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UNCOVERING HIDDEN FRONTS OF AFRICA'S LIBERATION STRUGGLE:  
BLACK POWER, BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS, AND SOUTH AFRICA'S  
ARMED STRUGGLE, 1967-1985

BY

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BA, Earlham College, 2010  
MA, Binghamton University, 2014

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in Sociology in the Graduate School of Binghamton University  
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Accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in  
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State University of New York  
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## **Abstract**

Many scholars have argued the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)'s principal contribution was as an intellectual/student movement, and its main shortcoming the limited degree of active political and military opposition it was able to offer the apartheid regime. My dissertation, 'Uncovering Hidden Fronts of Africa's Liberation Struggle: Black Power, Black Consciousness, and South Africa's Armed Struggle, 1967-1985', broadens our understanding of this movement and moment in South African history by unearthing the little known history of BCM's unrelenting engagement with armed struggle as a form of resistance to apartheid rule during the 1970s and 1980s.

The first part of my dissertation charts the evolution of Black Consciousness (BC) inspired organisations such as the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF), the Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE), and the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRSCO) from 1974-1982 as they organised for armed confrontation with the apartheid state. It then moves to a discussion of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) and its armed wing the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA) that emerged in the 1980s as the BC alternative to the non-racialist nominally socialist African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) after previous movements failed to consolidate themselves. Their failures are less important than examinations of why they failed, which reveals their struggles were mostly caused by BCM being outmanoeuvred and betrayed by the ANC-SA and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) in exile.

The second part of my dissertation excavates how many new recruits of the Soweto generation attempted to radicalize Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) from within. While this is acknowledged by most MK scholars, they do not link this drive for radicalization with the

politics of BC that a number of these recruits carried with them into the movement. From this perspective, the mutinies and internal suppressions that wracked MK during the 1980s need to be viewed as an internal ideological struggle for what the future of South Africa would look like.

Although my work offers a careful historical reconstruction of previously under-explored events, my thesis suggests BCM's vision of a future South Africa/Azania, where land and resources would be redistributed to the masses, was outmanoeuvred and defeated by bourgeois liberal-democratic and South African Communist Party (SACP) forces of the ANC-SA. Returning to this history helps frame contemporary struggles South Africa finds itself in as current movements strive to find answers to continued racism and economic inequality. While BC did not have all the answers, it offered a different vision of freedom that Black activists today have rediscovered.

*This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to the working people who fought and continue to fight for the liberation of the Pan-African world from racial capitalism and all its institutions. It is also dedicated to my parents and grandparents/aunts who were unable to receive a PhD given the racist and sexist nature of the societies in which they lived. Lastly, this work is dedicated to, and has been animated by, the lives of Tynesha “Jenny Keys” Davis and Ty Tumminia who were called to glory on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 respectively.*

## **Acknowledgements and Inspirations**

My parents are unquestionably the major inspiration behind this work. My mother, an Afro-American from Washington, DC, worked on Capitol Hill for a number of years fighting the Regan regime's support for apartheid South Africa. As a child of the Black Power era she raised me to respect the revolutionary praxis of Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, and most importantly Malcom X. Armed self-defence was embraced in the Asheeke household and is a lesson I have carried with me ever since. My mother also taught me the importance of fighting for social justice, enslaved Africans were not given emancipation, it was taken by force of arms from those who sought to deny it from us.

My father was and is another central influence on my life. He was a South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) activist during the 1970s in Namibia and at Fort Hare in South Africa. In the early 1980s after escaping Namibia and undergoing guerrilla training in Zambia, he was assigned by SWAPO to work in the United Nations and the wider United States to mobilise support for the liberation movement. Through his organising with radical Afro-Americans like Prexy Nesbitt and Elombe Brath, to name but a few, he met my mother, a union not uncommon across the Black Atlantic. Although dad was always reticent with sharing information about his experiences as a SWAPO guerrilla, my two younger sisters and I always listened attentively when he spoke about the importance of the struggle of SWAPO against apartheid. His experiences of racism in Namibia and South Africa, like those of my mother's, were constant lessons in the Asheeke household.

While at Binghamton University, in addition to being exposed to amazing faculty and brilliant graduate and undergraduate students, I came across an event I knew little about



while growing up, the Haitian Revolution. I had always heard about Haiti, whispers of some revolt that had taken place there, but mostly that it was poor and corrupt, a similar narrative given by western media about Africa. Although Professor Michael West had suggested I read CLR James's masterpiece *Black Jacobins* over the summer of 2012, which I did, it was not until auditing a class with Professor Horace Campbell at Syracuse University during the Fall 2012 semester that I grew to truly appreciate Haiti's importance. Campbell and then again West and William Martin's respect for the Haitian Revolution energised me. I threw myself into *Black Jacobins* and Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past* with reckless abandon, reading them perhaps four times each that semester. Learning its many facets and internal struggles gave me a rubric for revolution independent of the French, Russian, Chinese, or Cuban revolutions. It enabled me to look at the numerous problems confronting the African people today through the lens of our anti-colonial struggles with Haiti as a locus point.

As I left the studies of the Haitian Revolution and searched for a topic for my dissertation, I fell back on my own independent political groundings with Black Consciousness. As I wandered in the South African history section of Bartle Library I stumbled across Mosibudi Mangena's autobiography entitled *On Your Own*. I thought I knew all there was to know about Black Consciousness but reading Mangena's autobiography showed me how wrong I was. It was through reading his work on BCM and its numerous conversations internally about armed struggle that I decided to embark upon the research found in these pages. The growing #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements in South Africa around this time served as a final inspiration to embark upon the study of this dissertation. It also helped me think through ways to connect my study of

the Black Power Movement with the African Liberation Struggles as I had just submitted a critical book review to *The Black Scholar* on Peniel Joseph's biography of Stokely Carmichael. I was also, and still am, deeply influenced by Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* and Walter Rodney's numerous works, chiefly, *The Groundings with my Brothers* and *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

Most importantly, much of my time at Binghamton University has been taken up in struggles for social justice against Babylonian forces in the area, as well as those nationally and internationally. The Confronting Racism Coordinating Committee (CRCC), Students for Change (SfC), Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), and the Frances Beal Society (FBS) were central to the development of my Black radical praxis, perhaps more so than my more formal academic instruction. Working with amazing and not so amazing activists and intellectuals in these spaces, and those I met across the country, gave my academic work purpose and brought me more forcefully into the revolutionary work of Black women and LGBTQIA folks. While I had always known and praised Tubman, Ida B. Wells, Angela Davis, Winnie Mandela, and Bayard Rustin, in the context of the rising Black Lives Matter movement founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, in addition to the fact that many of my comrades in these organising spaces identified as LGBTQIA and/or women of colour, I had to entirely rethink my politics. As my activism grew I rebuilt my activist praxis from the ground up by incorporating these hidden, ignored, and silenced voices more intricately into my evolving rubric of revolution.

It was within these spaces and our numerous political education sessions that I stumbled across a short article by a little known Binghamton-born Black Power activist

named Frances Beal. Her piece, 'Double Jeopardy' challenged my still male-centred vision of struggle, revolution, and change as she directly confronted hetero-cis men like myself to be equally eloquent and unforgiving in our critiques and self-critiques of sexism and patriarchy as we were of capitalism and racism. Through Beal I re-evaluated other activists I knew who were women and LGBTQIA and found new ones such as Ella Baker and Claudia Jones, to name but a few. The recent death of Winnie Mandela and the assassination of Marielle Franco have re-emphasised to me and other scholar-activists the need to centre Black women in narratives of struggle.

Finally, a host of friends, family, comrades, loved ones, professors, and colleagues have strengthened and animated my life and work in the United States. I love them all dearly as they provided spiritual and emotional fuel throughout my life. This work is for them as well as for the wider movement.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

African Liberation Committee (ALC)  
African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA)  
African National Congress of South Africa Youth League (ANCYL)  
All-African People's Conference (AAPC)  
Association for the Educational and Cultural Advancement of the African Peoples of South Africa (ASSECA)  
Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA)  
Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA)  
Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF)  
Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)  
Azanian Youth Unity (AZANYU)  
Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU)  
Black Community Programmes (BCPs)  
Black Consciousness (BC)  
Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)  
Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA)  
Black First, Land First (BLF)  
Black Lives Matter (BLM)  
Black Panther Party (BPP)  
Black People's Convention (BPC)  
Black Workers Project (BWP)  
Bureau of State Security (BOSS)  
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)  
Committee of Ten (CoT)  
Department of National Intelligence and Security (NAT)  
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)  
Division of Internal Propaganda (DIP)

Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)  
Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)  
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)  
Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola (FAPLA)  
Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO)  
Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA)  
Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)  
International University Exchange Fund (IUEF)  
Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE)  
Mouvement National Congolais (MNC)  
Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA)  
National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP)  
National Party (NP)  
Organisation of African Unity (OAU)  
Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO)  
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)  
Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC)  
People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN)  
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)  
South African Communist Party (SACP)  
South African Defence Force (SADF)  
South African Police (SAP)  
South African Students' Movement (SASM)  
South African Students' Organisation (SASO)  
South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO)  
South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO)  
South West Africa National Union (SWANU)

Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC)  
Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)  
Tanganyika African National Union (TANU)  
Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK)  
União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA)  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)  
United Nations Organisation (UN)  
Unity Movement (UM)  
University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF)  
World University Service (WUS)  
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)  
Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)  
Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA)  
Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)  
Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA)

## **Introduction: South Africa's Armed Struggle, Black Power, and Black Consciousness**

'Taking up arms for the freedom and the political unification of Africa is the final crystallisation of serious study of the oppressed and the oppressor'.<sup>1</sup>

### **Black Consciousness and Armed Struggle: A New Research Agenda**

During the 1970s the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), essentially the unidentical twin of the US Black Power Movement in South Africa, had grown to become one of the principal vehicles for Black opposition to apartheid rule in South Africa. With the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) suffering from state suppression, military defeats in the 1960s, and heavy scepticism in the diplomatic community, Black South Africans turned to a new group of activists like Steve Biko, Bokwe Mafuna, Deborah Matshoba, Thenjiwe Mtintso, Harry Nengwekhulu and a multitude of other BCM activists for political leadership. Despite this, a host of scholars and ANC-SA activists have sought to negate BCM's impact by arguing its principal contribution was as an intellectual movement, and its main shortcoming the limited degree of active political and military opposition it was able to offer. Within the growing Black Consciousness (BC) literature efforts to disrupt this narrative have sought to understand the political/community projects the movement built, explore its contributions to Black art and culture, expand our understanding of its student activism, and track its current socio-economic reverberations in post-apartheid South Africa. This dissertation adds to this literature by exploring BCM's little researched but nonetheless

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<sup>1</sup> K. Nkrumah, *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare: A Guide to the Armed Phase of the African Revolution* (London, Panaf Books Limited, 1968).



serious and unrelenting engagement with armed struggle as a form of resistance to white minority rule.

My research has shown that during the 1970s and again in the 1980s, BCM organisations formed a number of independent armed wings that have not been given sufficient attention in BC literature or the wider canon on South Africa's armed struggle. Chapters two, three, and four this dissertation follows what was famously called the "Bokwe Group", inspired by its leading personality Bokwe Mafuna, who formed the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF) whose cadres trained undercover in Botswana, Libya, and Syria before trying to infiltrate South Africa. However, shortly after the Soweto Uprising of 1976, due to a host of reasons, the APLF disintegrated. In its wake two new organisations arose to replace it, namely, the Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE) and the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO). In the 1980s, after both formations withered away, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) consolidated itself as the external wing of the newly formed Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO). They too formed an armed wing, the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA) which unlike its predecessors would last longer and be more effective.

Despite these numerous attempts by BC activists to form independent armed wings, chapters five and six show that many BCM adherents did end up joining the ANC-SA and its armed wing Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK). Unlike a number of other scholars and ANC-SA activists, my work argues their joining did not represent an abandonment of Black Consciousness, instead, it was a conscious attempt to radicalize the ANC-SA/ MK and its ally the South African Communist Party (SACP) from within. Here, my dissertation pays particular attention to the June 16<sup>th</sup> and Moncada Detachments, MK's first detachments

trained in the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising. These detachments are worthy of note not only because they were MK's first since the Luthuli Detachment of the mid-1960s, but because they were made up of cadres who were more strongly influenced by the Black Nationalism of BC than the ANC-SA's non-racialism. Hence, my dissertation argues the initial resurgence of MK in the 1977-1979 period can be directly traced to BC-inspired activists. While some in this new wave of recruits were able to positively contribute to the growth and development of MK and rise in the ranks, tragically, many more were brutally repressed by some in the leadership who felt threatened by this new political force. Chapters five and six track these tensions in order to help us rethink why so many MK guerrillas remained in exile rather than being infiltrated into South Africa. This new emphasis helps us re-evaluate the mutinies in the ANC-SA's camps in the 1980s that have garnered a good degree of scholarly attention but have not been explicitly linked to presence of BC inspired recruits in MK's ranks.

Although this dissertation offers a careful historical reconstruction of previously under-explored events, the conclusion attempts to provide alternative thoughts to why the post-apartheid ANC-SA government has not delivered on many of the promises they made during its armed struggle. Most of the literature has argued the following: structural conditions within the global economy have hindered South Africa's development, the movements themselves were always flawed due to corrupt leaders, or the ANC-SA leadership was not Marxist-Leninist enough from the onset. My argument complicates these narratives by suggesting that during the liberation struggle, it was both bourgeois liberal-democratic and SACP elements which conspired to stamp out the more grassroots radical Black Nationalism of BCM. This suppression, done within the broader context of

the war against apartheid, and the culture it created in the ANC-SA has played a significant role in hindering a more sustained grassroots democratic culture and curtailing the promotion of a stridently Black self-affirming ethos.

Among those who study BCM hints of a wider story of its armed struggle while plentiful, have remained mostly unexplored. This is unfortunate as much of the criticism levelled at BCM from the ANC-SA, and a lesser extent the PAC, centres around the former not actively embracing armed struggle. Consequently the ANC-SA in particular has capitalised on this narrative to secure its own claims to political leadership post-1994 and hegemony over the narrative of liberation prior to 1994. The following section will chart the development of the literature on Black Consciousness since the 1970s with a focus on two traditions that seem to dominate the writing on BC, namely, a Black activist tradition and an academic tradition predominately but not exclusively dominated by whites. Both traditions have offered important insights into the historiography on BCM, its impact on the struggle against apartheid, and importance post-1994 and are read together to chart the evolution of the literature since the 1970s.

This literature review also points out how the academic tradition has gained more “legitimacy” in the canon on BCM over the activist tradition. Moreover, the Black activist tradition has been more open to reading a strong class critique within BCM and has generally rejected characterizations of BCM as a movement not taking class struggle seriously. The relative dominance of the academic tradition has been influential in the limited understanding and marginalization of BCM as a “race-based” movement.

After engaging with the literature on Black Consciousness, this introduction will move to a discussion on the literature on South Africa’s armed struggle. It argues that the

recent emphasis on exploring the regional and global activities of the various Southern African Liberation Movements opens a space for an engagement with the under-researched armed struggle activities of BCM. Additionally, the emphasis on exploring the contributions of other organisations to South Africa's fight for democracy and the ANC-SA's interactions with them opens a space for the research in this dissertation. Following this, the section will conclude with a broad overview on the international reverberations of the US Black Power Movement as it was a powerful inspiration, among a host of other radical Third World currents, to the formation and development of BCM. This engagement will also critique the growing Black Power literature for not paying enough attention to Black Power's reverberations on the African continent; doing so reveals it to be far more than a race-first political philosophy but one able to speak to class struggles from within a predominately African-descendant population.

### **Black Consciousness, South Africa's Armed Struggle, and Black Power**

Gail Gerhart's work in the late 1970s and again in the mid-1990s was one of the first to construct a broad historiography of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) within the wider context of Black South African opposition to apartheid since the 1940s.<sup>2</sup> Gerhart's early work argued that like the PAC, BCM represented what she termed a "rebel" tradition that developed within Black South African politics post-World War II. This tradition, according to Gerhart, argued Africans could only find freedom if they began to

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<sup>2</sup> G. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: An Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979); T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990, Vol. 5, Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 89-155.

think African, in other words, ‘to define their own goals in terms of their own interests and priorities as an oppressed people’.<sup>3</sup> It was a praxis born in opposition to a “reformist” tradition personified best by the ANC-SA and its Congress Alliance which believed in a gradualist approach to integration. Consequently, the reformists were willing to work closely with white liberals and communists to articulate a broad non-racialist vision for a future South Africa and up until 1961, work within the apartheid system to find freedom.

While Chabani Manganyi had in the early 1970s briefly written on BC’s political philosophy, seeking to centre its conception of Blackness with sociological and psychological factors that went beyond merely reacting to white racism, Gerhart’s work was foundational. Her access to key primary sources and interviews enabled her to more accurately chart the development of organisations like the South African Students’ Organisation (SASO), track BCM’s numerous internal debates, and map the movement’s multi-faceted approach to attacking the apartheid regime.<sup>4</sup> Gerhart’s work launched what this introduction terms the academic tradition of writing on BC, as someone who was not Black and not intimately involved with BC organising, Gerhart’s work offered an outsiders’ perspective on the nature and development of this growing Black movement. Tom Lodge would continue this tradition with his brief engagement with Black Consciousness as part of his broader work on Black politics in South Africa. Following Gerhart, he connected BCM’s evolution to not only revolutionary trends within the African

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<sup>3</sup> Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa*, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> N. Manganyi, *Being-Black in the World* (Johannesburg, SPRO-CAS/Ravan Press, 1973), pp. 17-24. It should be noted that Gerhart being a white woman with US citizenship gained her access and a freedom of movement in South Africa those who were Black were never afforded. This does not diminish the import of her contributions, rather it places were academic research and publications in a real political context.

continent but to movements in the African diaspora like the US Black Power/Theology movements.<sup>5</sup>

Around the same time Mokgethi Motlhabi and Sam Nolutshungu, writing within the academic tradition, sought to clearly define the political ideology of Black Consciousness as opposed to the African Nationalism of the PAC it was often compared to. Their contributions are important, like that of Manganyi, because theirs were one of the first attempts by Black scholars to explain what the movement represented to the world.<sup>6</sup> Importantly, they both located a powerful class and anti-capitalist critique within the racial consciousness of BCM in ways Gerhart and Lodge had not. According to Motlhabi, ‘Among the values of white society to be rejected was its exploitative nature which was seen as a result of capitalism’.<sup>7</sup>

Nolutshungu was concerned with exploring the development of BCM as a broad movement inside South Africa as an example of ‘the tendencies towards nationalist militancy and social radicalism that popular movements among Blacks invariably contain’.<sup>8</sup> He went further than Motlhabi and others by framing BCM as a revolutionary movement, designed initially not to replace the ANC-SA and PAC, and was one of the first to discuss, albeit briefly, the discussions among activists in SASO on the question of armed struggle. Interestingly, in opposition to Lodge and Gerhart, both downplayed the connection between BCM and US Black Power. In hindsight, this may have been done

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<sup>5</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Harlow, Longman, 1983), pp. 323-325.

<sup>6</sup> S. Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa: Political considerations* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982); M. Motlhabi, *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid: A Social-Ethical Analysis* (South Africa, Skotaville Publishers, 1984), pp. 106-153.

<sup>7</sup> Motlhabi, *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid*, p. 112.

<sup>8</sup> Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa*, pp. xiv-xv.

because they saw it as a connection being overemphasised by the apartheid government, and the ANC-SA, as an excuse to attack/discredit SASO. Where they agreed with Gerhart was on her reading of the Soweto Uprising as being a manifestation of BC politics despite not being directly planned by it.

A few years later Robert Fatton Jr. would offer perspectives on BCM that closely followed Gerhart and Lodge but departed from them in his understanding of the class critique inherent in its radical Black Nationalism.<sup>9</sup> Fatton Jr's perspective came from his grounding in the politics and history of Haiti as well as the Marxist revisionism tradition that began emerging within South African historiography in the 1970s. These perspectives enabled him to understand BC, similar to other Black scholars, as a movement designed to strengthen the subjective impulses of the exploited Blacks to reinvigorate the fight for a social revolution. Black Consciousness for Fatton Jr. was helping to facilitate the process through which the exploited Black population transitioned from 'a class in itself into a class for itself'.<sup>10</sup> Like Gerhart and Lodge, Fatton Jr. strongly acknowledged the influence of the US Black Power Movement on BCM as its activists had closely read the works of Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, Malcom X, James Cone, Angela Davis and others. Fatton Jr. argued the Black Power Movement provided 'a theoretical source for the renewal of black South African thinking' but he stressed, like Motlhabi, that it was not an uncritical importation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> R. Fatton Jr., *Black Consciousness in South Africa: The Dialectics of Ideological Resistance to White Supremacy* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> Fatton Jr., *Black Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 58.

<sup>11</sup> Fatton Jr., *Black Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 75.

Following Fatton Jr. the late 1980s saw the unheralded release of one of the first autobiographies of a South African guerrilla in exile. The autobiography of Mosibudi Mangena, who at the time was President of the BCMA, was one of the first to openly, albeit briefly, discuss BCM's engagement with armed struggle.<sup>12</sup> Mangena was a founding intellectual and activist of BCM, in 1973 he was arrested for his activism and became the first BC organizer to be sent to Robben Island. His autobiography launched the Black activist tradition school on BCM which wrote on the movement in ways that were fundamentally different from others. Mangena's book was unique in that it offered a personal take on the political significance and ideological importance of BCM in the context of the late 1960s and early 1970s where the ANC-SA and PAC were non-existent.

While a stalwart of the movement, Mangena was never shy in dealing criticism. In particular, Mangena believed the Soweto Uprising demonstrated the weakness in BCM as it pertained to its 'inability to handle the armed and other forms of violence unleashed by the abominable apartheid regime against the black community'. Although they reacted in solidarity with the high school student protests, Mangena pointed to SASO's decision at its July 1972 General Student Council (GSC) to reject calls to 'create structures for the prosecution of the struggle at other levels' as the reason why BCM was unable to effectively channel the anger and energy of the students into an organised overthrow of the apartheid regime under the banner of BCM.<sup>13</sup> In some ways his memoir should be

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<sup>12</sup> M. Mangena, *On Your Own: Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa/Azania* (Braamfontein, Skotaville Publishers, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> Mangena, *On Your Own*, p. 117. The second half of chapter two will explore this GSC in more detail.



considered a primary document like some of the writings of Steve Biko in the early 1970s that were compiled into the seminal text *I Write What I Like*.<sup>14</sup>

Shortly after the unbanning of the liberation movements by F.W. De Klerk in 1990, soon to be followed by the release of Nelson Mandela, a number of BC activists met in Harare, Zimbabwe to discuss ways to effectively add BCM to the growing global and national discussion of South Africa's freedom struggle.<sup>15</sup> Notably absent were BCMA comrades like Mosibudi Mangena whose organising strategies and tactics differed from those leading this conference like Barney Pityana, one time President and Secretary-General of SASO, and Mamphela Ramphele, a founding activist and intellectual of SASO and the Black Community Programmes (BCPs). Nevertheless, working in conjunction with friendly scholars like Lindy Wilson, this meeting was able to lay the foundation for a seminal text on BCM in 1991 entitled *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness*.<sup>16</sup> This text saw the activist and academic traditions meet with the former emerging dominant enabling it to provide insights into BCM previous scholars had been unable to do.

To begin with, *Bounds of Possibility* went into more depth and detail than previous works on the intricacies of BC's ideology and the various political projects of the movement. In addition to this, while Nelson Mandela had by this point become the global figure of anti-apartheid resistance, and by extension the ANC-SA became seen as the natural heirs to the National Party (NP) for power, BCM activists sought to insert the

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<sup>14</sup> S. Biko, *I Write What I Like: Selected Writings* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Wits Historical Papers (hereafter referred to as WHP) A2675/1/3, Gerhart notes on Biko Symposium, Harare, June 17th-22nd, 1990, pp. 33-37.

<sup>16</sup> B. Pityana, M. Ramphele, M. Mpumlwana, and L. Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers 1991).

murdered Steve Biko into the discourse to bring to light the still little known contributions of BCM to South Africa's freedom struggle.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, unlike earlier literature, in the chapters by Lindy Wilson and Mamphela Ramphele, this edited volume carefully explored the experiences of women in BCM and openly critiqued the patriarchy of male leaders like Biko.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the authors sought to chart BCM's continued impact within South Africa after the assassination of Biko in September 1977 and the banning of almost twenty major BCM organisations one month later.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, again unlike earlier works with the exception of Mangena's autobiography, in a chapter by former BCM activists Welile Nhlapo, Thenjiwe Mtintso, and Keith Mokoape who eventually joined the ANC-SA, BCM's engagement with the armed struggle was briefly charted. This chapter on armed struggle was the first to openly discuss attempts by some SASO activists in Botswana to obtain training with the PAC in Libya and Syria. The authors also discussed a few reasons why the alliance failed but focused on praising the Soweto generation for revitalizing and reinvigorating the ANC-SA/MK in exile.<sup>20</sup>

Inside South Africa, Tom Lodge would build on his earlier engagement with BCM by exploring the formation of BC organisations post-1977. In some sense arguing against the growing notion in mostly ANC-SA centric scholarship that BCM was mostly dead inside South Africa during the 1980s, Lodge showed how groups like AZAPO continued

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<sup>17</sup> L. Wilson, 'Bantu Steve Biko: A Life', in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, and Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, pp. 15-77.

<sup>18</sup> M. Ramphele, 'The Dynamics of Gender within Black Consciousness Organisations: A Personal View', in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, and Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, pp. 214-227.

<sup>19</sup> K. Moodley, 'The Continued Impact of Black Consciousness', in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, and Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, pp. 143-152; G. Budlender, 'Black Consciousness and the Liberal Tradition: Then and Now', in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, and Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, pp. 228-237.

<sup>20</sup> K. Mokoape, T. Mtintso, W. Nhlapo, 'Towards the Armed Struggle', in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, and Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, pp. 137-142.

to organize and mobilise Blacks against apartheid under a BC banner. Unlike earlier scholars on BCM, both from within the primarily white academic and Black activist tradition, Lodge located the evolution of BC politics in the 1980s to their rejection of the Freedom Charter, rivalry with the United Democratic Front (UDF), and the deadly clashes between these organisations and Inkatha and the increasingly desperate apartheid regime.<sup>21</sup> Lodge's chapter, as well as chapters by Bill Nasson, Khehla Shubane and a few others, looked more closely at how BC politics operated at a local and regional level within South Africa set in the wider context of the turbulence of the 1980s.

This was followed shortly after by a very important article by Nozipho Diseko.<sup>22</sup> Diseko's piece was primarily concerned with divorcing SASO and BPC from having any influence over the South African Students Movement (SASM) during the Soweto Uprising. Indeed, Diseko went so far as to claim, with questionable evidence, that SASM had secretly embraced the ANC-SA's non-racialist doctrine in the early 1970s. According to Diseko this meant that June 1976 needed to be seen as an example of the ANC-SA's influence on Black Consciousness instead of the latter's influence on youth activism in South Africa. Diseko argued that SASM sought to break with the larger BCM for the following reasons: the latter embracing Black communalism instead of scientific socialism, SASM rejecting the exclusion of whites, and SASM wanting to engage with armed struggle. According to Diseko, these disagreements moved the organisation closer to the ANC-SA. In the early 1990s this was a landmark piece, yet, recent work by ANC-SA scholars and even recollections by some ANC-SA activists have debunked Diseko's thesis on the strong

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<sup>21</sup> T. Lodge, 'Black Consciousness and the Left', in T. Lodge and B. Nasson, eds., *All, Here, and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1991), pp. 142-151.

<sup>22</sup> N. Diseko, 'The Origins and Development of the South African Students Movement (SASM): 1968-1976', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 1 (1992), pp. 40-62.

presence of the ANC-SA underground in the early 1970s.<sup>23</sup> As it pertained to the growing scholarship on BC from within the Black activist tradition, Diseko's piece was one of the first to be openly critical of the movement.

Anthony Marx, similar to Diseko although from within the scholar tradition, particularly the broad analysis of Lodge, levelled a blistering critique of BCM and its Black Nationalist politics in his work on opposition to apartheid inside South Africa.<sup>24</sup> Marx's text can be seen as a counter to *Beyond a Boundary* as he sought to argue that while Black Consciousness was an understandable evolution within South African politics, it was insufficient and actually detrimental as a political praxis to the liberation of South Africa. Incorrectly, Marx tried to construct BC as primarily concerned with boosting the self-image of Blacks instead of organizing concrete actions against the apartheid state. In other words, they were more idealists than activists.<sup>25</sup> Following Diseko, Marx also mistakenly argued BC activists like Biko rejected Marx's class analysis as a foreign ideology, this was inaccurate as it conflated BCM's fierce desire to be independent of the SACP and USSR with rejecting class analysis. Marx also, like Diseko, did not take into consideration the fact that BCM tactically wanted to stay legal for as long as possible, because of this decision if they had openly embraced socialism/class struggle they ran the risk of being banned before they could consolidate themselves. Marx's text also argued that when the engagement with class analysis came, it began in 1976 with Diliza Mji, SASO's President

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<sup>23</sup> WHP A2675/1/35, Victoria Butler interview with Joe Slovo, February 1988, pp. 1-4; WHP A2675/1/14, Howard Barrell first interview with Ronnie Kasrils, August 19th, 1989, pp. 241-242; T. Simpson, 'Main Machinery: The ANC's Armed Underground in Johannesburg During the 1976 Soweto Uprising', *African Studies*, 70, 3 (2011), pp. 415-436.

<sup>24</sup> A. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, pp. 10-16.

at the time who many believed had secretly joined the ANC-SA.<sup>26</sup> In addition to not having enough sources available to him on the serious activist work BCM did accomplish, Marx was very hostile to African/Black Nationalism in South Africa as, 'Extreme in its claim to the land and in its attitude towards whites'. He also referred to the US Black Power Movement as a 'volatile expression of racial assertiveness'.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, Marx did make an intriguing argument as it pertained to the banning of BC organisations in 1977 after Biko's death. According to Marx, this was done by the apartheid regime to prevent attempts at forming a united front under BC's banner rather than the immediate threat of BC after the Soweto Uprising. The apartheid government wanted to head off Biko's death being used as a rallying point for serious unity among the Blacks in South Africa as they were still convinced they could hold onto power.<sup>28</sup> Yet, this prescient analysis is overshadowed by his dismissal of groups like AZAPO as repeating the same mistakes of the previous BC organisations by only having Black membership.<sup>29</sup>

A few years later, seeking to centre the experiences of women Mamphela Ramphele followed in the now rapidly growing practice of South African anti-apartheid activists in publishing her autobiography. Importantly, Ramphele built on her earlier work on women in the movement by attacking characterizations of her having value only in relation to being one of Steve Biko's romantic partners. Through her autobiography she tried to illustrate the ignored contributions of Black women to the founding, development, and growth of BCM. This was done by using her own example as a critical co-author with Steve Biko on

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<sup>26</sup> Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, p. 48.

<sup>27</sup> Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, p. 85.

<sup>29</sup> Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, pp. 89-91, 103-104, 118-141.

his now famous articles on Black Consciousness for the SASO Newsletter as she, ‘would write down his thoughts as a stream of consciousness which he would dictate to me, and later I would read the text back to him as he typed with his two fingers until it was done’.<sup>30</sup> Ramphele also charted her rise within the organisation as Chairperson of a SASO Local Committee which ran a number of health clinics that she was critical in operating as a doctor-in-training.<sup>31</sup> As Ramphele grew in confidence, she and other Black women like Nomsisi Kraai, Deborah Matshoba, and Thenjiwe Mtintso ‘became a force to be reckoned with at annual SASO meetings. Ours was not a feminist cause at the time... but an insistence on being taken seriously as activists in our own right amongst our peers’.<sup>32</sup>

Another important contribution this autobiography gave to the historiography of BCM was the importance King Williamstown had for the movement after Steve Biko was banned there in March 1973. Ramphele recalled that, ‘As the community at King grew and developed, the transition was made from student activism to professional development work’. It was also here that newer activists began to develop such as Malusi Mpumlwana and Mapetla Mohapi.<sup>33</sup> Mohapi in particular Ramphele recalled, ‘often had more radical views on many issues, and would engage Steve and Malusi in long discussions’. Mohapi seemed to be advocating more overt forms of resistance against apartheid in addition to the self-help projects of the BCPs.<sup>34</sup> This was important in two regards, firstly, it showed the diversity of opinions present among key personalities in BCM which had until that point only been minimally interrogated in the literature on BCM. This is something Anne

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<sup>30</sup> M. Ramphele, *Across Boundaries: The Journey of a South African Woman Leader* (New York, The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1996), p. 59.

<sup>31</sup> Ramphele, *Across Boundaries*, pp. 61-65.

<sup>32</sup> Ramphele, *Across Boundaries*, p. 66.

<sup>33</sup> Ramphele, *Across Boundaries*, p. 94.

<sup>34</sup> Ramphele, *Across Boundaries*, p. 108.

Heffernan would later expand upon with her carefully researched work on Onkgopotse Tiro and his importance as one of the founding activists of BCM.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, through highlighting the lively debates among these different visions of how BCM should organize itself, Ramphele underscored one of the strengths of BCM in comparison to other South African organisations at the time, namely, its ‘openness to internal debates [which] helped to develop leadership amongst younger members of the community’.<sup>36</sup>

Towards the end of the 1990s critiques of BCM from within the predominately academic school continued in the work of Salim Badat, a former South African National Students’ Congress (SANSCO) activist in the 1980s.<sup>37</sup> Like Gerhart and a few others before him, Badat drew connections between the ideology of SASO and that of the African National Congress of South Africa Youth League (ANCYL). He also acknowledged the impact US Black Power and wider Pan-African nationalism had on BC thinking and praxis.<sup>38</sup> However, he like Marx and Diseko continued the critique of BCM/SASO as only seeing the problem of apartheid through the lens of race. Moreover, he also linked BCM/SASO’s turn to an embrace of class with Diliza Mji’s 1976 July speech which chapter two will show to be inaccurate as the embrace happened from as early as the late 1960s. That said, unlike Marx, Badat did not believe SASO was anti-white.<sup>39</sup>

Badat also made a point in his book to delve deeper than others into how SASO organised itself and structured its branches across the country at the various “Bush”

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<sup>35</sup> A. Heffernan, ‘Black Consciousness’s Lost Leader: Abraham Tiro, the University of the North, and the Seeds of South Africa’s Student Movement in the 1970s’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 1 (2015), pp. 173-186.

<sup>36</sup> Ramphele, *Across Boundaries*, p. 109.

<sup>37</sup> S. Badat, *Black Student Politics: Higher Education and Apartheid from SASO to SANSCO, 1968-1990* (Oxford, Routledge, 1999).

<sup>38</sup> Badat, *Black Student Politics*, pp. 82-87.

<sup>39</sup> Badat, *Black Student Politics*, pp. 88-101.

colleges and universities.<sup>40</sup> He also discussed the BCPs and literacy projects in more depth than previous scholars with the exception of Mangena. Although he concluded they failed, mostly because of a lack of drive, he did see success for BCM in its impact on Black culture and Black Theology.<sup>41</sup> In summation, unlike Marx who argued BCM fell because of its own internal contradictions, or Diseko's argument that it was a rising internal ANC-SA underground that made BCM redundant, Badat correctly argued it was government repression which limited its ability to expand.<sup>42</sup>

In the early 2000s, Tor Sellstrom's masterful history of Sweden's assistance to the African Liberation Movements also engaged with BCM. This work was distinctive in that up until that point, with the exception of the closing chapters of Mangena's biography, few had systematically dealt with the movement and its politics in exile. Also located from within the white academic school, Sellstrom relied heavily on primary sources of Swedish officials who interacted with BCM and a number of secondary sources to demonstrate how supportive Sweden and its non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were of the movement and its community projects.<sup>43</sup> Their support to BCM, in particular SASO, had been so extensive that when Sweden finally recognised the ANC-SA as the leading South African liberation organisation in November 1974, they had already contributed to BCM 175,000 SEK in aid which was 25,000 SEK more than they had given the ANC-SA up until that point.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Badat, *Black Student Politics*, pp. 108-121.

<sup>41</sup> Badat, *Black Student Politics*, pp. 124-128.

<sup>42</sup> Badat, *Black Student Politics*, pp. 134-138.

<sup>43</sup> T. Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II: Solidarity and Assistance 1970-1994* (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, pp. 400-401.



According to Sellstrom, 'The most important reason for the comparatively late assistance to ANC... was the liberation movement's precarious situation in the 1970s'. This led many in the Swedish government like First Secretary Govan Hasselmark, posted to Dar es Salaam, to remark in November 1975 that both the ANC-SA and PAC were ineffective organisations as BCM/SASO were the most active organisations inside South Africa. This opinion was echoed by the influential international secretary of the Swedish Metalworkers Union who visited South Africa in early 1975. By mid-1976 Oliver Tambo was pressuring the Swedish government to stop financing BCM all-together as this was, in his opinion, creating unnecessary tensions between BCM and ANC-SA. Tambo was eventually able to successfully argue that the money for the liberation of South Africa should be flooded through the ANC-SA only.<sup>45</sup>

Sellstrom's piece was also important because it was the first to prove that Steve Biko had some knowledge about the attempts by some BCM cadres to receive military training in exile from the PAC.<sup>46</sup> In addition to providing a wider understanding of BCM in exile, Sellstrom's detailed study exposed the little acknowledged narrative of how weak, vulnerable, and minimally supported the ANC-SA was in exile throughout the 1960s and 1970s. It was only in the late 1970s that Swedish support 'had increasingly taken the form of institutional cooperation, outside the military field paving the way for support to central functions of the future South African ruling party'.<sup>47</sup>

More recently in the immense South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) volumes, a new narrative on Black Consciousness has emerged that blends the academic

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<sup>45</sup> Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, pp. 409-413, 544-547, 561.

<sup>46</sup> Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, pp. 550-551.

<sup>47</sup> Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, p. 580.

and Black activist/civil society traditions.<sup>48</sup> Mostly following the established academic narrative on BCM, authors in Volume II of the immense series have argued, curiously, that it was ‘Activity, not activism as such, [that] marked BC strategy’.<sup>49</sup> They also temporally delineate its boundaries to the 1967-1977 decade, with scant attention being paid to its continued activism at home and abroad post-1977 except to say BC remained entrenched in the minds of politicised Blacks. Notably, the authors argued that when BCM ended in 1977 its adherents split into three broad groups: those that saw BCM as an end who eventually formed the BCMA, those who would join the ANC-SA, and those who joined the PAC.<sup>50</sup> More importantly, they argued, perhaps more strongly than those before them, that BCM trained a generation of new leaders and laid important foundations for the movements of the 1980s. However, it seems for the authors when BCM went into exile their impact as a movement was negligible, a viewpoint this dissertation hopes to challenge.

As the 2000s progressed a number of activist scholars, both white and Black, began to reengage with Black Consciousness and the political thought and praxis of Steve Biko to help find ways to frame why South Africa had become racially and economically more unequal more during the ten years the ANC-SA had been in political power. Nigel Gibson was one of the central figures in this new wave of scholarship who provocatively argued that movements like Abahlali baseMjondolo, also called the Shackdwellers Movement, challenged the post-colonial apartheid state in a ways that embodied ‘Fanon and Biko’s idea of a decolonised new humanism’.<sup>51</sup> Gibson importantly emphasised that Black

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<sup>48</sup> M. Mzamane, B. Maaba and N. Biko, ‘The Black Consciousness Movement’ in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2007), pp. 99-159.

<sup>49</sup> Mzamane, Maaba and Biko, ‘The Black Consciousness Movement’, p. 100.

<sup>50</sup> Mzamane, Maaba and Biko, ‘The Black Consciousness Movement’, p. 157.

<sup>51</sup> N. Gibson, ‘Upright and free: Fanon in South Africa, from Biko to the shackdwellers’ movement (Abahlali baseMjondolo)’, *Social Identities*, 14, 6 (2008), p. 684.

Consciousness was not a simple identity politics framework or a cultural exceptionalism argument, instead, it was ‘a product of the experience of a movement – of apartheid, of postcolonial Africa and of the Black consciousness mediated by US Black freedom movements’.<sup>52</sup> Arguing against some of the more orthodox Marxist-Leninist writings on post-apartheid South Africa, Gibson posited BC was still a relevant political praxis of liberation in a South Africa where it was wrong to reduce current struggles to a transition from racial oppression to class oppression as ‘the economic reality and the glaring inequalities do not mask the racialised human reality’.<sup>53</sup>

This emphasis on re-engaging with Black Consciousness in order to speak to contemporary struggles in South Africa would continue in an edited volume entitled *Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* which can be seen as an updated version of *Bounds of Possibility*.<sup>54</sup> Working with and drawing inspiration from scholar-activists such as Andile Mngxitama and Amanda Alexander, the authors in this new text sought to demonstrate the powerful role BC ideology, organizing strategies/tactics, and fierce material/ideological independence played in shaping South African politics prior to and after the historic 1994 elections. Furthermore, they offered an expanded view of some of the struggles women in BCM experienced that emphasised how despite their contributions and some new political freedoms won, women in the movement still encountered both old and new patriarchal restrictions.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Gibson, ‘Upright and free’, p. 694.

<sup>53</sup> Gibson, ‘Upright and free’, p. 702.

<sup>54</sup> A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander, and N. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> It is striking how similar these experiences are to those of Black women in the US/Caribbean Black Power movement. See for example, S. Chisholm, ‘Race, Revolution and Women’, *The Black Scholar*, 3, 4 (1971), pp. 17-21; F. Beal, ‘Slave of a Slave No More: Black Women in Struggle’, *The Black Scholar*, 12, 6 (1981), pp. 16-24; K. Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organisations, 1968-1980* (Durham: Duke

On the question of Black women in BCM one of the more revealing chapters was an interview the editors published with one of the more unheralded founding BCM activists and intellectuals, Deborah Matshoba.<sup>56</sup> Matshoba's interview was significant because in addition to providing more details on various aspects of SASO's early history, her discussion of her own political biography showed that a number of women entered SASO with a fully formed political consciousness about Blackness. Moreover, unlike Ramphele, Matshoba explicitly stated that while in SASO she and other women identified as feminists as they had engaged closely with Black radical figures like Angela Davis. Matshoba also castigated Biko and others for voting down a women's proposal to form a Women's Student Organisation (WSO) in order to independently organize Black women. According to men like Biko, they mistakenly believed creating a WSO would produce unnecessary divisions among Black people, instead, WSO should just become a branch within SASO.

