, Coloureds and Indians, who were all regarded as ‘black’ and as a single category of oppressed people.¹⁹³ Joe Slovo, the first white person to be elected on the NEC of the ANC, was carried on the

¹⁹¹ Interview with Brian Bunting, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 22 November 2004.

¹⁹² “Main decisions and recommendations,” ANC Second National Consultative Conference, meeting at Kabwe, Zambia, 16-22 June 1985, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/conf/kabrep.html>.

¹⁹³ Interview with Aziz Pahad, Cape Town, 14 February 2005.

shoulders of his MK cadres up onto the platform at Kabwe,¹⁹⁴ which seems to suggest that the Kabwe resolutions were supported by the rank and file of the ANC.

The opening of ANC membership at Morogoro was facilitated by some political developments on the African continent. By 1966, inter-state disputes, disagreements within the OAU, and the instability of African governments (of which the February 1966 coup in Ghana is an example) had shown Africa to be an unstable factor as an aid and assistance to the struggle, thus easing some of the pressure off the ANC of having to prove its African-ness. The Soviet bloc, on the other hand, had become the ANC's principal source of support, accounting for 85 percent of the funding in 1965.¹⁹⁵ Finally, by the late 1960s, the PAC no longer represented a serious threat to the ANC's international standing.

The transformation of the ANC into a non-racial organisation was viewed by some as evidence of its successful hijacking by the Communist Party and of a dilution of the ANC's "African image." In fact the resolutions (notably the opening of membership and the creation of the Revolutionary Council) and the reshuffling of the NEC at Morogoro became the source of resentment for a small group of people, gravitating around Robert Resha, Tennyson and Ambrose Makiwane, Joe Matlou and Alfred Kgokong, calling themselves "African Nationalists," and who became better known as the "Group" or "Gang of Eight." The discord between this group and the rest of the leadership of the ANC (and of the SACP¹⁹⁶) erupted in public in a speech made by Tennyson Makiwane at the unveiling of Resha's tombstone in London in 1975,¹⁹⁷ after which the "conspirational group of

¹⁹⁴ Slovo, *Every Secret Thing*, 206.

¹⁹⁵ Shubin, ANC, 68.

¹⁹⁶ Makiwane and Resha had also been SACP members.

¹⁹⁷ See Speech by Ambrose Makiwane at the unveiling of Robert Resha's tombstone, London 19 July 1975, and Statement by eight expelled members of the ANC, 27 December 1975, documents 18 and 20 in Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 400-402, 403-406.

dissidents” was expelled by the NEC.¹⁹⁸ The resentment felt by the “Eight” clique was to due to some extent to personal grudges – most of them were ex-NEC members who had not been re-elected at Morogoro. But, at the same time, they were the same group who had opposed any change to the structures of the ANC external missions during the debates that had taken place in the years prior to the conference, as they displayed the same Africanist stance (now also openly anti-communist, or rather anti-SACP) that they had displayed then in defence of the “African image.” The “Group of Eight” represented the last potentially disruptive expression of a narrow African nationalism, always a subliminal trend within the ANC which would periodically find articulation.

The ANC-SACP alliance

After the Morogoro conference, a historic meeting took place between a delegation from the NEC of the ANC and from the Central Committee of the SACP, at whose last plenary session a decision had been taken to initiate discussions with the ANC. Although the two organisations had “walked with hands clasped together for many years,”¹⁹⁹ this was the first formal meeting ever to have taken place between the ANC and the SACP. The meeting was chaired by JB Marks and attended by eight others, including Tambo, Dadoo, Slovo, Harmel and Matthews. It is perhaps significant that Kotane, probably still hospitalised then, did not take part in this meeting. Joe Slovo, speaking on behalf of the Central Committee of the SACP, put forward to the ANC two key proposals. The first was that of the setting up of

¹⁹⁸ See “Expulsion of a conspiratorial clique,” statement by the National Executive of the ANC, Morogoro, 11 December 1975 (abridged), and “The enemy hidden under the same colour,” statement by the Central committee of the SACP on the “Group of Eight,” 1976 (abridged), documents 19 and 22 in Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir and Resurgence*, 402-403, 411-413.

¹⁹⁹ 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.].

non-public, regular contact between the leaderships of the two organisations “on common problems and policy and the utilisation of all our resources, both inside and outside the country.” The second proposal concerned the careful establishment of organised contact between the SACP leadership and its individual members in MK. The reorganisation of the SACP in exile had in fact led to the “almost complete isolation of individual members from the Party collective.” The lack of organised touch had weakened, according to the SACP leadership, not only the SACP (because of the absence of a proper collective life) but also the movement as a whole (because the isolation of individual SACP members had led to the creation of unorthodox attitudes and political postures in conflict with the Party’s ideology and standards of conduct).²⁰⁰

In his speech, Tambo stated that there was “no doubt that the two leading pillars of our struggle are the ANC and the SACP.” This unique situation had been made possible by the special character of the SACP, which had “shown the sort of flexibility which one does not always see in other organisations claiming to be communist.” Tambo declared to be unaware of the gap which the SACP felt existed between the two organisations. He explained that: “We [in the ANC] have not always felt the need for joint discussions of this character because we thought that the Party was a collective and operates as a collective. This seemed to meet all the requirements of contact mainly through some of its leading members in the ANC,”²⁰¹ most notably Kotane, Marks and Duma Nokwe. In reply to the SACP’s two proposals, Tambo warned against providing “the evidence which our enemies so badly want, to show (what of course is quite untrue) that the SACP runs the ANC.” Which meant that it was “good politics and good tactics” for the ANC and the SACP to continue to keep their separate identities, even if in practice the two organisations worked

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

“intimately and closely together.” The ANC Acting President also cautioned against the method through which contact between the leadership collective of the SACP and its membership in MK camps in Africa should be achieved, although he agreed with the question of contact in principle. The implicit danger in this case was that of setting up two, possibly competing, levels of discipline within MK which may in the end undermine the overall authority of the ANC, to which all MK members were ultimately subject to.²⁰²

The ANC-SACP meeting unanimously agreed that the leaderships of the two organisations should maintain “regular, non-public contact on common problems and major policy questions” and on the “maximum utilisation of all resources for the struggle both inside and outside the country.” A leading member of the ANC would be appointed by the Central Committee of the SACP as liaison man between the latter and the ANC’s Acting President. On the question of effective contact within the SACP, no separate SACP units were to be created in the army. It was however accepted that the Central Committee privately appoint two or three members in each major centre to maintain discreet contact with the Central Committee. These appointees were in turn allowed to establish individual contact with other SACP members or, where necessary, appoint one or more other members under them. The ANC-SACP liaison person would also be responsible for keeping in touch with these SACP appointees to ensure that the possible complications arising out of the method of implementation of contact would be avoided. SACP members outside of the army centres were also given authorisation to meet from time to time.²⁰³

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

Conclusion

By the late 1960s, the problems of representation that had emerged in London came to converge with pressures from the camps, where MK cadres were growing increasingly disaffected with the ANC leadership. The state of disillusionment in MK pointed to a widening gap between the political and military wings of the ANC. This had been made possible by their continuing separation even after the ANC external mission had taken over the whole leadership of the struggle. It seems that by the time the Morogoro Conference was called, the leadership of the ANC was lagging behind in creative ideas, and vitally needed to put itself back in pace with its non-African comrades and, most importantly, with its rank and file. The Morogoro Conference was an important act of intervention by the leadership of the ANC that sought to address as well as redress this situation of crisis and to rebuild the confidence of the people in the organisation.

Stephen Ellis, like the “Group of Eight” before him, has interpreted Morogoro as an opportunity which the SACP used “to advance its own cause by persuading the ANC to adopt a more explicit socialist line and by opening the ranks of the External Mission to non-black members.”²⁰⁴ Although the influence of the SACP thinking on “Strategy and tactics” is undeniable, the conclusions of the Morogoro conference were an independent achievement which the ANC reached as a collective as a result of the development of the armed struggle during the 1960s. In fact, in the period leading up to the conference, there had been no official SACP line, and individual SACP leaders adopted divergent views on the issue of incorporation of non-Africans into ANC structures. The resolutions of the Morogoro conference, on the other hand, provided the ideological foundation for the

²⁰⁴ Ellis, “The ANC in exile,” 444.

development of a more coherent working relationship between the two organisations over the decades to come.