In addition to this, two chapters in this edited volume offered new perspectives on BCM that were not found in previous writings. Gibson's chapter on BCM after the murder of Biko tried to sketch a more nuanced history of AZAPO's attempts to bring some organisational unity to the scattered BC forces in the country post-1977. However, incorrectly, Gibson argued that in exile the BCMA was formed by exiles like Barney Pityana who were scrambling to pick up the pieces of the injured movement.<sup>57</sup> That said,

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University Press, 2005), pp. 1-44; A. Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

<sup>56</sup> 'Interview with Deborah Matshoba,' in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander, and N. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives!*, pp. 275-284.

<sup>57</sup> The newer autobiography of Mosibudi Mangena as well as interviews with other BC cadres active in the formation of BCMA and some primary source material have shown that Pityana was against BCMA's formation.

Gibson's chapter accurately charted how this new phase of BCM more explicitly grafted a broad conception of Marxism onto the organisation.<sup>58</sup>

Neville Alexander's chapter added to this by attempting to explain the context around the night Steve Biko was picked up by security forces by explaining what he (Alexander), Biko, and Peter Jones were trying to discuss at a meeting in Cape Town. According to Alexander, he and Biko were to be sent abroad 'to discuss with the armed movements in exile the suggestion to constitute a single united liberation army that would be complemented and "represented" by the Black People's Convention (BPC) as the legitimate voice of the oppressed inside the country'.<sup>59</sup> He also argued, against scholars like Anthony Marx, that the AZAPO-led National Forum's failure was due more to it being overwhelmed by the rising United Democratic Front (UDF) which had more international support instead of it being racially exclusive.<sup>60</sup>

From within the predominately white academic tradition, Daniel Magaziner's work built on Gerhart's by centring the influence of US Black Power, the South African multi-racial University Christian Movement (UCM) and Black Theology during BC's formative years (1968-1972).<sup>61</sup> Magaziner importantly offered an expanded understanding of the early years of BCM by locating its development with that of Black Theology and the University Christian Movement (UCM). Prior to Magaziner, this link had not been explicitly made despite it being widely accepted that both Biko and Pityana regularly

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<sup>58</sup> N. Gibson, 'Black Consciousness after Biko: the Dialectics of Liberation in South Africa, 1977-1987', in Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives!*, pp. 129-155.

<sup>59</sup> N. Alexander, 'An Illuminating Moment', in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander, and N. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives!*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>60</sup> Alexander, 'An Illuminating Moment', in Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives!*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>61</sup> D. Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968-1977* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2010).

engaged with liberal/radical Christian organisations in SASO's early years. Furthermore, unlike Gerhart, Magaziner discussed how women who joined the movement found a level of freedom within its political spaces while at the same time continued to combat sexist and patriarchal stereotypes held by their male comrades.<sup>62</sup> Despite these important contributions, Magaziner departed from Gerhart and others before him when he questionably framed the movement's post-1972 moment as the end of a "pure" Black Consciousness as adherents moved away from internal conscientizing towards direct confrontation with the apartheid state.<sup>63</sup>

In a corrective to Magaziner's false dichotomy between conscientization and direct confrontation, Julian Brown and Leslie Hadfield's recent works have shown how BCM's transition to openly organizing opposition to apartheid was implicit in its conscientizing process during its formative years.<sup>64</sup> Brown in particular sought to demonstrate how SASO evolved from a university student project to a national activist movement that was able to mobilise mass-based demonstrations against apartheid.<sup>65</sup> Leslie Hadfield's work further broadened our understanding of BCM by chronicling its participation in rural struggles, exemplified by its grassroots economic/health care projects in the Transkei and Natal (today's Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal respectively). She also, more deeply than Badat, explored the origins of the BCPs, a little known but critical BCM organisation that

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<sup>62</sup> D. Magaziner, 'Pieces of a (Wo)man: Feminism, Gender and Adulthood in Black Consciousness, 1968-1977', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 1 (2011), pp. 45-61.

<sup>63</sup> D. Magaziner, "'Black Man, You Are on Your Own!': Making Race Consciousness in South African Thought, 1968-1972", *Journal of African Historical Studies*, 42, 2 (2009), pp. 221-240.

<sup>64</sup> T. Karis and G. Gerhart, 'The Black Consciousness Movement: Confronting the State, 1972-1976', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart (eds), *From Protest to Challenge*, pp. 120-155.

<sup>65</sup> J. Brown, 'SASO's Reluctant Embrace of Public Forms of Protest, 1968-1972', *South African Historical Journal*, 62, 4 (2010), pp. 716-734; J. Brown, 'An Experiment in Confrontation: The Pro-Frelimo Rallies of 1974', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38, 1 (2012), pp. 55-71.

constructed health clinics and leather-making factories in local villages.<sup>66</sup> Her focus on the rural areas and the BCPs centrality in the publication of the *Black Agenda* newsletter highlighted the activism of women in these projects in ways previous scholars were unable to do.<sup>67</sup>

Recently, Mosibudi Mangena published an updated autobiography in which he continues his story roughly from when his first one ended. Here, Mangena made two notable contributions to the historiography and analysis of BCM.<sup>68</sup> To begin with, he detailed the work the BCMA and its armed wing AZANLA did in exile as they struggled to pick up the pieces of the fractured movement in the wake of the Soweto Uprising. Mangena also traced the various internal splits that racked BCM in exile and the struggles the movement faced in regards to gaining recognition, obtaining financial/military support, and simply surviving in foreign countries. Secondly, he honestly and self-critically discussed the struggles of AZAPO since 1993 in the newly democratic South Africa. Primarily, there were crippling conflicts, similar to the ANC-SA, between cadres who had gone abroad and those who had operated from inside the country. These tensions hindered the ability of AZAPO to become a mass party. Furthermore, while Mangena argues that ideologically the decision of AZAPO to not participate in the 1994 elections was correct given the conditions under which free and fair elections were being called, tactically, it was

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<sup>66</sup> L. Hadfield, *Liberation and Development: Black Consciousness Community Programs in South Africa* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2016).

<sup>67</sup> L. Hadfield, 'Challenging the status quo: Young Women and men in Black Consciousness Community Work, 1970s South Africa', *Journal of African History*, 54, 2 (2013), pp. 247-267.

<sup>68</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches: A Courageous Journey by South African Patriots* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2015).

a mistake which locked them out of power and the larger national conversation on where South Africa needed to go up until today.

Taken together, this literature has importantly presented Black Consciousness as more than an ideological/intellectual intervention in the anti-apartheid struggle, or as a mere incubator for the high school student led Soweto Uprising.<sup>69</sup> While Brown, Mngxitama, Mangcu, Hadfield and Gerhart recognize BCM as a liberation movement, none, with the exception of the autobiographies of Mosibudi Mangena, have researched its deep engagement with armed struggle. Even Xolela Mangcu's expansive biography on Steve Biko does not systematically discuss this engagement with armed struggle although we know from Sellstrom that Biko knew about the attempt in exile to train a BC-inspired armed wing.<sup>70</sup> When BCM's engagement with armed struggle is discussed, scholars like Anthony Marx and Gerhart have mistakenly dated its genesis to the Soweto Uprising or

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<sup>69</sup> What has not been discussed in this literature review is the literature on the Soweto Uprising and the numerous works analysing the philosophical implications of Steve Biko's work. The work on the Soweto Uprising while tied to Black Consciousness has become highly contested terrain in South African historiography with all political organisations claiming a piece of it. It is beyond the scope of this literature review to deeply engage with it although the dissertation will by necessity encounter aspects of it. The work on Steve Biko and his writings has been left out because it has been used by scholars, primarily from the academic tradition, to read Biko's writings on Blackness and humanism in a wider philosophical/theological framework. Part of the work on Biko's philosophy has been reading him through and alongside Frantz Fanon. As it pertains to the theological pieces, Biko was a layman preacher of sorts and a number of theologians have engaged with him explicitly on that level. This literature review is more concerned with research detailing with the evolution of the wider movement vs the figure of Steve Biko. Chapter two will delve into a deeper critique of this literature as it pertains to the pitfalls of hero/great man narratives. For some examples of this Biko literature see, V. Lloyd, 'Steve Biko and the Subversion of Race', *Philosophia Africana*, 6, 2 (2003), pp. 19-35; C. Du Toit, 'Black Consciousness as an Expression of Radical Responsibility: Biko an African Bonhoeffer', *Religion & Theology*, 15, ½ (2008), pp. 28-52; M. More, 'Gordon and Biko: African Existential Conversation', *Philosophia Africana*, 13, 2 (Fall 2010/Spring 2011), pp. 71-88; G. Haresnape, 'Biko, Shakespeare and Black Consciousness', *Shakespeare in South Africa*, 25 (2013), pp. 99-106; I. Kamola, 'Steve Biko and a critique of global governance as white liberalism', *African Identities*, 13, 1 (2015), pp. 62-76; M. More, 'Biko and Douglass: Existentialist Conception of Death and Freedom', *Philosophia Africana*, 17, 2 (Winter 2015/2016), pp. 101-118; M. Lamola, 'Biko, Hegel and the End of Black Consciousness: A Historico-Philosophical Discourse on South African Racism', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 42, 2 (2016), pp. 183-194.

<sup>70</sup> X. Mangcu, *Biko: A Biography* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2012).



the assassination of Steve Biko/banning of BCM organisations.<sup>71</sup> This is not surprising as the APLF and others like AZANLA kept their work very secret and only recently have some members been willing to discuss what they did as little written record exists of their activities. Furthermore, because much of the BCM literature contains it to a project within the borders of South Africa, little has been done to sketch its impact in exile; consequently, its armed struggle efforts have been under-researched.

This silence on BCM's various armed wings throughout the 1970s and 1980s and their contribution to the struggle against apartheid is continued within the growing literature on South Africa's armed struggle which is dominated by refreshing insights into the inner workings and missions of ANC-SA/MK and other organisations. This upsurge of interest has taken place within the wider context of scholars like Luise White, Miles Larner, Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Blessing-Miles Tendi excavating the history of the various southern African liberation movements from a more regional non-leadership centred perspective.<sup>72</sup> The exile experience, engaged with more closely here than within the BCM literature, has formed an important component of the scholarship directly focusing on South Africa.<sup>73</sup> What makes this literature innovative is the access to

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<sup>71</sup> Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, p. 97; Karis and Gerhart, 'The 1976 Soweto Uprising', in Karis and Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge*, pp. 161-162, 184.

<sup>72</sup> For a non-exhaustive list of this more regional orientation see the following, T. Lyons, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle* (New Jersey, Africa World Press, 2004); R. Southall, *Liberation Movements in Power: Party and State in Southern Africa* (South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013); M. Mukwahepo, *Mukwahepo: Woman, Soldier, Mother*, Translated by Ellen Namhila, (Windhoek, University of Namibia Press, 2013); H. Spire and C. Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives* (South Africa, UCT Press, 2013); L. White and M. Larner, 'Introduction: Mobile Soldiers and the Un-National Liberation of Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 6 (2014), pp. 1271-1274; J. Saul, *A Flawed Freedom: Rethinking Southern African Liberation* (UK: Pluto Press, 2014); C. Williams, *National Liberation in Postcolonial Southern Africa: A Historical Ethnography of SWAPO's Exile Camps* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015); J. Alexander, J. McGregor, and B. Tendi, 'The Transnational Histories of Southern African Liberation Movements: An Introduction', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, 1 (2017), pp. 1-12.

<sup>73</sup> Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Vol. II*, pp. 394-579, 698-863; K. Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1959-1994*

interviews, memoirs, and other primary source material few had available to them during the liberation struggle. Recently, scholars such as Arianna Lissoni have pointed out that in order to counter the post-1994 ANC-SA centric narratives that dominate discussions on South Africa's liberation struggle, scholars need to 'complicate a single heroic narrative of liberation and suggest that the relationship between the histories of earlier struggles and the present needs to be rethought in more complex, and less utilitarian terms'.<sup>74</sup> Doing so amplifies the neglected voices of rank-and-file members, women, youths, and other subversive individuals and has set the standard for how future research on southern African Liberation Movements need to be studied.

Scholars within this field of study like Lissoni, Hugh Macmillan, Thula Simpson, Ben Magubane, Noor Nieftagodien, and Gregory Houston have expanded our understanding of the ANC-SA's armed struggle by detailing internal differences within the organisation and highlighting the difficulties they faced trying to survive in exile and relaunch their armed struggle.<sup>75</sup> Their scholarship has been particularly thought-provoking as it has attempted to show how the politics of exile shaped the ability, or inability, of MK

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(Switzerland, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2009); S. Ndlovu, G. Houston, and B. Magubane, 'The South African Liberation Struggle', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 1960-1994/Liberation War Countries* (continued), Vol. 3 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 539-745.

<sup>74</sup> J. Soske, A. Lissoni and N. Erlank, 'One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Struggle History after Apartheid', in A. Lissoni, J. Soske, N. Erlank, N. Nieftagodien, O. Badsha, eds., *One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories Today* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2012), pp. 30-31.

<sup>75</sup> A. Lissoni, 'Transformations in the ANC in External Mission and Umkhonto we Sizwe, c. 1960-1969', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 2 (2009), pp. 287-301; G. Houston, 'Military bases and camps of the liberation movement, 1961-1990', Democracy, Governance, and Service Delivery (DGSD), Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013), available at [www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/ktree-doc/13802](http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/ktree-doc/13802), retrieved February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015; G. Houston and B. Magubane, 'The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1970s' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]*, pp. 454-460; N. Ndebele and N. Nieftagodien, 'The Morongo conference: A moment of self-reflection', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 1: 1960-1970* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2005), pp. 521-546; H. Macmillan, 'Morogoro and Africa: The Continuing Crisis in the African National Congress (of South Africa) in Zambia', in Spire and Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 76-95; T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town, Penguin Books, 2016).

to carry out operations. Additionally, others have explored how other South African movements like PAC/Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) and National Committee for Liberation/African Resistance Movement (ARM) took up arms against apartheid.<sup>76</sup> Yet, BCM's armed wings are not explored and the movement itself is dismissed as being too concerned with psychological liberation versus physical liberation.<sup>77</sup>

Lastly, while research on the Black Power Movement and its global reverberations has grown, precious little has been done to excavate the presence of these radical tendencies within the African continent.<sup>78</sup> While Kwame Nkrumah's public embrace of Black Power and the activism of Steve Biko is widely known, as it pertains to the study of its global reverberations, few have interrogated what this form of Black radicalism meant within African Liberation Movement spaces.<sup>79</sup> While scholars like Gale Plummer and Fanon Che

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<sup>76</sup> See Karis and Gerhart, 'The Liberation Movements, 1964-1975,' in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: Volume 5*, pp. 21-23; M. Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/African Resistance Movement', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2005), pp. 209-256; S. Mathabatha, 'The PAC and POQO in Pretoria, 1958-1964', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1, 1960-1970*, pp. 299-318; G. Houston, T. ka Plaatjie and T. April, 'Military Training and camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961-1981', *Historia*, 60, 2, November 2015, pp. 24-50.

<sup>77</sup> Marx, *Lessons of Struggle* (1992); Mzamane, Maaba and Biko, 'The Black Consciousness Movement', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1, 1960-1970*, pp. 99-160; S. Ndlovu, G. Houston, and B. Magubane, 'The South African Liberation Struggle', *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 594-608

<sup>78</sup> One such text is S. Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell Run: Tanzania, Black Power, and the Uncertain Future of Pan-Africanism, 1964-1974* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> For a brief list of Black Power/Black Internationalism in Global perspective literature see C. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000, orig. 1983); M. Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994): 99-141; AM Angelo, "The Black Panthers in London, 1967 -- 1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic," *Radical History Review* 103 (2009), pp. 17-35; M. West, W. Martin, F. Wilkins, eds., *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2009); R. Bunce and P. Field, 'Obi B. Egbuna, C.L.R. James and the Birth of Black Power in Britain: Black Radicalism in Britain 1967-1972', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22, 3 (2011), pp. 391-414; N. Slate, ed., *Black Power Beyond Borders: The Global Dimensions of the Black Power Movement* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); D. Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2013); K. Quinn, ed., *Black Power in the Caribbean* (Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2014). On Kwame Nkrumah and Black Power see K. Nkrumah, *The Spectre of Black Power* (London, Panaf Books, 1969).

Wilkins have shown us how influential the African Liberation Movements were to the Long Black Sixties, and we know that many Black radicals travelled to Africa, we do not know much about the inverse relationship as it pertains to how the diaspora influenced African movements.<sup>80</sup> This is interesting because the literature on Black Power in the Caribbean is very rich as it reveals the relevancy of Black Power within predominately African/Indian populations. While indeed some elements of Black Power were more culturally Black Nationalist, the radical thrust of the Black Power Movement in the Caribbean was firmly entrenched in socialism. Moreover, it offered serious visions for a future for the Caribbean that was politically, economically, and socially independent of capitalism. That said, where attempts have been made to explore Black Power's reverberations on the African continent scholars such as May Joseph, Manthia Diawara, and Andrew Ivaska have focused on the circulation and consumption of US Black Power music and cultural expressions in African states.<sup>81</sup>

### **Silences in History: Reading South Africa's struggle through Michel-Rolph Trouillot**

Accordingly, this dissertation seeks to fill the various holes in all three literatures. In order to move past the limits of these debates this dissertation draws heavily on the pioneering work of Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot and his concept of silences in

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<sup>80</sup> B. Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956-1974* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); F. Wilkins, 'The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa before the Launching of Black Power, 1960-1965', *The Journal of African American History* 92, 4 (2007), pp. 467-490.

<sup>81</sup> M. Joseph, 'Soul, Transnationalism, and Imaginings of Revolution: Tanzanian Ujamaa and the Politics of Engagement' in M. Guillory and R. Green, eds., *Black Power, Politics and Pleasure* (New York, New York University Press, 1998); M. Diawara, 'The 1960s in Bamako: Malick Sidibé and James Brown' H. Elam Jr. and K. Jackson, eds., *Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture* (USA, University of Michigan, 2005), 242-265; A. Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (USA, Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 68-85.

history as it pertains to the scholarship, or lack thereof, on the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804).<sup>82</sup> Engaging with Trouillot's work offers a different way to imagine how future research should unpack South African liberation movement historiography. In the late 1980s a number of scholars focused on various trends that developed in South African historiography from colonial-apologist positions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the Marxist-revisionism of the 1970s, with some engagement with Black writing in-between.<sup>83</sup> More recently, as mentioned above, there has been a concerted effort in the literature on South Africa's struggle for democracy to highlight the efforts of organisations not named the ANC-SA or, if one is working within the ANC-SA historiography, centre narratives of those whose voices have not been highlighted.

In this Trouillot is useful because unlike most South African scholars, his work pays more attention to how silences within and among radical Black movements against white supremacy operate. He also discusses how these silences are mobilised by the ruling class post-independence to justify their exploitation and suppression of the working people. As the first Third World/African country to win political independence, Haiti's struggles after the euphoria of its victory was a precursor to the contemporary struggles of African states like South Africa.

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<sup>82</sup> M. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1995); M. Trouillot, *Haiti: State against Nation: The Origins of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).

<sup>83</sup> For a brief list see, C. Saunders, 'Towards Understanding South Africa's Past: Reflections on recent developments in history writing in English', *South Africa International* 19, 2 (1988), pp. 65-73; B. Bozzoli and P. Delus, 'Hegemony, Essentialism, and Radical History', *Radical History Review* 46, 7 (1990), pp. 13-45; A. Odendaal, 'Developments in Popular History in the Western Cape in the 1980s', *Radical History Review* 46, 7 (1990), pp. 369-375; M. Legassick and G. Minkley, 'Current Trends in the Production of South African History', *Alternation* 5, 1 (1998), pp. 98-129; L. Witz and C. Rassool, 'Making Histories', *Kronos* 34 (2008), pp. 6-15; A. Coombes, 'The Gender of Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa', in S. Radstone and B. Schwarz, eds., *Memory: Histories, Theories and Debates* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 442-457.

In the mid-1990s Trouillot powerfully introduced the compelling thesis that the researching, writing, publishing and even assumption of what history is, has always been a contested project for power.<sup>84</sup> Moving beyond arguments stating that history is written by the victors, he carefully explored how the construction of histories implies a certain choice of sources of what to include or exclude. In so doing, the creation of certain silences in history is inevitable. However, far from being an accidental or neutral project, the construction of silences according to Trouillot is an active political project often controlled by those in power to centre a particular narrative over others both nationally and world-historically. At the level of world history, he potently argued that at the time of the Haitian Revolution, during the Age of Slavery, the global dehumanization of African-descended peoples made the successful execution of an armed slave revolution to a racist European world-view an “unthinkable” event. In many ways, the prospect of a BCM-led movement winning political power in South Africa and reshaping the country accordingly is an “unthinkable” event to not only a number of whites, but ruling class Blacks who draw their legitimacy from their ties to white monopoly capital.

Nevertheless, at the national level, more pertinent for this dissertation, Trouillot addressed the process by which certain leaders/tendencies of the revolution, particularly Toussaint L’Ouverture (broadly recognised as the leader of the revolution) and Henri Christophe, were praised over others in the national narrative created after independence in 1804.<sup>85</sup> For Trouillot the case of Christophe, who eventually became King of Haiti in

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<sup>84</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, pp. 1-30.

<sup>85</sup> M. Trouillot and M. Past, ‘Toussaint on Trial in “Ti dife boule sou istoua Ayiti,” or the People’s Role in the Haitian Revolution’, *Journal of Haitian Studies*, 10, 1 (2004), pp. 87-102. A note on this article, Past is here summarizing an early text written by Trouillot that went unnoticed mostly because it was written in Haitian Kreyol. She is not the author of the text yet in this article she does provide some background on its construction and summarizes, in English, its chapters. The author of the text remains Trouillot.

1806, is instructive. During the revolution Christophe, who had been emancipated before the slave revolt began, rose within L'Ouverture's army to become a high-ranking general. Towards the end of the revolution, a rivalry developed between him and a maroon (runaway enslaved peoples) Bossales (African-born) leader named Sans Souci. Sans Souci was an exceptional military figure who, like Christophe, was one of the early leaders of the revolution. Unlike the Creole (Caribbean-born) Christophe, Sans Souci was popular with the former field-slaves and maroons who made up the majority of the army and emancipated population. Sans Souci did not trust Christophe's commitment to building a better life for the formerly enslaved in the future as at a critical point in the closing stages of the revolution Christophe, as well as other Creole leaders, surrendered to the French. To add insult to injury, these Creole generals decided to work with the French to stamp out various pockets of maroon resistance that continued after their surrender.

Sans Souci was one of the maroon leaders who successfully led this resistance to the French as he fought against both the white French army and the forces of the Black Creole generals, in particular Christophe. The resistance of maroon leaders like Sans Souci eventually convinced these Creole generals to break from the French and re-join the growing popular resistance to the French army. Sans Souci was asked to make peace with the Creole generals and join the reconstituted army of both Creoles and Bossales. At a meeting to make peace with Christophe, Sans Souci and his close lieutenants were murdered by the vengeful general. To seal his victory over the maroon leader, yet silence his name to history, upon becoming King of Haiti he built a palace on the spot where he murdered the maroon leader and named it Sans Souci. According to Trouillot this can be interpreted as Christophe killing, 'Sans Souci twice: first, literally, during their last

meeting; second, symbolically, by naming his most famous palace Sans Souci'.<sup>86</sup> To this day, while Haitians and the world recognize the castle and its name, it is always attached to Henri Christophe and not to Sans Souci despite the fact that he is broadly known to scholars of the Haitian Revolution.<sup>87</sup> This dissertation begins with the premise that despite the growth in research on BCM, a similar silence exists around it in part given the lack of engagement with its dogged attempts to form an armed wing.

### **The Contributions of understanding BCM and Armed Struggle to the Literature**

My dissertation makes a number of contributions to the literature on the history of South Africa's armed struggle, the impact of US/Caribbean Black Power within Africa, understandings of forgotten fronts of the Cold/"Hot" War, and the impact silences in the history of South Africa's ANC-SA led national project are having on current political tensions. The first part of my dissertation seeks to excavate BCM's deep and unrelenting engagement with armed struggle throughout the 1970s and 1980s. As the literature review above made clear, this is one of the silenced/hidden histories of southern Africa's armed liberation struggle. Moreover, the opening chapters will argue BCM's failure to insert itself as the dominant liberation movement had more to do with the maneuverers of the ANC-SA, its international allies, and the PAC than inherent ideological/organisational flaws within BCM.

Secondly, through a close engagement with BCM's armed wings, these chapters also uncover the contributions of Palestinian, Eritrean, and European Leftist organisations

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<sup>86</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, p. 59.

<sup>87</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, pp. 31-69.



in the 1970s and 1980s had in supporting southern Africa's decolonization struggle through their support of Black Consciousness. While literature on the superpowers, the Nordic countries, Cuba, and various NGOs dominates the narrative of the Cold War in southern Africa<sup>88</sup>, my work shows how radical organisations such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the Italian Red Berets, and the Baader-Meinhof gang (West Germany) also made a lasting contribution to southern Africa's liberation movements. Additionally, the critical networks they were able to cultivate in exile demonstrate the lengths to which South Africans were willing to go outside the ANC-SA and PAC to defeat apartheid.

Chapters five and six chart the contributions BCM made to the radicalization of the ANC-SA/MK. Chapter five in particular details how BC organisers like Keith Mokoape re-energised and re-focused the ANC-SA/MK in the early 1970s after they left South Africa for exile in Botswana. It also charts their disappointment in MK in particular when they were denied requests to receive military training as the Luthuli Detachment was accepting no new recruits. It was partly the efforts and dogged determination of cadres like Mokoape, who came from and never renounced BC politics, which forced MK to begin training new recruits and incentivised key leaders like Chris Hani to open new fronts of struggle inside the country.

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<sup>88</sup> R. Scalapino, 'Sino-Soviet Competition in Africa,' *Foreign Affairs*, 42, 4 (1964), pp. 640-654; P. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); P. Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009, org. 1999); E. Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013); N. Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War* (Washington, DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2016).

The following chapter focuses on the post-Soweto period, which is seen by most scholars of Umkhonto we Sizwe as being a key turning point in which the armed struggle in South Africa became more serious although not more successful. While the Soweto/BC generation of MK recruits is praised as being key to this shift, they are commended more for providing numbers to the ANC-S/MK instead of tangibly contributing to a radical transformation of the movement in exile.<sup>89</sup> While others like Archie Mafeje have recognised some of their desires to simply receive MK training then leave and promote their own BC world-view, it is concluded that this was not possible.<sup>90</sup> Still others, a tiny minority, see a more Black Nationalist approach within the ANC-S/MK post-1976 but do not go deeper into what this looks like or what impact it had.<sup>91</sup> This chapter also suggests that part of the reason so many cadres were left in the camps and were repressed in places like Quatro was because of their BC world-view.

The conclusion summarises each chapter and then ends by trying to frame this history of BC through a reading of current political events in South Africa. Over the past decade, a number of new social movements in South Africa have emerged – namely #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, and Abahlali baseMjondolo to name a few – which the conclusion hopes to show represents a resurgent Black Consciousness.<sup>92</sup> Broadly, these

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<sup>89</sup> S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 72; D. Massey, *Under Protest: The rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2010), pp. 84-87.

<sup>90</sup> A. Mafeje, 'Soweto and Its Aftermath', *Review of African Political Economy*, 11 (1978), p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> T. Lodge, 'State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976-1986', *Third World Quarterly*, 9, 1 (1987), pp. 9-14, 27; R. Suttner, 'The character and formation of intellectuals within the ANC-led South African liberation movement', in T. Mkandawire, ed., *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development* (London, Zed Books, 2005), p. 135.

<sup>92</sup> Similar to efforts by the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, activists are returning ideologically to earlier forms of radical Black organizing efforts (SNCC, BPP, Combahee River Collective etc.) to find creative ways to challenge the continued de-humanization of Black people and other people of colour in the United States. The uncomfortable truth these protests are exposing on both sides of the Atlantic are despite flowery rhetoric about our evolution to non-racialism/post-racialism, racism in all its social,

social movements are challenging the ANC-SA's non-racialist vision of a post-apartheid South Africa where land remains in the hands of white capitalists to the detriment of the Black masses. In the recent elections in the ANC-SA for its new President to replace Jacob Zuma, for the first time the two front-running candidates, Nkosana-Dlamini Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa were cadres who had a strong history in Black Consciousness. While his story as union organizer to billionaire is widely known, his roots in BCM are not.<sup>93</sup> This conclusion argues understanding BCM will be critical to grasping the political potential of the new leaders and organisations emerging in South Africa going forward. By doing so, more accurate assessments on the prospects of serious radical economic transformations can be given.

### **Sources for the Dissertation**

Much of the archival and oral interview work used to construct this article was done during 2016 and 2017 across South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Tanzania, and the United States. In South Africa, where most of my work took place, I conducted over fifteen interviews with former members of the Black Consciousness Movement who either formed their own wings and/or eventually joined MK in the 1970s and 1980s. Archival research was done at the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) at the University

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political, economic and cultural forms continues to repress people of colour. For a related take on the contemporary student movement in South Africa see L. Naidoo, 'Contemporary student politics in South Africa: The rise of the black-led student movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeeMustFall in 2015', in A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto '76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), pp. 180-190.

<sup>93</sup> A. Butler, *Cyril Ramaphosa* (UK, James Currey, 2008); R. Hartley, *Ramaphosa: The Man Who Would Be King* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2017).

of Fort Hare, the Wits Historical Papers – Karis/Gerhart Collection, the Manuscripts and Historical Papers at the University of Cape Town, and the Department of Botswana National Archives & Records Service. Interviews were also conducted with a number of former leaders of SWAPO and focused on exploring their viewpoints on Namibia's struggle, the South African struggle, and their own understanding of Black Power and Black Consciousness (BC). Interviews were also conducted with former top ranking Tanzanian officials in Dar es Salaam in order to gain an appreciation for how the Tanzanian state, which was a critical locus point for the decolonization struggle, interpreted the ANC-SA, PAC and BCM. The challenge of this dissertation was balancing the memory of interviewees with what we have available in the written record. In most circumstances PAC/ANC-SA notes, briefs and documents were used to confirm the narratives of the BCM cadres in exile although these primary sources on the whole did not have an insider perspective on things. Nevertheless, the dissertation has sought to the best of its ability to offer an accurate narrative on the development of BCM's armed struggle from a variety of perspectives.

## **Chapter One: Africa's Armed Decolonization struggle and the US Black Power Movement, 1958 - 1973**

This opening chapter seeks to do different but closely interrelated things. To begin with, the First All-African People's Conference (AAPC) of 1958 will be briefly discussed. This was an important event in the African decolonization struggle because it brought a number of soon-to-be liberation movement figures together. Moreover, the First AAPC triggered a debate among the conference participants between Kwame Nkrumah's non-violent positive action and Frantz Fanon's armed struggle, akin to Gerhart's rebel and reformist traditions, which would follow organisations like the ANC-SA until 1994. This will be followed by a brief overview of the movements pushed into following Fanon's charted route to freedom. What this chapter seeks to highlight is how after numerous attempts were made at peaceful negotiations with the colonial authorities, brutal repression often followed their collapse with the cost of much human life. It was only then that certain movements decided to take up arms.

After this broad survey we will introduce into this rising southern African struggle the figure of Stokely Carmichael who from the vantage point of the Black Power Movement in the United States, saw the armed movements as something he wanted to physically join. However, upon his arrival in Tanzania he saw how far his imagination of the armed struggle was from the reality on the ground. His response to this state of affairs infuriated certain movements, none so much as the ANC-SA who published a public rebuke of Carmichael that found its way into the western press. Carmichael's critiques, as

well as the reaction to them, foreshadowed future critiques Black Consciousness adherents would also level at the ANC-SA. Furthermore, at the time, Carmichael's critiques were in line with a number of criticisms being made within the ANC-SA and its armed wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK). Yet, Carmichael's trip to Tanzania is remembered by many, including himself, as being a failure.

Carmichael's most recent biographer, Peniel Joseph, contends the trip was poorly received by the African Liberation Movement (ALM) leaders because, 'The reality of African politics blurred distinctions between guerrillas and revolutionaries, statesmen and dictators and made Carmichael's blunt analysis ring false to indigenous leaders who had spent a lifetime combating colonialism.'<sup>94</sup> The earlier and more complete autobiography of Stokely Carmichael, written with the assistance of Ekwueme Thelwell, proposed his negative reception was due to comments he made on the limitations of Marxism-Leninism for the global Black revolution. Thelwell speculates this view was criticised by many orthodox Marxist groups such as the ANC-SA and its Angolan ally the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA).<sup>95</sup> More recently, Seth Markle has argued that the negative reactions were caused not by Carmichael's ideological content but the style (brashness, arrogance) and tone of his delivery. According to Markle many, like the radical Zanzibari activist Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, defended Carmichael and his vision of Black Power openly.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> P. Joseph, *Stokely: A Life* (New York: Basic Civitas, 2014), p. 224.

<sup>95</sup> S. Carmichael and E. Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)* (New York, Scribner, 2005), pp. 632-634.

<sup>96</sup> S. Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell Run: Tanzania, Black Power, and the Uncertain Future of Pan-Africanism, 1964-1974* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2017), pp. 68-69.

While these accounts largely see this trip as a disaster, my research shows Carmichael's critiques, while rejected by some of the leadership of ALMs like the ANC-SA, spoke directly to many of the concerns rank-and-file cadres had of why their armed struggle up to that point had been failing. Furthermore, Carmichael's mission to spread the message of Black Power was received well by many elements of Tanzanian society. Moreover, in the aftermath of his visit and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968, Black Power took on a new significance for the ALMs. The murder of this man of peace convinced many ALMs to see Black Power's message legitimate and prescient to their own fight against racism, imperialism, and colonialism.

By utilizing primary and secondary sources not used, or under-used, by the above mentioned authors – such as the publications of other liberation movements, internal critiques within MK in the late 1960s, and non-mainstream news accounts – this chapter concludes that Carmichael's mission to connect Black Power with the armed struggle in southern Africa was successful. Establishing this foundation is important for later chapters because it shows the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)'s embrace of Black Power was not unique among Africans in the African continent.

This analysis on the relationship between Black Power and the ALMs is also unique in that while much is written on the influence of Frontline States, the USSR, and sympathetic European governments/civil society organisations on the ANC-SA in exile, curiously, the impact of global Black Nationalist currents such as Black Power has still been little explored.<sup>97</sup> Harkening to earlier observations of this neglect Hilary Spire and

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<sup>97</sup> V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 1999, republished, 2009) and *The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 2008); T. Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa Vol. II: Solidarity and Assistance, 1970-1994* (Uppsala, Nordiska

Chris Saunders pointedly remind us that while much is known about, ‘African-American and “black diaspora” solidarity with the southern African liberation struggles... the attitudes and responses on the African continent itself’ to the militant strivings of Afro-American/African diaspora peoples in the 1960s and 1970s ‘remain[s] largely unexplored’.<sup>98</sup>

A similar hole exists within the growing study of the Black Power Movement in which scholarship studying its global reverberations have yet to deeply explore its impact within Africa.<sup>99</sup> Despite pioneering scholars like Brenda Plummer, Fanon Che Wilkins, Ashley Farmer and others carefully researching how Afro-American radicals reacted and responded to the African liberation project, the inverse relationship has remained little researched.<sup>100</sup> Did Black Power even have a role in Africa? Former Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist James Forman believed it did and he argued so

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Afrikaninstitutet, 2002); N. Manghezi, *The Maputo Connection: The ANC in the World of FRELIMO* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2009); H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2013); S. Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (London, Hurst & Company, 2014).

<sup>98</sup> H. Sapire and C. Saunders, ‘Liberation Struggles in Southern African Context’, in H. Sapire and C. Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives* (Claremont, South Africa, UCT Press 2013), p. 19.

<sup>99</sup> On the growth of the study of Black Power see P. Joseph, ‘The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field’, *The Journal of American History* 96, 3 (2009), pp. 751-776. On Black Power’s global impact see M. Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 99-141; A. Angelo, ‘The Black Panthers in London, 1967 -- 1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic’, *Radical History Review* 103 (2009), pp. 17-35; R. Bunce and P. Field, ‘Obi B. Egbuna, C.L.R. James and the Birth of Black Power in Britain: Black Radicalism in Britain 1967-1972’, *Twentieth Century British History* 22, 3 (2011), pp. 391-414; N. Slate, ed., *Black Power beyond Borders: The Global Dimensions of the Black Power Movement* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); D. Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto, Between the Lines, 2013); J. Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2013); K. Quinn, ed., *Black Power in the Caribbean* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2014).

<sup>100</sup> F. Wilkins, ‘The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa before the Launching of Black Power, 1960-1965’, *The Journal of African American History* 92, 4 (2007), pp. 467-490; B. Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956-1974* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); A. Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2017).



at a conference in Lusaka, Zambia in 1967. Here, he declared Black Power posed ‘a threat to the existing power structures in many African countries... because certain leaders of Africa countries are really agents of the colonial powers’.<sup>101</sup> Consequently, for Africa to be free of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism Africans ‘must have power, which means that the Black Power we are talking about in the United States has to become an international concept’.<sup>102</sup>

Recently, Seth Markle’s *A Motorcycle on Hell Run* has charted Black Power’s reverberations in Africa through an analysis of its impact on the Tanzanian state.<sup>103</sup> Different than Markle, but operating from within the same Africa-based framework, this chapter focuses on another aspect of this impact by chronicling how Black Power impacted non-state actors such as the ALMs. Focusing on ALMs helps us understand the interlocation between African and African-descended revolutionary groups across the Atlantic. Being of African descent did not guarantee unity of thought and action among militant groups and some of the differences often took a classed and cultural bent whose subtleties this chapter will try to capture.

### **First All-African People’s Conference (AAPC) and Africa’s return to Armed Struggle, November 1958 – November 1967**

The independence of Ghana from British colonial rule and the coming to power of the outspoken Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah in 1957 brought much hope to Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. One year later, done arguably to cement his status as the

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<sup>101</sup> J. Forman, *The Political Thought of James Forman* (Michigan: Black Star Publishing, 1970), p. 127.

<sup>102</sup> Forman, *The Political Thought of James Forman*, p. 127.

<sup>103</sup> Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell Run*.

trailblazer for African decolonization, Nkrumah called for a conference of African peoples to take place in Accra. From December 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 1958, over 300 delegates representing 65 organisations from across the African continent, its diaspora, and the larger Third World gathered in Accra for the First All-African People’s Conference (AAPC). The mission of the conference called by Nkrumah and his Pan-Africanist interlocutor and mentor, the Trinidadian George Padmore, was to discuss how to win Africa’s freedom through non-violent positive action.<sup>104</sup> Similar to its predecessor, the 5<sup>th</sup> Pan-African Conference that took place in Manchester in 1945, this gathering attracted a number of current and future luminaries of the African liberation struggle. Some of the new faces were Patrice Lumumba (Congo), Frantz Fanon (Martinique/Algeria), Robert Mugabe (Rhodesia/Zimbabwe), and Holden Roberto (Angola). They represented a younger and less established generation of African freedom fighters whose ideas on what decolonization should mean were powerfully influenced by the proceedings of the conference. According to Jeffrey Ahlman, ‘While in Accra’ these figures, ‘not only explored the political and intellectual fluidity between the ideal types of violent and nonviolent resistance, but attempted to comprehend them in relation to their political and social praxis’.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to these younger activists, there were in attendance more established political agitators like Tom Mboya of Kenya (named chairman of the conference), Hastings Banda (Malawi), and Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia). There were also a number of Black-

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<sup>104</sup> G. Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain: Glimpses of Africa's Liberation Struggle* (Cleveland, The Pilgrim Press, 1988), p.70; Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-42, Folder 12, All African People’s Conference New Bulletin, ‘All African People’s Conference: A Call to Independence’, pp. 1-2. I am indebted to Dr. Michael West for providing me with the call for the 1<sup>st</sup> AAPC.

<sup>105</sup> J. Ahlman, ‘The Algerian Question in Nkrumah’s Ghana, 1958-1960: Debating “Violence” and “Non-Violence” in African Decolonization’, *Africa Today*, 57, 2 (2010), p. 72.

American organisations in attendance such as the Harlem-based United African Nationalist Movement (UANM).<sup>106</sup> Representing the wider Third World and backed by a USSR growing ever more curious about Africa, the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) representative was also in attendance. Present also were liberal pacifist activists, antagonists to movements like UANM, such as the white American George Houser. Hovering in the background of this conference was the struggle of the Vietnamese and Cuban peoples, the US Civil Rights Movement, and the ever-present Cold War. Despite the multitude of interests and viewpoints at the conference, the AAPC organisers were determined to promote a non-aligned stance in which the direction of African freedom would be defined by Africans.

Towards that end, two major viewpoints on the direction Africa's decolonization struggle would take emerged as the conference unfolded. The first was articulated by the host of the AAPC, Prime Minister Nkrumah, who at the opening of the conference declared his model of liberation, non-violent agitation or positive action, as the model most appropriate for adaptation by African peoples seeking to end colonial rule.<sup>107</sup> Nkrumah's vision was comparable with the tactics being utilised across the Atlantic in the Afro-American Civil Rights struggle by activists like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., A. Philip Randolph, and Ella Baker. Many at the AAPC embraced this idea of struggle but it was challenged on the second day of the conference by the young Caribbean-born revolutionary

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<sup>106</sup> The United African Nationalist Movement (UANM), who were very central in facilitating the visit of President Sekou Toure to Harlem, was a key Black Nationalist group in the 1950's active in Harlem helping to promote Pan-African consciousness. See Plummer, *In Search of Power*, pp. 33-77.