The Congress Alliance as it had been conceived in the 1950s had ceased to have meaning in exile. In the words of Albie Sachs, outside of the South African context: “It made less and less sense. You can’t have four organisations underground. [...] In London we had an ANC office. Imagine if you are telling the English people, here is the ANC, there is the Coloured People’s Congress, there is the Indian Congress, there is the Congress of Democrats. And you are [all] fighting apartheid. You just couldn’t.”²⁰⁵ Although the ANC had been slow in recognising this, it finally did so at Morogoro by opening its membership to non-Africans so that in the international setting all South African exiles would be members of the same non-racial organisation. After Morogoro, the term the “Alliance” no longer referred to the partnership between the ANC, SAIC, CPC, COD and SACTU but to the one between the ANC, SACTU and the SACP.²⁰⁶ The alliance between the ANC and the SACP was formally reviewed at a meeting between representatives of the leading organs of the two organisations after Morogoro, when a more official and institutionalised form of collaboration was agreed on.

²⁰⁵ Quoted in Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 335.

²⁰⁶ Maloka, *The South African Communist Party*, 21-22.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has outlined the development of the ANC and the PAC during their first decade in exile. It is an attempt to restore this part of their past to a history in all of its complexity and ambiguity. The notion that the 1960s was a ‘decade of quietude’ not only conveys the erroneous impression that ‘nothing happened,’ but also fails to accurately illustrate the dramatic nature of some of the changes which took place during this often difficult period.

The year 1960 was a turning point in the history of both South Africa and the African continent as a whole. However, whereas by 1960 most of Africa was on a pace of rolling independence, the date marked a serious setback in the struggle against white minority rule in South Africa. In the wake of the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, a handpicked number of leaders of the resistance movement secretly left South Africa so that they could mount international support for the liberation struggle. Thus, 1960 saw the establishment of an official external presence by both the ANC and the PAC at the time that they were outlawed in South Africa. But this thesis has argued that since the end of the Second World War there had been an increase of diplomatic and international work by the South African liberation movements. In the aftermath of the war, Britain, which had always been one of the key focal points of black South Africans’ protest because of its colonial legacy and responsibility for the creation of the Union of South Africa as a white Dominion in the British Empire, became the centre of an intensified anti-colonial and Pan-African activity. It was within this broader context of the movement against colonialism that anti-apartheid campaigning also took root in Britain during this period. Moreover, because of the deep-rooted historic and economic links that tied South Africa to Britain, and with no African countries yet independent, it was through the UK that the South African liberation

movements' international contacts initially passed. From the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, Britain also became home to a small but nonetheless significant number of South African radical students and leaders of the extra-parliamentary opposition and trade union movement. This first generation of exiles left South Africa because of a mixture of personal and political reasons, but with no formal mandate for international representation from the organisations they had been members of back home. Nonetheless, they were driven by a strong political commitment and profound sense of allegiance to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Thus they organised themselves politically in the UK by becoming active within the network of British organisations supporting the struggles for independence of colonial peoples, African students organisations represented in London, and other political groups on the left of British politics, especially the British Communist Party, by way of its connection with the SACP.

Inspired by the ANC's decision to launch a boycott of products associated with the National Party and apartheid, in June 1959 they launched a parallel consumer boycott with the help of their supporters in Britain. Less than a year later, this limited campaign had transformed itself into a permanent organisation. The AAM grew over the next decades into one of the most formidable solidarity movements by offering its broad support for the freedom struggle in South Africa without, however, trying to control its direction. The birth of the AAM, this study has suggested, was significant for a number of other considerations. Not only do the origins of the AAM bear strong similarities with the Congress Movement in South Africa, but also the AAM performed a similar role to the one of the Congress Alliance in the 1950s as it provided a broad public front through which anti-apartheid protest could be articulated by a wide range of individuals and groups. After 1960, the AAM was able to incorporate successive waves of South African political exiles that arrived in the UK so that they could put their resources and energies to use in support of the

national liberation movement. This was especially true of the 1960s, when non-African exiles, the majority of whom came to stay in Britain, were excluded from membership of the ANC external mission.

The networks established by South African exiles during the course of the 1950s played a crucial role in welcoming the leadership of the liberation movements as they were driven into exile when Sharpeville took place. These black South African leaders were also highly conscious of the importance of African support for the furtherance of their cause, as one African country after another won its independence from colonial rule. Encouraged by the newly-independent African states, and Ghana especially, to unite in a common front, the first international ambassadors of the ANC and the PAC, as well as representatives from the SAIC, SWANU and SWAPO, joined forces in the SAUF. Although the leaders of the SAUF were able to set common goals and work together towards their achievement with a modicum of success, the union was ultimately shortlived. As the internal opposition movement gradually reactivated after the State of Emergency imposed following Sharpeville was lifted, the political differences which had led the PAC to break away from its mother body in the first place again came forcefully to the fore. The active opposition to unity displayed by the PAC in South Africa with regards to the anti-republican demonstrations at the end of May 1961 put a heavy strain on the tentative union which had been achieved abroad. Eventually, early in 1962, the union collapsed. The delay in breaking up the SAUF can be explained by the liberation movements' unwillingness to upset the views of independent African states, who believed that different liberation movements in Africa's unliberated territories should unite to defeat their common enemy. Moreover, ANC leaders like Tambo and Mandela had been distressed to discover that the ANC's multi-racial strategy of cooperation with other groups was out of step with the dominant

Pan-African sentiments in the rest of the continent, where the PAC appeared to be the preferred movement.

This discovery led to the formulation of the little known policy of the “African image” by the ANC. It was according to this principle that the ANC began to set up offices or external missions in various countries, mainly in African cities, following the demise of the SAUF in 1962. The other organisations in the Congress Alliance, as well as the recently ‘emerged’ SACP, agreed 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 so as to avoid an unnecessary dispersion of energies and most importantly to correct the notion that the ANC was controlled by Indians and white communists. The coolness of relations between the ANC and Ghana was a glaring example of the suspicion with which the ANC was viewed by many African states because of its policy of multi-racial cooperation. Meanwhile, the failure of the anti-republican stay-away of May 1961 had brought about a dramatic re-thinking of the liberation movements’ non-violent tactics which in turn led to the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe by the ANC and SACP leadership and of the PAC-inspired Poqo movement. Although for a brief period of time MK was able to carry out a number of sabotage operations under the direction of a leadership secretly functioning inside South Africa, by 1964 this underground machinery had almost completely been destroyed by the South African government thanks to the Rivonia raid and trial.

From mid-1962, the PAC, whose leadership had been momentarily paralysed by mass the arrests and prison sentencing after the March 1960 anti-pass protest, also started to regroup in exile with its centre in Maseru, where it enjoyed the full backing of the locally popular BCP. Thanks to its physical proximity to South Africa, the PAC leaders in Basutoland, under Leballo’s command, were able to synchronise operations with the

internal Poqo movement, which had started off as the result of spontaneous initiatives by PAC members in various localities. Despite the great strategic potential offered by the Basutoland headquarters and the popular support it enjoyed, the underground PAC/Poqo network was infiltrated and smashed by the South African police in 1963 before the PAC's ambitious plan of a country-wide general uprising could be staged, while the PAC leadership was forced out of Basutoland shortly afterwards. Leballo's careless statements at a press conference in Maseru in March 1963 are partly to blame for the police crackdown on Poqo. In the long term, Leballo's Maseru claims had severe repercussions as they irretrievably undermined his legitimacy as the leader of the PAC in the eyes of many of its members. Despite Leballo's attempts at centralising control of the organisation in his own hands, internecine strife, which centred around who should hold positions of power within the movement, became an endemic feature of PAC politics in exile. Fighting did not confine itself to the internal affairs of the PAC but also spilled over to the Basutoland political context, often violently, with the effect of pushing the British colonial authorities in that country to do everything in their powers to make the PAC's continued existence there as difficult as possible (short of its banning). Continuous harassment of PAC members by the Basutoland police coupled with the 1965 BNP electoral victory eventually had the desired effect of thwarting PAC activities in the country.