<sup>107</sup> Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, p.73; Ahlman 'The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana, 1958-1960', p.73-77.

representing the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN).<sup>108</sup> Emerging from the context of Algeria's violent war of national liberation Frantz Fanon – who was in the midst of writing his *Wretched of the Earth* – took Nkrumah's call for non-violent agitation to task. He countered by arguing that violence was at times a necessary reaction to the violent system of colonialism and hence was an indispensable tool for many fighting for the liberation of Africa.<sup>109</sup> While conditions in Ghana and other places might not lend itself to the need to pick up arms, this was not the reality for other African people suffering under European colonialism. Although his challenge occurred on the second day of the conference it was positively received by many delegates, much to the chagrin of Nkrumah.<sup>110</sup>

As Chairman of the conference Mboya tried to balance the two positions by arguing armed struggle should only be turned to if the former, non-violent agitation, did not work. Politically this was important because with international press in abundance at the conference, the AAPC was determined to show a unified front that on the whole endorsed the non-violent position so as not to alienate potential allies in the West. However, coming from a situation in which the Kenya Land and Freedom Army's (KLFA) turn to arms had galvanised decolonization efforts, Mboya made it clear that violence had a legitimacy in situations like Algeria but made it equally clear it could only be turned to after all peaceful options had been exhausted.<sup>111</sup> Consequently the second resolution of the AAPC stated

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<sup>108</sup> In some informal discussions with Horace Campbell, he claims it was both Mboya and Fanon who challenged Nkrumah's call for non-violence.

<sup>109</sup> Apparently, Ghana did not want to allow the FLN and UPC (Cameroonian group) to attend the 1st Conference on Independent African States (April 17th – 22nd, 1958). Not only because this was to be a meeting only of nation-states, but because particularly the FLN's usage of violence was seen as a challenge to Nkrumah's positive action. It was only on the 2nd day of the conference, under heavy pressure from the UAR that both groups were allowed to attend the conference. See Ahlman 'The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana, 1958-1960', pp. 70-72.

<sup>110</sup> Ahlman 'The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana, 1958-1960', p. 75.

<sup>111</sup> Ahlman 'The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana, 1958-1960', pp. 74-75.

they (Africans) would, ‘use non-violent means to achieve political freedom, but be prepared to resist violence where the colonial powers resort to force’.<sup>112</sup> Fanon’s intervention not only ensured this important caveat was added, but also paved the way for African freedom movements which embraced violence to receive aid from the AAPC.<sup>113</sup>

Whether Africans decided to endorse the use of armed struggle or not would be irrelevant to many of the colonial regimes desperate to cling on to power. As Fanon correctly asserted at the AAPC and later within the pages of his magnum opus, many European colonial regimes and/or their settler populations were so desperate to cling to power they would commit horrendous acts of aggression against Africans building movements for political independence. It could only be expected that the response of the oppressed and exploited African peoples would be a violent one. While not embraced as of yet by many of the growing liberation movements, examples of its successes were in evidence across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Many looked to the KLFA, popularly known as the Mau Mau rebellion, in the mid-1950s and the war underway in Algeria as the FLN fought to end French settler colonial rule. Cuba’s successful revolution was also an influential event as the 1950s came to a close and many African activists organizing decolonization struggles were powerfully influenced by the figures of Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara. At the same time, the valiant efforts of the Vietnamese people in their war against the French, particularly their victory at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, showed Africans as well as the rest of the Third World that European powers could be militarily challenged by the darker

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<sup>112</sup> K. Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom* (UK, Zed Books, 1973), p. 175.

<sup>113</sup> The second AAPC in Tunis in 1960 more embracing of violence and openly critical of US. Around this time Mboya and Nkrumah had a falling out, see Houser, *No One Can Stop The Rain*, p. 74.

peoples of the world. Yet within southern Africa – as protests, demonstrations, agitations, and isolated acts of armed resistance swept across the region – four events would lend further credence to Fanon’s challenge to Nkrumah at Accra and the later full endorsement of armed struggle by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

A little over one year after the closing of the First AAPC, African activists in Windhoek, the colonial capital of what was then called South West Africa (currently Namibia) gathered to oppose a plan by the apartheid regime to move African people out of the Old Location (today Pioneers Park and Hochland Park) to Katutura. The Old Location was needed, the authorities argued, for white families and as the policies of apartheid dictated whites and Africans could not live in close proximity to one another, the Africans had to be relocated. On the morning of December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1959, colonial authorities attempted to forcibly register Namibians of the Damara community (D5) for the removal. A local leader was beaten as he resisted and with most of the men away at work, the women of the community swiftly rose to his defence and attacked the police officers. Forced to retreat, later that day the police returned with reinforcements and arrested four of the women leaders of the attack. This brazen action prompted the rest to organize hundreds of women to march on the Colonial Administrators Office, to protest the arrest of their comrades and the forced move.<sup>114</sup>

As the Namibian women sought an audience with Daan Viljoen, the Colonial Administrator, the disrespect shown to them by the colonial authorities infuriated the local population and gave further impetus to other organisations such as the Ovamboland

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<sup>114</sup> P. Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia* (New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1990), pp. 47-49; M. Wallace, *History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 254-255.

People's Organisation (OPO), the Herero Chiefs' Council, and the South West Africa National Union (SWANU) to join the direct action protests organised and led by the African women of Windhoek. The protest eventually grew to around 4,000 people who day after day rallied at Freedom Square to hear their leaders denounce the forced relocation of residents. They also agreed at the rally to boycott the Beer Hall and bus system to attack the revenues of the colonial regime. On the night of December 10<sup>th</sup> after a day of rallies, speeches and denunciations of the forced relocation, police arrested an innocent man near the Beer Hall and after protesters demanded he be released, the police opened fire on hundreds of peaceful protesters killing eleven and wounding fifty-four.<sup>115</sup> In the aftermath of this attack a number of leaders like Sam Nujoma were forced to go into exile as dozens were rounded up by the apartheid regime for questioning and interrogation. This attack was the final push the Nujoma's organisation, the OPO, needed to reform itself into a truly national organisation. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1960, it officially reconstituted itself as the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).<sup>116</sup> In 1962 SWAPO's external branch decided the time was right to secretly train cadres for armed struggle against the colonial regime and sent a few to be trained in Egypt and other locations.

Three months after the Windhoek Uprising, to the south-east, South Africa's newly formed Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) held a national demonstration against the hated pass laws. The PAC was born from a split within the ANC-SA between Africanists and non-racialists with the former representing cadres unhappy with the multiracial politics of

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<sup>115</sup> Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, pp. 47-49; S. Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered: The Autobiography of Sam Nujoma - My Life in SWAPO and My Participation in the Liberation Struggle of Namibia* (London, Panaf Books, 2001), pp. 71-77.

<sup>116</sup> Important to note that even in OPO there were many from the other ethnic groups who were members so this change from OPO – SWAPO was not initially drastic, see A. Moleah, *Namibia: The Struggle for Liberation* (Wilmington, Disa Press, 1984), p. 100.

the ANC-SA they felt was manifesting itself with the Freedom Charter and within the wider organisation. The idea for this protest had already been discussed while they were still members of the ANC-SA but after the split the newly formed PAC immediately announced the national action against the pass laws. Their call was answered by thousands from across the country who came out to publically burn their passes and peacefully face arrest. As the day progressed, it seemed the non-violent protest would remain peaceful. However, around mid-day in the town of Sharpeville tensions escalated as police shot into the peacefully protesting crowd killing sixty-nine people and wounding one-hundred and eighty. This was followed by protests across the country which triggered even more violent responses from the state. In the ensuing weeks thousands were arrested, dozens were killed, and hundreds were injured as the state sought to crush all opposition to its rule. Within weeks of what became known as the Sharpeville Massacre, both the PAC and ANC-SA were banned forcing many of their leaders to go underground or flee into exile.<sup>117</sup>

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1960, a few months after Sharpeville, the northern Mozambican town of Mueda would be the site of another overt act of violent repression by colonialism against peaceful African protesters. Fed up at poor working conditions, racist treatment by white Portuguese settlers as well as a list of other grievances, hundreds of primarily Makonde peoples marched to Mueda the headquarters of the district ran by the Portuguese. Despite the colonial authorities swiftly rejecting their grievances and harshly commanding them to

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<sup>117</sup> G. Gerhart, T. Karis, M. Carter, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, Vol. 3: Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964* (Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1977), pp. 325-343; G. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978), pp. 212-256; B. Magubane, 'The Political Context', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2005), pp. 1-52; B. Magubane, P. Bonner, J. Sithole, P. Delius, J. Cherry, P. Gibbs, T. April, 'The turn to armed struggle', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, pp. 53-146; T. Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and Its Consequences* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2011).



disperse, the protesters refused to leave until their demands were met. In response, the Portuguese administrator ordered the security forces to fire into the crowd. Estimates of how many were killed range wildly from sixteen, reported by the Portuguese authorities, to six hundred, a figure given by the organizers of the protest. Regardless, the Mueda massacre galvanised the Mozambican people and their diaspora. Two years later on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1962, the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) was formed from a merger of other organisations and Eduardo Mondlane, a US-trained PhD in Anthropology, was elected President.<sup>118</sup>

As the end of June 1960 approached these acts of naked military aggression across southern Africa could not blunt the excitement many felt as the independence of the Congo approached. June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1960, was the date slated for the official handing over of power from the Belgians to Patrice Lumumba's Mouvement National Congolais (MNC) that had won the May 1960 elections. The young Congolese nationalist who had come to the First AAPC as a fledgling activist was soon to be officially named the Prime Minister of the newly independent Congo. From many accounts, Lumumba was determined to implement some of the ideas of Pan-African freedom he gained while at the Accra conference to the Congo. He also took seriously the call for Non-Alignment in the Cold War and was open to receiving aid and support from Cuba and the USSR.<sup>119</sup> However, freedom from colonial rule was intended by the Belgians to be one in which Brussels and global capitalist interests

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<sup>118</sup> E. Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique* (London, Zed Press, 1983), pp. 101-137; W. Burchett, *Southern Africa Stands Up: The Revolutions in Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, Namibia, and South Africa* (New York, Urizen Books, 1978), pp. 128-136; J. Das Neves, 'Uhuru na Kazi: Recapturing MANU Nationalism through the Archive', *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, 39 (2013), pp. 257-279.

<sup>119</sup> G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London, Zed Books, 2005), pp. 94-120; H. Campbell, 50 years after Lumumba: The burden of history, Pambazuka (January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011), available at <https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/50-years-after-lumumba-burden-history>, retrieved March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

would dictate how the development of the African state would proceed. Not only that, the memory of colonialism was to be recast as one of positive upliftment and harmony by the departing Belgian colonists. This whitewashed rewriting of history was challenged by Lumumba at the independence ceremony as he strode to the podium un-scheduled after the Belgian King's comments and launched a blistering attack on colonialism.<sup>120</sup> The shaken Belgian King fled the ceremony in anger and embarrassment, in the months that followed all efforts were made by the European powers in coordination with their local puppets in the mineral-rich Katanga province to destroy not only Lumumba, but the vision of African freedom he represented. Despite promises of support from the United Nations (UN) and Nkrumah's Ghana after the Belgian/global capitalist backed the Katanga province after it broke from Congo, they watched as Lumumba was blamed for the national unrest, placed under house-arrest, toppled from power, and finally assassinated on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1961.<sup>121</sup>

These four events are notable for a number of reasons. To begin with, the massacres of the Namibians, South Africans, Mozambicans, and the violent imperialist backed overthrow of the Lumumba government, as well as a host of other similar incidents, made it clear to many that Fanon's call for armed resistance would have to be embraced by some. Even the white American pacifist George Houser saw that after the Congo crisis, 'the struggle against colonialism and white domination in southern Africa would be more violent.'<sup>122</sup> Secondly, as the case of the Congo demonstrated, the imperialist powers would

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<sup>120</sup> P. Lumumba, Statement at the Closing Session of the Belgo-Congolese Round Table Conference, Marxists.org (February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1960), available at <https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/lumumba/1960/02/statement.htm>, retrieved March 12th, 2015

<sup>121</sup> F. Fanon, *Towards the African Revolution: Political Essays* (New York, Grove Press, 1994), pp. 191-197; E. Gerard and B. Kuklick, *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>122</sup> Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, pp. 148-149.

never support a liberation struggle – whether popular or not – unless it secured global capitalist interests in the country after independence. Freedom was to be political with economic freedom to be defined as the freedom to subordinate the political economy of the country to imperialism. Thirdly, the UN, while a useful body for the legitimization of different liberation movements and for communicating with the global community, was exposed to many Africans through the Congo crisis to be powerless. International peacekeepers could not be relied upon to militarily protect African independence, let alone help free Africans suffering under colonial rule. Lastly, although not clear to most at the time, it was perhaps the first overt example of Cold War politics entering the southern Africa in the form of the CIA. How would southern Africa respond?

The response would be in-line with decisions already made at the First AAPC in Accra at the end of 1958. The events outlined above increased the urgency behind the necessity for the return to armed struggle and movements from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Mozambique reached out to allies in in Ghana, Algeria, Egypt, the USSR, China, and even Zaire for military training. Exile in these countries allowed the liberation movements fighting for freedom a relatively safe space to organize themselves ideologically, communicate their struggle to the global community, receive funds, and train new cadres in the art of guerrilla warfare. Yet, as we shall soon see, taking up arms and reorganizing what were nominally non-violent organisations for armed struggle was a harder challenge than many originally anticipated.

The first of the southern African liberation movements to strike militarily against colonial rule was the MPLA on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1961. With roots in the Angolan Communist Party (PCA) founded in 1956, it was also the brainchild of Amilcar Cabral, the

revolutionary leader of the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), who was close with MPLA leaders like Agostinho Neto. One month after the assassination of Lumumba by Katangese forces backed by western imperialism, the MPLA simultaneously attacked the Sao Paulo security forces and police HQ in an attempt to release some of their comrades who had been arrested. The attack left seven Portuguese dead with the MPLA suffering forty losses. Although beaten back, the intent of this movement to use arms was clear as was their open acknowledgement that their vision of freedom owed a great debt to Marxist-Leninist praxis.<sup>123</sup> In the context of the Cold War this served as excellent propaganda by the Portuguese regime against the MPLA and helped them to receive aid from a US government that up to that point had been hesitant to openly back the colonial regimes.

One month later on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1961 African peasants in the predominately Bakongo north of Angola also struck for freedom. Unlike the MPLA whose support was drawn primarily from the urban areas and petty bourgeois mulatto/assimilados intellectuals, these Africans were primarily coffee plantation workers loosely organised by the rural-based União dos Povos de Angola (UPA).<sup>124</sup> The rebellion was bloody, reminiscent of rebellions of enslaved Africans in the Americas in previous centuries as many of those very same conditions were to be seen on the coffee plantations in Angola. The uprising lasted six months despite the Bakongo peasants lacking arms and formal guerrilla training, at its end over 1,000 white farmers and soldiers were killed and the

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<sup>123</sup> J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol. 1: The Anatomy of an Explosion, 1950-1962* (Cambridge, The M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 27-36, 130-146.

<sup>124</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol. 1*, pp. 64-69, 83-95, 175-180; R. Gibson, *African Liberation Movements: Contemporary Struggles Against White Minority Rule* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 208-211.

Portuguese authorities were forced to abandon a number of fortified forts in the area. The Portuguese responded to this rebellion by reportedly killing almost 20,000 Bakongo which forced around 150,000 into exile, most of whom fled to Congo (later to be named Zaire). After these heavy losses it became apparent guerrilla training would be needed and the Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola (ELNA), the UPA's armed wing, was taken over by Marcos Kasanga and Joao Batista, former soldiers in the Portuguese army.<sup>125</sup>

Given the massive reprisals against both the UPA and MPLA in Angola, they moved their HQ to Leopoldville, Congo. While Neto had been arrested after the initial upsurge of violence, upon his escape in 1962 with the help of an anti-Salazar underground, he re-joined the MPLA at HQ. Around this time the Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola (FAPLA), the armed wing of the MPLA, was formed in response to vicious Portuguese response to the African uprisings of February and March 1961. When Neto finally arrived in Leopoldville he was eventually, after some internal struggle, elected as President of the MPLA in December 1962. Neto also tried to unite the MPLA with the UPA but to no avail as the latter distrusted the formers embrace of Marxism-Leninism. Under the leadership of Holden Roberto, who had like Lumumba attended the First AAPC and would eventually cultivate close links with the CIA, the UPA reshaped itself in March 1962 into the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) and tried to project itself as the government-in-exile. By 1963 the FNLA was the most dominant group in Angola leading to bitter fighting between them and the MPLA. Mobutu in Congo/Zaire, backed the FNLA which eventually lead to the MPLA being kicked out of Leopoldville in 1963.

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<sup>125</sup> Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, p. 154.

They moved their headquarters to Brazzaville, Congo which was a boon in hindsight as it placed them strategically close to Cabinda and its rich oil reserves.<sup>126</sup>

In South Africa in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre and the vicious repression of all Black political organisations by the apartheid regime, armed struggle was tacitly embraced by both the ANC-SA and PAC. Beginning in November 1962 and continuing on and off throughout the 1960s, Poqo, the underground armed wing of the PAC, terrorised white rural communities with its brazen attacks on white farmers. Similar in form to the Bakongo uprisings in March 1961 in terms of its targeting of whites, Poqo was highly effective at spreading fear among the white community. Its goal was to trigger a Black uprising in the rural areas. While this never materialised, it was during this time the main South African force engaged in some sort of sustained armed resistance.<sup>127</sup> The PAC's headquarters was in Basutoland as they had at the time excellent relations with the ruling Basutoland Congress Party (BCP).

Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC-SA, was officially formed on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1961 although discussions and decisions to form the movement had taken place throughout 1960 in the wake of Sharpeville. MK was initially conceived as separate body from the still nominally non-violent ANC-SA where organisations both legal and banned could secretly coordinate and execute armed sabotage actions. Unlike Poqo,

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<sup>126</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol. 1*, pp. 30-45, 159-163, 175-180, 200-209, 227-267, 302-308; Burchett, *Southern Africa Stands Up*, p. 9; Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, pp. 161-165.

<sup>127</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Harlow, Longman, 1983), pp. 241-261; B. Maaba, 'The PAC's War against the state, 1960-1963', in *Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2005), pp. 257-298; S. Mathabatha, 'The PAC and POQO in Pretoria, 1958-1964', in *Road to Democracy in South Africa*, pp. 299-318; A. Lissoni, 'The Implosion of the Pan-Africanist Congress: Basutoland, c. 1962-1965', in H. Sapire and C. Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives* (Cape Town, UCT Press, 2013), pp. 32-57; G. Houston, T. ka Plaatjie and T. April, 'Military Training and camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961-1981', *Historia*, 60, 2 (2015), pp. 24-50.

MK did not want to attack whites, or the armed forces, but structures of the apartheid state like pass-offices and infrastructure like power-lines. Doing this would hopefully force the government to negotiate with them for free and fair elections. Nelson Mandela was named the first Chief of MK with Joe Slovo of the SACP serving as his deputy. Under their leadership a number of cadres were sent abroad for training (primarily USSR, Ethiopia, Morocco and Algeria) and local sabotage actions were carried out. Unfortunately, on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962 Mandela was captured and in 1963 a series of events led to MK High Command being eventually discovered at the farm of Liliesleaf in Rivonia.<sup>128</sup> During the Rivonia trial of 1963 – 1964 Mandela and others were handed life sentences and shortly afterward transported to Robben Island.

As the Rivonia trial picked up intensity, African states came together to form of the Organisation of African Unity in May 1963. An important body within the newly created continental organisation was the Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa (ALC). The ALC had its roots in Julius Nyerere of Tanzania's Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA), seen as the friendly rival of Nkrumah's AAPC. Dar es Salaam was eventually chosen as the HQ of the ALC over Lusaka as Zambia became independent only on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1964, among other reasons.<sup>129</sup> The formation of ALC was important because it would decide which

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<sup>128</sup> V. Shubin, *ANC: A View From Moscow* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2009, org. 1999); Magubane, Bonner, Sithole, Delius, Cherry, Gibbs, April, 'The turn to armed struggle', pp. 53-146; G. Benneywort, 'Armed and Trained: Nelson Mandela's 1962 Military Mission as Commander in Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Provenance for his Buried Makarov Pistol', *South African Historical Journal*, 63, 1 (2011), pp. 78-101; S. Ellis, 'The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1961,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 4 (2011), pp. 657-676; P. Landau, 'The ANC, MK, and "The Turn to Violence" (1960-1962)', *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3 (2012), pp. 538-563; T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town, Penguin Books, 2016), pp. 1-42.

<sup>129</sup> H. Ododa, 'The OAU and African Liberation', *The Black Scholar*, 5, 7 (1974), pp. 40-42; E. Dube, 'Relations Between Liberation Movements and the O.A.U', in N. Shamuyarira, ed., *Essays on the Liberation of Southern Africa* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House, 1975), pp. 25-68; H. Yousuf, 'The OAU and

movements would be officially recognised and how much aid was to be given to each. Despite its noble intentions, many have argued that its creation intensified the rivalries between liberation movements representing various colonised peoples as each strove to be the “sole authentic” liberation movement of a particular colony.

1964 would be an important year in the development of the armed struggle in southern Africa with three more events helping to intensify the armed struggle. The first took place in January 1964 with revolution on the island of Zanzibar. By April 1964 Zanzibar had united with the mainland of Tanganyika to form Tanzania, a unification with mixed reactions among scholars and activists alike. Some saw the unification as an example of Pan-Africanism in action that helped radicalize TANU. Others perceived it to be an initiative by Nyerere, with lesser or greater impact from the CIA, to control the radical forces on the island as it was feared they would become a mini-Cuba and spread socialism throughout southern Africa.<sup>130</sup> The same month as unification, the second important event took place when the Tanzanian government officially opened the Kongwa camp for the liberation movements under the administration of two Tanzanian Defence Force officers, Major Chongambele and Lt. Muganga. Kongwa played host to FRELIMO, SWAPO, ANC-SA, MPLA, Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) and unbeknownst to the

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the African Liberation Movement’, *Pakistan Horizon*, 38, 4 (1985), pp. 55-67; A. Tekle, ‘A Tale of Three Cities: The OAU and the Dialectics of Decolonization in Africa’, *Africa Today*, 35, 3/4 (1988), pp. 49-60; P. Bjerck, ‘Postcolonial Realism: Tanganyika’s Foreign Policy Under Nyerere, 1960-1963’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 44, 2 (2011), pp. 215-247; A. Mbughuni, ‘Tanzania and the Pan African Quest for Unity, Freedom, and Independence in East, Central, and Southern Africa: The Case of the Pan African Freedom Movement for East and the Central Africa/Pan African Freedom Movement for East Central and South Africa’, *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 7, 4 (2014), pp. 211-238.

<sup>130</sup> See A. Mazrui, ‘Socialism as a Mode of International Protest: The Case of Tanzania’, in R. Rotberg and A. Mazrui, eds., *Power and Protest in Black Africa* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 1144; H. Campbell, ‘Abdulrahman Mohammed Babu 1924-96: A Personal Memoir on Babu’, *African Journal of Political Science* 1, 2 (1996), pp. 240-246; Issa G. Shivji, ‘The Life & Times of Babu: The Age of Liberation & Revolution,’ *Review of African Political Economy* 30, 95, (2003), pp. 109-118; A. Wilson, *The Threat of Liberation: Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar* (London, Pluto Press, 2013).



Tanzanian authorities the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA). By 1965 over 1,000 guerrillas from the various movements were in training.<sup>131</sup>

In October 1964, shortly after the opening of Kongwa camps, FRELIMO officially declared armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism, the last of the Portuguese African liberation movements to do so.<sup>132</sup> Based in Tanzania, at first in Kongwa and then primarily in Nachingwea (southern Tanzania), FRELIMO soon became the most effective fighting force in southern Africa without much aid from the USSR.<sup>133</sup> FRELIMO and its style of organisation became a model many of the liberation movements tried to utilize in hopes of replicating its success.

The unity of FRELIMO as it pertains to its ability to fuse the various liberation organisations in Mozambique was one not found in the Zimbabwean movements. The National Democratic Party (NDP) was the immediate petty bourgeois led precursor of ZAPU and Joshua Nkomo was the guiding personality which was still, at least on the surface, agitating for the British and UN to take a more active role in implementing free and fair elections in the white colonialist dominated Rhodesia. There were various attempts made in mid-1962 at armed revolt secretly controlled by ZAPU but publically denounced. Yet, as time went on a number of members became increasingly dissatisfied with Nkomo's leadership. These elements eventually broke from ZAPU and formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in August of 1963. The Reverend Ndabaningi

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<sup>131</sup> By the end of the 1960's FRELIMO, MPLA, and ZAPU had closed down their camps to move closer to their respective frontlines, see C. Williams, 'Practicing pan-Africanism: An Anthropological Perspective on exile-host relations at Kongwa', *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 37, 3-4 (2014), pp. 223-238.

<sup>132</sup> Northwestern University Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies (hereafter MHLAS), 'Proclamation to the Mozambican People' in *Mozambique Revolution*, No. 11, October 1964, pp. 2-4.

<sup>133</sup> V. Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold' War: The USSR in Southern Africa* (London, Pluto Press, 2008), pp. 120-123.

Sithole was this splinter group's first President. Initially there were not many differences between the two organisations, ZANU was perhaps more verbally militant, yet the rivalry between the two groups was intense as clashes between supporters of the two groups broke out repeatedly in the Black areas of Salisbury (Harare) and Bulawayo throughout 1963 and 1964. Despite these clashes, it became clear that these forces were growing in power and the white government moved swiftly and arrested leaders of both organisations and placed them under house arrest. Among those arrested were Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe (another attendee of the First AAPC), and Ndabaningi Sithole to name a few. Despite these setbacks ZANU was the first of the two movements to openly launch the armed struggle in 1965 and were backed by the Chinese and later FRELIMO, while ZAPU had since 1958, according to Vladimir Shubin, been given material assistance by the Soviet Union.<sup>134</sup>

Following the tragic assassination of Malcolm X in February of 1965, the white government in Rhodesia made its infamous Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in November 1965.<sup>135</sup> This marked an important end to the first stage of the armed struggle as now the European colonialists indicated their determination to deny majority rule even if it meant going against the UN. Yet again it was clear that Africans would have to be the ones to lead the fight for their own freedom which required increased political mobilization

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<sup>134</sup> S. Mubako, 'The Quest for Unity in the Zimbabwe Liberation Movement', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 5, 1 (1975), pp. 5-17; Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, pp. 226-239; I. Taylor, 'The Ambiguous Commitment: The People's Republic of China and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle in South Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 18, 1 (2000), pp. 91-106; M. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 203-235; E. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-1987* (New Jersey, African World Press, 2005), pp. 71-160; T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964* (Woodbridge, University of Rochester Press, 2008), pp. 134-157.

<sup>135</sup> S. Onslow, 'A Question of Timing: South Africa and Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, 1964-65', *Cold War History*, 5, 2 (2005), pp. 129-159; C. Zvobgo, 'Church and State in Rhodesia: From the Unilateral Declaration of Independence to the Pearce Commission, 1965-72', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31, 2 (2005), pp. 381-402; C. Watts, 'Britain, the Old Commonwealth and the Problem of Rhodesian Independence, 1964-65', *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History*, 36, 1 (2008), pp. 75-99.

at home, immaculate diplomacy abroad, and dogged determination in the execution of the armed struggle. As this brief survey has shown, a number of movements suffered from both internal fractures and rivalries between various movements within the same colony. These rivalries would become more vicious as the USSR, China, Cuba and the United States entered the fray by financially, militarily and diplomatically backing one group against another.<sup>136</sup>

This is the context in which the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist Stokely Carmichael arrived in Tanzania in November 1967. Coming at the tail-end of a lengthy tour of the Third World, the young Black Power activist came to Dar es Salaam to forge links between the US Black Power struggle and the African Liberation Movements (ALMs). Secretly, Carmichael also wanted to join one of the armed wings of the ALMs in order to directly participate in the fight against white settler colonialism. However, upon his arrival, Carmichael was alarmed at how unprepared and even lackadaisical some of the liberation movements seemed to be as it pertained to the execution of their respective armed struggles. He made his opinions known publically at various speaking engagements but chose to criticize the ALMs collectively, rather than individually, so as not to isolate organisations or be seen to favour one group over another. Nevertheless, his blunt assessments offended some, chiefly, the ANC-SA.

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<sup>136</sup> It must be noted that the negative impact of the USSR, Cuba, and China on the Southern African Liberation Movements is not to be compared to the damaging interventions of the western imperialist powers. The former tried to support movements they felt stood the best chance of victory against colonialism while the latter were determined to promote groups who would protect their capitalist interests. However, the USSR and China were locked in a crippling Sino-Soviet split and this increased tensions between rival groups broadly falling under the category of Marxist-Leninists on one hand and Maoists on the other. Moreover, the USSR and China often supported the wrong movements in certain countries and this too caused immense confusion and needless bloodshed in the early years of the turn to armed struggle.

## Tanzania, Carmichael, and a Critique of the Liberation Movements

In early 1967, President Julius Nyerere officially presented his *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics) vision to his people. At the time this policy initiative electrified many as it seemed to offer a plausible path of socialist development for Africa.<sup>137</sup> More importantly for Black radicals like Stokely Carmichael, Dar es Salaam as we have discussed above, was the headquarters of the ALC and consequently many of the ALMs had key representatives stationed there. Moreover, they had guerrilla camps spread across the country in places like Kongwa, Nachingwea, and Morogoro to name a few.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, while Tanganyika's road to political independence had been mostly non-violent, the revolution in Zanzibar in January 1964 had been anything but peaceful. The unity of these two states and the presence of Zanzibari radicals such as Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu in the new unity government further increased the global leftist profile of the new Tanzanian state.<sup>139</sup> This as well as Tanzania breaking off diplomatic relations with Britain from December 1965 – June 1968 after the latter refused to condemn the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia further enhanced its radical credentials.

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<sup>137</sup> J. Nyerere, *Ujamaa – Essays on Socialism* (London, Oxford University Press, 1977); A. Mazrui, 'Socialism as a Mode of International Protest: The Case of Tanzania', in R. Rotberg and A. Mazrui, eds., *Power and Protest in Black Africa* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 1139-1152; L. Cliffe and J. Saul (eds), *Socialism in Tanzania Vol. 1: Politics* (Dar es Salaam, East Africa Publishing House, 1972); H. Campbell, 'Socialism in Tanzania: A Case Study,' *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 6, 8 (May 1975), pp. 41-51

<sup>138</sup> C. Williams, 'Living in Exile: Daily Life and International Relations at SWAPO's Kongwa Camp,' *Kronos*, 37 (2011), pp. 60-86 and 'Practicing pan-Africanism: An Anthropological Perspective on exile-host relations at Kongwa,' *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 37(3-4) (2014), pp. 223-238.

<sup>139</sup> See A. Mazrui, 'Socialism as a Mode of International Protest', p. 1144; H. Campbell, 'Abdulrahman Mohammed Babu 1924-96: A Personal Memoir on Babu,' *African Journal of Political Science* 1, 2 (1996), pp. 240-246; Issa G. Shivji, 'The Life & Times of Babu: The Age of Liberation & Revolution,' *Review of African Political Economy* 30, 95, (2003), pp. 109-118; A. Wilson, *The Threat of Liberation: Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar* (London, Pluto Press, 2013).

For many Pan-African militants on both sides of the Atlantic, these achievements made Tanzania, especially after the coup against Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in 1966, a location many had to visit. Malcolm X arrived in Tanzania in October 1964, six months after unification, and was able to meet with Babu and Nyerere on his quest to forge stronger Black internationalist networks.<sup>140</sup> The Chicago born Prexy Nesbitt, future Black Power advocate and ally of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), came to the University College of Dar es Salaam (UCD) in 1965 for a year on a study abroad program. During Nesbitt's time at UCD he was able to participate with other Africans in a protest at the British Embassy in response to the UDI of Rhodesia.<sup>141</sup> For a young Yoweri Museveni, future President of Uganda, dreaming of a radical education to help him liberate his country, the attraction of Dar es Salaam lay in its, 'atmosphere of freedom fighters, socialists, nationalizations, [and] anti-imperialism'.<sup>142</sup> For James Forman, SNCC's Director of International Affairs who passed through Dar es Salaam in July of 1967, 'Our first days in Dar es Salaam lifted our spirits high, and we wanted to remain in Africa for the rest of our lives... The freedom with which people talked of socialism, armed struggle,

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<sup>140</sup> M. Sherwood, *Malcolm X: Visits Abroad (April 1964 – February 1965)* (Hollywood, California: Tsehai Publishers, 2011), pp. 102-110; S. Markle, 'Brother Malcolm, Comrade Babu: Black Internationalism and the Politics of Friendship,' *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, 36, 10 (2013), pp. 540-567.

<sup>141</sup> W. Minter, G. Hovey, C. Cobb Jr., eds., *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000* (New Jersey: African World Press, 2008), pp. 91-93.

<sup>142</sup> Y. Museveni, 'My Three Years in Tanzania', *Cheche*, July 1970, Issue 2, 12; Ironically as a young man in the late 1960s Museveni was very radical and was renowned on the University College of Dar es Salaam's campus as Chairman of the University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF). See Y. Museveni, 'Letter to the Editor: Blessed be Africa!', *The Nationalist*, Tuesday, December 5th, 1967, p.4; Y. Museveni, 'Fanon's Theory of Violence: Its Verification in Liberated Mozambique', in N. M. Shamuyarira (ed), *Essays on the Liberation of Southern Africa* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1975), pp. 1-24; Y. Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda* (Macmillan Education, 1997), pp. 24-32; K. Hirji ed., *Cheche: Reminiscences of a Radical Magazine* (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2010). Malcolm X had also visited Dar es Salaam in 1964 and formed a strong friendship with A.M. Babu who introduced him to Nyerere, see G. Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (New York, Schocken Books, New York, 1968); M. Sherwood, *Malcolm X Visits Abroad* (Hollywood, Tsehai Publishers, 2011), 102-109; S. Markle, 'Brother Malcolm, Comrade Babu: Black Internationalism and the Politics of Friendship,' *Biography*, 36, 3 (Summer 2013), pp. 540-567.

the liberation of Africa, was a liberation in itself... coming as we did from the repressive atmosphere of the United States.’<sup>143</sup>

At UCD countless intellectuals, global activists, TANU officials (even Nyerere himself) as well as representatives of the ALMs often spoke and/or hosted events. At these popular events questions on how the armed struggle needed to be carried out, why it was important, and what the roles of allies would be were frequently discussed.<sup>144</sup> The plight of Afro-Americans, and their attempts to resist through non-violence and urban rebellions throughout the 1960s, was also closely followed. Many citizens of Tanzania, particularly those located in Dar es Salaam, paid close attention to these debates. While many of them supported the ALMs, some of their actions – or perceived inactions – made a few Tanzanians ask some uncomfortable questions of them. Moreover, as George Roberts has shown, intelligence agencies of imperialist powers such as the CIA and fascist European-based vigilante organisations were very active in Dar es Salaam seeking to cause as much disunity and confusion as possible.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> J. Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Washington, DC, Open Hand Publishing, 1985), p.484. James Forman and his colleague Howard Moore Jr. were passing through Dar on their way to Lusaka for the UN sponsored International Seminar on Apartheid, Racism, and Colonialism in Southern Africa set to take place from July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1967 – August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1967.

<sup>144</sup> ‘Seminar on African Freedom Struggle,’ *The Nationalist*, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.1; H. Campbell, ‘The Impact of Walter Rodney and Progressive Scholars on the Dar es Salaam School,’ *Social and Economic Studies* 40, 2 (1991), pp. 99-135; I. Shivji. *Intellectuals at the Hill: Essays and Talks, 1969-1993* (Dar es Salaam, DUP, 1993), pp. 32-44; J. Blommaert, ‘Intellectuals and Ideological Leadership in Ujamaa Tanzania,’ *African Languages and Cultures*, 10, 2, (1997), pp.129-144; R. Lewis. *Walter Rodney’s Intellectual and Political Thought* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), pp.124-131; K. Hirji, ‘Appendix C: Program of 1969 Youth Seminar’, in K. Hirji, ed., *Cheche: Reminiscences of a Radical Magazine*, pp.202-203; A. Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (USA, Duke University Press, 2011), pp.124-165; A. Ivaska, ‘Movement Youth in Global Sixties Hub: The Everyday Lives of Transnational Activists in Postcolonial Dar es Salaam’, in R. Jobs and D. Pomfret eds., *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century* (UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp.188-210

<sup>145</sup> Carmichael and Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*, p. 635; G. Roberts, ‘The assassination of Eduardo Mondlane: FRELIMO, Tanzania, and the politics of exile in Dar es Salaam,’ *Cold War History* 17, no. 1 (2017), pp. 1-19.

When Stokely Carmichael arrived in Dar es Salaam on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1967, this was the atmosphere he entered. In his autobiography he recalls, ‘The Dar es Salaam I saw was, at that point, a hotbed of international intrigues’.<sup>146</sup> He had written to various liberation movements a few weeks prior inquiring into the possibilities of him serving as an armed guerrilla in their organisations but had only received an affirmative response from David Sibeko of the PAC. Thus, when Carmichael arrived in Dar he stayed with Sibeko and his wife Elizabeth for a time to get his bearings.<sup>147</sup> Still, with little guidance on the ground, Carmichael threw himself into a number of speaking tours and interviews about a range of topics concerning African liberation, Black Power, African leaders, Vietnam, *Ujamaa*, armed struggle, and Che Guevara. On Black Power, Stokely Carmichael defined it as the,

coming together of black people around the world to fight, wherever they are, for their dignity, and the regaining of their Motherland, and to fight for the benefit of the masses of our people who are oppressed around the world... for the African-American, Black Power would mean the coming together of 50,000,000 Africans inside the United States; organizing ourselves into a powerful organisation ready to fight for our rights by any means necessary.<sup>148</sup>

While the race question for Afro-Americans was central, Black Power was to be distinguished in Carmichael’s view from the Civil Rights Movement as one which sought the destruction of capitalism for a radical reorganisation of society. The connection between the Afro-American and African struggles to him was their shared experience of racism and economic exploitation, with the former suffering from internal colonialism and

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<sup>146</sup> Carmichael and Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*, p. 632.

<sup>147</sup> Carmichael and Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*, pp. 632, 637-638; Sibeko was known later forged strong relationships with US Black Power Movements as representative of the PAC in the United States, see D. Sibeko, ‘The Black Scholar Interviews: D. Sibeko,’ *The Black Scholar*, 4, 10 (1973), pp. 36-44.

<sup>148</sup> ‘Viewpoint meets the leader of Black Power’, *The Standard*, Sunday News, Special Edition, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.4. Importantly, the definition of Black Power, similar to its un-identical twin Black Consciousness in South Africa, had a variety of meaning and usages depending on who embraced it and when they did so. Carmichael’s was a particular vision that itself evolved over time, see S. Carmichael, ‘From Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism’, in S. Carmichael, Mumia Abu-Jamal, eds., *Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism* (Chicago, Chicago Review Press, 2007), pp. 221-227.

the latter classic colonialism. For Black people racism was a fundamental experience and Carmichael was not shy in his criticisms of Marxists who often dismissed the race question as being incidental to the larger class question. Another point repeatedly stressed throughout his stay in Tanzania was the need for both Afro-Americans and Africans to embrace the necessity of armed struggle.<sup>149</sup> As it pertained to Tanzania, Carmichael believed that if they were, ‘going to take the lead in that struggle [liberating Africa] as she has shown signs of doing, it must be prepared to fight because it will have to fight’.<sup>150</sup>

His second potent message, more than likely the start of his troubles, was that Black freedom could not be achieved if it was controlled by whites. Stokely argued that too many movements, on both sides of the Atlantic, were ideologically and financially dependent on white support. Fresh off his experiences in SNCC, in which well-meaning whites had been expelled for hindering Black organizing attempts in the US South, Carmichael believed whites had a limited role in the African struggle. While some individuals may have fought for Black Africans, as a collective, white people could not and should not be relied on.<sup>151</sup> More importantly than the limitations of whites was his belief, shared by others like the Guyanese scholar-activist Walter Rodney, that Black Africans within the liberation movements needed to be the ones to independently define the shape and direction of their struggle. Often serving as conduits for the vast material aid flowing from countries such as the USSR and socialist/communist groups in Europe, Carmichael felt that white support

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<sup>149</sup> ‘‘Fight’ Call to students by Carmichael’, *The Standard*, Saturday, November 4th, 1967, p.3; ‘Viewpoint meets the leader of Black Power’, *The Standard*, p.4; ‘Focus: On Third World Revolution’, *The Nationalist* November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1967, pp. 2-3.

<sup>150</sup> ‘Focus: On Third World Revolution’, *The Nationalist*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>151</sup> ‘‘Fight’ Call to students by Carmichael,’’ *The Standard*, 3; ‘‘Expose the enemy call to youth,’’ *The Nationalist*, Monday, November 13th, 1967, 1; Carmichael and Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*, 565-571.



often entailed the ALMs adopt ideological positions, such as taking sides in the Sino-Soviet split, which were not always in line with the interests of the African peoples.<sup>152</sup>

Thirdly, Carmichael lambasted African heads of state and some liberation movement leaders for living lavish lifestyles, being indifferent to the fight for African freedom, or being unnecessarily intimidated/seduced by Western imperialism.<sup>153</sup> In an interview with *The Nationalist* when he was asked to further explain why African heads of state disgusted him he replied,

the African continent in general is ruled by clowns who are more concerned about big cars than the welfare of their people. I do not name them because I do not want the white man to divide Africa further. But I think it is crystal clear to all of us that many African leaders today are playing with the lives of their people and are traitors.<sup>154</sup>

Not done yet, Carmichael isolated the leadership of the liberation movements as the reason the armed struggle was being setback as, ‘Half of those leaders do not even know how to use a gun. The other half have never seen the inside of a jail inside their country and they are fighting revolutions.’<sup>155</sup> Carmichael used the example of Che Guevara’s recent death fighting on the frontlines, widely covered in the Tanzanian newspapers, to argue it was unacceptable for the leadership of the African guerrillas to not be in the field

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<sup>152</sup> “Viewpoint meets the leader of Black Power,” *The Standard*, p.4. On the Sino-Soviet split see R. Scalapino, ‘Sino-Soviet Competition in Africa’, *Foreign Affairs*, 42, 4 (1964), pp. 640-654; L. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2008); M. Li, ‘Ideological dilemma: Mao’s China and the Sino-Soviet split, 1962-63’, *Cold War History*, 11, 3 (2011), pp. 387-419; Z. Shen and Y. Xia, ‘A Political Duet: The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, the Eighth Congress of the CCP, and Sino-Soviet Relations’, *Modern China Studies*, 22, 1 (2015), pp. 127-167; J. Friedman, ‘Free at Last, Now What: The Soviet and Chinese Attempts to Offer a Road-map for the Post-Colonial World’, *Modern China Studies* 22, 1 (2015), pp. 259-292.

<sup>153</sup> ‘You will have to fight – Carmichael’, *The Standard*, Wednesday, November 1st, 1967, p.1; ‘Viewpoint meets the leader of Black Power’, *The Standard*, p.4. A similar critique was offered by some members of TANU’s ruling party in power although Carmichael’s name was not referenced see ‘Many Leaders in Africa ‘Duped’’, *The Standard*, Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.1.

<sup>154</sup> “Focus: On Third World Revolution”, *The Nationalist*, p.2.

<sup>155</sup> “Focus: On Third World Revolution”, *The Nationalist*, p.3.

with their guerrillas.<sup>156</sup> Instead of prioritizing traveling the world seeking aid they should be at home mobilizing their people.<sup>157</sup> Carmichael also wanted to see the ALMs promote more sustained methods of struggle in their respective homelands even if it meant them using bottles and bricks as weapons against the colonial authorities; Afro-Americans were doing it he reasoned, so why could not they? One did not need high tech weapons to fight back as seemed to be the pervading logic among some of the liberation movements.<sup>158</sup>

Lastly, Carmichael urged the liberation movements to stop inflating the number of casualties they claimed to have inflicted on the enemy as it was unnecessary to do so.<sup>159</sup> These exaggerations further divided the liberation movements of the same country by forcing them to one-up each other in terms of enemies killed. However oddly, given his fiery oratorical performances across Dar es Salaam, he followed this up with a plea to the ALMs to stop publically denouncing each other as that only served foreign/imperialist media who hungrily reported these differences. Similar to his message to Afro-American groups claiming Black Power across the Atlantic, Carmichael felt disagreements within and among the liberation movements should be done behind closed doors. Echoing the opinions of many in the ALC and allies of the ALMs, he argued that instead of publically critiquing one another, more united fronts were needed because they all were Africans fighting white colonialism in southern Africa.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> ‘Carmichael on Che’, *The Nationalist*, Tuesday, November 7th, 1967, p.1 and 8.

<sup>157</sup> ‘You will have to fight – Carmichael’, *The Standard*, p.1; ‘Viewpoint meets the leader of Black Power’, *The Standard*, p.4.

<sup>158</sup> ‘Guns’ Not Vital in Fight’, *The Standard*, Wednesday, November 8th, 1967, p.5.

<sup>159</sup> ‘You will have to fight – Carmichael’, *The Standard*, p.1; ‘Viewpoint meets the leader of Black Power’ *The Standard*, p.4.

<sup>160</sup> ‘Viewpoint meets the leader of Black Power’, *The Standard*, p.4.

## **The Impact of Carmichael's Comments on the Leadership and Rank-and-File of the ANC-SA**

The ANC-SA leadership reacted none too kindly to these comments, particularly the second and third points Carmichael made, and they took it upon themselves to denounce Carmichael publically. Their disparaging remarks were republished across the United States even though details of his tour across the Third World to that point, according to his biographer Peniel Joseph, had gone mostly unreported.<sup>161</sup> His direct statements were also not recounted in the mainstream media or Black press and so the prevailing viewpoint constructed by unfriendly media outlets was that he had made a fool of himself by needlessly critiquing the liberation movements.

*The Standard*, a Tanzanian newspaper, reported on the ANC-SA's response in a small piece entitled 'Attack "Naïve" – A.N.C' on November 5<sup>th</sup>. The South African liberation organisation described Carmichael's discussion of the ALMs as, 'a stream of coarse invectives about Africa and her revolution.'<sup>162</sup> The ANC-SA reportedly was upset with the "naïveté" shown by Carmichael and they continued by saying, 'He excelled himself in meaningless and arrogant demagoguery. This amateurism is not conducive to the proper co-ordination of the struggle of the Afro-American people with that of the people of Africa'.<sup>163</sup> *The New York Times* jumped in on the act by reporting, 'Carmichael, the American black power advocate, was accused today of preaching racial hatred by an African national group [the ANC-SA]'.<sup>164</sup> *The Washington Post* gleefully reported, 'A Negro African liberation movement yesterday accused visitor Stokely Carmichael of

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<sup>161</sup> P. Joseph, *Stokely: A Life*, p.224.

<sup>162</sup> 'Attack "Naïve" – A.N.C', *The Standard*, Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.1.

<sup>163</sup> 'Attack "Naïve" – A.N.C', *The Standard*, p.3.

<sup>164</sup> 'African Group Accuses Carmichael of Hatred', *The New York Times*, Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.24.

preaching racial hatred that contradicted the fight against racism'.<sup>165</sup> *The Amsterdam News* gave the most balanced although brief report in their issue reporting that Stokely departed Tanzania after having left 'several African guerilla leaders irked over his criticism of them and other Africans admiring them'.<sup>166</sup>

Were Carmichael's comments out of line? This chapter argues they were not as much of what was being said by Carmichael reflected the sentiments of a number of rank-and-file cadres in armed wings like MK across Tanzania.<sup>167</sup> This should not be surprising as the strand of Black Power he represented was born from within the Civil Rights struggle as younger militants argued more confrontational methods were needed to truly win the fight against racism and social inequality. The mainstream leadership of the Civil Rights movement entrenched within organisations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were content with winning legal equality and mostly rejected armed self-defence as well as anti-imperialist/capitalist positions. SNCC and later the Black Panther Party, to name just a few, rejected what they felt was a conservative approach towards the liberation process in the United States. Much of the critique Black Power embodied was directed at the SCLC and NAACP for not reorganizing itself and its strategies to reflect the desires of

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<sup>165</sup> 'Carmichael Decried by Africans', *The Washington Post*, Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.A28.

<sup>166</sup> 'International: Dar es Salaam', *The Amsterdam News*, Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.2.

<sup>167</sup> It should be noted that there were a number of internal leadership meetings within the ANC-S during this time seeking to address some problems within the movement. However, rank-and-file cadres in MK were not allowed in these meetings and consequently the meetings were not as critical of some of the failures in the movement as they perhaps could have been. See S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC in exile, 1960-1970', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Vol. 1 (1960-1970)* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2010), pp. 406-413.

the Black masses to fight for, by any means necessary, a radical transformation of the racist capitalist system.<sup>168</sup>

Unquestionably, the leadership of the US Civil Rights movement was different from those in the ANC-SA in exile, nevertheless, it would be the rank-and-file elements in MK who would deliver strikingly similar critiques to the ANC-SA for their (mis)handling of the armed struggle. Around the time of Carmichael's visit to Tanzania, and unbeknownst to him initially, the ANC-SA/MK had begun a secret mission to infiltrate armed guerrillas into South Africa through Rhodesia. While risky, the ANC-SA felt pressured into this decision due to a combination of internal and external pressures. To help them with this mission, the ANC-SA reached out to its ally ZAPU. Together, they planned a joint operation designed to infiltrate MK cadres into South Africa through Rhodesia with ZAPU's armed wing, the Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), serving as a guide. Two operations were launched in late 1967 and early 1968 called respectively the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns; both failed to achieve their goal and dozens of MK and ZIPRA guerrillas were killed or arrested in a number of skirmishes against Rhodesian forces. While these campaigns were outwardly touted as an important first step in waging armed struggle against the apartheid state, internally, the ANC-SA was reeling.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> S. Carmichael and C. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York, Vintage Books, 1992, orig. 1967); C. Jones, ed, *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998); K. Cleaver and G. Katsiaficas, eds, *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy* (New York: Routledge, 2001); K. Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organisations, 1968-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); P. Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>169</sup> There are conflicting accounts of the exact chronology of the events of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns, nevertheless, most of the authors cited here follow the rough chronology I have sketched out above. See M. Legassick, 'Racism and Guerrilla Struggle in Southern Africa', *Africa Today*, 15, 1 (1968), pp. 3-5; R. Ralinala, J. Sithole, G. Houston, and B. Magubane, 'The Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns' in *The Road to*

A little over a year after Carmichael departed Tanzania a number of veterans of the Wankie campaign were released from prison in Botswana and allowed to return to ANC-SA base in Lusaka, Zambia. Furious by how unofficially they were received and determined to debrief about the failed mission, a young political commissar named Chris Hani and a few others penned a memorandum to put their thoughts to paper. Upon its completion sometime in January 1969 they eventually circulated this document which critiqued the movement in exile for almost exactly the same things Carmichael had pointed out earlier.<sup>170</sup> The Hani Memorandum, as it later came to be called, pinpointed a number of serious issues within the ANC-SA Hani and others felt needed to be addressed.

Matching the withering opinion Carmichael had earlier expressed about the leadership of the liberation movements, the memorandum opened by declaring ‘the revolutionary members of M.K. have... lost all confidence in the ANC leadership abroad’.<sup>171</sup> Much of this was due to veterans of the recent Rhodesian campaigns not getting a proper welcome from leadership after their return from imprisonment and having no debrief take place. This perplexed the authors of the memorandum as they were anxious to learn from their previous mistakes in order plan better infiltration strategies in the future. To their disappointment, it seemed upon their return to ANC-SA HQ that they, and the armed struggle, had been forgotten. This neglect by the leadership was due in their opinion to many being comfortable working in offices or traveling abroad instead of struggling around the clock to find ways to infiltrate South Africa. This had transformed them, in the

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*Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1 [1960-1970]*, pp. 435-490; T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town, Penguin Books, 2016), pp. 133-165.

<sup>170</sup> H. Macmillan, ‘The “Hani Memorandum” – introduced and annotated’, *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 69 (2009), pp. 106-129; J. Smith and B. Tromp, *Hani: A Life Too Short* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009), pp. 83-125.

<sup>171</sup> Macmillan, “The ‘Hani Memorandum’”, 114.

words of the writers, into ‘professional politicians rather than professional revolutionaries’.<sup>172</sup>

To add insult to injury, many in leadership were corrupt and flamboyantly drove expensive cars, were receiving stipends, stayed in nice accommodations in the city, and received better healthcare than the rank-and-file. They saw this, as Carmichael had earlier, as ‘in every way building them up as a middle class in our revolutionary organisation and in M.K.’.<sup>173</sup> Hani and his comrades argued these attitudes lowered morale and caused many who had taken pains to escape the country to train for military combat to question how serious the leadership was in carrying out the armed struggle. Furthermore, and this indirectly spoke to the concerns of Carmichael about leaders not knowing how to use guns, the writers of the memorandum felt it was ‘strange that its leaders have not been obliged to take the M.K. oath’. If this was truly a revolutionary guerrilla army where leadership was no different from the MK rank-and-file, they needed to take this oath. Finally, echoing the call of Carmichael that all efforts needed to be made by the liberation movements to go home, the memorandum added, ‘We demand that a serious and genuine effort should be made towards the intensification of ways and means of going home’.<sup>174</sup>

Upon being read contents of the memorandum, many MK cadres in Kongwa camp openly supported it. To them, it accurately reflected their interpretation of the numerous internal obstacles hindering the success of the movement.<sup>175</sup> Yet, these opinions did not matter much to certain leaders, especially those called out by name in the memorandum.

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<sup>172</sup> Macmillan, ‘The “Hani Memorandum”’, 115.

<sup>173</sup> Macmillan, “The ‘Hani Memorandum’”, 119.

<sup>174</sup> Macmillan, “The ‘Hani Memorandum’”, 119.

<sup>175</sup> Macmillan, “The ‘Hani Memorandum’”, 119.

For attempting to push for reform – done internally unlike Carmichael’s public tongue lashing – the writers of the memorandum were arrested, suspended, and later expelled from the ANC-SA in March 1969. It is also rumoured they were sentenced to death and if it had not been for some quick action by Acting ANC-SA President Oliver Tambo and others, they would have been shot. Chris Hani later recalled that the leadership reacted angrily because they ‘were not used to being criticised... from underlings, from subordinates’ in such a manner.<sup>176</sup> Nevertheless, one month later in response to the memorandum the ANC-SA held a consultative conference that later became known as the Morogoro Conference. Unofficially, the memorandum was used to help think about ways to reform and reorganize the party given its recent failures in Wankie and Sipolilo.<sup>177</sup> Upon the conclusion of the conference, Chris Hani and his colleagues were pardoned, reinstated as members of the ANC-SA, and Hani was soon after promoted.

Although the memorandum did not contest the presence of whites or USSR influence, and Chris Hani to our knowledge did not embrace Black Power, Hani would in a later interview in the early 1990s admit the ANC-SA had been overly reliant on the USSR for tactics, strategy, and ideology which hindered their ability to find their own solutions to problems.<sup>178</sup> This was something Carmichael and later BCM activists had stressed as a trap the ANC-SA was falling into, both were ignored, but by the early 1990s even those

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<sup>176</sup> G. Houston and J. Ngculu, eds., *Voice of Liberation: Chris Hani* (Pretoria, HSRC Press, 2014), p. 20

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Comrade Chris Hani, 16; N. Ndebele and N. Niefertgodien, ‘The Morongo conference: A moment of self-reflection’, in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 1: 1960-1970* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2005), pp. 521-546; H. Macmillan, ‘Morogoro and Africa: The Continuing Crisis in the African National Congress (of South Africa) in Zambia’, in Spire and Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 76-95.

<sup>178</sup> C. Hani, ‘The Future of the Party in a Democratic South Africa’, in G. Houston and J. Ngculu, eds., *Chris Hani : Voices of Liberation* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2014), pp. 216-217.



strongly in alliance with the fallen USSR were seeing the error their overreliance had caused. Looking back, Hani recalled

we are aware of the dominant role played by the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] in the whole international communist movement... in some cases we saw internationalism as meaning the endorsement of positions of the CPSU. In its ideological dispute with China, we tended to follow the position of the CPSU. When it sent troops into both Hungary and Czechoslovakia, we endorsed those positions. And I think generally we are all agreed as South African communists that it was not the right thing to do.<sup>179</sup>

All the same, they did often uncritically follow the CPSU however Hani was quick to point out blame lay not with the USSR, but their own internal contradictions as an organisation. Did this overreliance contribute to the public critique of Carmichael? In some ways this reflection by Hani lends credence to the views of Richard Gibson, a Black journalist based in London-based who argued, ‘The ANC attack on Stokely Carmichael was... prompted by Russian fears that militant Black nationalism, Black Power doctrines, might sweep through Africa, shutting the door on white revisionist Communist “guidance” for the African liberation movements’.<sup>180</sup> Although he was a dedicated Maoist and was working for the CIA at some point, he had cultivated close contacts with ZANU and the PAC who provided him with information on the clash between Stokely Carmichael and the

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<sup>179</sup> C. Hani, ‘The Future of the Party in a Democratic South Africa’, p. 216.

<sup>180</sup> R. Gibson, ‘South African Toms Denounce Stokely’, *Liberator*, December 1967, p.10; R. Gibson, ‘Russians held responsible for ANC attack on Carmichael’, *The Richard Gibson Reports*, p. 1. Unfortunately, Gibson used this attack on Carmichael to tout the PAC as the ‘authentic’ liberation movement in South Africa and denounce the ANC-S, a strategy Carmichael had been clear to reject. Yet this is where the Cold War politics of the time entered the fray as the Maoist Gibson believed that the USSR-backed ANC-SA/ZAPU/FRELIMO/MPLA were puppets and hence were enemies of the African people. The ANC-SA was an organisation he particularly attacked in his numerous writings, while he equally upheld the PAC as the ‘real revolutionary vanguard’ of the South African masses. See *African Liberation Movements: Contemporary struggles against white minority rule* (London, Oxford University Press, 1972). This perspective was challenged, privately, in a letter to the Editor of *The Liberator* by white ANC-SA supporter Martin Legassick on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1968 see Gibson Papers, Series 1, MS2302 Box 2 Folder 5: Correspondence January – May 1968, *Martin Legassick letter to Editor of the Liberator*, 29th January, 1968, pp. 1-4.

ANC-SA.<sup>181</sup> Despite his political leanings Gibson came to this conclusion because Carmichael along with James Forman and H. Rap Brown had supported the ANC-SA and ZAPU Wankie campaign even though they were advised by organisations like the PAC, ZANU and other African leaders to condemn it as a senseless suicide mission.<sup>182</sup> Yet, Carmichael was still viciously attacked by the ANC-SA which Gibson correctly pointed out was uncharacteristic of it.

Undoubtedly we cannot out of hand dismiss the involvement of the USSR in this attack on Carmichael by the ANC-SA. That said, Gibson's explanation does not take into account the equally, if not more so, vicious response by ANC-SA leadership to the Hani Memorandum less than eighteen months later. Chris Hani was by that time a member of the SACP, close with Jack and Ray Simons (key senior white members of the SACP), and was seen as a rising star within the organisation.<sup>183</sup> Nonetheless these factors did not stop Hani and his comrades from being suspended, briefly expelled, and almost executed. More than just the pressure put on them by the USSR was at play in this drama.

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<sup>181</sup> The Cold War was a time where accusations of CIA links were liberally flung around within radical struggles and movements across the world. In my research I was unable to find conclusive evidence Gibson had CIA links but the following documents do cast serious suspicion on him, despite his vociferous denunciations of any involvement with the CIA. See Gibson Papers, Series 1, MS2302 Box 13 Folder 5: Correspondence with Robert Williams 1965 – 1966, *Gibson Letter to Bollethius* (name hard to make out), June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1966; *Gibson Letter to Comrade Leon*, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1966, *Letter to Gibson from Centro di Documentazione Frantz Fanon*, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1966; Series 2 MS2302 Box 16, Folder 1: Clippings [1 of 2] 1958 – 1996, 'Danger – American Agent at Work', SYNIC publication, February No.14, 1970; Series 1, MS2302 Box 12 Folder 8: Correspondence with Roy Hodges, 1978 – 1986, *Gibson Letter to Roy Hodges*, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1977.

<sup>182</sup> XII: Series 1 MS2302 Box 13 Folder 6: Correspondence re: Robert Williams 1967-1976, *Gibson Letter to Robert Williams*, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1967; II: Series 1 MS2302 Box 2 Folder 4: Correspondence September – December 1967, *Gibson Letter to Grace and Jim*, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1967; R. Gibson, 'Russians held responsible for ANC attack on Carmichael', *The Richard Gibson Reports*, p. 2. James Forman confirms SNCC's knowledge of the ANC-ZAPU alliance and their Wankie Campaign in a speech he gave back in Afro-American fresh off his trip to the continent where he hailed the mission as it departed through Rhodesia, see J. Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 499. Also see, R. Gibson, 'South African Toms Denounce Stokely', *Liberator*, p.10.

<sup>183</sup> T. Gibbs, 'Chris Hani's "Country Bumpkins": Regional Networks in the African National Congress Underground, 1974-1994', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 4, (2009), p.680.

Another explanation lies in the work of John Marcum. By the late 1960s the ANC-SA was in a deep crisis for a number of reasons. Suffering through this crisis put the movement under a lot of stress which lends weight to Marcum's argument that their severe reaction to Carmichael's 'unsolicited, critical counsel to the African liberation movements' was due primarily to the vulnerability they felt as it pertains to the status of their armed struggle.<sup>184</sup> It became easier to blame their failures or struggles on a third party rather than internally confront the real problems Carmichael, Chris Hani, and later Black Consciousness cadres and groups would highlight. However, hearing these criticisms from inside the organisation, particularly from lower ranking members pushed the ANC-SA/MK to the brink.

Similar to the Black Power critique of the Civil Rights movement – demanding a more militant struggle against US oppression to be organised by people such as Carmichael – Hani from January-March 1969 represented a similar tendency within MK and the ANC-SA agitating the older leadership to radically reform itself to better carry out the armed struggle. Read in this light, and speaking to Seth Markle's argument about the style of Carmichael causing more trouble than his substance, the older ANC-SA leadership was more connected to the mainstream Civil Rights organisations than to Black Power. Also, given the ANC-SA's limited presence in Afro-American communities during the 1960s, as most of their attention was focused on the United Nations, Carmichael's style of oratory and usage of words could have been seen as being rude and disrespectful. On top of this, Carmichael and Chris Hani were young men in their mid-20s. For the older male ANC-

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<sup>184</sup> J. Marcum, 'The Exile Condition and Revolutionary Effectiveness: Southern African Liberation Movements', in C. Potholm and R. Dale, eds., *Southern Africa in Perspective: Essays in Regional Politics* (New York, Free Press, 1972), p. 271.

SA leadership who were in their 40s and above, being spoken to so forcefully by younger men, not to mention women, grated on them. All in all, the negative reactions to Carmichael's comments speaks more about how painfully they hit home to some of the movements like the ANC-SA, instead of his comments being out of place or him being critical of Marxism as Peniel Joseph and Ekwueme Thelwell respectively have argued.

### **Black Power, the Assassination of Dr. King, and the Project of African Liberation: December 1967 – December 1973**

Despite significant negative press among imperialists and the ANC-SA, Carmichael's statements seemed to be well received among Tanzanians. A close look at the two major English-language Tanzanian newspapers of the time demonstrates how actively people were engaging with his comments and seemed agreeable to them. *The Standard's* editors had perhaps the most balanced take on Carmichael's visit when they wrote, 'In spite of his gratuitous and ill-founded insults... and in spite of all the flamboyance and histrionics, much of his accusation and advice has a hard core of practical commonsense'. They agreed with his call for more demonstrations to be organised within the colonies by the liberation movements, his critique of inflated causality claims, and acknowledged his realism as it pertained to the need for a united African political ideology. 'However, like all brash young revolutionaries he would change the world overnight, no matter the consequences or the harm that could be done to countless thousands'.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> 'Sunday News Opinion: Mr. Carmichael' *The Standard*, Sunday (Sunday News, Special Edition), November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.4.

The TANU-backed paper, *The Nationalist*, took a decidedly pro-Carmichael view. It argued, after he had departed Tanzania, that he had done two important things, namely ‘the articulation of Black Power, and... the link he forged between the African Americans struggle inside the United States and the struggle of the Third World’. They continued by denouncing those who claimed Carmichael only practiced hate speech and they embraced Black Power as, ‘a concept that cannot be confined to the United States, because it is also particularly relevant in colonies where white settlers and non-black merchants are lording it over blacks’. For them Black Power implied Black self-determination, redefinition, and pride in culture – comparable to *Ujamaa* – and they believed Tanzanians needed to, ‘take Black Power very seriously’.<sup>186</sup>

How did everyday Tanzanians in Dar es Salaam at the time respond to this message of Black Power? Nothing definitive can be said about this but we can examine the regularly-published letters to the Editor of *The Nationalist* to give us a general sense of some people’s thoughts. One writer named A.S. Mbonda from Dar agreed ‘with Mr. Carmichael, the Black Power leader on his views concerning “Freedom Fighters”... These people should not be allowed to make any noise here without taking any practical measures on the battle spot’.<sup>187</sup> A Wasilwa Barasa embraced Black Power as applicable to Africa because it was ‘a threat to collective neo-colonialism and gives white racists and their lackey’s many sleepless nights’.<sup>188</sup> In another piece, a writer named “Revolutionary” vociferously critiqued certain liberation movements who ran to the Western press complaining about Carmichael’s comments. ‘By blatantly seeking to denigrate brother

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<sup>186</sup> ‘Pressman’s Commentary: Carmichael and Black Power’, *The Nationalist*, Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1967, p.4.

<sup>187</sup> ‘Letter to the Editor: Carmichael is Right’, *The Nationalist*, Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.4.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Letter to the Editor: Black Power’, *The Nationalist*, Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1967.

Stokely, these so-called freedom fighters would seem to imply that in fact they are here waiting for someone to give them armoured cars and tanks to go out and fight their oppressors!!’ Furthermore, after making a distinction between revolutionaries and professional freedom fighters (a distinction Hani and others would use a little over a year later in their memorandum), “Revolutionary” wrote,

What is even appalling is the way these professional freedom fighters have misunderstood Stokely. When he talked about fighting with bottles he meant, as any other revolutionary would have meant, that at least some of these freedom fighters... should go home and organize their people for sabotage work which is an important aspect of guerrilla fighting instead of flirting around here with whites’.<sup>189</sup>

Tanzanians and MK cadres were not the only ones in Africa to react to the Black Power Movement. Kwame Nkrumah, who had briefly met Carmichael before he left for Tanzania (and was later to become his mentor when Stokely came to live in Guinea-Conakry), saw Black Power as intimately linked with the international struggle against capitalism. He wrote a pamphlet about it entitled *The Spectre of Black Power* which was cited heavily by groups such as the PAC in its publication *Azania News*. In this pamphlet Nkrumah commented that, ‘With a decisiveness and force which can no longer be concealed the spectre of Black Power has descended on the world like a thundercloud flashing its lightning’.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, it was,

part of the vanguard of world revolution against capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism which have enslaved, exploited and oppressed peoples everywhere... Black Power is part of the world rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor... It operates throughout the African continent, in North and South America, the Caribbean, wherever Africans and the people of African descent live. It is linked with the Pan-African struggle for unity on the African continent, and with all those who strive to establish a socialist society.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> ‘Letter to the Editor: Freedom Fighters’, *The Nationalist*, Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.4. Later on, as popular protests wracked South Africa in the 1980s, the ANC-S would embrace these bottle throwers through their People’s War strategy.

<sup>190</sup> K. Nkrumah, *The Spectre of Black Power*, *Azania News*, Vol. 3, No.1-2, January 1968, p. 1.

<sup>191</sup> K. Nkrumah, *The Spectre of Black Power* (UK, Panaf Books, 1968), p.10.

In the wake of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968, a number of other ALMs embraced the banner of Black Power, none more openly than ZANU. In their publication *Zimbabwe News*, they condemned the US white supremacist system for murdering Dr. King and saw his assassination as a call to arms. ZANU declared, ‘Black people, both here and in America, have been singing and praying for too much throughout many centuries of enslavement. There has to be an end to “loving” even those who would murder us at the first opportunity, and that can only come about via the use of power –black power’.<sup>192</sup> A violent response to a violent system was required and this separated them from groups such as the ANC-SA which were in ZANU’s estimation, ‘Southern Africa’s oldest Uncle Tom [who] once denounced Stokely Carmichael as an “irresponsible racist demagogue” for urging militancy in the struggle’.<sup>193</sup>

For SWAPO, while their Dar es Salaam and London offices did not mention King’s death, the Cairo branch did. In the *Namibian Commentator and News Graphic* SWAPO believed the assassination of Dr. King by white America revealed their determination to wipe out Black people and King joined Malcolm X and Medgar Evers as martyrs for, ‘the Afro-American struggle for dignity’. Hence,

The Blackman’s struggle in the U.S.A like that of his compatriot in another U.S.A (Union of South Africa) had reached a stage that there is simply no sense to confront the racist maniacs with the non-violence methods... This is why we fully support the call by Brother

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<sup>192</sup> ‘VIVA Black Power’, *Zimbabwe News*, Vol. 3, No. 7, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1968 – Reprinted in a later *East Africa Edition* May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1968, Vol.2, No.8, p.6. Note the echoes of Malcolm X in this phraseology.

<sup>193</sup> ‘What Kind of Revolution is This?’, *Zimbabwe News*, Vol. 3, No. 19, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1968, p.5. According to some letters written by Richard Gibson to Robert Williams both the PAC and ZANU had supported Carmichael’s comments in Tanzania in November 1967 see James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers, Box 19, folder 20, Wayne State University, R. Gibson, ‘Russians held responsible for ANC attack on Carmichael: Fear “Black Chauvinism” from America Spreading through Africa’, *Richard Gibson Reports: International News and Features*, November 1967, pp. 1-2; Gibson Papers, Series 1 MS2302 Box 13 Folder 6: Correspondence re: Robert Williams 1967-1976, ‘Gibson Letter to Robert Williams’, London 16 November, 1967 and ‘Gibson Letter to Robert Williams’, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1968; R. Gibson, ‘South African Toms Denounce Stokely’, *Liberator*, December 1967, p.10; ‘Gibson Letter to ZANU Secretary of External Affairs’ (Mr. S.V. Mtambanengue) in Zambia, 29 December, 1967.

Stokely Carmichael to his people to get guns in order to protect themselves and wage a struggle against the racist suppression and enslavement.<sup>194</sup>

The ANC-SA's ally ZAPU would restrict their comments to condemning the life-sentence given to Dr. King's assassin as a demonstration of the hypocrisy of US liberal-democracy.<sup>195</sup> In a later piece ZAPU would call out the US government for spending billions on space programs while American Negroes lived in poverty and were disproportionately drafted in higher numbers to fight in the unjust Vietnam War.<sup>196</sup> A few years later, ZAPU member Comrade Ziyapapa would in a statement made at the African-American Relations Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (December 3-7<sup>th</sup>, 1973) make it clear that until Black folks were given equal rights in the United States, all statements made by the Americans of their support for freedom and democracy were not to be trusted.<sup>197</sup> The ANC-SA, like ZAPU, was equally elusive on the question of Black Power and strangely, *Sechaba*, the ANC-SA's publication, did not acknowledge Dr. King's assassination.

It would take until 1970 for the ANC-SA to break their silence on Black Power and they would do so by publishing an interview they conducted with Minister of Defense of the BPP Huey P. Newton shortly after his release from prison.<sup>198</sup> In this interview Huey explained how the Panthers were formed and then proceeded to supersede Black Power as

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<sup>194</sup> M. Garoeb, 'Dr. M. Luther King: A Planned Cold-Blood Murder', *Namibian Commentator and News Graphic*, March/April 1968, p. 4-5.

<sup>195</sup> MHLAS, *Zimbabwe Review* May 24-30, 1969.

<sup>196</sup> MHLAS, 'America, Moon and Negroes' in *Zimbabwe Review* July 26<sup>th</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1969, pp. 3-4.

<sup>197</sup> MHLAS, 'Untitled', *Zimbabwe Review* December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1973, pp. 4-7.

<sup>198</sup> NAHECS Collection, 'Repression Breeds Resistance: Huey P. Newton talks to Sechaba', in *Sechaba*, Vol. 4, No. 11/12, November/December 1970, 14-18. In *Sechaba* Vol. 5, 1971, No. 7 Sechaba would also accept a letter from Angela Davis's lawyer in which it is affirmed that Davis in prison reads their publication and imploring them to send copies of Sechaba to George Jackson.



they ‘transformed [it] into a socialist ideology, a Marxist-Leninist ideology.’ When asked about future programs Huey talked about the need for armed struggle on a global scale to overthrow, ‘the ruling circle in the United States of America’ and as Black America was an internal colony, she had the right to claim nationhood. He closed by asking for more information on Southern Africa’s liberation struggle, offered to send people to fight for the struggle, as well as provide the ANC-SA with more information on the Afro-American struggle.<sup>199</sup>

The Panthers and the wider Black Power Movement had an irresistible effect on many African revolutionary groups and governments in the wake of King’s assassination. The Congolese Worker’s Party was one such group who shortly after their independence eagerly invited the International Section of the Black Panther Party to attend their International Conference of Solidarity with the People Under Portuguese Domination in mid-1971.<sup>200</sup> In a series of interviews with Eldridge Cleaver, First Secretary Ndalla of the Congolese Workers Party acknowledged the importance of the Afro-American struggle as one taking place ‘in the very citadel of imperialism’.<sup>201</sup> The Political Commissar of the National People’s Army, Ange Diawara, who Kathleen Cleaver would later describe as ‘the most impressive experience of the visit’, would express similar sentiments.<sup>202</sup> Comrade Diawara it seemed had ensured that before the Black Panther delegation arrived ‘some comrades made oral reports on the struggle of the Black Panthers in the United States... [while] some comrades gave some refresher talks, for in the context of teaching

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<sup>199</sup> NAHECS Collection, ‘Repression Breeds Resistance’, in *Sechaba*, pp. 14-18.

<sup>200</sup> E. Cleaver, ed., *Revolution in the Congo* (Algiers, Revolutionary Peoples' Communications Network, 1971); K. Cleaver, ‘Back to Africa’, in Charles Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]* (Baltimore, Black Classic Press, 1998), pp. 211-254.

<sup>201</sup> E. Ndalla, ‘Message to Afro-Americans’, in Cleaver, *Revolution in the Congo*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>202</sup> Cleaver, ‘Back to Africa’, 241.

the fighters about the revolutionary struggles taking place in the world, they already knew what the Black Panther Party was'.<sup>203</sup> The Panthers were so impressed by this revolutionary government that they briefly considered moving the International Section HQ to Brazzaville from Algiers, Algeria.

### **Conclusion: The African Reach of Black Power**

In closing, this piece submits a rethinking is needed of some of the interpretations of Carmichael's trip to Tanzania and the wider silence on Black Power's impact in Africa. As it pertains to the works of Peniel Joseph and to an extent E. Michael Thelwell, the former believing the guerrilla leaders did not seriously consider his message while the latter argued the trouble caused in Dar centred mostly on Stokely's questioning of Marxism-Leninism, a closer look at different sources necessitates a more nuanced reading of his trip and its impact. Especially as it pertains to Joseph's analysis, much of it is trapped by its uncritical reliance on United States Information Agency (USIA) documents and international media outlets who used the ANC-SA's critique as speaking *defacto* for the African guerrillas.

To begin with, Carmichael was enthusiastically received by not only college students, but key liberation movements and many citizens of Dar es Salaam who felt his message of Black Power resonated deeply within their own experiences as colonised and

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<sup>203</sup> Cleaver, 'Interview with Ange Diawara', in Cleaver, *Revolution in the Congo*, p. 43; The Algerians were running out of patience with the Panthers as the Houari Boumediene regime was desperate to close an oil and gas deal with an American company the Panthers continued to openly condemn. In some ways progressive African states failed to provide the support radical Afro-American groups needed to build their revolution, this offers another interesting area of inquiry future research can explore.

recently liberated Africans. Secondly, many of his critiques of the liberation movements, while they should have been more tactfully delivered, were nevertheless accurate and even more so, Carmichael was not the only figure to point out these issues.<sup>204</sup> Finally, Carmichael's presence in Dar es Salaam, the hub of the liberation movements of Africa, placed the agenda of Black Power within the context of African freedom and in his wake a number of liberation movements and personalities openly aligned themselves with the movement's message. Hence, his trip was far from being a failure. Furthermore, the global reach of Black Power had laid firm roots in Africa. More importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, it shows the Black Consciousness Movement was not unique among organisations in Africa fighting against white settler colonialism to embrace Black Power.

The deeper question this research poses for continued research on the ANC-SA in exile, beyond analysing the impact of the SACP, is what was the impact of radical Black Nationalist praxis's like Black Power and later Black Consciousness on the ANC-SA leadership? Particularly as it pertains to Black Consciousness, why was it so fiercely rejected by ANC-SA leadership in exile? How much or how little did these new recruits impact the ANC-SA and MK's ideological orientations and/or its organisational structures in exile?<sup>205</sup> The next chapters attempt to answer these queries.

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<sup>204</sup> Che Guevara had made some similar critiques in 1965 when he was passing through Dar es Salaam see, Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 76-87.

<sup>205</sup> M. Orkin, "Democracy Knows No Colour": Rationales for Guerilla Involvement among Black South Africans', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 3, (1992), pp. 642-669. Of particular interest are the accounts of Black Consciousness inspired youths who joined the ANC-SA abroad, see pp. 653-669.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Expansion of Black Consciousness from a Project of Psychological Liberation to Physical Liberation, December 1968 – August 1973**

The impact of the Black Power Movement was felt not only in Tanzania, or within the African Liberation Movements (ALMs), but also among young Black students trying to survive under apartheid rule in South Africa. While Black Power grabbed global headlines, with Carmichael's visit to Tanzania placing its politics directly within the growing regional guerrilla movement, young Black university students in South Africa began using its language to chart a new way forward. Among the resolutions passed at the South African Students' Organisation's (SASO) July 1970 conference, one stated that as 'the Students' Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee was one of the first organisation to adopt the "Black Power" Slogan and to articulate the philosophy after careful consideration... [SASO] resolves to instruct the Executive to seek information on the SNCC and their approach to Black Power'.<sup>206</sup> During their political education sessions later that year SASO cadres were very clear that the 'study of the Afro-American approach to their problems offered interesting comparisons between their situation in the [United] States and ours in this country.'<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Wits Historical Papers: Karis and Gerhart Papers III South African Political Materials (WHP), A2675/III/744, 'Resolutions adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> SASO General Student's Council: July 4<sup>th</sup>-July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1970', p. 7. It seems they were unaware that SNCC had dissolved itself at this time.

<sup>207</sup> 'Regional Formation Schools', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge Vol.5: Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 463. Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) himself would acknowledge the closeness of Black Consciousness to Black Power in his autobiography written with Thelwell. In it he writes that Black Consciousness was, 'almost identical – in its analysis, goals, perspectives, and rhetoric – with the Black Power movement in the States'. See S. Carmichael and E. M. Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael* (New York, Scribner, 2005), p. 638.

As the 1970's progressed and BCM spread across the country, a rich debate began as to how much or little the US Black Power movement influenced it.<sup>208</sup> Unequivocally, the former was inspired by the latter. Easier to access than some of the banned communist or African Liberation Movement (ALM) literature, Black students listened covertly to the speeches of Malcolm X and Dr. King, closely followed the actions of the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), procured books of Black Power figures legally and illegally, and in their political discussions used revolutionary thinkers such as Frantz Fanon to formulate their own rubric of revolution.<sup>209</sup> Additionally, Black American cultural expression through artists such as Ray Charles, James Brown, Nina Simone, and Soul music greatly influenced the style, language and attitude of South African Black youth during the 1970s. The adaptation of the Afro hair-style became immensely popular during this era as was the carving of Black fists on the chests of outspoken activists who proudly declared themselves to be "Black and Proud".<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> ANC Archives, ANC Lusaka Mission Part I (hereafter LSM) LSM/016/078/39, 'Speech delivered by the NEC representative at the ANC Youth and Students Seminar, held in GDR, August 1<sup>st</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 1971', pp. pp. 7-8.

<sup>209</sup> For some works which touch on the connections between US Black Power and Black Consciousness see G. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978), pp. 257-311; T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Harlow, Longman, 1983), pp. 323-325; L. Wilson, 'Bantu Steve Biko: A Life', in B. Pityana, M. Ramphele, M. Mpumlwana, L. Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1991), p. 15, 23, pp. 27-29; C. Halisi, 'Biko and Black Consciousness Philosophy: An Interpretation', in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, pp. 100-110; N. Alexander, 'Black Consciousness: A Reactionary Tendency?', in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, pp. 238-245; B. Mafuna, 'The impact of Steve Biko on my life', in C. van Wyk, ed., *We write what we like* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2007), pp. 77-85; N. Gibson, 'Upright and free,' 684-690; M. Marable and P. Joseph, 'Steve Biko and the International Context of Black Consciousness' in eds., Mngxitama, Alexander, Gibson, *Biko Lives!* (2008), vii-x; Magaziner, "'Black Man, You Are on Your Own!'", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 42(2) (2009): 221-240; S. Hill, *Biko's Ghost* (2015): xiii-86; S. Manong, *If We Must Die: An Autobiography of a former Commander of uMkhonto we Sizwe* (South Africa, Nkululeko Publishers, 2015), pp. 39-40; although not Black Power, the praxis of Paulo Freire was also highly influential as a means of communicating the message of BC to the masses.

<sup>210</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, J. Obatala, 'U.S. "Soul" Music in Africa' in *African Communist*, No. 41, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 1970, June 1<sup>st</sup>, pp. 57-67; Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 4-5; WHP A2675/I/3, 'Interview with Steve Biko by Gail Gerhart', October 24th, 1972 (full interview), p. 47; S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 39.

With BCM's relationship with Black Power serving as a backdrop, this chapter will chart the early formative years of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) from its beginnings in December 1968 to the flight of what would become the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF)/Bokwe Group core leadership in September 1973. For scholars of BCM, the early formative years is broadly understood to encompass the founding of SASO, the activism of Steve Biko, the impact of Black Power on BCM activists, the importance of the University Christian Movement (UCM), the formation of the Black People's Convention (BPC), and more recently a historiography of the Black Community Programmes (BCPs).<sup>211</sup> Fleeting attention has been paid to the importance of BCMs efforts to organise waged workers, build literacy programs, debate the merits of taking up arms, and the real fears the apartheid regime had about the growing movement. Even less attention has been given to the central role played by Black women in the growth and development of these various projects which has hindered a deeper understanding of the dynamism of BCM.

In order to address this hole in the literature, this chapter will be arranged chronologically as follows. The first section will broadly chart the struggles of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) and Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) to stay relevant to South Africa's struggle from their banning in the wake of the

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<sup>211</sup> G. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: An Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979); T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990, Vol. 5, Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 89-155; D. Magaziner, "'Black Man, You Are on Your Own!': Making Race Consciousness in South African Thought, 1968-1972", *Journal of African Historical Studies*, 42, 2 (2009), pp. 221-240; D. Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968-1977* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2010); J. Brown, 'SASO's Reluctant Embrace of Public Forms of Protest, 1968-1972', *South African Historical Journal*, 62, 4 (2010), pp. 716-734; J. Brown, 'An Experiment in Confrontation: The Pro-Frelimo Rallies of 1974', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38, 1 (2012), pp. 55-71; L. Hadfield, *Liberation and Development: Black Consciousness Community Programs in South Africa* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2016).