Whereas by 1964 the internal underground machineries of both the ANC and the PAC had almost completely been destroyed by the apartheid state, their respective external movements grew simultaneously. After Rivonia, the external mission of the ANC, the only representative of the Congress Alliance with formal external representation, assumed the leadership of the whole of the ANC as well as of its armed wing, MK. For the ANC and its partners in what had been the Congress Alliance, the transformation into an exile movement entailed a complex and re-negotiation of the relations which had existed

between them in South Africa. This rearrangement was a highly contested process and not a straightforward progression from the multi-racial structure established in the form of the Congress Alliance in the 1950s to the creation of a non-racial, unitary organisation. By the mid-1960s, the “African image” policy, which in fact 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 had come to live, and Barney Desai’s clash with the leadership of the ANC in exile on this matter represents a clear manifestation of it. Desai’s impatience with the ANC, which appeared unwilling to compromise, led to his defection to the PAC with a small group of CPC leaders in 1966. Despite Desai’s break from the ANC, the question of external representation continued to be an issue of contention between the Africa-based leaders of the ANC and their non-African supporters in London. These debates, which essentially centred on the ANC membership policy, also seemed to divide the SACP along racial lines. However, the very SACP membership of the London milieu was what differentiated the ‘London debates’ from the dispute between the ANC and Barney Desai. Unlike Desai, SACP exiles in London were bound by SACP policy to the absolute principle of unity with the ANC.

At the time that the CPC men joined the PAC, this organisation was on the verge of being torn apart by its in-fighting, which had emerged quite forcefully since its Basutoland days. Only after the intervention of the OAU and the Tanzanian government, where the PAC’s headquarters had been moved, was an attempt made to bring an end to the factional struggles within the PAC in exile through a leadership meeting at Moshi in 1967. The Moshi conference, however, only put off the problems that it intended to resolve. The failure to contain the problems of factionalism can be ascribed to the exclusive character of

the Moshi Conference – where rank and file members were not represented – and the scapegoating tactics used by Leballo and his supporters to deflect criticism from his person. Lastly, the Moshi Conference is evidence of a process of ideological reorientation that the PAC in exile underwent as a result of the relations that it established with the People's Republic of China. How profound this change was and whether it was essentially one of convenience remains open to question.

Unlike the Moshi meeting, the resolutions adopted by the Morogoro Conference were more successful in smoothing the tensions between the ANC and its supporters in exile. By opening membership, a more inclusive framework was established on the basis of which future relations could be built. This proved to be especially important for the development of a working relationship between the ANC and the SACP. The clarion call that a consultative meeting was not just desirable but also vital to the ANC's continued survival, however, did not come from the London exiles but from within the ANC itself, and more specifically from its armed wing.

Despite the ANC's plan to launch a campaign of guerrilla warfare inside South Africa, by 1965 it had become clear that there was a serious physical problem of how to return trained MK cadres to South Africa. As MK guerrillas found themselves indefinitely stationed in military camps such as Kongwa, discontent started to brew. As well as loitering, there seem to have been other reasons for the malaise in the camps. These included neglect by the leadership, accusations of corruption, and perceptions of preferential treatment/unjust punishment often meted out on the basis of ethnicity. Further, perhaps less acknowledged sources of discontent seem to have been related to the different type of training MK recruits received (e.g. Chinese or Soviet) and to issues of strategy and tactics (e.g. rural-based vs urban guerrilla warfare). The ANC's response to this state of unrest in MK was to form an alliance with ZAPU and to embark on a series of military

incursions in Rhodesia which started in August 1967 and continued throughout most of 1968. Despite the symbolic value that they may have come to acquire in official and popular histories of MK – thus helping sustain the myth of the armed struggle (which in actual fact never came anywhere near a full-scale war) over the years – from a military point of view the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns ended in disaster and threw MK – and the ANC – into an even deeper crisis. The criticism waged against the ANC leadership by Chris Hani and his comrades pointed to fundamental problems of strategy and tactics which arose out of the ANC's inability to adjust to the changing context.

Therefore, by the time the Morogoro Conference was called, the ANC had reached an *impasse* which could only be overcome through the working out of new strategies, objectives and structures. The importance of this process of self-renewal and change was that the ANC and its allies were able to survive 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 not about whether, but *how*, unity could best be achieved. Given the huge rifts in South African society, this was quite a remarkable achievement.

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- CO Colonial Office, series 1048
- DO Dominions Office, series 214

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