Sharpeville Uprising to the official closing of MK's camps in Tanzania in 1971. The following section will delve briefly into a biography of Bokwe Mafuna, one of the unheralded founding activists of BCM, and discuss the early formation of the core leadership of the movement. This will be followed by an engagement with the Black Consciousness (BC) project of psychological liberation through the renaming of themselves as Black, how the message of BC was spread at universities, and how its ideas were taught to new members. The next section will discuss the central role Black women played in the expansion of BCM from a university movement to the urban and rural areas of South Africa. The next two sections will trace the formation of the BPC and the watershed Tiro Affair which opened the space for a more open discussion of armed struggle. This will be followed with a brief engagement on the relationships between the BCM activists who would go on to become to core leaders of APLF in Botswana. The conclusion will recap this rereading of BCM's formative years (1968-1973), which extends the mainstream understanding of these years from 1972 to 1973, and then discuss why this new movement was seen as a threat to the apartheid regime.

### **A Flailing Armed Struggle: MK and APLA Searching for Answers, 1960-1971**

In the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre which took place on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1960, where the apartheid government killed sixty-nine and injured well over one-hundred peaceful PAC-led protesters across South Africa, the ANC-SA and PAC were banned as organisations. In response, the ANC-SA and its ally the South African Communist Party (SACP) formed Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) whose initial purpose was to sabotage vital infrastructures across the country in hopes of putting pressure on the regime to negotiate

with them for free and fair elections.<sup>212</sup> According to ANC-SA/SACP historian and activist Frances Meli, this turn to armed struggle was seen as necessary among key leaders as they believed if they were not seen by the masses to be leading efforts to respond to the state's violent attacks, they would lose credibility as an organisation.<sup>213</sup> Unfortunately by 1964 after a few isolated actions Nelson Mandela and eventually most of MK's High Command were in prison leaving the remaining leadership in exile and the internal sabotage missions in tatters.

After the arrest of the PAC's founding President Robert Sobukwe in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre, Potlako Leballo rose to leadership in the early 1960s. Arianna Lissoni and Kwandiwe Kondlo's excellent research on the early phase of the PAC's history in exile has shown that while based out of Lesotho (at the time called Basutoland) in 1963, Leballo ordered secret networks of underground PAC activists who later became known as Poqo (meaning "pure" or "alone" in Xhosa), to attack white farmers and policemen in order to end apartheid once and for all. His statement, foolishly made to the press, tipped the apartheid regime off to the plans of the PAC and hundreds of its members were arrested under suspicion of being Poqo. In spite of this monumental blunder, some Poqo guerrillas

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<sup>212</sup> V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2009 2nd edition, org. 1999), pp. 9-18; B. Magubane, P. Bonner, J. Sithole, P. Delius, J. Cherry, P. Gibbs, and T. April, 'The turn to armed struggle' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1 [1960-1970]*, pp. 49-133; S. Ellis, 'The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1961,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 4 (2011), pp. 657-676; G. Benneywort, 'Armed and Trained: Nelson Mandela's 1962 Military Mission as Commander in Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Provenance for his Buried Makarov Pistol', *South African Historical Journal*, 63, 1 (2011), pp. 78-101.

<sup>213</sup> F. Meli, *A History of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 147. For some examples of rural organisations outside of the ANC-SA and PAC that embraced armed defence of their communities from the apartheid regime, and by so doing threatened the legitimacy of the ANC-SA, see S. Matoti and L. Ntsebeza, 'Rural Resistance in Mpondoland and Thembuland, 1960-1963' *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1 [1960-1970]*, pp. 163-191.



were able to evade capture and over the next few years a number of isolated attacks against white settlers were carried out.<sup>214</sup>

Forced to flee to Tanzania and Zambia, ANC-SA and PAC leaders and rank-and-file members who were able to evade arrest attempted to reorganize themselves after these crippling setbacks.<sup>215</sup> Due to a combination of internal (MK restlessness) and external (Organisation of African Unity) pressures, the ANC-SA reached out to its ally the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) for assistance in infiltrating South Africa. Together, they planned a joint operation designed to infiltrate MK cadres into South Africa through Rhodesia with ZAPU's armed wing, the Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), serving as a guide. Two operations were launched in late 1967 and early 1968 called respectively the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns; both failed to achieve their goal and dozens of MK and ZIPRA guerrillas were killed or arrested. While these campaigns were outwardly touted as an important first step in waging armed struggle against the apartheid state, internally, the ANC-SA was reeling.<sup>216</sup>

Upon the return of some veterans of the campaigns to ANC-SA headquarters in Zambia after almost two years in Botswana prisons, a small group led by Commissar Chris Hani wrote and circulated a memorandum identifying top ANC-SA/MK leaders and the

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<sup>214</sup> Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution*, pp. 229-248; A. Lissoni, 'The Implosion of the Pan-Africanist Congress: Basutoland, c. 1962-1965', in H. Sapire and C. Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 32-57.

<sup>215</sup> S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC in exile, 1960-1970' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1 [1960-1970]*, pp. 375-433.

<sup>216</sup> There are conflicting accounts of the exact chronology of the events of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns, nevertheless, most of the authors cited here follow the rough chronology I have sketched out above. See M. Legassick, 'Racism and Guerrilla Struggle in Southern Africa', *Africa Today*, 15, 1 (1968), pp. 3-5; R. Ralinala, J. Sithole, G. Houston, and B. Magubane, 'The Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1 [1960-1970]*, pp. 435-490; T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town, Penguin Books, 2016); pp. 133-165.

lack of internal democracy as the primary reasons for the current failures of the armed struggle.<sup>217</sup> In response, this group was arrested, stripped of membership, and almost executed for insubordination. Acting President Oliver Tambo and others eventually intervened to release Hani's group and postpone the decision on their expulsion. In response to one of the critiques in the memorandum, Oliver Tambo called for an ANC-SA consultative congress at Morogoro, Tanzania in early 1969 where a number of reforms were made. After this conference, the group who wrote the memorandum was pardoned and Hani was promoted.<sup>218</sup>

This pardon and promotion was met with anger from a few MK guerrillas and there were whispers that some were plotting a mutiny against Tambo. Working with the Zambian army these disillusioned comrades were contained.<sup>219</sup> To make matters worse, after the conclusion of the Morogoro conference the President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere ordered all of MK's camps closed. This was prompted by suspicions that the ANC-SA was either complicit in or in support of a coup attempt against Nyerere by his former Minister of Foreign Affairs Oscar Kambona. These suspicions combined with how close the ANC-SA

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<sup>217</sup> H. Macmillan (compiler), "'The 'Hani Memorandum'" – introduced and annotated', *Transformation*, 69 (2000), pp. 106-129.

<sup>218</sup> N. Ndebele and N. Nieftagodien, 'The Morogoro conference: A moment of self-reflection' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1 [1960-1970]*, pp. 521-544; H. Macmillan, 'Morogoro and Africa: The Continuing Crisis in the African National Congress (of South Africa) in Zambia', in H. Sapire and C. Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 76-95; T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe*, pp. 133-166.

<sup>219</sup> ANC Archives, OTP/004/0035/01, 'Notes on Concerns of Comrades after Morogoro', n.d., no author, page numbers unclear; G. Houston, 'Oliver Tambo and the challenges of the ANC's military camps', *The Thinker*, 58 (2013), pp. 20-23; H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2013), pp. 79-84.

was to the USSR prompted the Tanzanian government to expel MK from Tanzania until the middle of 1971.<sup>220</sup>

Around the time of the Sipolilo campaign in 1968 the PAC entered into an alliance of its own, however, they chose to work with the Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique (COREMO) who was a rival to the larger Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO). The hope was that by working together the PAC's reformed armed wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), could find a way to infiltrate some of their cadres into South Africa through southern Mozambique. This campaign, named Operation Villa Piri, also failed but was important according to APLA guerrillas because it gained them the respect of liberation movements across southern Africa.<sup>221</sup> Unfortunately, in the wake of this unsuccessful infiltration internal splits and arguments between Templeton Ntantla, the head of APLA, and Potlako Leballo began to tear at the seams of an already struggling organisation.<sup>222</sup>

For both organisations these challenges, combined with the limited support from the fledgling Botswana government and the continued strength of the white settler regimes across southern Africa, effectively closed them off from South Africa. Consequently, they

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<sup>220</sup> 'Tanzanian Treason Trial Entering Third Week', *New York Times*, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1970, p. 12 (accessed online through Binghamton University libraries); LUM/081/0004/60, 'Letter from O.R. Tambo to Duma', June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1970, pp. 1-7; S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 53-60; P. Landau, 'The ANC, MK, and "The Turn to Violence" (1960-1962)', *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3 (2012), pp. 559-560; H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years*, pp. 101-106; V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow*, pp. 78-80; R. Aminzade, *Race, Nation, and Citizenship in Post-Colonial Africa: The Case of Tanzania* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 168-169.

<sup>221</sup> Houston, Plaatjie and April, 'Military Training and camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961-1981', p. 40; G. Houston, ed., T. Plaatjie interview, 'Mokoena, Zebulon', *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 450-468.

<sup>222</sup> ANC Archives LSM/016/069/03, T. Ntantla, 'The Crisis in the PAC', April 4th, 1978, pp. 1-29; Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution*, pp. 120-155.

felt forced to halt recruiting efforts for their armed wings and their internal networks suffered as attention now turned to surviving in exile. It was within this context, what Tom Karis and Gail Gerhart have described as a hole in South African Black politics, that BCM under the stewardship of SASO began to rise in influence among the Black masses of South Africa.<sup>223</sup> Among these new activists Bokwe Mafuna would emerge as a guiding personality among those convinced that armed struggle was the only way they could free themselves from apartheid oppression.

### **Bokwe Mafuna, the “Small Broederbond”, and the Founding of BCM**

Bokwe Mafuna was born in Mafeking on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1937 to working class Xhosa parents. By the mid-1950s, unable to finish Form II, he moved to Johannesburg to find work to help support himself and his struggling family. In these early years Mafuna supported the ANC-SA but later joined the PAC as he embraced their explicit Pan Africanism which rejected the non-racialism practiced by the ANC-SA. In a later interview Mafuna recalled that part of the allure of the PAC to him at the time was he ‘was young and was thinking emotionally like any young man. I hated the system, I hated what was happening to me, I was full of anger and revolt, but I did not know how to express it.’<sup>224</sup> This anger intensified after the banning of the ANC-SA and PAC. After both organisations were banned he briefly worked for the Engineering Worker’s Union (EWU) but after a fallout left to take a job as a freelance writer for the *Rand Daily Mail* (RDM) newspaper in 1968.<sup>225</sup> As a freelance writer Mafuna made it his mission to track down stories about

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<sup>223</sup> T. Karis and G. Gerhart, ‘Preface,’ in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: Volume 5*, pp. xxi-xxiv.

<sup>224</sup> *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner Interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, p. 3.

<sup>225</sup> *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, p. 12.

Black life in South Africa, particularly African life in the townships, and use his pen as a tool to expose the suffering apartheid was inflicting on his people.

While Mafuna was finding his way with the *RDM*, university students like Steve Biko and his colleague Barney Pityana were growing increasingly frustrated at the multiracial National Union of South African Students' (NUSAS). In particular the white members' lack of militancy and desire to dominate discussions of freedom despite their position of privilege under apartheid. While individually they had good relationships with some of the more leftist-leaning leadership of NUSAS, the larger white student body was mostly moderate or conservative. Black students constantly found themselves having to either mediate their criticisms of the system of apartheid through this predominately white leadership or quickly found that these students, for all their preaching of non-racialism and equality, were not willing to challenge their own racism let alone effectively attack the apartheid regime.<sup>226</sup>

Rejecting this, a number of Black students like Steve Biko who were members of NUSAS broke from the organisation in order to create an autonomous Black organisation where they could discuss among themselves what the problems of apartheid were and plan how to dismantle this oppressive system.<sup>227</sup> From this SASO was founded in December 1968 at Marianhill with its unofficial headquarters located at the University of Natal Non-European Section (later Black section, UNB) in Durban where Biko was studying medicine.<sup>228</sup> The year 1968 was significant as it was one of student protest and radical

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<sup>226</sup> 'Communique' by SASO, July 1969 in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, Volume 5: Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 459-462.

<sup>227</sup> 'Communique' by SASO, July 1969 in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, Volume 5*, pp. 459-462.

<sup>228</sup> WHP A2675/III/743, 'Constitution, South African Students' Organisation', December 1968, pp. 1-6.

action world-wide. Some scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein have termed this moment as a second wave of global anti-systemic movements, the first being 1848, seeking to challenge the capitalist world-economy.<sup>229</sup> South Africans were not immune from this global current as many like Biko, Mafuna, Barney Pityana and another rising SASO activist, Randwezi Nengwekhulu, paid close attention to its dynamics. By melding this global wave with their local experiences under apartheid, a new political space began to form where the voice of the oppressed majority began to rise with confidence and purpose.<sup>230</sup>

After SASO's December 1968 opening conference, Biko was clear that his organisation believed in 'the principle that blacks should work themselves into a powerful group so as to go forth and stake their rightful claim in the open society rather than to exercise that power in some obscure part of the Kalahari. Hence it belies the belief that our withdrawal is an end in itself'.<sup>231</sup> While tentative at first in their break with NUSAS, eliciting some criticism from some militant students, SASO eventually found its footing to make a public break with NUSAS during the term of its 2<sup>nd</sup> President Barney Pityana.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner Interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, p.3; I. Wallerstein, 'Antisystemic Movements: History and Dilemmas', in I. Wallerstein, S. Amin, G. Arrighi, A. Gunder Frank, eds., *Transforming the Revolution: Social Movements and the World-System* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1990), pp. 13-53.

<sup>230</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Sibeko, 'Students in Revolt (II): South African Students are Alive and Well and not Unaffected by World Events', in the *African Communist*, No. 38, Third Quarter 1969, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1969, pp. 31-43.

<sup>231</sup> Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, 'Letter to S.R.C Presidents (English and Afrikaans Medium Universities), National Student Organisations, Other Organisations, Overseas Organisations by Steve Biko', February 1970, p. 6.

<sup>232</sup> 'Communique' by SASO, July 1969 in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, Volume 5*, pp. 459-462; WHP A2675/III/743, 'Report on the 1<sup>st</sup> National Formation School', December 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 1969, University of Natal Black Section (note page numbers vary based upon what section of the report is done); Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, 'Letter to S.R.C Presidents (English and Afrikaans Medium Universities), National Student Organisations, Other Organisations, Overseas Organisations by Steve Biko', February 1970, pp. 1-6; WHP A2675/III/744, 'Letter to the President of NUSAS from Secretary of SASO', November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1970, p. 1 and 'Letter to the President of UCM from Secretary of SASO', November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1970, p. 1.

By 1971 SASO had openly condemned all multi-racial organisations as working against the interests of Black liberation.<sup>233</sup>

The formation of SASO caught the attention of Bokwe Mafuna who began to take more of an interest in the budding moves of these university students. He was eventually able to meet with UCM activists Stanley Ntwasa and Justice Moloto who, as scholar Daniel Magaziner has correctly shown, were critical to the early development of SASO.<sup>234</sup> Through them Mafuna met Steve Biko in 1969; the two men had many similarities such as coming from a PAC background and being avid readers of Black radicals like Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and Frantz Fanon.<sup>235</sup> Saths Cooper and Wally Serote, two early converts to Black Consciousness, remember Mafuna having an excellent Jazz record collection which made his small house in Alexandra township a party/meeting-spot for Black Consciousness activists. Eventually, Mafuna began to attend UCM and SASO events and regularly covered them for the *Rand Daily Mail*.<sup>236</sup>

The addition of Mafuna and Nengwekhulu to the growing movement introduced a level of working class activism into SASO. Mafuna and Nengwekhulu, having had a history in labour organising and university activism prior to the formation of SASO, were with Biko and Pityana some of the founding activists of key BCM organisations like the

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<sup>233</sup> WHP A2675/III/746, B. Pityana, 'South African Students' Organisation Amended Constitution', July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1971, pp. 1-8.

<sup>234</sup> Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets*, pp. 26-54.

<sup>235</sup> WHP A2675/I/17, 'Gail Gerhart interview with Bokwe Mafuna', Harare, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1990, pp. 9-10; J. Mafuna, 'Race talks futile, say Blacks', *Rand Daily Mail*, 11/5/71; B. Mafuna, 'The impact of Steve Biko on my life', in Chris van Wyk, ed., *We write what we like: Celebrating Steve Biko* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2007), pp. 77-89; Saths Cooper Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Johannesburg, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017, p. 3; G. Houston, ed., G. Houston, 'Serote, Wally', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued), Vol. 4* (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 664-671.

<sup>236</sup> WHP A2675/I/17, 'Gail Gerhart interview with Bokwe Mafuna', pp. 9-10; Saths Cooper Interview, pp. 2-3; J. Mafuna, 'Race talks futile, say Blacks', *Rand Daily Mail*, 11/5/71.

Black People's Convention (BPC, the leading Black political organisation for adults), SASO, National Youth Organisation (NAYO), the BCPs, BWP (the labour union/workers wing of BCM) and the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ). Nengwekhulu cheekily called this group the "Small Broederbond" who quietly, and in similarly patriarchal fashion to their unwitting namesakes, guided the movement during these formative years.<sup>237</sup>

### **Psychological Liberation: Becoming Black, Spreading the Gospel of BC, and Formation Schools (FS)**

This "Small Broederbond" was central in the early years of BCM in promoting, as a part of the project of psychological liberation, efforts of non-whites to rename themselves. Up until the formation of SASO, Blacks were legally and informally referred to as non-whites/Europeans. This classification was something the early BCM activists began to forcefully reject in favour of being identified as "Black". This was important, and unquestionably inspired by Black Power, in the first instance because it was a clear assertion of self in direct contention with the concept 'non' which implied one was not something, i.e. the standard that was white or European. Being Black became a way to assert ones being in and of oneself. Additionally, BCM used the concept Black to pull all the racially/ethnically (Zulu, Xhosa, Tsonga, etc.) oppressed Africans under one political identity. Consequently, and controversially among some among the older generation, Indians and Coloureds were included in the definition of Black showing it to be an identity grounded in socio-economic and political factors of exploitation and oppression. SASO

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<sup>237</sup> For more on the formation of the Afrikaner Broederbond as the power in the shadows of the apartheid state see C. Bloomberg, *Christian Nationalism and the Rise of the Afrikaner Broederbond in South Africa, 1918-48* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1989).



began to frame this population as the majority who would eventually reshape and re-Africanize South Africa and give the world its human face, a Black one.<sup>238</sup> They also began to refer to Bantustan leaders and others who supported the system of divide and rule as “non-whites” showing that scholars like Salim Badat, Anthony Marx and others who have argued that BC was trapped by a level of Black chauvinism are mistaken.

Armed with a core leadership, a new political identity, and a rejection of Bantustan and other apartheid created avenues for Black political expression, the movement now began to take seriously the mission of spreading “the gospel of Black Consciousness” throughout the universities and high schools. In these early years Biko, Nengwekhulu and Pityana were tasked with going to the Black universities such as Turfloop, Ngoye, Fort Hare and the Western Cape to convince Black students to disaffiliate from NUSAS and join their new organisation. Working with and within the Student Representative Councils (SRC’s) as well as radical Christian groups like the UCM was critical to their success. Being initially officially recognised by university administrators made it easier for SASO to build its membership without gaining the disapproval of university officials or the state so soon.

Welile Nhlapo and Mosibudi Mangena, young cadres who would later become key leaders in a second wave of BCM leadership after the “Small Broederbond”, both recall coming into contact with SASO while at university in early 1971.<sup>239</sup> In a recent interview

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<sup>238</sup> S. Biko, ‘Who is Black?’, *SASO Newsletter*; September 1970 in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge, Volume 5*, pp. 464-466; WHP A2675/I/3, Interview with Steve Biko on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1971 by Greg Lanning, pp. 1-10; WHP A2675/III/748, M. Masekala, ‘Black Consciousness and the Role of the Black Woman’, December 1971, pp. 1-6; WHP A2675/I/28, Gail Gerhart interview with Harry R. Nengwekhulu, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1972 in Johannesburg, p. 4.

<sup>239</sup> M. Mangena, *On Your Own: Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa/Azania* (Braamfontein, Skotaville Publishers, 1989), pp. 10-11; Welile Nhlapo Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Johannesburg, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017, p. 2.

Nhlapo recalls Biko making ‘a speech, we were listening very careful and attentively to him and then a select group of us met with him afterwards to respond to the call he was making to the University of Zululand to join SASO.’<sup>240</sup> Similarly, Mangena in his early memoir noted that these ‘early visitors [Biko and others] made a powerful impression on us [students]’ with their preaching on the importance of Black unity and their subtle criticisms of the apartheid regime.<sup>241</sup>

As new cadres like Mangena and Nhlapo entered the still fledgling movement a method needed to be developed to teach the politics of Black Consciousness to more people, study previous South African movements, learn about global events, and create a space where young cadres could themselves add to and expand upon what BCM would and should mean for the liberation of South Africa. One of the institutions built by SASO to accomplish this were the Formation Schools (FS). Keith Mokoape, the younger brother to PAC and later founding BCM activist Aubrey Mokoape, recalled in a recent interview that in these FS, which would usually take place over the weekends or during holidays,

we would... compare the different revolutionary movements and where they were, where they failed. So we had ample literature, I really can’t remember how we used to get these documents whether it is a book by Malcolm X, whether it is Black guys in the United States who were the Black Panthers, so, Amilcar Cabral, you name it, we used to read a lot. And at this workshops, I remember I was in a workshop that was studying the positives and negatives of the ANC and another group was studying the PAC and another group was studying the Unity Movement another group was studying the Communist Party and then we would come back together to plenary and say all of them ultimately failed and we must do something better<sup>242</sup>

These national and regional FS were essentially training seminars held by the local, regional, and national sections of SASO. According to notes from one the first FS meetings, FS were designed ‘to allow the participants the chance of self-development

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<sup>240</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 2.

<sup>241</sup> Mangena, *On Your Own*, p. 10.

<sup>242</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Johannesburg (Midrand), January 14th, 2017, p.2.

through participation in discussions and other group projects. In this way this offers also a training in leadership qualities'. Furthermore, those who participated in these training seminars were encouraged to 'contribute in ideas towards the running of the organisation' so that 'most of the work done by the participants forms the basis of the way in which SASO functions'.<sup>243</sup> Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, they were designed 'to create a core of people in each campus who not only understood in detail what SASO is all about, but, also who are prepared to do SASO work'.<sup>244</sup> This investment in grooming leadership at all levels of BCM set it apart from previous South African organisations. It grew out of an understanding by the founding leadership of BCM that eventually they would be banned and/or arrested by the apartheid regime and if this happened, they did not want a void in Black radical politics to emerge in South Africa as had been the case in the wake of the bannings of the ANC-SA and PAC.

### **Black Women and Black Consciousness: Spreading the Movement beyond the University**

Another element integral to the project of psychological liberation, conscientization, and activism was the gender question. Although not engaged in with the tenacity of the race question, it held some significance to early BC activists. More importantly, it was a debate and discourse which evolved over time and often took place not in written form but in the grassroots activism of the movement. This section will begin with some initial thoughts that one woman, Maphiri Masekala, expressed in written form on the role of Black women to the movement and will then move to a discussion of pivotal

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<sup>243</sup> WHP A2675/III/743, 'Report on the 1<sup>st</sup> National Formation School', December 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 1969, University of Natal Black Section.

<sup>244</sup> 'Regional Formation Schools', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge, Volume 5*, pp. 462-464.

BCM community projects that developed in the early 1970s that were staffed and run by women. Leslie Hadfield has been central in excavating this history in ways other scholars before her have not. She has argued convincingly that paying attention to grassroots organizing, which is work that often goes unheralded in accounts of liberation struggles everywhere, by default centres and illuminates the contributions of women given their strong representation in these arenas of struggle.<sup>245</sup>

In a piece written by Masekala for the SASO newsletter in the early 1970s, it was made clear that the women of Black Consciousness, similar to the women of Black Power in North America, ‘must appreciate that we are Black first and then women. Thus Black Women must play a meaningful role in the struggle of the Black community’. Given this, Black women were not to be neglected and ignored in the movement as had been the case in previous freedom struggles in South Africa. Moreover, the role of Black women should and must ‘be relevant to the role and meaning of Black People as a whole. It has to be seen within the context of Black Consciousness. Our struggle calls for the involvement of the entire Black Community. It is therefore essential that Black Women must shed that built-in feeling of inferiority that dogs even the most courageous Black woman’. Masekala would continue by pointing to two areas where Black women could make the best contributions to the movement: politically educating/conscientizing Black children and leading efforts in BCM’s economic self-reliance projects. Furthermore, white feminism was to be rejected as theirs was a ‘tactics designed by the enemy to divide [the] Black Community and we must refuse to be part of a conspiracy against ourselves’.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> L. Hadfield, ‘Challenging the status quo: Young Women and men in Black Consciousness Community Work, 1970s South Africa’, *Journal of African History*, 54, 2 (2013), pp. 247-267.

<sup>246</sup> WHP A2675/III/748, M. Masekala, ‘Black Consciousness and the Role of the Black Woman’, December 1971, pp. 1-6.

In addition to making critical if questionable interventions around the question of the role of women within Black Consciousness, Maphiri Masekala would also play a decisive role in thinking through how to cultivate better relationships between SASO, community organisations, and development programs. She and the other founding minds of this new movement were keenly aware of the relative privilege they held as university students in comparison to the majority of Blacks in South Africa. Consequently, they were determined from BCM's earliest days to find ways to have their members deeply engage with the lives and struggles of their people outside the university.<sup>247</sup> One of the main challenges these young activists faced when it came to expanding their movement into the non-university Black population was their lack of access to financial resources. Not to be discouraged, activists like Masekala joined relatively well-funded white liberal multi-racial groups like the Special Project for Christian Action in Society (SPROCAS) I and II. While in this organisation Masekala fought to push whites members out of the space so that Black Consciousness adherents could run the organisation the way they saw fit for their own community. After 1972, SPROCAS I and II would dissolve and become the BCPs which Hadfield's work as accurately shown was the key arm in BCM's rural community outreach efforts.<sup>248</sup>

Formation School seminars in July and December 1971 were incubators for this SPROCAS I and II takeover as participants debated how BCM should organize with and within the community.<sup>249</sup> Masekala was present at both meetings with other BCM activists

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<sup>247</sup> WHP A2675/III/744, 'GSC Circular No. 6: Commission for 1970 GSC', June/July 1970?, pp. 1-5; WHP A2675/III/745, B. Pityana, 'Presidential Report of the Transvaal Tour', March 9-11<sup>th</sup>, 1971, pp. 1-8.

<sup>248</sup> WHP A2675/III/270, Spro-Cas 2: Black Community Programmes. Tentative Suggestions for Action, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971, pp. 1-6; WHP A2675/I/17, Gerhart Interview with Bokwe Mafuna, p. 16.

<sup>249</sup> Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, S. Moodley, 'Report of Leadership Training Seminar: Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, Pietermaritzburg', December 5-8, 1971, pp. 1-14.

like Ben Khoapa and Nengwekhulu present to help guide the sixty participants from various SASO branches. In the minutes of the July meeting it was stressed that their goal was ‘to combine Black Consciousness and Community Development... with a view to showing the inter-relationship between those concepts and how necessary an understanding of Black Consciousness was in the implementation of Community Development projects’.<sup>250</sup>

By the middle of 1973 these community projects seemed to be the most effective among women’s federations forming in Soweto and Durban as, ‘Black Women wanted to form themselves into some organisation so that they could be better equipped to meet the challenge of present day oppressive society, and be able to mount the liberation wagon from another angle’.<sup>251</sup> The BCP’s Women and Welfare Programmes were crucial in the growth of these often localised independent projects as they helped some ‘women’s groups to see more clearly the importance of joint planning and the advantages of cooperation and also demonstrate that pooling of resources can be done without loss of identity and autonomy by the cooperating parties’.<sup>252</sup> Much of the impetus for women in the building of these self-reliance projects was to ensure they and their families’ maintained a level of economic and material independence from men who, given their demand as labourers in the waged economy, disproportionately held influence over women in the household. At the same time, these projects were also turned to by those who needed to supplement the meagre income their male family members made in the apartheid economy.

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<sup>250</sup> Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27, Moodley, ‘Report of Leadership Training Seminar: Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, Pietermaritzburg’, p. 1.

<sup>251</sup> WHP A2675/III/753, ‘Composite Report of the Interim – Executive to the 4<sup>th</sup> General Students Council, St. Peters’ Conference Centre’, Hammanskraal 14<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, July, 1973, p. 19.

<sup>252</sup> WHP A2675/III/270, H. Bhengu, ‘Black Community Programmes, 1974 Report’, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1974, p. 12.

In addition to the community projects being run by women in places like Soweto and Durban, the Literacy Projects of BCM also played a key role in making the work of Black Consciousness practical to the every-day people they hoped to reach. The purpose of the Literacy Projects was to mobilise SASO students and those in the youth organisations outside the university inspired by Black Consciousness into a force of cadres determined to share their skills and provide a service for the Black community. According to Dr. Diliza Mji who was a member of the Literacy Projects and later President of SASO, the Literacy Project was ‘an attempt by SASO to forge links with non-students or community groups, and extend its influence beyond its constituency’. Psychological liberation needed to have a material component or it would mean little to the wider masses of Blacks they sought to conscientize. It also would serve as a way to break some of the elitism present in many Blacks who had been able to get to university.<sup>253</sup> By forcing Black university students affiliated to SASO to physically share their skills with the Black masses, the praxis of Black Consciousness could hopefully develop into something real and living which would enable them to better communicate and marry their visions of freedom effectively with that of the masses.<sup>254</sup>

The Literacy Projects could not have succeeded without the tireless work of its founding activist, Deborah Matshoba.<sup>255</sup> In the literature on BCM, the Literacy Projects are scarcely discussed outside of some recent work done by Hadfield, consequently, names

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<sup>253</sup> WHP A2675/I/23, ‘Gail Gerhart interview with Dr. Diliza Mji, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1987, New York’, p. 3.

<sup>254</sup> WHP A2675/III/744, ‘Practical Application of the Ideology of Black Consciousness’, more than likely 9/70, pp. 1-7; WHP A2675/III/746, V. Mafungo, ‘Report on Seminar on Community Development (Involvement)’, July 1971(?), p. 10; WHP A2675/I/17, ‘Tom Karis and Gail Gerhart interview with Tebogole Mafole, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1992, New York City’, p. 2.

<sup>255</sup> ‘Interview with Deborah Matshoba,’ in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander, and N. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives!: Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 279.

of BC activists who developed this organisation who were primarily women have been lost. Matshoba joined SASO in 1972 after meeting with Bokwe Mafuna and Steve Biko on separate occasions.<sup>256</sup> Importantly, she joined the movement having already come to a level of political consciousness due to her work with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) who she had been able to represent in a conference in Ghana in 1971. When she joined SASO in 1972, she became one of the first women on SASO's National Executive serving as the Educational Coordinator. In this position she, with the white American activist Anne Hope, trained young people from the universities who wanted to become active in SASO's Literacy Projects in Paulo Freirean methods of teaching.<sup>257</sup> Charles Mthombeni, an activist in the BC-aligned Transvaal Youth Organisation (TRAYO), a sub-sect of NAYO who would later join the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF) in Botswana, confirms that he and others were trained by Matshoba and Hope in Paulo Freirean methods of teaching.<sup>258</sup>

Musa Mdlalose, another who would eventually join the APLF, recalls that in addition to the Literacy Projects they [BCM] 'used to do... community health projects'. Mdlalose had transferred to the University of Natal Black Section (UNB) in 1971 to pursue dreams of being a doctor. Already active in SASO from his time in Turfloop prior to his transfer, he came to the bustling coastal city with a clear vision of what BC was and how

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<sup>256</sup> 'Interview with Deborah Matshoba,' in Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson (eds), *Biko Lives!*, pp. 275-276.

<sup>257</sup> WHP A2675/III/755, 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> General Students' Council of the South African Students' Organisation', St. Ansgars Fellowship Centre, Roodeport, Transvaal, 30<sup>th</sup> June to the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1974 (pg numbers very confusing); Charles Mthombeni interview by Toivo Asheeke, Soweto, Orlando East, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016, p. 5; WHP A2675/I/17, 'Tom Karis and Gail Gerhart interview with Tebogo Mafole, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1992, New York City', p. 2.

<sup>258</sup> WHP A2675/III/592, 'National Youth Organisation Constitution, Policy Statement, and Recommended Action Program', June 1973, pp. 1-12; Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 5; M. Ramphela, *Across Boundaries: The Journey of a South African Woman Leader* (New York, The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1996), p. 65.



he would contribute to it. While he did some work with the Literacy Projects, most of his time was spent helping cadres like Mamphela Ramphele run ‘a clinic at Wentworth [and]... on Sunday, helping the community around and so forth. Even outside we were outside in Durban, Tintown... teaching people how to make water safe to drink and such things’.<sup>259</sup> Projects such as these were some of the many active attempts by SASO to engage in effective community organising.<sup>260</sup>

These community projects/programs, staffed and run by women like Matshoba, Masekala, and Ramphele were key components to the broader mission of BCM to promote self-reliance, cultural leadership, and educational independence within the Black community. Black Consciousness activists believed that the dehumanization of Blackness and deification of whiteness in apartheid society needed to be combated by both intellectual critiques and the creation of practical projects run by Blacks that could address the struggles people faced in their daily lives. Biko made the point even clearer when he said, ‘Our projects are not so much oriented towards getting or achieving something for the people. We would rather have people getting it for themselves, and therefore being able to utilize that critical awareness for ever so many things, including a possible retaliation or measure against the system’.<sup>261</sup> This was inspired partly by Tanzania’s *Ujamaa* initiative, briefly referenced in chapter one, as well as the community projects a number of Black Power groups were creating for their people in the United States.<sup>262</sup> None of this would

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<sup>259</sup> Musa Mdlalose Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Pretoria, December 13th, 2016, p. 2.

<sup>260</sup> WHP A2675/III/747, ‘Community Development Programme for Summer Vacation’, September 1971, pp. 1-2; Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, ‘Winterveld Community Project: A Progress Report’, 1972, pp. 1-14.

<sup>261</sup> WHP A2675/I/3, ‘Interview with Steve Biko by Gail Gerhart’, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972 (full interview), p. 47

<sup>262</sup> WHP A2675/III/746, V. Mafungo, ‘Report on Seminar on Community Development (Involvement)’, July 1971(?), pp. 1-19; WHP A2675/III/270, B. Khoapa, ‘Spro-Cas 2: Black Community Programmes. Tentative Suggestions for Action’, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971, pp. 1-6.

have been possible without the contributions of women like Masekala, Matshoba, Ramphela, Hope, and numerous other women.

### **The Formation of the Black People's Convention (BPC)**

This emphasis on community was critical during the formative years of BCM and needs to be emphasised as much of the literature too often frames it as a student-lead intellectual movement, divorced from the daily struggles of the people. While indeed there were elements of the movement like this, many of this first wave of Black leadership understood that given the relative privilege of Black university students SASO could not in the long-term be in the vanguard of the fight against apartheid. Understanding this in December 1971 SASO organised a meeting with leaders from various local and national African organisations like the Association for the Educational and Cultural Advancement of the African Peoples of South Africa (ASSECA), Interdenominational African Ministers' Association (IDAMASA), the National Council of African Women (NCAW), and *The World* newspaper (largest Black run newspaper in South Africa at the time) to discuss what needed to be done to formally bring the political ideology of Black Consciousness to the masses. Winnifred Kgwane, Drake Koka, Temba Sono, Nengwekhulu, Aubrey Mokoape, Biko and Khoapa were some of the key Black Consciousness cadres present at this meeting with Aubrey Mokoape playing a central role in the proceedings.<sup>263</sup>

Initially, there was a split among those present on whether to create an informal or formal political organisation. Nengwekhulu through SASO made a strong push for the

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<sup>263</sup> WHP A2675/III/282, 'Minutes of National Organisations Conference held at the Orlando YMCA from 17th December to \_\_ December 1971', December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1971, page numbers unclear; WHP A2675/I/24, 'Interview or meeting notes by GMC with M. T. Moerane, WM F. Nkomo, David Thebehali', Johannesburg, February 11th, 1972 not verbatim, pp. 1-17.

creation of a political organisation that would embrace Indians and Coloureds in the definition of Black. During the meeting, the BC activists also successfully pushed for the rejection of multi-racialism and were key in getting Drake Koka, a staunch SASO ally, elected Convener of this conference and the steering committee moving forward. Moreover, the conference importantly passed a motion stating that members of government created institutions like the Urban Bantu Councils (UBCs) and Traditional Authorities (TAs) could not be members of this organisation.<sup>264</sup>

This meeting would form the foundation for what later would be called the Black People's Convention (BPC) and Winniefred Kgwere, a Black woman, would become its first President. This organisation was envisioned by many in the leadership of SASO, in tandem with later attempts to form a Black workers union, as a vehicle through which Black people could ideologically and politically unite under the banner of Black Consciousness. Nengwekhulu, one of the "Small Broederbond", was clear at a commemoration for Sharpeville in 1972 that Black people in South Africa needed to 'unite under an ideology, unite under a philosophy. And the only philosophy we can unite under is that of Black consciousness'.<sup>265</sup> Later that year the BPC would formally be launched. In hindsight, the timing could not have been better as students who had been a part of BC since its inception now felt that since they had achieved political consciousness and freed their minds, what was the next step?

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<sup>264</sup>WHP A2675/III/282, 'Minutes of National Organisations Conference held at the Orlando YMCA from 17th December to \_\_\_ December 1971', December 17th, 1971, page numbers unclear; WHP A2675/I/24, 'Interview or meeting notes by GMC with M. T. Moerane, WM F. Nkomo, David Thebehali', Johannesburg, February 11th, 1972 not verbatim, pp. 1-17; WHP A2675/III/282, 'Minutes of the Black People's Convention held at the Lay Ecumenical Centre (Edendale)', July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1972 – July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1972, pp. 1-9.

<sup>265</sup> Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, 'Commemoration of Sharpeville', March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1972, p. 28.

## **Stage Two: Exploring the Roots of Black Consciousness's turn to Armed Struggle**

While scholars such as Daniel Magaziner correctly emphasize that the 1968 – 1972 period was one of growth and consolidation for Black Consciousness, Magaziner in particular is incorrect to argue the turn to more confrontational politics, which included for some a turn to armed struggle, signified a break from BCM's foundational beginnings.<sup>266</sup> As many who were building the movement during this period attest, the question of armed struggle was on the table from as early as 1969. Literacy Project activist Charles Mthombeni remembers that the question of armed struggle was 'always there, there was absolutely no way we could bring down this regime by any other means but through armed struggle'.<sup>267</sup> Bokwe Mafuna argued something similar, 'we were fully supportive of the armed struggle which was then being pursued by the two liberation movements then... in the Black Consciousness Movement we were quite clear that it was important in much as it was necessary'.<sup>268</sup> Nkosazana Dlamini, former Vice President of SASO and key member of BCM in the early 1970s, also recalled many in the movement believed that 'eventually armed struggle would have to be employed', the question was, 'Would Black Consciousness have its own army or would we have to work with the existing liberation movements'?'<sup>269</sup>

In another example Marti Mueller, a white American union organizer who briefly had an affair with Biko during a trip to South Africa, described in an interview with Gail Gerhart a conversation Biko and other BC leaders had in private in early 1971 on what

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<sup>266</sup> D. Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968-1977* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2010), pp. 15-54.

<sup>267</sup> Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 6.

<sup>268</sup> Bokwe Mafuna Interview, p. 1.

<sup>269</sup> WHP A2675/I/41, 'Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma interview with Gail Gerhart, London, July 3rd, 1988', p. 6.

armed action in Durban or Johannesburg would look like. Maps were laid out and targets to hit were pointed out during this meeting. While there was some light-heartedness and jesting throughout, this demonstrates SASO cadres were constantly thinking about what an armed struggle could look like.<sup>270</sup> The challenge was they could not openly or loosely talk about it because the initial plan, tactically, was to keep SASO and other growing BC organisations legal for as long as possible. On this point Tebogo Mafole, another cadre who would later join APLF and the ANC-SA/MK, recalled in an interview with Gerhart and Karis that, ‘Everyone felt that armed struggle was inevitable; the question was how to relate to it as an organisation’.<sup>271</sup> To openly declare support for armed struggle and/or publically embrace its execution by the banned movements ran the risk of having SASO and/or the BPC banned before they could really consolidate themselves with the masses.<sup>272</sup>

It would ultimately take a fiery speech by Onkgopotse Tiro at the graduation ceremony at Turfloop on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1972, to elevate the voices of the few willing to embrace armed struggle.<sup>273</sup> At this ceremony Tiro critiqued Bantu Education, apartheid, and the overall hypocrisy of the system in front of National Party (NP) representatives, Afrikaner university officials of Turfloop, and the wider body of Black students.<sup>274</sup> Tiro

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<sup>270</sup> WHP A2675/III/748, ‘Gail Gerhart notes on interview with Marti Mueller, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971, Nairobi’, pp. 1-5).

<sup>271</sup> WHP A2675/I/17, ‘Tom Karis and Gail Gerhart interview with Tebogo Mafole, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1992, New York City’, p. 2.

<sup>272</sup> Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 7; Bokwe Mafuna Interview, pp. 1-2.

<sup>273</sup> Tiro, while well known among those versed in the history of BCM, is another forgotten leader of the movement. While scholars such as Anne Heffernan and Arianna Lissoni have done some excellent work to rehabilitate his contributions to the struggle, they have not discussed how his activism and example opened a space for a deeper discussion on armed struggle to be launched within BCM. See A. Heffernan, ‘Black Consciousness’s Lost Leader: Abraham Tiro, the University of the North, and the Seeds of South Africa’s Student Movement in the 1970s’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 1 (2015), pp. 173-186; A. Lissoni, ‘Student Organisation in Lehurutshe and the Impact of Onkgopotse Abraham Tiro’, in A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto ’76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), pp. 34-44.

<sup>274</sup> O. Tiro, ‘Graduation Speech by O.R. Tiro at the University of the North, Turfloop’, in Karis and Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, Vol. 5*, pp. 497-499.

was immediately expelled for his bold statements and denied entry into the graduate program he had been accepted in. In solidarity Turfloop students boycotted classes. In retaliation, the university under pressure from the regime expelled them all and forced those who wanted to return to re-apply. Black students across the country rose up in solidarity with those expelled at Turfloop and demanded SASO lead efforts to organise student resistance during what became known as the Tiro Affair. The University of Fort Hare, located in the small town of Alice in the Transkei (what is now called the Eastern Cape Province), became the centre of the Black student response to this unfolding crisis and the SASO Executive, chief among them the President of UNB's SRC Keith Mokoape, converged on its campus to strategize the way forward.<sup>275</sup> After a few days of intense discussion on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1972, the Alice Declaration was released which called for an official boycott of classes on June 1<sup>st</sup> in solidarity with the expulsions of those at Turfloop.<sup>276</sup> Over the next few weeks and months many like Welile Nhlapo at Ngoye and Tebogo Mafole at Turfloop answered the call. Unlike others, when these SASO members left, they knew they would not return. For them, this was the moment they had been waiting for, the beginning of Stage Two in their struggle against apartheid.<sup>277</sup>

With the Black university student population on the verge of open rebellion, those in the local and national leadership of BCM were split on what to do. The newly formed BPC was too weak to do anything more than send messages of support to the students across the country protesting. Biko was hesitant to engage in protest actions that would

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<sup>275</sup> WHP A2675/III/748, 'SASO Executive Council Meeting', December 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 1971, p. 1; D. Massey, *Under Protest: The rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2010), p. 212.

<sup>276</sup> 'Alice Declaration', in Karis and Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, Vol. 5*, p. 499.

<sup>277</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 4; Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 4.

bring down the wrath of the apartheid regime on the still growing political movement. Younger activists like Keith Mokoape, Makwezi Mtulu, Gwaza Twalo, Malebo Malebo and Archie Tshabalala who were in the leadership of SASO at UNB wanted to begin sabotage actions immediately. In late May, during the boycott, they secretly tried to bomb their ‘classrooms at Alan Taylor Residence [at the UNB in Durban] where preliminary studies’ were underway even though the Alice Declaration had issued a call for Black students to boycott all classes. Mokoape recalls their attempts failed ‘dismally because I think we mixed some chemicals and a little bit of this from and a little bit of what we were learning in chemistry and I think a small window was broken’. Police came the next day to investigate but could not find enough evidence to catch anyone. Encouraged by this mini-success, Mokoape and his comrades then tried, but failed, to ‘burn the college itself, the medical college, at King Edward Hospital’ in order to force the university to shut-down.<sup>278</sup>

With some like Mokoape and his colleagues already plotting sabotage, cadres such as SASO President Temba Sono and Onkgopotse Tiro were engaging with Black communities across the country that BCM had, through the community projects and literacy classes, formed connections with to attempt to explain what these university students were doing and why. Mthombeni remembers in the middle of the university student uprising getting word of Tiro coming to speak in Soweto at a local Catholic church near to where he was living. He recalled that Tiro came one afternoon to this church and addressed about three-hundred youths and elders on ‘what was going on at the universities’.<sup>279</sup> Some locally respected elders like Dr. Nthato Motlana disagreed with the

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<sup>278</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 5.

<sup>279</sup> Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 3.

decision of students to walk out of classes as it hurt their future job prospects and took exception to youths telling elders to support a student strike.<sup>280</sup> Tiro and a number of others at the church came down hard on him and eventually Dr. Motlana was forced to retract his statements given the popularity of the action being taken by the students.<sup>281</sup>

Consequently, the stage was set for the July 1972 SASO GSC to become a critical space for university student activists to discuss and chart the way forward. Gail Gerhart, Mosibudi Mangena, Daniel Magaziner, Julian Brown and other scholars and activists on BCM broadly agree on the importance of this meeting as a turning point in the history of SASO and the wider BCM. However, none have centred it as the moment which would eventually solidify the determination for some in BCM to leave the country and form an armed wing. This latter contribution will be explained within the context of two major events that occurred during the opening day of the SASO July 1972 GSC that need to be highlighted.<sup>282</sup> To begin with, Temba Sono the outgoing SASO President made a speech that infuriated the fiery delegates leading to his expulsion from the organisation. At the same time, Keith Mokoape began to openly agitate for students not to return to school and

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<sup>280</sup> One must also acknowledge that Dr. Motlana echoed the concerns of many parents and community members who had collectively sacrificed much to get their children into university. The South African economy was growing in the 1960s and early 1970s, hence, there were a number of job prospects that were emerging for Blacks given the nature of segregation in South Africa. Cadres like Biko had been able to earn scholarships to go to university because communities like those in King Williamstown/Ginsberg, where Biko was from, had pooled their wealth to give the bright young scholar enough money to afford his school fees and books. Biko was one of many who had received such from their communities. So when the Tiro Affair exploded onto the national scene and thousands of students were expelled or simply walked out, it caused much consternation because many could not understand why students would abandon their education, the sacrifices made to get them there, and prospects to earn a good job to provide for their families and communities.

<sup>281</sup> Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 3.

<sup>282</sup> M. Mangena, *On Your Own: Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa/Azania* (Braamfontein, Skotaville Publishers, 1989), pp. 28-31; T. Karis and G. Gerhart, 'The Black Consciousness Movement: Confronting the State, 1972-1976', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, Volume 5*, pp. 129-130; D. Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets*, pp. 146-147; J. Brown, *The Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976* (Suffolk, James Currey, 2016), pp. 63-82.



suggested they make plans to begin Stage Two, which everybody knew meant armed struggle. I will address each of these responses in turn, but will focus more intently on Mokoape's intervention as recent interviews with him have provided more clarity into what has generally been a little known discussion on the question of armed struggle.

Outgoing SASO President Temba Sono was not originally slated to speak to open the GSC. That honour had been given to Professor Robert Williams, a proponent of Black Power in the United States at the time who had been asked to say some words on 'Creativity and Black Development.' He was unable to attend the SASO GSC after the South African government denied him a visa after having agreed to give him one a few weeks earlier.<sup>283</sup> Nengwekhulu recalls he had some trepidation with asking Sono to speak but others did not share his reservations.<sup>284</sup> Sono's speech began with him arguing, strangely to the delegates, in favour of working with the Bantustans and white liberals which went against SASO's stated policy of non-cooperation or recognition of state created forms of self-governance and whites. He followed these comments by saying SASO needed to engage better with those who disagreed with them in order to convert them to their cause which included 'everybody – black and white whether they are security police, liberals, non-whites etc'.<sup>285</sup>

The second contentious section of his speech was his rejection of taking up arms against the regime and him denouncing SASO students seeing themselves as revolutionaries. He stated 'we should never allow our fantasies to deceive us because we shall be engaging ourselves in one of the greatest exercises in human self-deception that

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<sup>283</sup> WHP A2675/III/750, S. Moodley, 'Memorandum: Conference 1972', pp. 1-3.

<sup>284</sup> Randwezi Nengwekhulu interview by Toivo Asheeke, Pretoria, January 17th, 2017, pp. 6-8.

<sup>285</sup> Gail M. Gerhart Collection BC 2A/28: Reel to Keel No.9: Manuscripts and Archives, UCT, T. Sono, 'In Search of a free and new society', July 1972, p. 8.

the world has ever known'.<sup>286</sup> Towards the end of his speech he curiously said the following,

'The Whiteman differs from the blackman not in terms of his human nature... but differs in terms of his social nature and since it is true that the whiteman behaves in compliance to his... leadership complex, while the blackman behaves in terms of his dependency complex, therefore our strategy should be to avoid any physical confrontation with the whiteman'.<sup>287</sup>

Taken together, he seemed to be saying Black people were not psychologically ready for a physical confrontation with the state and this was not the time for Stage Two. His comments set off an inferno of rejection from the assembled delegates. An author of a recap of Sono's speech, probably Strini Moodley, had the following to say,

What the entire conference expected from the address was an unflinching, unapologetic address that would place SASO in perspective and give some insight into SASO's future, and her role in society. In her three years of existence SASO had moved from strength to strength; she had progressed; she had stood firm. Now she had to move further forward; make further progress... A million burning questions echoed in the minds and hearts of the 200 or more delegates and observers. The Free University, the relationship between student and worker, the impact of Black Consciousness, SASO's future on and off campus, new methods of Conscientization, a complete new look at the role of the Black student, the need for a BLACK press, on and on students were probing, wanting to know<sup>288</sup>

Furthermore, Sono had not shared his ideas for his remarks with the leadership of SASO prior to making the speech, which went against SASO policy. Whenever points were to be made in public speeches that departed from the stated goals and public statements of the organisation, they were to be discussed so all could decide whether it was appropriate or not.<sup>289</sup> To add insult to injury, cadres were expecting a rousing anti-system

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<sup>286</sup> Gail M. Gerhart Collection BC 2A/28: Reel to Keel No.9: Manuscripts and Archives, UCT, T. Sono, 'In Search of a free and new society', July 1972, p. 2.

<sup>287</sup> Gail M. Gerhart Collection BC 2A/28: Reel to Keel No.9: Manuscripts and Archives, UCT, T. Sono, 'In Search of a free and new society', July 1972, p. 6.

<sup>288</sup> WHP A2675/III/750, S. Moodley, 'Memorandum: Conference 1972', p. 3.

<sup>289</sup> WHP A2675/III/750, S. Moodley, 'Memorandum: Conference 1972', pp. 3-5. According to an interview I conducted with Welile Nhlapo in 2016, he and Tebogo Mafole who were working at the SASO office in Johannesburg and were attending the SASO GSC as Reef SASO Local Branch Representative and Turfloop Representative respectively, actually had read the speech before it was delivered by Sono. The day of the conference Sono had come to the office to ask for copies of it to be made. He took some and gave others to a white woman journalist he was with, but, unbeknownst to him, Mafole and Nhlapo had made copies for

speech, to have him instead endorse Bantustans and reject revolutionary thinking embarrassed many of the delegates.<sup>290</sup>

In response to the conservative remarks from Sono, or despite them, Keith Mokoape and Mosiuoa Lekota pressed for a motion to be passed demanding all students refuse to attend classes for the rest of the academic year. The fiery Mokoape continued by saying that any of the delegates who returned to university were ‘reinforcing the Bantu education system and that we should go do other things’.<sup>291</sup> These “other things” clearly meant for all those who were deeply involved in SASO that Mokoape felt the time was right for stage two, armed struggle.<sup>292</sup> He then closed by openly saying he would not be returning to school even though he was a few years into his studies for his medical degree. A break was then called and some cadres came to Mokoape and his inner circle of Mtulu, Malebo, Twalo, and Tshabalala to ask if they had a plan. Mokoape made it clear he had one, but would not tell anybody what his plans were unless they accepted it and agreed to not speak of it. Only his inner circle agreed and so others were not given details. It seems a few hours later the motion was defeated after which Biko and Tiro pulled the younger

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themselves. When they read it they immediately gave it to Biko, Pityana, Moodley and Tiro to inform them that this was what Sono was going to say. See Welile Nhlapo interview, pp. 5-6

<sup>290</sup> In an interview done a year later with Gerhart, Temba Sono argues he made this speech because when he had been critical of Bantustan leaders such as Gatsha Buthelezi the year before, he had received negative responses from students, particularly those at Ngoye. Given these negative responses, he had been reprimanded in a SASO Executive meeting in December 1971 for his comments due to how it had put SASO in a negative light. Because to this he believed his statements at the GSC were in line with previous discussions. His rejection of armed struggle and revolution can be seen as him staying in-line with previous SASO policies which demanded members not draw the attention of the apartheid authorities with overtly confrontational statements and actions. Furthermore, there had been no set plans for how Stage Two was to be carried out so it can be seen as very pertinent for Sono to have dismissed this as even a possibility. Yet, in the context of the rebellious mood of the students in the wake of the Tiro affair, the conference delegates were not friendly to him making these remarks.

<sup>291</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 3.

<sup>292</sup> WHP A2675/I/8, ‘Gail Gerhart interview with Saths Cooper, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1987, New York City’, pp. 15-16; WHP A2675/I/31, ‘Conversation/interview notes (almost verbatim) of Barney Pityana with GG and Karis, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1988’, p. 6; WHP A2675/I/6, Gail Gerhart interview with Zithulele Cindi, Johannesburg, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1989’, pp. 5-6; M. Mangena, *On Your Own*, p. 31.

Mokoape brother aside and told him bluntly if he was serious about armed struggle he should go into exile. He knew where the liberation movements were, so they would rather he go and not put SASO in jeopardy with his call for Stage Two. Another option was he could join the BPC which was designed for those who either were done with studies or who wanted a different organizing space outside of the university.<sup>293</sup> Mokoape was clear he was unwilling to continue being a student or join the BPC as he ‘knew already that I am beyond that, I wanted the armed struggle’.<sup>294</sup>

Nonetheless, Mokoape and his comrades were in the minority, so the conference continued with questions of psychological liberation, building movement strength, SASO Executive Board elections, unification of the ANC-SA and PAC, and building relations with domestic Black organisations taking precedence over discussions of armed struggle.<sup>295</sup> At the forefront of all this, the question of how to make BC a living philosophy in the minds of the people was the most critical issue to be tackled. The results of this conference and the rich ideas being produced in its formal meetings and informal side conversations and planning sessions were the official founding of working people-based organisations like the BCPs and BWP.<sup>296</sup>

Writing about South Africa’s armed struggle in the 1970s in the Eastern Cape, Timothy Gibbs argues that the ANC-SA underground was, ‘at least in part, a nationalist movement constituted through regional networks’.<sup>297</sup> This article importantly built on

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<sup>293</sup> WHP A2675/I/8, ‘Gail Gerhart interview with Saths Cooper, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1987, New York City’, pp. 15-16; G. Houston and B. Magubane, ‘The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s’ in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]*, pp. 377-379.

<sup>294</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 3.

<sup>295</sup> Later, Mosibudi Mangena would note in his autobiography that he regretted he made this decision. See Mangena, *On Your Own*, p. 117.

<sup>296</sup> WHP A2675/III/282, S. Moodley, ‘Memorandum: Conference 1972’, p.6.

<sup>297</sup> T. Gibbs, ‘Chris Hani’s “Country Bumpkins”: Regional Networks in the African National Congress Underground, 1974-1994’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 4 (2011), p. 679.

earlier work that sought to highlight the importance of native reserves in South Africa to the growth, development, and support of African Nationalism. As an example Gibbs showed how MK commander Chris Hani, who was born in the rural village of Sabalele in the Cofimvaba region in what is now the Eastern Cape, utilised his strong connections to the area to recruit for the ANC-SA while he was posted to Lesotho. Many of those who he recruited were people Hani knew directly or indirectly through their family/teachers/friends which enabled him to trust them more than others. In this section, we wish to argue something similar happened with Bokwe Mafuna when he was in Botswana recruiting for the APLF, many of those who were able to enter its inner circle were cadres he had direct interactions with during his years organizing for BCM before his departure in September 1973.

As the July 1972 SASO conference came to a close, Mafuna, who had been unable to attend, began to have problems with his editors at the *Rand Daily Mail*. While the problems were surely multifaceted, much of it centred on the overtly political tone of Mafuna's articles and his insistence that he use the word Black instead of non-white to describe the people and events he was covering. The fights had gotten so intense with his editors, who often changed the wording right before it went to print, that Mafuna resigned, or was fired, from the *Rand Daily Mail*.<sup>298</sup> This enabled him to spend more time and energy building up SASO and forming other BCM organisations such as the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ), the BPC, and the BWP, the latter which was officially formed at the close of the July SASO GSC.<sup>299</sup> Being about ten years older and coming from a more

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<sup>298</sup> WHP A2675/III/751, 'Memorandum by SASO: In Detention for their Country', March 1973, pp. 1-2; *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, pp. 12-13.

<sup>299</sup> Gail M. Gerhart Collection BC 2A/28: Reel to Keel No.9: Manuscripts and Archives, UCT, 'Structures and staff appointments as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 1972', page number unclear; WHP A2675/III/282, 'Minutes of

urban working poor background than most of the SASO student activists, in addition to never having been based at a university, Mafuna took the question of organizing workers more seriously than others.<sup>300</sup>

After leaving the *RDM* Mafuna found employment with the newly formed Black Community Programmes (BCPs) as a Research/Field Worker.<sup>301</sup> This was a paid position and helped replace some of the income he had lost after leaving *RDM*. Around this time he was also central in starting up the *Black Review*, a Black Consciousness publication that was a counter to the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) publications that many in the movement felt embodied the very white liberal politics they were fighting to overcome. For Mafuna, the *Black Review* was critical because it was an active example of BCM not just talking about Black potential but actively working on it.<sup>302</sup> According to Mamphela Ramphele the major issue they had with the white liberal South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) and its yearly publications was, ‘Nothing positive about what blacks did was reported with any prominence... Blacks were depicted as the ultimate victims, lacking in agency’.<sup>303</sup>

During this flurry of activity Mafuna also found time to have a discussion with Mokoape and his inner circle about their plans moving forward shortly after the July SASO GSC. Mafuna cites this conversation as the key moment that convinced him to eventually leave the country to find the armed struggle. Shortly after this conversation, around late

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the First National Congress of the Black People’s Convention held at St. Peter’s Seminary’, December 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, 1972, pp. 1-11.

<sup>300</sup> *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, p. 3.

<sup>301</sup> WHP A2675/III/270, ‘Black Community Programmes; Year Report 1972’, p. 7; *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, p.3.

<sup>302</sup> WHP A2675/III/751, ‘Report on the Proceedings at the Black Press Seminar’, October 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 1972, page numbers unclear; Interview with Bokwe Mafuna on 2005-11-03, *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, pp. 14-15.

<sup>303</sup> Ramphele, *Across Boundaries*, p. 67.

September 1972, Mokoape and his inner circle disappeared.<sup>304</sup> Mafuna was not ready to leave yet, but after this talk with Keith Mokoape he was firmly convinced leaving was a necessity, however, this was a conclusion others in the “Small Broederbond” like Biko and Pityana did not embrace.<sup>305</sup>

While Mokoape and his colleagues left to find the armed struggle, Bokwe Mafuna began to devote more of his time and energy to the BWP which was officially launched on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1972. Mthuli Shezi, as SASO activist who was close with Mosibudi Mangena, was named its Field Officer. Operating mostly out of Johannesburg, the BWP’s mission was to approach already existing trade unions, help unite Black workers, conscientize them, and assist them in the training of leadership. Some unions they worked with and helped form were the Allied and Transport Workers Union, the UBJ, and the Black Union of Shop and Office Workers. In line with SASO, BPC, and BCP’s emphasis on combining radical theory with practical assistance to the Black community, the BWP also organised concrete programs for the workers such as providing financial services, legal funds, health-care, and funeral help.<sup>306</sup> Despite facing constant police harassment, BWP was able to model itself on the Industrial and Commercial Worker’s Union (ICU) which Biko and Mafuna believed had been a more radical body than the ANC-SA backed South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU).<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> More on this will be discussed in Chapter 6 concerning Black Consciousness and its impact on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

<sup>305</sup> Bokwe Mafuna Interview, p. 2.

<sup>306</sup> WHP A2675/III/754, ‘Report on Black Workers Project’, more than likely early-mid 1973, pp. 1-10; WHP A2675/III/761, ‘Notes on the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)’, 1987, p. 4.

<sup>307</sup> WHP A2675/III/764, ‘SASO Meets the People and Incidentally the Police Too!!’, *SASO Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 5, November/December 1972, pp. 4-6; WHP A2675/II/17, Gail Gerhart interview with Bokwe Mafuna, Harare, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1990’, pp. 13-15; WHP A2675/III/761, ‘Notes on the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)’, 1987, p. 4; *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, p.13.

However, this ICU model was not an organisation strategy shared by all in BCM. Drake Koka, who was also a union organizer under the banner of Black Consciousness, created and led a parallel organisation called the Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU). BAWU differed from Mafuna's BWP as it pertained to the broad strategy of how to organize workers and on what types of protest actions would/should be utilised. BAWU was designed to be a 'national unitary body to which all workers could directly affiliate irrespective of their craft, industry or location'. This made BAWU a more national body than the BWP although the latter did have a sizeable base in the urban centres of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.<sup>308</sup> Mafuna disagreed with this style of organising as he believed, 'what we should do is to have the different unions in different sectors, different industries, and to have an overall umbrella union which could serve as a federation umbrella'.<sup>309</sup> Regrettably, these disagreements hindered the ability of the BWP and BAWU to work together effectively and created some tension between Koka and Mafuna.<sup>310</sup>

Despite these tensions one of the key people to work with Mafuna and Shezi on the BWP was Welile Nhlapo. Unlike others, Nhlapo grew up in a relatively political middle class household where he did not experience poverty the same way many others did. Growing up in Alexander Township, Nhlapo had from a very young age known of Bokwe Mafuna prior to officially meeting him. Nhlapo recalls that Mafuna 'was in Alexander Township, he stayed there. He was a journalist. Same street where I was staying. So I've always known him, we used to call him Bra Bob'.<sup>311</sup> Yet, it was the 1972 student protests

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<sup>308</sup> WHP A2675/III/761, 'Notes on the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)', 1987, p. 4.

<sup>309</sup> WHP A2675/II/17, Gail Gerhart interview with Bokwe Mafuna, Harare, June 21st, 1990', p.14.

<sup>310</sup> WHP A2675/III/754, 'Report on Black Workers Project', more than likely early-mid 1973, p.2.

<sup>311</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 4.



which pushed him and his good friend Tebogo Mafole closer to Mafuna. Mafole had also grown up in Alexandra township and lived about a two minute walk from Nhlapo, furthermore, he was one of the students who rebelled at Turfloop in the wake of Tiro's expulsion.<sup>312</sup> Under Biko's suggestion Mafole and Nhlapo registered as students through UNISA in order to continue their organizing work with SASO.<sup>313</sup>

From that point on Nhlapo remembers 'we [he and Mafole] were always with Bokwe Mafuna'.<sup>314</sup> Mafole worked more closely with the BPC in Johannesburg as the Central Organiser while Nhlapo after the murder of Shezi in December 1972 became Field Worker for the BWP.<sup>315</sup> Nhlapo believes that it was this turn to organising workers, in addition to the numerous projects BCM was starting across the country and the potency of the Durban Strikes, which drew the attention of the state more closely to him and the broader movement.<sup>316</sup> Eventually, Nhlapo was issued banning orders in late 1973 or early 1974 and was arrested a number of times for breaking them while doing BWP work.<sup>317</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Threat of BCM and the move Towards Armed Struggle**

The growth of BCM during these early formative years began to worry the apartheid regime more than a clearly diminished ANC-SA and PAC struggling to survive in exile. The connection BCM had with the Black Power Movement played an important role in this rising fear as from as early as November 1970, reports in newspapers like the

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<sup>312</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 6.

<sup>313</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, pp. 4-5.

<sup>314</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 4.

<sup>315</sup> WHP A2675/III/284, 'BPC Members on Executive Branch', 1973, p. 1; WHP A2675/III/753, 'Composite Report of the Interim – Executive to the 4th General Students Council', July 14th – 22nd, 1973, p.8; Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 6.

<sup>316</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 7.

<sup>317</sup> WHP A2675/III/755, 'Composite Executive Report to the 6<sup>th</sup> GSC', June 30<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1974, pp. 1-4.

*Daily Nation* stated, ‘The Black Power movement poses a threat to South Africa by the end of this decade’.<sup>318</sup> In the *Sunday Express* it was reported in October 1971 that the Chief of Security Police Major-General “Tiny” Venter had sent some of his staff to investigate SASO and the ASSECA because he had proof that both groups were in contact with U.S. Black Power groups.<sup>319</sup> Shortly afterwards the same paper would report that ‘The Minister of Interior, Mr. Theo Gerdener, has information that a Black Power movement – which rejects total cooperation with whites – is fast developing in South Africa along the lines of its Negro counter-part in the United States’.<sup>320</sup>

By 1973 a number of Black South Africans from all walks of life, rural and urban, were approached by the South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS) to infiltrate the growing movement. Stanley Manong, a future mid-level commander in MK, was one of those approached. In his detailed autobiography Manong recalls that in early 1973, when he was still politically inactive, he was approached by a Mr. Gogo to infiltrate the BPC. According to Manong, Mr. Gogo approached him by explaining that a

new menace and threat was now emerging in our country in the form of the Black People’s Convention (BPC) and the South African Student Organisation (SASO) who were pawns of the Communists. The State wanted to know exactly what these organisations were planning’.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, ‘Black Power threat forecast’, *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1970.

<sup>319</sup> Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, ‘Security Chief hints at Black Power probe’, *S. Express*, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>320</sup> Gerhart Archives – UCT – BC2A/87/27: Microfilm reel No.8: Manuscripts and Archives UCT, ‘Danger real, says Gerdener’. In a later transcribed meeting between Paul Kruger the Minister of Justice and Police and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi in September 1977, Kruger makes it abundantly clear that for them Black Consciousness was a carbon copy of US Black Power. Furthermore, it was a threat to the internal security of South Africa because it would radicalize Blacks in the country and make them more rebellious to white rule. It had to be defeated before it grew to become a Black Power movement like the one that had developed in the USA. For this transcribed meeting see ‘Transcript of meeting between Chief M.G. Buthelezi, Minister J.T. Kruger and others, Pretoria, September 19, 1977 (abridged)’, Karis and Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge*, Volume 5, pp. 679-686.

<sup>321</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 36.

His mission would be to infiltrate these organisations as his strong connections in the Transkei would make him less suspicious. Mr. Gogo knew that Manong was working at the Ciskei office because he did not have enough money to immediately go to university so he also offered to pay all his university fees if he agreed to infiltrate the BPC. Manong rejected the offer but Mr. Gogo continued over the next few weeks to keep the offer open which showed Manong how worried the state was about BCM.<sup>322</sup>

Even anti-apartheid states in the international community like Sweden and its various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) recognised and respected BCM. According to Swedish historian Tor Sellstrom, when the Swedish state finally recognised the ANC-SA as the leading South African liberation organisation in November 1974, they already given BCM 175,000 SEK in aid, 25,000 SEK more than the ANC-SA had received up until that point.<sup>323</sup> In Sellstrom's view, 'The most important reason for the comparatively late assistance to ANC... was the liberation movement's precarious situation in the 1970s'. This led many in the Swedish government like First Secretary Govan Hasselmark, who worked in Sweden's Tanzanian embassy, to remark in November 1975 that both the ANC-SA and PAC were ineffective organisations. Instead of recognizing the ANC-SA as the government was doing, Hasselmark believed BCM/SASO needed to be given more attention as they were the most active organisations inside South Africa. This outlook was not isolated, it was supported by the international secretary of the Swedish Metalworkers Union who visited South Africa in early 1975.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), pp. 35-36.

<sup>323</sup> T. Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II: Solidarity and Assistance 1970-1994* (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), pp. 400-401.

<sup>324</sup> Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, pp. 409-413, 544-547, 561.

This expansion of the Black Consciousness project formed an important backdrop for the eventual five-year banning orders given to Nengwekhulu, Pityana, Strini Moodley, Biko, Jerry Modisane, Mafuna, Saths Cooper, and Drake Koka in March 1973.<sup>325</sup> In its aftermath even the ANC-SA's National Executive Committee (NEC) was forced to admit that, 'In the last few years... there has come into being a number of black organisations whose programmes, by espousing the democratic anti-racist positions that the ANC fights for, identify them as part of the genuine forces of the **revolution** [emphasis in original]'.<sup>326</sup> Later, this praise of BCM by the ANC-SA turned to rejection as unbeknownst to them while sitting in jail in Johannesburg a recently re-arrested Mafuna was plotting his escape from South Africa in order to form an armed wing.

Little is known about an important interaction he had during his short prison term stint in the middle of 1973 with PAC members Mark Shinnars, Isaac Mafadzi and Dikgang Moseneke who were being held there as they transferred out of Robben Island.<sup>327</sup> While locked in separate cells, Mafuna remembered that there were times during their morning or afternoon walks when 'we were locked out together at the same time... So we were able to have some exchanges that were not deep enough. That were not precise enough'. The PAC activists wanted to know from him what the mood was inside the country 'and I [Mafuna] was able to feed them the idea that people are more than ready and are tired of the fact that nothing is happening... We promised each other to have a follow up as soon as I was released'.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> WHP A2675/III/751, 'Memorandum by SASO: In Detention for their Country', March 1973, pp. 1-2.

<sup>326</sup> NACHES Collection, 'Armed Seizure of Power: Statement by the National Executive of the ANC', *Sechaba*, Vol. 7, No. 6, June 1972, p. 2.

<sup>327</sup> Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 22; Welile Nhlapo Interview, pp. 14-15.

<sup>328</sup> Bokwe Mafuna Interview, p. 3.

However, after his release his banning orders meant he was unable to go and meet them to continue the conversation. In his stead, he sent his now trusted Lieutenants Tebogo Mafole and Welile Nhlapo to speak with them to gauge their readiness to perhaps depart the country together.<sup>329</sup> They also carried Mafuna's message to the rest of the "Small Broederbond" who were banned informing them of his plans to leave the country, Mafuna also wanted to know their thoughts on his desire to find the armed struggle or form an armed wing. Besides Nengwekhulu, the message back from everyone else was they were not ready to leave the country. Mafuna recalls that Nhlapo told him that Biko 'said that he did not think it was the right time, but he would not stand in front of us and stop us'.<sup>330</sup> Although this cannot be seen as the development of a faction or split within BC, it does clearly indicate a difference of opinion and strategy among some of the founding minds of Black Consciousness.<sup>331</sup> Nengwekhulu himself later recalled that among the "Small Broederbond" Mafuna was always 'the activist; somebody who wanted armed struggle. He wanted to fight'.<sup>332</sup>

As an only child, Welile Nhlapo was unable to leave with Mafuna due to the failing health of his single mother. He would leave in the middle of 1974 after his mother passed away of a heart-attack. This is of importance because it speaks to the gendered elements of even who could join an armed wing in exile. In families with daughters and sons, the sons would be the ones more likely to leave in part because daughters were expected to stay behind and take care of parents or their own kids. Nhlapo was an only child and his

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<sup>329</sup> Bokwe Mafuna Interview, pp. 3-4.

<sup>330</sup> Bokwe Mafuna Interview, p. 4.

<sup>331</sup> WHP A2675/I/3, 'Interview with Steve Biko by Gail Gerhart', October 24th, 1972 (full interview), pp. 31-32.

<sup>332</sup> G. Houston, ed., X. Mangcu and B. Maaba interview, 'Nengwekhulu, Harry', *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, p.560.

mother was single so he had to stay behind to take care of her which delayed his flight into exile with Mafuna and the rest. Countless women, and most assuredly a number of men, faced similar situations throughout the history of the African Liberation Movements and it is important to understand this when we discuss how gendered the movement was.

Despite having to stay behind to take care of his sick mother, Nhlapo would play a central role in planning Mafuna's escape. He and Mafole, who was ready to leave, planned their route out of Johannesburg through to Lobatse, Botswana where they had heard the liberation movements were located. In addition to wanting to find the liberation movements and see what was happening as it pertained to armed struggle, they also wanted to find out what happened to Mokoape, Gwaza and the others who had left the previous year as there had been some rumours that they had been killed by the ANC-SA/MK.<sup>333</sup> In addition to Mafole, Mafuna and Nengwekhulu, the younger sister of Debs Matshoba, Nosipho Matshoba, also came with them. She seemed to have been working closely with the founding members of the BPC in 1972 and 1973 and is listed in the minutes of some of those meetings as a Typist.<sup>334</sup> These relationships are important to understand as in exile Mafole, Nhlapo and Matshoba were some of the few Bokwe Mafuna trusted explicitly and they formed the core of what would become known as the Bokwe Group.

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<sup>333</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 8.

<sup>334</sup> WHP A2675/III/282, 'Minutes of the First National Congress of the Black People's Convention', December 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, 1972, p.3; WHP A2675/III/753, 'Minutes of the Proceeding of the 4<sup>th</sup> General Students Council of the South African Students' Organisation', July 14<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1973, pp. 4-5.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Arming the Movement: The formation of the Bokwe Group/Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF), September 1973 – September 1976**

#### **Brief Literature Review**

Continuing our narrative of the departure of Mafuna, Nengwekhulu, Mafole and Matshoba as they left South Africa for Botswana, this chapter will explore attempts by these Black Consciousness (BC) cadres to form an independent armed wing in exile in the mid-1970s. Upon their arrival in Botswana in September 1973, this group of activists set out to organize a broad South African/Azanian Liberation Front with the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) and Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). When this failed, they formed the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF) to complement the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)'s growing non-violent protest actions inside the country and open a third front of struggle. In time, driven by ideological affinity and practical expediency, the APLF aligned itself with the PAC. Through this alliance they were able to send cadres for military training to camps in Libya and Syria. The PAC interpreted this alliance as having assimilated the APLF into its structures, yet, they remained independent causing conflict between the two. Between this disagreement and crippling infighting within the PAC itself, the APLF abandoned the alliance. In its aftermath some of its members joined the better organised but ideologically suspect ANC-

SA. As a result, the APLF had effectively been disbanded as the Soweto Uprising of June 1976 unfolded before it launched a successful attack inside South Africa.

While the APLF failed militarily, this chapter argues it succeeded as a political project in three ways. To begin with, forming an armed wing helped transform BCM from a non-violent movement into an armed national liberation movement on par, albeit briefly, with the PAC and ANC-SA. Additionally, the process of building support for the APLF expanded the politics and presence of Black Consciousness outside South Africa's borders. Lastly, it forced the ANC-SA's armed wing Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) to revamp its armed struggle plans which up to 1976 had been disturbingly uneven.

This global and more militant aspect of BCM's projects, what I argue was an extension of their internal organising, remains little known or explored. As previous chapters have already outlined, scholars like Gail Gerhart, Daniel Magaziner, Julian Brown and Leslie Hadfield have conducted research primarily on BCM's evolution, student activism, theological interventions, and rural community programs.<sup>335</sup> Others, mostly from the activist tradition of BC, have focused on exploring the life, politics and legacies of BCM and excavating the life of Steve Biko.<sup>336</sup> At the same time, centring the exile experience, newer research on South Africa's armed struggle has emerged offering fresh insights into the inner workings and missions of Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) and the

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<sup>335</sup> G. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: An Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979); D. Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968-1977* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2010); L. Hadfield, *Liberation and Development: Black Consciousness Community Programs in South Africa* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2016); J. Brown, *The Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976* (Johannesburg, James Currey, 2016).

<sup>336</sup> A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander, and N. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); X. Mangcu, *Biko: A Biography* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2012).



Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA).<sup>337</sup> While these new insights have added depth and complexity to our understanding of the uneven development of South Africa's armed struggle, none have engaged in a sustained excavation of BCM's contribution to the armed struggle.<sup>338</sup> Lastly, while writings on Black Internationalism have praised and incorporated the political action of Steve Biko and the rebellion of the Soweto students into an understanding of what Cedric Robinson once termed the Black Radical Tradition (BRT), they too have overlooked attempts by BCM elements to form an armed wing.<sup>339</sup>

The absence of systematic research on the APLF in the vast literature on South Africa's freedom struggle is peculiar given a number of primary documents and secondary sources reference its existence. Early mentions can be found in the late 1970s in ANC-SA reports to senior leadership on BC activities in Botswana.<sup>340</sup> Former APLF members who joined the ANC-SA/MK, Welile Nhlapo and Tebogo Mafole, chart the development of

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<sup>337</sup> T. Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Vol. II: Solidarity and Assistance 1970-1994* (Stockholm, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), pp. 394-579, 698-863; K. Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1959-1994* (Switzerland, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2009); H. Spire and C. Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives* (South Africa, UCT Press, 2013); L. White and M. Lerner, 'Introduction: Mobile Soldiers and the Un-National Liberation of Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 6 (2014), pp. 1271-1274; G. Houston, 'Military bases and camps of the liberation movement, 1961-1990', Democracy, Governance, and Service Delivery (DGSD), Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013), available at [www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/ktree-doc/13802](http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/ktree-doc/13802), retrieved February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015; S. Ndlovu, G. Houston, and B. Magubane, 'The South African Liberation Struggle', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries* (continued), Vol. 3 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 539-745; T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town, Penguin Books, 2016); also see the impressive volumes of the Road to Democracy in South Africa.

<sup>338</sup> *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 3, International Solidarity*, Part I and 2 (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2008). In over 1,000 pages there is no mention of the support given to BCM organisations by European groups like the Red Army Faction in East Germany or Palestinian groups like the PFLP/PFLP High Command.

<sup>339</sup> C. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000, orig. 1983); M. West, W. Martin, F. Wilkins, eds., *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2009)

<sup>340</sup> ANC Archives, Fort Hare University, Alice, South Africa (hereafter ANC Archives): OTP/035/0304/01, D. Gadibone and B. Nguna, 'The Joint Statement', 9/7/1977, pp. 1-5; ANC Archives Lusaka Mission Part II (hereafter LUM) 088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, 'The Exile: Black Consciousness Movement Students', 6/12/77, pp. 1-5.

Black Consciousness groups in exile from 1973 to 1976. This was followed by a report written by ANC-SA underground activists D. Gadibone and B. Ngunu who were assigned to spy on BCM groups in Botswana. While they mostly followed the chronology of Nhlapo and Mafole, their overview painted a more disapproving narrative driven by their suspicion that Steve Biko was a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Whereas both are useful as historical documents, neither provide detailed accounts of why the APLF/Bokwe Group formed, how it grew, why it fell, and what its impact was.

The next fleeting engagement with this group of BCM activists came from Mosibudi Mangena's first autobiography in which he mentions his own discovery of the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF, official name of the Bokwe Group). Prior to becoming the new President of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) in exile and attempting to form a new armed wing in the 1980s, he had no knowledge of the APLF.<sup>341</sup> A few years later Nhlapo, Thenjiwe Mtintso, and Keith Mokoape – all former Black Consciousness activists who joined the ANC-SA – wrote a chapter summarizing the movement's contributions to South Africa's armed struggle in an edited volume entitled *Bounds of Possibility*.<sup>342</sup> Here the authors sketch how some of them, in this case Nhlapo, obtained military training through the PAC in Libya but after a fallout eventually joined the ANC-SA. More recently an article by G. Houston, T. Platjje and T. April on the camps and training programs of APLA briefly discusses how in 1975 the PAC went with a group

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<sup>341</sup> M. Mangena, *On Your Own: Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa/Azania* (Braamfontein, Skotaville Publishers, 1989), pp. 150-151.

<sup>342</sup> K. Mokoape, T. Mtintso, and W. Nhlapo, 'Towards the Armed Struggle' in B. Pityana, M. Ramphela, M. Mpumwana, and L. Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town, David Phillip Publishers, 1991), pp. 137-142.

of SASO activists from Botswana for military training in Libya.<sup>343</sup> In 2016 Mosibudi Mangena released an updated autobiography where he marginally expands on his earlier engagement with the APLF.<sup>344</sup> As his focus is more on how the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) evolved in the post-1994 period, the details of how APLF was formed, why, and for how long was not covered.

This begs the question, why is reconstructing a history of this attempt by BC cadres to form an armed wing, that was ultimately unsuccessful, important? To begin with, excavating the work of the APLF illuminates BCM's rich Third World internationalism beyond their powerful internal activist projects. Additionally, an analysis of the APLF puts into context how other South Africans responded to the relative inability of MK and APLA from the mid-1960s up to the Soweto Uprising to effectively launch armed actions against the apartheid regime.<sup>345</sup>

This chapter will begin by tracking five Black Consciousness activists as they entered Botswana in September 1973.<sup>346</sup> It will then examine some of the challenges they

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<sup>343</sup> G. Houston, T. ka Plaatjie and T. April, 'Military Training and camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961-1981', *Historia*, 60, 2, November 2015, pp. 42-43.

<sup>344</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches: A Courageous Journey by South African Patriots* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2015), 59-60.

<sup>345</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2013), pp. 101-106.

<sup>346</sup> Efforts were made in this article to balance both oral testimony and archival research in order to construct as accurate a picture of events as possible. Each piece of evidence radiates from particular concerns, biases, stresses and pressures of those who constructed them and so generally neither was used unless multiple sources matched what they were saying. Particularly as it pertains to testimonies given under interrogation a careful process was used to determine which documents were more reliable than others. During the interrogations a number of dynamics were at play. On the one hand those being tortured did not want to reveal all that they knew, or did not know, about attempts to organise a BCM inspired armed wing. At the same time, some did succumb to the torture. For those who did, it becomes difficult to tell whether they admitted to certain things because they were violently coerced to, as they claimed, or because this was actually the truth. On the other hand, the security forces were able to eventually piece together elements of what the Bokwe Group was doing and so their presumptions about what was happening give us an interesting insight into their fears about this movement, whether true or unfounded. Moreover, multiple testimonies were given in the months leading up to the trial and the lawyers on the case independently formulated their own sequence of events based on their personal discussions with their clients after months of torture. This

faced trying to construct an armed wing, forge international support structures, and build internal networks. This will be followed by a more in depth analysis of the trainings they went through in Libya and Syria while also exploring in detail why some left to join the ANC-SA/MK. The conclusion will assess the importance of this movement, why it failed, and what lessons can be learned from this fascinating, but little known project of BCM.

### **Find their Way: Early Trials for BCM Exiles, September 1973 – February 1974**

Bokwe Mafuna, Nosipho Matshoba, Tebogo Mafole, and Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu arrived in Botswana in mid-September 1973 after a harrowing escape from South Africa. While exile had always been accepted as a possibility, banning orders given to Mafuna and Nengwekhulu in February 1973 expedited this process.<sup>347</sup> Determined to advance the struggle for Black Consciousness in exile as a support to the internal struggle against apartheid, the four activists initially settled in Lobatse to attempt to reach out to the liberation movements as well as sort out their refugee status. A few days later they were joined by another Black Consciousness (BC) activist, Onkgopotse Abraham Tiro, who had received word he was to be banned leading him to skip the country as well.<sup>348</sup> As Tiro had

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need not make these documents the truth, as the objective of the accused was to not be convicted and not sell-out their comrades, all complicated testimonies were always given. Due to these complexities, and confusions, oral interviews and other archival sources were used to match what was said in the various statements to establish its veracity. In other sections of this chapter and dissertation, especially those relying more on the memory of various participants, if archival evidence could not be found especially in establishing dates of certain events or decisions, multiple oral interviews were read together and compared to try to approximate the precise chronology of events as possible.

<sup>347</sup> Botswana National Archives (hereafter BNA), Office of the President (hereafter OP), Lobatse Refugee Advisory Committee, 'Bokwe James Mafuna: Notice in Terms of Section 10QUAT(1) of the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950 (Act No. 44 of 1950)', February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1973, pp. 1-7; BNA OP, Lobatse Refugee Advisory Committee, 'Randwedi (misspell in original document) Harry Nengwekhulu: Notice in Terms of Section 10(1)(a) of the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950 (Act No. 44 of 1950), pp. 1-6.

<sup>348</sup> BNA OP27/21, Gaborone Refugee Advisory Committee (Reports), 'Application for Political Asylum: Tiro Onkgopotse Abram', October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1973, p. 1; BNA OP16/1, Lobatse Refugee Advisory Committee,

deeper connections in Gaborone with the University of Botswana given his position as President of the Southern African Student Movement (SnASM), he settled at the house of Mr. K. H. Mogapi of St. Joseph's College to be closer to the students of the university and local high schools.<sup>349</sup>

For these new exiles, especially those who had grown up in the burgeoning metropolis of Johannesburg, living in Gaborone and Lobatse was a jarring experience. Founded in 1964 when it became clear independence for Botswana was imminent, Gaborone by 1974 had a population of only 18,000; Lobatse was even smaller. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu remembers that, 'we expected to find [a] small and younger Pretoria in Lobatse, here we arrive, in a one street town [laughter]'.<sup>350</sup> In addition to being small and very rural, Botswana did not have a standing army, instead, it had a Police Mobile Unit (PMU) comprised partially of local volunteers. Moreover, as the discovery of diamonds in exportable quantities only occurred in 1982, throughout the 1960s and 1970s this landlocked nation was surrounded on all sides by white minority regimes placing it in a very vulnerable geo-political and economic situation.<sup>351</sup> In spite of this, Botswana offered

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'Application for Political Asylum: Bokwe James Mafuna', September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1973, p. 1; BNA OP14/1, Lobatse Refugee Advisory Committee, 'Application for Political Asylum: Nosipho Matshoba', September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1973, p. 1; BNA OP15/1, Lobatse Refugee Advisory Committee, 'Application for Political Asylum: Randwedzi Harry Nengwekhulu', September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1973, p. 1; BNA OP/17/1, Lobatse Refugee Advisory Committee, 'Application for Political Asylum: Denis Tebogo Mafole', September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1973, p.1.

<sup>349</sup> BNA OP27/21, Gaborone Refugee Advisory Committee (Reports), 'Application for Political Asylum: Tiro Onkgopotse Abram', October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1973, p. 1; ANC Archives LUM088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, 'The Exile: Black Consciousness Movement Students', 6/12/77, pp. 1-5. I have chosen to abbreviate the Southern African Students Movement (SnASM) because it is often confused with SASM, the South African Students Movement. In a number of interviews and academic pieces these two are conflated with Tiro at times being constructed as the founding President of SASM which is not the case. See WHP A2675/III/788, 'The Southern African Students Movement: Constitution', Annex VIII, n. d., pp. 1-9.

<sup>350</sup> Toivo Asheke interview with Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu (hereafter Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu interview), Pretoria, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, p. 21.

<sup>351</sup> T. Tlou and P. Mgadla and Research Team Leaders, 'Botswana's Role in the Liberation of Southern Africa', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 1960-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 5 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 271-355.

the BC activists a freedom they could not find in apartheid South Africa. They were finally removed from the constant direct surveillance of Special Branch (SB) forces and could more easily access books on Marxism, Black Power, Maoism, Vietnam, African Liberation and other radical materials and not fear arrest. Furthermore, they could actively engage with banned organisations, travel relatively freely around Botswana and learn the international political landscape.

However, disaster struck in Gaborone on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, when Tiro opened an IUEF package mailed to him and was killed in the ensuing blast of a hidden parcel bomb.<sup>352</sup> In later years the South African Bureau for State Security (BOSS) admitted to having sent the bomb, however at the time, they denied all accusations.<sup>353</sup> Not being fooled by the denials from BOSS, Tiro's assassination was a wake-up call to Mafuna, Mafole, Matshoba, and Nengwekhulu – if they wished to go down the path of armed struggle, their lives were literally on the line.<sup>354</sup> They were forced to re-evaluate what it meant to have a secure group and it re-enforced the reality that they, despite being seasoned labour and student activists, knew little about what it meant to create, run, and execute a guerrilla movement.<sup>355</sup> It also raised difficult questions about how democratic and open they could/should be as an organisation whilst embarking on this very different form of radical politics. It was also felt that they would be better able to manage their safety in Gaborone

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<sup>352</sup> WHP, South African Institute of Race Relations (hereafter SAIRR) AD1912/239, 'Tiro Bomb "A Real Killer"', *The Star*, 4 February 1974; WHP, SAIRR, AD1912/239, P. Wellman and I. Segola, 'Bomb Kills Ex-Saso Leader', *Rand Daily Mail*, 4 February 1974.

<sup>353</sup> T. Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II: Solidarity and Assistance 1970-1994* (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), p. 555.

<sup>354</sup> WHP A2675/1/17, 'Tom Karis and Gail Gerhart interview with Tebogo Mafole, March 24th, 1992, New York City', p. 6.

<sup>355</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Bokwe Mafuna, December 7th, 2016, Johannesburg, p.5.

instead of Lobatse so they moved to the capital shortly after the assassination of their comrade.

Inside South Africa, Tiro's assassination infuriated youths and BC activists. Many began to openly question whether they as Black South Africans would, 'ALLOW these KILLERS of OUR TIRO's to continue daily with their MURDEROUS plans and not REPLY in a manner that they and the whole WORLD will see that WE are prepared to FIGHT for that which is RIGHT'.<sup>356</sup> Even for those who never formally joined BCM, such as Stanley Manong who we met in our previous chapter, 'the assassination of Tiro and Boy Mvemve, coupled with the listening to Radio Freedom marked the beginning of our active political involvement'.<sup>357</sup> Upon hearing the news of Tiro's assassination South African Student Movement (SASM) activist Omry Makgoale, who was schooling in Orlando where Tiro had previously taught, remembers that his colleagues 'were very unhappy about it, we did talk about it in school... one of my teachers and the principal, Mr. Mathabathe... actually went to Botswana to go and bury him'.<sup>358</sup>

The funeral for Tiro in Botswana drew thousands of mourners, many of whom came from South Africa.<sup>359</sup> Mpotseng Kgokong, a SASO/BPC activist expelled from Turfloop during the Tiro Affair, and Pumza Dyantyi, who had briefly engaged with various BCM

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<sup>356</sup> Gail M. Gerhart Collection BC 2A/28: Reel to Keel No.9: Manuscripts and Archives, UCT, 'SASO document: Untitled', n. d. probably February 1974 given Tiro assassination, p.1.

<sup>357</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die: An Autobiography of a former Commander of uMkhonto we Sizwe* (South Africa, Nkululeko Publishers, 2015), p. 39.

<sup>358</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Omry Makgoale Interview, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Johannesburg, p. 3. Makgoale has done similar interviews after his release from Quatro in 1989 although nothing as detailed as mine on Black Consciousness, see ANC Archives OTP/093/047/08, R. Johnson, 'Suppressed voice of ANC waits to speak', *The Independent*, Sunday 2 June, 1991, p.5.

<sup>359</sup> WHP A2675/III/273, T. Mbanjwa, ed., *Black Review 1974/1975* (Durban, Black Community Programmes, 1976), p. 111.

organisations, came to Botswana together from South Africa to attend.<sup>360</sup> Dyantyi had briefly met Bokwe Mafuna and his wife Jane Mafuna in November/December of 1972 and then Mafuna again fleetingly towards the end of 1973 in Johannesburg. While at the funeral she again met Mafuna as well as Tebogo Mafole and Nosipho Matshoba.<sup>361</sup> She stayed with this group in Botswana for a few days after the funeral and began to cultivate a friendship with them. Because Dyantyi had a passport, over the next few months she was able to regularly visit them on weekends.<sup>362</sup>

### **Diverging Visions of BCM in Exile: Bokwe Mafuna and Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu**

Shortly after the funeral of Tiro, Mafuna travelled to Lusaka to attend another funeral. A week before Tiro's assassination Mafuna's brother-in-law Boy Mvemve, MK name John Dube, was killed by a parcel bomb. At the funeral in Lusaka he met a number of ANC-SA/MK comrades, some of whom he knew from his days living and working inside South Africa. After unsuccessfully trying to recruit him to their organisation James Stuart gave Mafuna a portion of *The Collected Works of Lenin* to help sharpen and broaden his understanding of revolutionary politics.<sup>363</sup> Upon Bokwe Mafuna's return to Gaborone he rapidly solidified himself as the leading personality among BC exiles serious about armed struggle.<sup>364</sup> In addition to his extensive work as a member of the "Small

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<sup>360</sup> WHP A2675/II/7, State Versus JM Molokeng and 6 Others, Yate MF, 'S.V. Joseph Molokeng and others (NAYO Trial), 1975-1976, hand written notes on trial', pp. n.d., 1-10. Kgokong would later become a leading member of the BCMA.

<sup>361</sup> BNA OP/27/22, Gaborone Refugee Advisory Committee (Reports), 'Confidential: Gaborone Refugee Advisory Committee for Masokoane Glenn Ujeke Ramojile Eric', April 2nd, 1974, p.1.

<sup>362</sup> WHP, State Versus JM Molokeng and 6 Others (hereafter AK3334), File 3, A2, 'Testimony of Pumza Patricia Dyantyi' (hereafter Pumza), n.d., p.1.

<sup>363</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, p. 20.

<sup>364</sup> ANC Archives LUM088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, 'The Exile: Black Consciousness Movement Students', 6/12/77, pp. 1-5.



Broederbond”, according to Musa Mdlalose who was soon to join the Bokwe Group, people turned to Mafuna because he ‘had the experience that we did not have. His experience came from his days working as a reporter for the *Rand Daily Mail*... he knew languages... he could speak Xhosa, Tswana, he could speak this and that... even the hierarchy, the authorities in Botswana they respected him because of that’.<sup>365</sup>

However, in the wake of Tiro’s assassination Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu became the international face of Black Consciousness and it was with him that organisations like the International University Exchange Fund (IUEF) and the World University Service (WUS) began to directly communicate with.<sup>366</sup> In addition to this international support and access, Nengwekhulu had contacts in the ANC-SA with Thabo Mbeki, the PAC through David Sibeko, and with the Algerians.<sup>367</sup> Mafuna and the others wanted him to use these connections to help them smuggle students abroad for military training; however, Nengwekhulu refused. In a recent interview with Nengwekhulu he explained that he did not think it was possible for them to build an armed force, keep it secret, and attack the apartheid regime effectively. Rather, he believed they should focus on building a legal aboveground Black Consciousness organisation in exile to support the internal movement.<sup>368</sup> Additionally, while Mafuna believed forming a BCM armed wing could serve as a means to unifying the fractured liberation movements, Nengwekhulu felt its

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<sup>365</sup> Musa Mdlalose Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Pretoria, December 13th, 2016, p. 11.

<sup>366</sup> ANC Archives OTP/035/0304/01, D. Gadibone and B. Nguna, ‘The Joint Statement’, 9/7/1977, pp. 1-5

<sup>367</sup> G. Houston, ed., X. Mangcu and B. Maaba interview, ‘Nengwekhulu, Harry’, *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, p. 556.

<sup>368</sup> WHP A2675/III/761, ‘Mr. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa to the Assembly of the IUEF held in Geneva, November 22nd, 1976’, p. 6; Toivo Asheeke interview with Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu.

formation ran counter to Black Consciousness's stated aim of bringing the various movements together as it would make them competitors with MK and APLA.<sup>369</sup>

In the same interview Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu says he came to this conclusion after he had made contact with the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) of Algeria to train him, Mafuna, and the others in guerrilla warfare. This was apparently agreed to and some arrangements were made to get this small group to Algeria. Unfortunately, the ANC-SA Representative in Algiers caught wind of this plan and successfully suppressed it. When this happened Nengwekhulu thought there was no other way to get this type of training and decided to accept a researcher position at the University of Botswana. He promptly moved out of the house where all four had been staying and began renting a place close to the main campus.<sup>370</sup>

His actions shocked the other BCM activists who were now unofficially being referred to as the Bokwe Group. Unlike Nengwekhulu, their brief time in exile had convinced them that forming an armed wing under BCM was the best way to unite the fractured South African movements. As they continued to read and digest revolutionary texts and engage in deeper discussions with other liberation movement activists in Botswana, they began to gravitate towards the praxis of Mao Tse-tung, Amilcar Cabral, Ho Chi Minh, and the concept of a "People's War".<sup>371</sup> While scholar Xolela Mangcu has striven to centre the evolution of BC as a political ideology from within radical South

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<sup>369</sup> WHP A2675/1/17, 'Gail Gerhart (hereafter GG) interview with Bokwe Mafuna, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1990, Harare', p. 18; Bokwe Mafuna Interview, pp. 4-5, Randwezi Nengwekhulu interview, pp. 9-10.

<sup>370</sup> ANC Archives LUM088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, 'The Exile' pp. 1-5; Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu interview, pp. 9-10. Despite this difference in opinion, Nengwekhulu remained an outspoken BCM spokesman and was always willing to help individuals from the movement in Botswana with money, a place to stay, or in dealing with the authorities.

<sup>371</sup> Note, this takes place about five years before MK began its own rethink after their trip to Vietnam.

African, primarily Xhosa, traditions of activism and intellectual thought, this has constrained our ability to appreciate BC's deep interlocution with radical currents across the Third World.<sup>372</sup> This engagement of BCM with Third World radical currents lends weight to recent arguments of scholars like Mabogo More who centres both local and global intellectual currents in the formation and Black Consciousness in South Africa.<sup>373</sup>

### **Beginnings of a Third Force: Engagements with Thabo Mbeki and the ANC-SA**

Despite their disagreements with Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, Mafuna and the others did believe it was necessary to meet with the older liberation movements in order to find ways to unite them. As Thabo Mbeki was a frequent visitor to Gaborone he and other ANC-SA cadres had a number of conversations with Mafuna and his Lieutenants about their plans to obtain military training. Surprisingly to them, Mbeki had a firm grasp of Black Consciousness ideology, Marxist-Leninism, and the politics of the Black Panther Party. Snuki Zikalala, one of the key members of the ANC-SA/MK underground in Botswana in the 1970s who worked with Mbeki remembers 'discussions would go on for hours, with Mbeki explaining in detail the importance of a well-organised front to fight against apartheid'.<sup>374</sup> Mbeki felt they could find an ideological home within the ANC-SA and obtain the military training they desired. However, to get this material and logistical support he insisted they join the ANC-SA as individuals, not as a group like the South

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<sup>372</sup> Mangcu, *Biko*, pp. 33-78.

<sup>373</sup> M. More, 'The Intellectual Foundations of the Black Consciousness Movement', in P. Vale, L. Hamilton, and E. Prinsloo, eds., *Intellectual Traditions in South Africa: Ideas, Individuals, and Institutions* (Durban, KwaZulu Natal Press, 2014), pp. 173-196.

<sup>374</sup> S. Zikalala, 'Snuki Zikalala' in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, eds., *The Thabo Mbeki I Know* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa), 2016, p. 320.

African Communist Party (SACP) and South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) had done. Despite the deep respect many in the Bokwe Group had gained for Mbeki, this offer was rejected.<sup>375</sup>

This offer was rejected for a number of reasons. To begin with, the Bokwe Group believed the ANC-SA/MK was disproportionately dependent on the USSR for materials, money, training, ideological influence, and other resources. This was concerning to BCM not because the comrades from the USSR were white as authors such as Vladimir Shubin have argued or because they were influenced by anti-Communist propaganda such as that of M. Norval.<sup>376</sup> It was influenced by their analysis of ‘Moscow as revisionist in a sense, even in the communist context’ given its repressions of radical movements in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.<sup>377</sup> Since the SACP often followed the directives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and seemed to be dominated by whites, they were concerned about their own ideological independence if they joined as individuals and not as a group. Connected to this, they, in-line with the PAC, took issue with the Freedom Charter clause championed by the ANC-SA which stated ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white’ as it was incompatible with their vision of taking land from the whites to redistribute it to the Blacks.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Bokwe Mafuna Interview; ANC Archives OTP/035/0304/01, D. Gadibone and B. Nguna, ‘The Joint Statement’, 9/7/1977, pp. 1-5; ANC Archives LSM 104/0038/01, ‘Present Tasks of the Azanian Revolution’, in *Ikwezi*, October 1979, No. 13, p. 32.

<sup>376</sup> M. Norval, *Inside the ANC: The Evolution of a Terrorist Organisation* (Washington, DC, Selous Foundation, 1990); Shubin, *ANC*, pp. 124-135.

<sup>377</sup> WHP A2675/II/3, Gail Gerhart interview with Steve Biko, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972, p.2; ‘Speech by Reverend Mashwabada Mayatula, first national congress of the Black People’s Convention, Hammanskraal, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1972’, *From Protest to Challenge*, pp. 519-524.

<sup>378</sup> ‘The Freedom Charter’, in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964, vol.3, Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964* (Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1977), pp. 205-208; WHP A2675/III/753, ‘Minutes of the Proceeding of the 4<sup>th</sup> General Students Council of the South African Students’ Organisation’, July 14<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1973, pp. 23-24.

Most importantly, none had seen any successful MK operations carried out inside the country.<sup>379</sup> Welile Nhlapo recalls their ‘impression at that time was that the ANC was not serious’.<sup>380</sup> For them, as well as most South Africans, most of what they knew about the armed struggle in southern Africa came from the actions of other African liberation movements and to a lesser extent the armed actions of Poqo.<sup>381</sup> Tied to this was their rejection of MK camps and ANC-SA/MK leadership being headquartered in Tanzania and Zambia, far from the borders of South Africa. The BCM exiles believed this distance from South Africa hindered the ability of the military and political leadership to be directly engaged with and guided by the popular forces inside the country. In their opinion, this was one of the main reasons why MK and APLA had been unsuccessful and they were determined not to make the same mistake with their war effort.<sup>382</sup>

### **Forging the APLF in the Shadows of Botswana: March 1974 – February 1975**

It was of prime importance not only for their safety from South African Defence Force (SADF) attacks and Special Branch (SB) infiltration, but for the continued good-will of the Botswana government that their attempts to build an armed wing in Botswana be hidden. According to APLF members numerous Botswana officials and citizens knew their intentions but agreed to turn a blind eye towards it if they were discrete. This was a similar

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<sup>379</sup> Mafuna Interview, p. 5; S. Zikalala, ‘Snuki Zikalala’ in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, eds., *The Thabo Mbeki I Know*, p. 321.

<sup>380</sup> W. Nhlapo, ‘Welile Nhlapo’ in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, eds., *The Thabo Mbeki I Know*, p. 270

<sup>381</sup> WHP A2675/1/17, GG interview with Bokwe Mafuna, p. 8; S. Manong, *If We Must Die*, pp. 22-23

<sup>382</sup> Note, this was one of the central critiques of the Hani Memorandum in 1969, the leadership of both the army and political wing were constantly traveling and were far from home hence they were unable to effectively think through and build the armed struggle at home. See, H. Macmillan, ‘Commentary: The “Hani Memorandum” – introduced and annotated’, *Transformation*, 69, 2009, pp. 106-129.

strategy employed by a number of small states bordering South Africa such as Lesotho and Swaziland who were heavily dependent on South Africa economically and outmatched militarily, but were determined to find some way to support the various liberation movements.<sup>383</sup>

Given this need for secrecy the process to join the Bokwe Group was stringent in order to ensure those interested were ready to dedicate themselves to the discipline required to form and maintain an effective guerrilla army free from spies, indiscipline, and overreliance on foreign backers.<sup>384</sup> At its peak they had successfully recruited over one-hundred members and were forced sometime towards the end of 1974 to form a Central Committee of which Mafuna, Mafole, and Matshoba were members. They also created task specific committees to collectively share responsibility for the running of the movement. Yet, as the Bokwe Group was still very inexperienced in the realm of armed struggle, they continued to read books and pamphlets from across the radical Third World whilst tapping into their own experiences as activists inside the country in order to think through and formulate different ways to organize themselves. Mafuna remembers that,

With the books and with a [the] kind of discussions that were taking place about the role of the people in a liberation war, that was a new idea for us. The Maoist idea. The ideas of Cabral. These were new ideas for us which made us realize that when we were talking of armed struggle it is not just a question of arming people and training them, and whaap sending them in to go and fight the opposite number and shot them. It is a much more complicated interaction over years with your own people.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> W. Morapedi, 'The Dilemmas of Liberation in Southern Africa: The Case of Zimbabwean Liberation Movements and Botswana, 1960–1979', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38, 1 (2012), pp. 73-90; L. Mothibe and M. Mushonga, 'Lesotho and the struggle for liberation in South Africa' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Vol. 5, African Solidarity, Part I* (Pretoria, UNISA, 2013), pp. 469-502; P. Mgadla and B. Mokopkgosi, 'Botswana and the liberation of South Africa: An evolving story of sacrifice' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Vol. 5, African Solidarity, Part I*, p. 417; T. Simpson, 'The ANC Underground in Swaziland, c. 1975 – 1982', in H. Spire and C. Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 96-116; H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years*, pp. 35-37; Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 9-11.

<sup>384</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 7-8.

<sup>385</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, p. 7.

Eventually they began to sharply differentiate themselves from other BC individuals and South Africans congregating in Botswana. It became increasingly clear to the local population, the government, and some South Africans inside the country that they were different. According to Puli Moloto-Stofile, sister of Papi Moloto a former student of Turfloop who left to join the Bokwe Group, she remembers them as being ‘the more organised group, in the sense they were the more cohesive and structured group’ compared to the others in exile.<sup>386</sup> Although she regularly visited her brother in Gaborone, and heard rumours of their intentions to form an armed wing, she was unable to get direct answers on what they were doing. Even Malusi Mpumlwana, a new SASO activist working under Biko who arrived in Botswana in May/June 1974 to meet the Bokwe Group, found them unwilling to tell him what they were doing.<sup>387</sup>

Some of the houses where Puli and Malusi would have met this militant group had been acquired through the help of Mafuna’s cousin Trevor Duiker. Duiker worked for the government of Botswana and held both South African and Batswana citizenship. He was critical to the Bokwe Group’s plan of staying close to home as he was able to acquire houses for them at affordable prices through his government connections. According to immigration documents from known Bokwe Group cadres such as Welile Nhlapo, House No. 3376, Gaborone was the address of one of their houses.<sup>388</sup> A number of political asylum documents filled out by SASO/BPC comrades seeking to join the Bokwe Group list Duiker’s name and address as the contact and place they were staying in Botswana.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Puli Moloto-Stofile, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, Johannesburg, p. 3.

<sup>387</sup> WHP A2675/I/26, GG interview with Malusi Mpumlwana, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1994, p.1.

<sup>388</sup> BNA OP/27, Confidential Interrogation Report B.P. No. 84, ‘Welile Nhlapo’, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, pp. 1-2.

<sup>389</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, p. 6.

While forming bases in Botswana would be challenging, it was seen as necessary to building the needed support amongst local Batswana so that when they conducted sabotage or attacking missions across the border they could easily disappear among the people to avoid detection. It also meant their leadership could respond quickly and decisively to events taking place inside the country. Consequently, the houses and villages in which they stayed across Gaborone, Mochudi, Lobatse and Tlokweng morphed into a different type of guerrilla camp.<sup>390</sup> Mdlalose remembers the daily regimen of the Bokwe Group in one of these houses in the following way:

Regular day, wake up in the morning, we go to gym, all of us... we come back, you sit down, we listen to the news. We wake up *early* in the morning, come back sit here, listen to the news. And then we analyse the news, what it means to us. In a group, a big group. We did not have furniture, this is a big group. And others are preparing breakfast and all of that.<sup>391</sup>

Their exercises consisted of running, jogging, and strength work-outs, for cover, they claimed to be a football team in training. After preparing breakfast they would sit together and listen to the news on the radio, mostly BBC shows on Africa and South African news. All cadres, regardless of gender, participated in the preparing of each meal and in the clean-up duties. This would be followed by an hour long discussion about what the news meant in relation to their struggle. Upon the conclusion of these long discussions time was then set aside to read the texts they acquired while those who had jobs left for them; others were free to roam around Gaborone as long as they did not abuse alcohol and/or cause trouble.<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Charles Mthombeni interview, p. 11-12.

<sup>391</sup> Musa Mdlalose interview, p. 9.

<sup>392</sup> WHP A2675/I/26, 'Gail Gerhart interview with Malusi Mpumlwana, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1994', p.1; Charles Mthombeni Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Soweto, Orlando East, 14:03, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016, pp. 10-12; Musa Mdlalose interview, pp. 9-10.



Charles Mthombeni recalls that,

the way they lived, they did not live in a typical camp. So a house like this [referring to his own house where the interview was conducted] would be a camp. With its own regime, structure and political commissar, social commissar and so on. So when you came in you would find us living like this. Even with children or somebody going to work because people were encouraged to find work so that they can get houses, you see, yea to house us.<sup>393</sup>

In theory and practice this idea had potential. The Tswana people living on the borders had historically crossed into South Africa, and vice versa, to conduct trade, go to school, seek medical attention, or just herd their cattle/goats. Until the late 1970s these crossings weren't as closely monitored by the authorities on both sides of the border as they would be in the following decade.<sup>394</sup> The Bokwe Group quickly realised having people based within these Tswana villages as trusted members of their communities would make getting people in and out of the country much easier.<sup>395</sup> More importantly in the short term, it enabled them to briefly host cadres from inside the country who managed to cross the border to meet them. This close interaction with organisations and individuals made it easier for them to quickly create an informal yet active underground in ways the ANC-SA and PAC had failed to do.<sup>396</sup>

### **Building an Underground: NAYO and Molobi/Williams Cell, July 1974 – March 1975**

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<sup>393</sup> Charles Mthombeni interview, p. 10.

<sup>394</sup> T. Tlou and P. Mgadla and Research Team Leaders, 'Botswana's Role in the Liberation of Southern Africa', *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 278-312. For an interesting article on how Batswana chiefs with ties to South Africa helped liberation movements like the ANC-SA see L. Cantwell, 'Chiefly Power in a Frontline State: Kgosi Linchwe II, the Bakgatla and Botswana in the South African Liberation Struggle, 1948-1994', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 2 (2015), pp. 255-272.

<sup>395</sup> *Aluka Project*, Daniel Magaziner interview with Bokwe Mafuna, 2005-11-03, p. 18.

<sup>396</sup> See T. Simpson, 'Military Combat Work: the Reconstitution of the ANC's Armed Underground 1971-1976', *African Studies*, 70, 1 (2011), p. 107; T. Simpson, 'Main Machinery: The ANC's Armed Underground in Johannesburg During the 1976 Soweto Uprising', *African Studies*, 70, 3 (2011), pp. 426-430.

One of the groups that consistently came to Gaborone to meet, discuss, and at times train with the Bokwe Group were members of an underground cell created by Eric Molobi. According to Murphy Morobe, one of the key organisers of the June 16<sup>th</sup> march, Molobi was one of the many youths who was close with Bokwe Mafuna before he had gone into exile. Morobe believed he was recruiting cadres for the Bokwe Group instead of the ANC-SA/MK as has been often assumed.<sup>397</sup> Timothy Williams, a SASO activist who grew into consciousness in the early 1970s, was one of those who joined this cell created by Molobi when it was formed in the weeks following Tiro's funeral. This group would secretly meet to read banned literature provided to them primarily by the Bokwe Group and discuss different ways to liberate South Africa. After the brutal reaction of the state to BCM in the wake of the FRELIMO rallies, as well as the fall of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, many of them began to vigorously embrace the decision to form an independent armed wing as they were growing tired of being beaten and killed by the state with no response from MK or APLA.<sup>398</sup>

Another group the Bokwe Group reached out to and built connections with was the National Youth Organisation (NAYO). In mid-1974 this Dyantyi received a call from Bokwe Mafuna at her place of work, Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, asking her to get a

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<sup>397</sup> WHP A2675/I/25, 'Gail Gerhart interview with Murphy Morobe, Cambridge, Mass., May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1991', p. 15; WHP A2675/I/18, 'Howard Barrell second interview of Mac Maharaj, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1990', p. 376; In this interview with Maharaj he remembers Eric Molobi coming to Robben Island and informing the ANC-SA cadres there that he had been in a delegation to see the ANC-SA to ask that they 'facilitate their training and that they should set up a private, a separate army of their own'. This suggests he was among those in the meetings with Mbeki and Bokwe Mafuna in the mid-1970s.

<sup>398</sup> G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, 'Williams, Timothy', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 4, pp. 753-761. According to Williams, Molobi had attended the funeral of Abraham Tiro in Botswana, there he met Mbeki who gave him some ANC-SA literature while also asking him to build some cells within the country. What Williams did not know was Molobi was closer to Mafuna and instead was building cells for the Bokwe Group.

message to Malebelle Molokeng the President of NAYO.<sup>399</sup> According to MK historian Thula Simpson, during the mid-1970s NAYO was one of the most active BCM organisations operating outside of formal above-ground circles.<sup>400</sup> Dyantyi did not know Molokeng but was friendly with Thato Bereng whom she knew was close to Molokeng. She reached out to Bereng who promptly informed Molokeng about Mafuna's request for a meeting.<sup>401</sup> In mid-September NAYO sent a delegation to Botswana led by Molokeng and guided by Welile Nhlapo to attend the meeting.

During the meeting, Mafuna updated them on some of his group's conversations and discussions with the liberation organisations. He also stressed to the NAYO comrades that they were doing all they could to work for unity among the movements. However, this was proving difficult as the ANC-SA wanted to absorb them. After this, Mafuna broached the topic of conducting military training for South Africans. According to some accounts of this meeting Mafuna claimed to have contacts in Europe who were willing to facilitate this training.<sup>402</sup> Apparently, they 'were prepared to give military and political training to about a hundred people over a period of three months, outside South Africa'.<sup>403</sup> They agreed to have deeper discussions later on this issue which shows that like Molobi's group, NAYO was looking for other ways to carry out resistance against apartheid. Unlike

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<sup>399</sup> Some historians have noted attempts by NAYO to organise their own armed wing, what they did not know, or have not written about, was they were engaged in these conversations and actions due to their relationship with the Bokwe Group, see T. Simpson, 'Military Combat Work: the Reconstitution of the ANC's Armed Underground 1971-1976', *African Studies*, 70, 1 (2011), pp. 105-107.

<sup>400</sup> Simpson, 'Military Combat Work', p. 105.

<sup>401</sup> WHP AK3334/3/2, 'Pumza', n.d., p.3.

<sup>402</sup> Unsure of who these allies were but according to Charles Mthombeni they had made contacts with the Red Brigades in Italy and the Red Army faction in Germany, see Charles Mthombeni interview, p. 10.

<sup>403</sup> WHP AK3334/3/A2, 'Langa', p. 7.

MK or APLA, the APLF in Botswana offered a possible alternative to the non-violent direct action of groups like SASO, BCPs and BPC.

### **A Breakthrough: An Opportunity Presents Itself for Military Training, February – August/September 1975**

In February 1975 Mafuna and Tebogo Mafole, according to Botswana immigration documents, left for studies in Nigeria.<sup>404</sup> In fact, this was an elaborate deception as they were actually headed to Dar es Salaam for a meeting with Tanzanian officials and more than likely a meeting with the PAC. After Dar they were to fly to Beirut to meet some Palestinian groups who had sent word through their European allies that they would be willing to train some of them. The meeting with the Tanzanian officials confirmed the unlikelihood of them ever obtaining funding from the African Liberation Committee (ALC) as they were seen as a group trying to compete with the ANC-SA and PAC. According to a recent interview with Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim and other sources, countries within the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) were divided on which movements they supported and there was a fear that introducing a third South African movement would promote unproductive infighting within the OAU.<sup>405</sup>

Fortunately, the meeting with the PAC was successful as they were able to secure an agreement from Viktor Mayekiso, the PAC representative in Libya, to train the Bokwe

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<sup>404</sup> BNA OP15/1/1.XVI (117), Emigration/Refugees, 'Bokwe James Mafuna', February 6th, 1975, p. 1; BNA OP15/1/1.XVI (116), Emigration/Refugees, 'Denis Tebogo Mafole', February 6th, 1975, p. 1.

<sup>405</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, p. 57; Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 11-15; Toivo Asheeke interview with Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Dar es Salaam, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017; Toivo Asheeke interview with Mzee Butiku, Dar es Salaam, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Also, given the divisions among the Angolan and Zimbabwean movements many in the OAU were averse to recognizing a third South African liberation group.

Group with their own cadres in their newly opened Libyan camp.<sup>406</sup> To the outside world they would be members of the PAC but this was merely a cover as they would retain their independence and be allowed to come back to Botswana to execute their own armed struggle plans. According to Mafuna, Mayekiso also suggested plans be made to conduct joint operations inside South Africa with APLA. These discussions opened up a whole new range of possibilities for APLF and a group was put together to go for training.<sup>407</sup> Despite their commendable achievements, the importance of this alliance cannot be overstated. Mdlalose was clear that before the PAC alliance their own independent discussions of armed struggle were ‘raw, we did not know what is what... we needed somebody to give us guidance’.<sup>408</sup>

The trip to Beirut to reach out to the Palestinians however was not successful. After finalizing the agreement with the Viktor Mayekiso the two APLF activists flew to Beirut via Cairo. When they landed in Beirut their timing could not have been worse as according to Bokwe Mafuna, the Lebanese Civil War had just broken out.<sup>409</sup> Consequently, they were marooned in the airport for a few days and eventually forced to return to Botswana without having spoken with the Palestinians.<sup>410</sup> Though they could not meet the Palestinians, during their time abroad, which also included some time in Rome, Mafuna and Mafole had been able to receive crash courses from European underground leftist

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<sup>406</sup> According to Ndlovu, Houston and Magubane, APLA did not have enough recruits to fill up the camp which pushed them to reach out to the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) and the Bokwe Group for recruits, see S. Ndlovu, G. Houston, and B. Magubane, ‘The South African Liberation Struggle’, in A. Tembe and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 3, p. 611.

<sup>407</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 5-6.

<sup>408</sup> Musa Mdlalose interview, p. 10.

<sup>409</sup> April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1975.

<sup>410</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, p. 14.

groups on how to make fake passports and currency, conduct basic intelligence work, build basic explosives, and construct underground cells.<sup>411</sup>

When Mafuna and Mafole returned to Botswana they added these new lessons to the Bokwe Group's daily regime. Charles Mthombeni remembers that the Bokwe Group helped train 'people from the country. People would come in, get trained, and go back. Like we did. I was trained in how to form cells and then sent back'.<sup>412</sup> While this type of training was not in advanced weapons or explosives it was useful for the recruiting and conscientizing work APLF operatives like Mthombeni were doing throughout 1974, 1975, and parts of 1976.<sup>413</sup>

Regrettably, while Mafuna and Mafole were abroad, Eric Molobi was arrested and brutally beaten by the police. Before succumbing to police torture, he managed to smuggle a letter to his unit stating he was going to break as he could no longer take the torture. This prompted the cell to leave for Botswana immediately.<sup>414</sup> On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1975 Molokeng was arrested by Special Branch. Over the next few weeks and months dozens of activists, including Jane Mafuna, Bokwe's wife, were arrested and detained in connection with the APLF.

### **Achievements and Disenchantments: To Libya and Syria for Guerrilla Training**

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<sup>411</sup> Charles Mthombeni interview, pp. 13-14.

<sup>412</sup> Charles Mthombeni interview, p. 10.

<sup>413</sup> WHP AK3334/3/A2, S. Chetty and R. Alloway, 'Accused Statements to Defence', p. 29.

<sup>414</sup> BNA OP/15/1/1/21 Confidential Interrogation Report, 'Timothy Charles Williams', March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1975, pp. 1-2; G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, 'Williams, Timothy', *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, p. 755.

While the Bokwe Group's internal network was slowly being uncovered, in late September 1975 twenty six APLF cadres left Gaborone with the PAC for Libya. From the perspective of Mafole, Williams, and Nhlapo who were a part of this group, they saw no indication at this point that they were being absorbed into APLA.<sup>415</sup> They relaxed even more when in Uganda, on route to Libya, their group was joined by BC cadres who had left South Africa through Swaziland with the PAC like January Masilela (later to be known in MK as Che Ogara) who were part of a BC-aligned group called the Anti-Coloured Representative Council Front (AFRO).<sup>416</sup> They were also joined by recruits who came directly from the PAC underground in South Africa and some Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) cadres, the armed wing of the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), allied to PAC/APLA.<sup>417</sup>

Upon arrival in the military camp outside Tripoli, the first signs of trouble began to show themselves. While the APLF had asked to be trained to survive alone or in small units in cities or the countryside, their Libyan and APLA commanders forced them to participate in conventional army drills against their wishes. As the weeks unfolded into months, among the APLA cadres, constant disagreements emerged between those loyal to Templeton Ntantla and Potlako Leballo which often erupted into violence.<sup>418</sup> The

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<sup>415</sup> Musa Mdlalose interview, pp. 13-14; Charles Mthombeni interview, p. 11; Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 10; G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, 'Williams, Timothy', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 755-758

<sup>416</sup> ANC Archives LUM088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, 'The Exile', 6/12/77, p.3; T. Moloji, "'Let's begin to participate fully now in politics'": Student politics, Mhluzi Township, 1970s', in A. Heffernan and N. Niefertagdien, eds., *Students Must Rise*, pp. 129-130; Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 10.

<sup>417</sup> The BCP/LLA was allied to the PAC/APLA as part of an attempt to overthrow the Basutoland National Party (BNP) who in 1970 had prevented the BCP from coming to power by declaring a state of emergency after the BCP had won elections. See G. Houston, ed., T. Plaatjie interview, 'Mokoena, Zebulon', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 4, p. 462; Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 10.

<sup>418</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 10.

indiscipline wracking the PAC/APLA began to show the Palestinian and Libyan trainers that certain comrades, unbeknownst to them those of the APLF, were different given their high discipline, independent thinking, and willingness to blend their Black Nationalism with Marxism-Leninism. This threatened to blow their cover and made APLF vulnerable to deportation or imprisonment if those training them found out they were not actual PAC/APLA recruits.<sup>419</sup>

Nevertheless, after a few months Nhlapo, Mdluli, Mafole, Williams, and a few others were chosen to undergo a higher level commando course in the Golan Heights of Syria in December 1975/January 1976.<sup>420</sup> This commando training, run by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) High Command is remembered by Nhlapo as being much better than what they received in Libya. In the Golan Heights they were trained to survive in the mountains, received further advanced weapons and sabotage training, and had ‘long walks, marching and carrying all sorts of things, and mock attacks and all those things. It was a very very interesting course of training, very rigorous’.<sup>421</sup> Despite the improved training and better food, Nhlapo remembers camp life in the Golan Heights as tough, with lice being a constant nuisance. Moreover, the APLF cadres had heated ideological disagreements with this Palestinian faction who did not care much for Yasser Arafat. Given their growing understanding of global movements, the APLF saw Yasser

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<sup>419</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 11.

<sup>420</sup> G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, ‘Williams, Timothy’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 4, p. 756-757; Nhlapo interview, pp. 10-12. This date is confirmed by both interviews with Welile Nhlapo, Timothy Williams and a short biography of a cadre named Peppi Everton. Everton was a member of the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) and SASO in Botswana. He recalls leaving in 1975 for training in Libya and eventually heading to Syria for advanced training in January 1976. On Everton see, University of Cape Town Special Collections (hereafter UCTSC): BC 1081 Jack Simons Collection, Organisations B (cont.), BPC 1970-1977 (hereafter BC 1081/B/BPC), ‘Untitled Biography of Peppi Everton’, n.d., more than likely 1977/1978, pp. 1-3.

<sup>421</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 11.



Arafat, Fatah, and the PLO cadres as heroes leading the fight against Zionism and imperialism. Moreover, while they respected and admired the PFLP High Command's courage and convictions, they disagreed with their suicide bombing tactics as a waste of the valuable lives of their people.<sup>422</sup>

### **Betrayals, Infiltrations and Court Cases, January 1976 – July 1976**

While these dozen or so cadres were undergoing specialised training in the Golan Heights, the remaining APLF members were sent back to Botswana with some PAC cadres. When they got to Uganda the PAC suddenly and without warning tried to force them onto a plane to Dar es Salaam so they could be sent to their guerrilla camp in Chunya. The APLF refused based on their earlier agreement which created an uncomfortable standoff in the airport. Fortunately, a message explaining the situation had been sent to Mafuna who happened to be in Dar es Salaam with Ntantla discussing further cooperation between APLA and APLF.<sup>423</sup> It was only when Mafuna arrived that he began to see the deeper issue. Mayekiso, whom they had made the agreement with, was allied to the Leballo faction of the PAC so when the agreement had been made the APLF unwittingly became entangled in Leballo's schemes against Ntantla and the broader exile politics of survival. To the latter point, Leballo's faction was trying to reroute these newly trained cadres to Chunya to show the OAU-ALC that the PAC was actively recruiting guerrillas and so deserved an increase in funding, at the expense of the ANC-SA. Additionally, these

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<sup>422</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 12.

<sup>423</sup> WHP A2675/III/621, H. E. Isaacs, 'Reflections of a Black South African Exile' (MA Thesis, 1986), pp. 341-342; Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 12-13.

recruits had a chance to be used against Ntantla's factions within Chunya as at this point both sides were openly in conflict with one another in their camps in Tanzania.<sup>424</sup>

With some cooperation from Ntantla the APLF was able to get tickets back to Botswana. However, Mafuna decided they could no longer work with the PAC which forced them to cancel sending another group of trainees to Libya.<sup>425</sup> This was a devastating blow to the APLF as the PAC/APLA did have global networks they could have used to better organise and arm themselves in exile. It also shattered Mafuna's vision of a united South African/Azanian armed wing made up of MK, APLF, APLA, and possibly other organisations like the LLA.<sup>426</sup>

In addition to the betrayal of the PAC, the way these cadres had been trained went against the desires of the APLF. As mentioned above, the APLF had wanted cadres to be trained to operate alone or in small groups, yet, it seemed that most of what they had learned was how to march and shoot like a conventional soldier. Believing that most of their training had not prepared them to survive in South Africa some dispersed, others began abusing alcohol, and still others began to prioritize their education and abandoned the armed struggle.<sup>427</sup> However, some like Jerome Kodisang refused to give up and began training others in what they had learned.<sup>428</sup> Later BCM activists in exile recall him being a part of 'the first people to come back from the Bokwe Mafuna group trained and now

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<sup>424</sup> ANC Archives LSM/016/03, 'The Profiles of Leballo's Gang', May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1978, pp. 1-27; Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 12-13.

<sup>425</sup> ANC Archives OTP/035/0304/01, D. Gadibone and B. Nguna, 'The Joint Statement', 9/7/1977, pp. 1-5; Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 12-13.

<sup>426</sup> Musa Mdlalose interview, pp. 14-15.

<sup>427</sup> Musa Mdlalose interview, pp. 14-15.

<sup>428</sup> ANC Archives LUM088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, 'The Exile: Black Consciousness Movement Students', 6/12/77, p.4; WHP A2675/III/12, 'Commando courses for PAC men', *Rand Daily Mail*, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1978, p. 11.

doing, starting to do their cell-work with people like Charlie and so on to prepare this'.<sup>429</sup> While some of the training was not what the APLF commanders had wanted, a handful were infiltrated into the country to carry out a number of other smaller operations which targeted white South African business interests in Botswana and South Africa. Mthombeni, who was released from prison in January 1976 calls this 'to repossess, if it was something of use, go in and steal'.<sup>430</sup>

While Kodisang and Mthombeni planned and executed their armed infiltration missions in the country, the NAYO Trial was underway. Finally given access to lawyers in January 1976 after months of torture while imprisoned, the accused began their testimonies on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1976. The trial had to be moved from its original location in Johannesburg to Pretoria after police unleashed dogs on a crowd of Black supporters who were chanting Black Power slogans in support of the accused.<sup>431</sup> The accused were charged with having made plans to build underground cells, learn about the South African economy, and find ways to overthrow the regime through armed struggle, strikes, and popular resistance.<sup>432</sup> Because many had been tortured, their legal representation argued the testimonies of them and other witnesses were not valid.<sup>433</sup> In May 1976 two members of the accused were handed guilty verdicts while the rest were released due to lack of evidence

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<sup>429</sup> Vusi Mchunu interview, p. 12.

<sup>430</sup> Charles Mthombeni interview, p. 12.

<sup>431</sup> B. Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Schoolchildren's Revolt that shook apartheid* (London, Zed Books, 2016 org., 1979), pp. 163-164.

<sup>432</sup> WHP A2675/III/273, Asha Rambally, ed., *Black Review 1975-1976* (Durban, Black Community Programmes 1977), pp. 88-90; WHP A2675/II/7, Yate MF, 'S.V. Joseph Molokeng and others (NAYO Trial), 1975-1976, hand written notes on trial', n.d., p. 1.

<sup>433</sup> WHP A2675/II/7, K. Abendroth, 'Police forced me to lie', *Rand Daily Mail*, 3.24.1976 and Staff Reporter, 'I talked out of terror, says accused', *Rand Daily Mail*, 5.7.1976 and Nat Diseko, 'No bail because "Dyantyi may flee"', *Rand Daily Mail*, 5.18.1976.

given most testimonies were coerced and a number of state witnesses refused to testify in court.

### **‘Total Paralysis’: From the Golan Heights, to Dar es Salaam... to the ANC-SA/MK?**

With the NAYO Trial winding down, Kodisang and Mthombeni doing underground work near the border, Welile Nhlapo and the others departed the Golan Heights for Libya upon completion of their training. When they arrived in Libya it seems it had been discovered that they were not PAC recruits, consequently, they were immediately rerouted to Dar es Salaam where from there they were to get a plane to Gaborone. Similar to the first group, when they arrived in Dar es Salaam the PAC refused to give them their tickets for Gaborone as they wanted them to go to their camp in Chunya instead. After they too refused, they found themselves marooned in the airport. After a day or so they saw a white man in their lounge and began speaking in township Afrikaans to see what he would do. When the man immediately got up and left Tebago and Welile followed him and realised it was Joe Slovo.<sup>434</sup> ‘The following day’ Welile Nhlapo recalls, ‘Keith and Eric Mtshali and Ready Mazingu came to meet us there.’<sup>435</sup> Excited to see Keith Mokoape, who they knew from their SASO days, they asked him to explain what happened to him and his group when they left in 1972 to find the armed struggle. They also wanted more details on the relationship between the ANC-SA, SACP, USSR and the clauses they were uncomfortable with in the Freedom Charter.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 14.

<sup>435</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 14.

<sup>436</sup> Mokoape and Nhlapo Interviews.

Mokoape briefly told them how he eventually joined the ANC-SA and argued that the ANC-SA/MK plan for freedom was in-line with theirs through its two-stage strategy, National Liberation and then Socialist transformation.<sup>437</sup> The National Liberation portion entailed achieving the political freedom of the Africans/Blacks which would be followed by the socialist transformation. He also addressed their concerns about communists and white control over the ANC-SA which he argued was not true as most of the SACP was Black. More importantly, he agreed with their assessment that the ANC-SA/MK had been up till then ineffective in executing its armed struggle, therefore, he argued that as BC activists them joining could ‘turn the ANC around into a fighting organisation... we are the ones more organised with our networks inside the country, we can swell their ranks’.<sup>438</sup> This conversation with Mokoape combined with the recent PAC betrayal made many in this group more agreeable to joining the ANC-SA.<sup>439</sup>

Upon arriving back in Gaborone a number of things further convinced Nhlapo and others to leave the Bokwe Group.<sup>440</sup> After Mafuna had stopped the attempts to divert APLF guerrillas to Chunya, the PAC sent a member of their NEC, Elias Ntloedibe, to give a talk at the University of Botswana. In this talk Mcodibe began speaking about the attempts by some South Africans in this Bokwe Group to get guerrilla training in exile through using fake covers as students. This exposed the APLF’s real intentions and the infuriated

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<sup>437</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Lerumo, ‘Forms and Methods of Struggle – The South African Democratic Revolution’, in the *African Communist*, No. 9, April/May 1962, pp. 43-51.

<sup>438</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 11.

<sup>439</sup> G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, ‘Williams, Timothy’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 4, pp. 755-758; Welile Nhlapo interview, pp. 14-15.

<sup>440</sup> There is some confusion here with a few of the secondary sources and interview conducted on the Bokwe Group. It is often assumed two groups were sent from Botswana for training in Libya, in fact it was only one group of twenty-six sent. What happened is twelve were chosen to go for advanced training while the rest were sent back to Botswana. Often this first group returning is seen as the original first group and then the twelve who went on for higher training as the second.

Botswana government ordered its intelligence services to keep a closer eye on them. Mafuna was also not in the country, he had eventually made his way from Dar es Salaam to Paris where he would remain until the late 1980s waiting for contact from Palestine organisations.<sup>441</sup> Additionally, in late May, Mthombeni brought word to them that the youth in the country, through SASM, were getting ready to take action against the imposition of Afrikaans in the schools. There was a serious threat of violence with the authorities and some of the youths wondered if those trained for armed struggle – regardless of which movement – could be sent to protect them, provide leadership, or retaliate if they were attacked. Some of those who had been trained abroad believed they could support the students militarily.<sup>442</sup> Others like Nhlapo believed different, ‘We could not. Total paralysis’.<sup>443</sup>

A few weeks after hearing Mthombeni’s warning, Soweto erupted into rebellion. Over the next few months hundreds began streaming across the border to Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho. Nobody, including the ANC-SA, was able to adequately respond to the events of the Soweto Uprising.<sup>444</sup> To make matters worse, Kodisang had been captured right before the Soweto Uprising began forcing Mthombeni to leave into exile shortly after the Uprising. Kodisang would later be one of the accused in the notorious

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<sup>441</sup> At some point in 1976 Jane Mafuna was released from prison, shortly after, she and their child joined him in Paris. However, in the interview I had with him he avoided answering why he stayed in France for so long except to say money was scarce so he could not leave easily and he now had new responsibilities.

<sup>442</sup> ANC Archives LUM088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, ‘The Exile’, 6/12/77, pp. 4-5; G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, ‘Williams, Timothy’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 4, pp. 755-758.

<sup>443</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, pp. 15.

<sup>444</sup> B. Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Schoolchildren’s Revolt that shook apartheid* (London, Zed Books, 2016, org. 1979); A. Hlongwane, ‘Reflections on the Pan Africanist Congress ‘Underground’ in the Era of the 1976 Youth Uprisings’, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3, 4 (2009), pp. 55-71.

Bethal Trial.<sup>445</sup> From the vantage point of Welile Nhlapo, Tebago Mafole, and others, the APLF was the most unprepared to deal with this onrush of exiles, many of whom wanted to take up arms against apartheid. After additional meetings with Mokoape, Snuki, and Mbeki they concluded ‘there was a clarity within the ANC-SA compared to the other liberation movements’.<sup>446</sup> As the Soweto Uprising continued and the APLF/Bokwe Group could only watch and analyse, an all-night debate took place at one of their houses in September 1976. Nhlapo lead the charge insisting most of their training was not useful to militarily overthrowing the apartheid regime, case and point, they could not even effectively support the kids who were at that moment taking a stand against the regime.<sup>447</sup>

After the all-night debate Nhlapo and Mafole left with Papi Moloto, Timothy Williams, and about fifty other cadres including some new ANC-SA recruits like Nkosana-Dlamini, former VP of SASO.<sup>448</sup> They contacted Snuki Zikalala of the ANC-SA underground to inform him that they were prepared to join the ANC-SA and MK and needed help to get out of the country. Tickets were provided to Lusaka from which point they were flown to Dar es Salaam and then Luanda. After a brief stay at Engineering

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<sup>445</sup> WHP A2675/III/608, D. Sibeko, ‘Statement of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania at the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination’, Geneva, 14th – 25th August 1978 pp. 1-10; WHP A2675/III/608, D. Sibeko, ‘Notes and Documents: The Bethal Trial’, October 1978, pp. 1-10 (note in this piece Sibeko incorrectly says Kodisang was recruited by the PAC); WHP A2675/II/12, ‘Bethal Trial’, no clear page numbers but in these extensive court documents Kodisang is noted as being one of those on trial with alleged links to BCM.

<sup>446</sup> W. Nhlapo, ‘Welile Nhlapo’, in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, eds., *The Thabo Mbeki I Know*, p. 271

<sup>447</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 16-18; Musa Mdlalosa interview, pp. 15-17; Welile Nhlapo interview, pp. 15-16

<sup>448</sup> ANC Archives LUM088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, ‘The Exile: Black Consciousness Movement Students’, 6/12/77, p.4; WHP A2675/II/41, G. Gerhart interview with Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, London, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1988, p. 23; Welile Nhlapo interview, pp. 15-16.

Camp, located outside of Luanda, they were deployed to MK's newly opened camp Novo Catengue in early 1977.<sup>449</sup>

### **'No nice package at the end, only that you would be free': Assessing the Influence and Importance of the Bokwe Group/APLF**

This chapter has endeavoured to reconstruct the early history of BCM's attempts to form an armed wing during the 1970s. The study of the APLF as an organisation shows it to be part and parcel of BCM like SASO, BCPs, BPC and SASM. Moreover, as MK and APLA had no meaningful presence within South Africa or in the neighbouring countries until mid-1976, beginning in 1974 up to September 1976, the APLF was arguably the most active South African liberation movement armed wing. This reality pushed the ANC-SA, according to Joe Slovo, to restructure the ANC-SA's National Executive Committee (NEC) to refocus efforts on the armed struggle inside South Africa. Slovo and Ronnie Kasrils, both top ranking MK commanders, have both admitted in interviews that their organisation had up to that point, from 1963-1976, failed to form an effective ANC-SA or MK underground.<sup>450</sup> Moreover, Keith Mokoape remembers no MK bases being open when he and his cadres left for exile in September 1972. It took them incessantly prodding and hustling to finally in late 1973 receive some informal training in a Zambian game reserve and until the middle of 1975 for MK to officially accept recruits for military training.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, pp. 17-18.

<sup>450</sup> WHP A2675/I/35, Victoria Butler interview with Joe Slovo, Lusaka, February 1988, pp. 1-4; WHP A2675/I/14, Howard Barrell first interview with Ronnie Kasrils, Lusaka, August 19th, 1989, pp. 241-242

<sup>451</sup> G. Houston, ed., S. Mathabatha interview, 'Mbuli, Jerry', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 4, pp. 357-359; G. Houston and B. Magubane, 'The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]*, p. 403; T. Simpson, 'Military Combat Work: the Reconstitution of the ANC's Armed Underground 1971-1976', *African Studies*, 70, 1 (2011), p. 117; Toivo Asheke interview with Keith Mokoape, Midrand, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017, pp. 7-10. Jerry



Interestingly, this change in policy occurred around the same time the Bokwe Group left for military training in Libya which lends context to Slovo's argument that within the ANC-SA/MK, and their international allies, 'there was a feeling that we were being upstaged by the emerging Black Consciousness'.<sup>452</sup>

While the decision to turn to armed struggle was not uniform among some of BCM's leading personalities like Biko and Nengwekhulu; militant youths inside the country seemed to support its creation as knowledge of them grew. In addition to the APLF's base in Johannesburg, in the Transkei in what is now the Eastern Cape, Stanley Manong knew of a man named Simon Mlonyeni who 'knew people who were operating a safe route to Botswana where I could join new recruits being assembled by Bokwe Mafuna, who was facilitating military training for new recruits in Libya'.<sup>453</sup> At Turfloop, in what is now Limpopo but what was then Bophuthatswana, Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini remembers hearing from Puli Moloto-Stofile about the activities of the Bokwe Group in Botswana. Although she and Puli did not agree with them forming their own armed wing, they and others at Turfloop were aware of what they were doing.<sup>454</sup> In Natal, what is now KwaZulu Natal, members of the KwaMashu Youth Organisation (KWAYO), an affiliate of NAYO, left the group sometime in 1975 in order to join the Bokwe Group.<sup>455</sup> Even within Robben Island their impact was felt as ANC-SA underground activist Kgalema

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Mbuli was the ANC-SA representative in Botswana when Keith Mokoape and his cadres arrived seeking either the ANC-SA, PAC or their own unit.

<sup>452</sup> WHP A2675/1/35, T. Karis, G. Gerhart, and S. Thobejane interview with Joe Slovo, Johannesburg, October 15th, 1990, p. 6.

<sup>453</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die*, p. 50.

<sup>454</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini, Windhoek, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017, pp. 5-7.

<sup>455</sup> WHP AK3334/2/A1, 'Langa', p. 15; Charles Mthombeni interview, pp. 14-15.

Motlanthe, arrested in April 1976, recalls militant BC members claiming to have an army being trained in Libya.<sup>456</sup>

That said, the Bokwe Group/APLF was not able to form and sustain an armed wing. Despite their commendable efforts and ideological interlocutions with Maoist/Cabralian/Vietnamese/Palestinian revolutionary thought, they ultimately failed. Much of this lies at the feet of the PAC whose actions destroyed the potentially transformative alliance from growing. The constant infighting, ideological confusions, and the PAC's attempts to reroute APLF cadres to their own camps in Tanzania to take part in their own internal squabbles repulsed members of the Bokwe Group/APLF who left with them for military training. A lack of support from the OAU-ALC was also critical, yet, it ended up being a positive as it enabled the Bokwe group to be independent of state support to run their movement. This granted them a level of autonomy in their praxis the ANC-SA and PAC were unable to match.

Even so, all blame cannot, and should not, lie with others. The constant splits between the various BCM aligned cadres in Botswana while never escalating to the violence of the PAC splits or the public mudslinging and imprisonments of the ANC-SA/MK, hindered their ability to effectively organise a sustainable Black radical alternative to the more non-racialist socialist ANC-SA. While the fierce independence of the BCM activists is to be commended, it at times worked as their greatest enemy as future iterations of the APLF founded in the late 1970s and early 1980s such as the Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE), the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO),

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<sup>456</sup> G. Houston, ed., N. Niefertgodien interview, 'Motlanthe, Kgalema', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, Vol. 4, pp. 531-532.

and the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA) were never able to cooperate efficiently with one another to attack the apartheid regime.<sup>457</sup>

Tied to this, the Bokwe Group/APLF left much to be desired in their ability, or inability, to seamlessly incorporate women into all strands of its structures. While Thato Bereng and Pumza Dyantyi most probably were members of the APLF, and their role as couriers and propagandists for the movement was undoubtedly effective, none were chosen to go to Libya with the first group of APLF cadres. Nosipho Matshoba who was part of the original four BC cadres who left for exile and is praised in various interviews and testimonies as being present in key discussions, was also not able to travel abroad for military training. While more research is needed, and indeed the strand of Islam practiced by Libya likely had an impact in determining who could or could not be trained, the story cannot end there. Despite women and men sharing in all cooking, cleaning, physical exercise and discussion duties, Mafuna seems to have never travelled abroad with a woman. In a recent interview with Bokwe Mafuna on the question of women and the struggle, he had this to say,

women had a special role which is not understood, of nurturing, and bringing together... there's always been a lack of spirituality guiding the movement and its ethos and its purpose and its philosophy and so when you go into that you are able to realize that women have got special powers, the powers of nurturing. They can create something that you and I cannot do, as so they do have a special role of being able to bring people together. That is why power most of the time in patriarchal societies has always been with men and that is why there is no peace. Women are the harbingers of peace and unity... they... bring nations together... *They're not great fighters* [emphasis mine] but they mould societies together and that role of moulding together is much more difficult than waging war against each other and it has not yet been tested. That how do we create a new society, it's a huge task and women have the greater role there. They have greater power, but it's a spiritual power.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, pp. 49-50, 60-61; Musa Mdlalosa interview, pp. 21-22; Charles Mthombeni interview, p. 21, pp. 23-24.

<sup>458</sup> Bokwe Mafuna interview, pp. 26-27.

On the one hand, Mafuna's appreciation for the power of peace making and spiritual depth in women could be seen by some as commendable. On the other hand, his belief that women were not good fighters reproduced the same stereotypes about women imposed on African peoples by European-Christian colonialism. This belief in the limits of women arguably influenced his decision to not take any with him on this international missions or to ensure that those willing to obtain military training were sent to Libya. Moreover, by anointing them with the task of spiritual freedom fighters and peace-makers, he placed this monumental task on their shoulders alone giving them extra burdens for the success of the movement. By doing this, he removed the responsibility of men, like himself, to fight our own socialised oppressive natures in order to be equal partners in the creation of this liberatory project.

In closing, the APLF made an admirable contribution not only to South Africa's freedom struggle, but to the larger global project of Black Internationalism. Most powerfully, the APLF's grassroots centred approach to organising, their commitment to executing a People's War along the lines of the Vietnamese, coupled with its lack of state support, marked it having the potential to be independent in ways the ANC-SA and PAC could never be. All these factors brought them more fully into Cedric Robinson's Black Radical Tradition (BRT). By approaching the problem of apartheid without 'the promise of a certain future' it distinguished itself from the ANC-SA/SACP's Marxism where 'victory is an inevitable eventually'. For the BRT, as it was for the APLF and some of its subsequent iterations, 'it is about a kind of resistance that does not promise triumph or

victory at the end, only liberation. No nice package at the end, only that you would be free'.<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> C. Robinson and E. Robinson, 'Preface', in G. Johnson and A. Lubin, eds., *Futures of Black Radicalism* (New York, Verso, 2017), p. 7.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Picking up the Pieces: Fighting for Unity under the banner of Black Consciousness, October 1976 – January 1990**

#### **Introduction/Literature Review**

The departure of Welile Nhlapo, Tebogo Mafole, Timothy Williams, and others combined with the crackdown of the Botswana authorities almost destroyed the morale of the remnants of the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF). Simultaneously, the stream of South African refugees to Botswana eventually grew into an uncontrollable flood which the shattered remains of the Bokwe Group were unable to absorb. Yet, cadres such as Musa Mdlalose and Charles Mthombeni were determined to rebuild and as 1977 got underway those remaining, with support from some new recruits from South Africa like Vusi Mchunu, formed the Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE). They picked up the networks created by the APLF and used them to obtain intelligence and military training across the Middle East. At the same time, although separately, discouraged at the failure of the various South African armed wings to protect students during the Soweto Uprising, members of the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) hatched a plan to form yet another armed wing under the banner of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Eventually, the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO) was formed and Khotso Seatlholo was elected its President in exile.

While IRE and SAYRCO consolidated themselves, Barney Pityana was able to flee into exile sometime in 1977. Working closely with Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu and other BCM cadres, although not IRE or SAYRCO, plans were laid for a consultative conference to be held for the various BCM factions in exile. Simultaneously, both Pityana and Nengwekhulu stepped up efforts to hold a meeting with the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) to discuss prospects for cooperation, or in the case of Pityana, unity talks. The meeting was mostly positive and a foundation was laid for future discussions upon the conclusion of the BCM conference. After many delays the conference took place in April 1980 in London; for some, the meeting has been remembered as a resounding success. For others, such as Pityana, the conference made it clear that his vision of BCM and its role differed from the majority leading him to depart the conference to join the ANC-SA. Unfazed by his departure, Pityana was promptly thanked by the conference participants for his work and the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) was officially formed with the implicit understanding that it was to be the external wing of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO).

Initially imagined as an umbrella organisation with a decentred structure of leadership, so as to respect the fierce independence of the various factions, the BCMA found itself unable to control groups like SAYRCO or IRE. As an example, one year after BCMA was formed, Khotso, tired of remaining in exile training while Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) rose to prominence, led a mission into the country to recruit for SAYRCO and promote BC as an alternative to the ANC-SA/MK. As he mobilised across the townships he was captured and imprisoned which led to the eventual fall of SAYRCO as a viable organisation. In response to this and other factors, the BCMA reformed itself yet again to

become a more centralised organisation, much to the chagrin of IRE. The arrival of Mosibudi Mangena and eventually Nkutsoeu 'Skaap' Motsau into exile ushered in the creation of the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA) and the solidification of the BCMA as the representative organisation for BCM to the world. Arguably more successful than APLF, IRE, or SAYRCO, the BCMA was able to recruit cadres for training, infiltrate combatants into South Africa, better incorporate women into its structures, and hold the line internationally as a Black radical alternative to the ANC-SA/MK as the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) fell even further from grace.

This period of BCM's history in exile is one of the most under-researched aspects of South Africa's armed struggle. Two pieces stand out as the most complete historiographies of this important point in the movement's history. The first is Bavusile Maaba and Mbulelo Mzamane's chapter entitled 'The Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, 1979-1990' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 4 [1980 – 1990]*.<sup>460</sup> Designed as an overview of BCM's politics in exile post-Soweto the authors focus on the ANC-SA and BCM's meeting in 1979, BCM's 1980 conference, and the efforts of BCMA/AZANLA in exile to project a BCM position to the international community. Although a constructive opening contribution, the chapter suffers from a lack of understanding of how and why various disagreements between these activists formed in exile. Moreover, while acknowledging the presence of IRE, SAYRCO, and AZANLA, their lack of access to newer research, particularly interviews from former IRE and

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<sup>460</sup> B. Maaba and M. Mzamane, 'The Black Consciousness Movement of Azanian, 1979-1990', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 4 [1980 – 1990]*, pp. 1361-1398.



AZANLA combatants, limits their ability to describe how these armed wings formed, how they were trained, and how they were infiltrated into the country.<sup>461</sup>

Unlike Maaba and Mzamane, Mosibudi Mangena's recent autobiography gives a more complete and comprehensive account of the evolution of the BCMA/AZANLA, as well as a wider history of BCM in exile.<sup>462</sup> Beginning with his family's flight into exile in 1981, Mangena takes his readers on a journey through the reorganisation of the BCMA and the founding of AZANLA during the 1980s. The strength of this autobiography lies in the level of detail Mangena is able to present on events he was directly involved in, as well as those of AZANLA combatants who he interviewed for many of the chapters. He is also critical of the state of the organisation prior to his arrival and goes through the clashes younger members had with older more veteran cadres like himself. However, his autobiography does not give a detailed look at the IRE and SAYRCO outside of a few pages.

With this in mind, this chapter will begin with exploring the little known origins of the IRE. It will then move to a discussion on how and why SAYRCO formed before launching into a brief overview of the meeting between ANC-SA and elements of BCM in Lusaka in December 1979. This will be followed by an analysis of the April 1980 BCM conference in London with a critical assessment given on why disagreements emerged. The remainder of the chapter will briefly summarize the formation and evolution of

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<sup>461</sup> Maaba and Mzamane, 'The Black Consciousness Movement of Azanian, 1979-1990', pp. 1392-1397.

<sup>462</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches: A Courageous Journey by South African Patriots* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2015).

AZANLA and close with thoughts on how and why the movement failed to surpass the ANC-SA/MK as the dominant organisation in exile.

### **The Fall of the APLF and the Rise of the IRE, June 1976 – December 1979**

In the wake of the departure of Welile Nhlapo, Tebago Mafole, and about fifty other cadres from the APLF there was an intense discussion on what to do as 1976 drew to a close. Not only had they lost the majority of their comrades who had been trained as guerrillas, but the Botswana government was keeping a closer eye on them which forced a number of their members to relocate to Dukwe Refugee camp. The authorities were clear, if one did not have a job or a legitimate business in the cities they would not receive their monthly stipend. Moreover, they faced the threat of deportation back to South Africa if they did not comply with government regulations. Furthermore, according to interviews with Musa Mdlalose and Charles Mthombeni, now in the leadership of the APLF, they found it near impossible to take care of, let alone offer military training to BC inspired refugees who came to them. For those few who did join, Mdlalose and Mthombeni took serious issue with the rudeness many of them exhibited towards with the local Batswana and their constant dagga smoking; things that were strictly forbidden among themselves.<sup>463</sup>

Despite these challenges, the former APLF cadres had some loyal members and strong allies with stable employment and/or businesses around Gaborone, Lobatse, Tlokweng, Molepolole, Mochudi, and other villages. These cadres had been embedded in the system not only for their own survival but as a part of the Bokwe Group's overall plan

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<sup>463</sup> Musa Mdlalose Interview, p. 16. This was a similar problem ANC-SA/MK commanders faced with some of these new recruits.

to create bases/safe houses and covers for their infiltration attempts. Determined not to join the ANC-SA or the PAC, Mthombeni and Mdlalose led the charge for the reorganisation of the shattered APLF and formed the IRE. The members of this new formation were drawn from the remnants of the APLF and a few new recruits such as a young Vusi Mchunu.<sup>464</sup>

In order to fund their operations – as they were not recognised as a liberation movement by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations (UN), or any of the Frontline States – they restarted their taxi businesses, became farmers, raised pigs and chickens, and eventually sold eggs and pork meat in the markets of Gaborone. Other work has linked these self-help projects to the BCMA cadres in Dukwe refugee camp in the early 1980s, but interviews with members of the APLF/IRE show these initiatives were started earlier.<sup>465</sup> Using this money, they were able to send some of their comrades to Europe to fund-raise and seek military training opportunities. While rebuilding their shattered armed wing, rumours began to reach them in mid-September 1977 about the death of Steve Biko. When this information was confirmed it dealt yet another devastating emotional and psychological blow to these comrades, many of whom had known Biko personally or at the very least were greatly inspired by him. Mthombeni recalls them feeling they ‘had let Biko down’.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, ‘Letter from Financial Secretary to “Comrades” with attached budget’, June 23rd, 1981, pp. 1-3. Vusi Mchunu crossed into Botswana with three others in mid-1977 specifically to join what he thought was the Bokwe Group, see Vusi Mchunu Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Johannesburg, December 15th, 2016, pp. 9-10.

<sup>465</sup> Maaba and Mzamane, ‘The Black Consciousness Movement of Azanian, 1979-1990’, pp. 1361-1398.

<sup>466</sup> Charles Mthombeni Interview, p. 19.

Unfortunately, there was little time to mourn as a few months later the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), whom the APLF had formed contacts with, notified them of an opportunity for some IRE member to undergo military training in Iraq. The EPLF offered to assist the first group of IRE trainees on their journey to Iraq where they would be trained by the Abu Nidal Organisation, a splinter group from the Palestinian organisation Fatah. Musa Mdlalose, who previously had to stay behind to run operations out of Gaborone while others in the APLF were training in Libya and Syria, was now able to acquire some weapons training. According to a recent interview with Mdlalose, four IRE cadres including himself travelled from Gaborone to Baghdad on a torturous route through southern and east Africa. A few days after their arrival they met Abu Nidal in person; two days later they went to a training camp in Basra located about 450 km south-east of Baghdad. Though their instructors did not speak English very well, Mdlalose remembers finding creative ways to communicate and eventually he and some others were able to learn a bit of Arabic. The process was slow but they eventually grew proficient in using pistols, revolvers, submachine guns, heavy guns, rockets, explosives and guerrilla warfare tactics which took place over a period of about four months.<sup>467</sup>

A few months into their training word reached the camp that Israel had invaded Jordan and Lebanon in Operation Litani, March 14<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 1978. Musa remembers 'foolishly we wanted to enlist to go and fight' with their trainers who were being deployed to the front.<sup>468</sup> Although their offer was politely refused, this showed the depth of respect and solidarity that existed between the two organisations. Despite these good relations,

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<sup>467</sup> Mdlalose Interview, pp. 17-18, 20.

<sup>468</sup> Mdlalose Interview, p. 19.

there were disagreements at times between the two groups as Musa recalls the IRE did not agree with the militarism of this particular Palestinian group. They felt, like the APLF did in the Golan Heights, that the suicide missions and bombings of civilian targets was not the best way to bring freedom to Palestine. These differences however did not affect their training and they left on good terms.<sup>469</sup>

As Musa's group was returning efforts were underway to send other IRE cadres to Europe, particularly West Germany, in order to fund-raise for the organisation. Vusi Mchunu, Mandla Ncayiyana, and Charles Mthombeni were among those sent out with the money saved by their self-help projects in Botswana. In Germany, this small group travelled around the country under the guise of students fund-raising for their studies and living expenses while in Botswana. While in Germany they received help from Black Consciousness-inspired individuals like Anthony Mongamele and Zande Mogwenju who was headquartered in Denmark.<sup>470</sup> Their main contact in East Berlin however was Kwezi Kadalie the grandson of the renowned founder of the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (ICU), Clemens Kadalie. Kwezi was a printer who helped IRE print their publication *Isandlwana: Official Organ of Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort of Azania* which they also funded through their self-help business in Gaborone.<sup>471</sup>

The IRE's West Germany connections were so strong that even the ANC-SA was forced to react and a number of members pushed leadership to open an office in West Berlin to combat BCM's rising influence among the anti-apartheid forces there.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Mdlalose Interview, p. 20.

<sup>470</sup> Mchunu Interview, pp. 11-12.

<sup>471</sup> Mchunu Interview, pp. 13-14.

<sup>472</sup> ANC Archives LSM/034/0024/01, 'Letter to Comrade Cap from Samson Nkwe', September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1979, p.1.

According to Vusi Mchunu, the IRE had gained support from the Red Brigades in Italy, the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain, and the Baader-Meinhof Group (Red Army Faction) in West Germany. Mchunu recalls that ‘we worked with them sensitively to sort out certain things, movements, resources and so on’.<sup>473</sup> While fundraising in Germany a chance offered itself in late 1978 to acquire military instruction with Palestinian students who were being sent for training by the PLO in Lebanon. Through underground networks a few IRE cadres were able to go to Beirut and over the next few months receive intensive training in the usage of small arms, heavy arms, rocket launchers, and explosives; in addition to this, they received instruction in the art of forging currency, passports, and other forms of underground intelligence work. They were part of a larger one-hundred person group of recruits being trained primarily by al-Fatah who had bases in Beirut and in the Sidon/Tyre area as part of their ongoing war against the Israeli state. The IRE cadres gained even more respect for the Palestinians even though they too did not agree with some of their methods of struggle such as suicide bombings and the hijacking of planes, nevertheless, they respected their courage to do anything for freedom.<sup>474</sup>

By 1979 both IRE groups were back in Botswana and were working closely together to restart efforts to organize sabotage and infiltration work in South Africa. This was to prove challenging as the flood of Soweto generation refugees were now mostly settled in ANC-SA/MK camps, combined with the contributions of trained BC cadres like

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<sup>473</sup> Mchunu Interview, p. 12. More research is needed here to uncover exactly what type of support IRE obtained from these groups. In interviews with Mchunu and Mthombeni their support was vaguely and broadly described as helping with intelligence training and on the ground support. For the latter, as IRE cadres did not know the layout of European politics and/or the legitimacy of certain groups claiming to be radical, it seems the Red Army Faction, the Red Berets, and the ETA helped them navigate these treacherous waters.

<sup>474</sup> Mthombeni Interview, pp. 14-15, Mchunu Interview, pp. 15-17.

Welile and Tebogo, MK strikes were beginning to dominate the headlines. Furthermore, the question still remained where they would get weapons from and once they received these weapons, where would they store them?

Towards the end of 1979 an opportunity to acquire weapons presented itself when a peace agreement was signed in Rhodesia between the major liberation movements and the white colonists. As a part of the process, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Zimbabwe African National Army (ZANLA) forces were to disarm, due to sympathies they had with some members of ZANLA, IRE was able to slip into these assembly points to obtain some weapons. Mchunu remembers that he and two others drove to a camp in Zimbabwe near the Gwayi River close to Bulawayo to pick up these weapons. After filling up about two bakkies full of AK-47s, grenades, bazookas and an assortment of other weapons, Mchunu and his comrades drove all the way back to Gaborone. According to a recent interview with Mchunu and another by an anonymous woman member of IRE, they dropped some of the weapons off in various safe houses and made a deal with some Xhosa speaking Batswana close to Tlhareselele (Borolong), close to the South Africa border, to store the rest at a house they built in the area.<sup>475</sup>

### **“The Ball of Liberation is in our hands”: A New Vision Merges, August 1976 – May 1980**

While the IRE was solidifying efforts to restart an armed wing, SAYRCO was doing the same separately. SAYRCO formed from elements of the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) who were frustrated at what they felt was a lack of

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<sup>475</sup> T. Tlou and P. Mgadla and Research Team Leaders, 'Botswana's Role in the Liberation of Southern Africa', p. 327; Mchunu Interview, p. 17.

effectiveness of the older liberation movements, including those of the APLF, towards bringing about the armed overthrow of the apartheid regime. Its central figure was Khotso Seatlholo who rose to prominence in South Africa as President of the SSRC after the departure of Tsietsi Mashinini in August 1976.<sup>476</sup> Upon assuming the mantle of President at the tender age of eighteen, the Soweto Rebellion increased in intensity as Seatlholo was clear that his was a new generation who would, unlike the older generation, ‘succeed. The mistakes they made [older generation], shall never be repeated. They carried the struggle up to where they could. We are very grateful to them. But now, the struggle is ours. The Ball of liberation is in our hands’.<sup>477</sup>

The students and youths meant this literally.<sup>478</sup> In an undated document written by Issa Gxuluwe, deputy President of the SSRC, to Seatlholo, who was forced to flee to Swaziland sometime in early 1977, an idea was proposed for the creation of a new organisation in exile. This document, rarely cited in research on BCM, was inspired by their experiences during the student rebellion and the practical work of some of their members who had been members of the Suicide Squad, a group of youths trained by but not under the command of MK to carry out sabotage attacks against the regime towards the end of 1976.<sup>479</sup> Gxuluwe wrote that while they were inspired to action by the history

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<sup>476</sup> WHP A2675/III/797, ‘Excerpts from Murphy Morobe testimony to “Commission of Inquiry Into the Riots at Soweto and Other Places in South Africa” [Cille Commission], 1976-1977’, pp. 4936-4937; WHP A2675/III/796, D. Ndlovu, ‘Amandla! The Story of the Soweto Students Representative Council’, in *Weekend World*, July 31st – August 28th, 1977 five part series, pp. 5-7.

<sup>477</sup> WHP A2675/III/795, K. Seatlholo, ‘[Soweto] Students Representative Council, Press Release’, October 29th, 1976, p. 1.

<sup>478</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, R. Ndzondo, ‘SAYRCO: Historical Background’, *Solidarity*, 1, 3 (1980), pp. 37-39

<sup>479</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, I. Gxuluwe, ‘Untitled Document of what would become SAYRCO’, n. d. p. 1; WHP A2675/I/18, ‘Third Interview of Mac Maharaj with Howard Barrell, November 30th, 1990’, p. 438. On the Suicide Squad see, ANC Archives OTP/050/0472/01, ‘Various Court Trial Notes’, pp. 226-233; WHP A2675/I/18, ‘Billy Masetlha interview with Victoria Butler, February 1988’, p. 16; T. Karis and G. Gerhart, ‘The Liberation Movements, 1975-1979,’ in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge*,



of struggle in South Africa, they were a Black Consciousness formation as was, at least to Gxuluwe, the entire Soweto Uprising. Furthermore, while praising the resilience and resistance of the uprising, the document pointed out that to that point, they had been too loosely organised and sporadic attacks were 'no longer suitable. They are wasteful and inefficient in terms of lives and other resources'.<sup>480</sup> Moreover, they could no longer work within the law for freedom or look to other liberation organisations or governments to save them.

Taking all these factors into account as well as the mistaken belief that the OAU would support them, 'we have decided to set up the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO)'.<sup>481</sup> The document went on to suggest the adaptation of a complex organisational structure, SAYRCO's main body would be the National Congress (NC) which would meet once a year, preferably inside South Africa, and would consist of ten representatives from each of the eight nationality groups as well as twenty from the urban Black areas. They would also have a National Executive Committee (NEC) that would be made up of a National President, Four Vice Presidents, a Secretary General (SG), Head of Tactical and Strategy Committee, and a number of other positions. Not done yet, the NEC was to have a Political and Economic Bureau and Tactical and Strategic Unit. The latter seemed to operate as the military wing of SAYRCO which would be headed by a Director

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Volume 5, p. 281; G. Houston and B. Magubane, 'The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2007), p. 389.

<sup>480</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, I. Gxuluwe, 'Untitled Document of what would become SAYRCO', n. d. p. 3.

<sup>481</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, I. Gxuluwe, 'Untitled Document of what would become SAYRCO', n. d. p. 5.

with four members: the Secretary-General, one Vice President, External Affairs Secretary, and Field Commander.<sup>482</sup>

By April 1979 SAYRCO officially announced itself as a new Black Consciousness-inspired organisation and named Khotso Seatlholo its 1<sup>st</sup> President.<sup>483</sup> According to an undated SAYRCO document, they defined armed struggle as the ‘psychological and physical transformation of our forces from apologetic and defensive forms of struggle to offensive and aggressive ones’.<sup>484</sup> More so than Mashinini, Seatlholo was arguably the best cadre to lead SAYRCO.<sup>485</sup> As leader of the SSRC at the height of the Soweto Uprising inspired rebellions he had distinguished himself as ‘a tactician of note, and a leader of weight’.<sup>486</sup> Gail Gerhart described Seatlholo in comparison to Mashinini as a ‘more forceful speaker’. Furthermore, unlike Mashinini, his speeches were notable for their ‘unadorned and unqualified anti-whiteism: there is no place for whites in South Africa; the whites must get out of South Africa: what has been done to the blacks has been done to by

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<sup>482</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, I. Gxuluwe, ‘Untitled Document of what would become SAYRCO’, n. d. pp. 6-8. Shortly after this a second document was written as it pertains to the creation of SAYRCO, it is mostly the same except the grammar has been smoothed over and it offered a more detailed and precise history of BCM. Furthermore, more emphasis was placed on political/social/economic aspects of the oppression/resistance and a number of deputy positions were established, see WHP A2675/III/785, ‘S.S.R.C. Working Paper on the creation of SAYRCO’, n. d., pp. 1-4.

<sup>483</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, R. Ndzondo, ‘SAYRCO: Historical Background’, *Solidarity*, 1, 3 (1980), p. 39; WHP A2675/III/785, ‘The Apprehension of Comrade Khotso Seatlholo’, n.d., p. 1; WHP A2675/III/785, M. Mokoena, ‘Our Struggle, our solidarity, our united effort’ in Special Bulletin of the SAYRCO, August/September 1981, pp. 11-16.

<sup>484</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, ‘The Apprehension of Comrade Khotso Seatlholo’, n.d., p. 2.

<sup>485</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, ‘“Forward” Special Bulletin of the SAYRCO,’ August/September 1981, pp. 4-7; WHP A2675/I/20, ‘Interview with Billy Masetlha by Victoria Butler, February 1988’, p. 17; G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, ‘Mamabolo, Jeremiah’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 4 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 242-243.

<sup>486</sup> WHP A2675/III/796, D. Ndlovu, ‘Amandla! The Story of the Soweto Students Representative Council,’ in Weekend World, July 31st – August 28th, 1977 five part series, p.4.

the white man, and the white man is his enemy'.<sup>487</sup> His Black Consciousness loyalties were clear and as he toured the United States in 1977 after his own hasty departure from South Africa after an armed confrontation with South African Police earlier that year. On this tour, Khotso made a point to link the movement in South Africa with the Black struggle internationally.<sup>488</sup>

From the balance of evidence, it is clear that Nigeria was supporting SAYRCO financially and with military training.<sup>489</sup> As of now there are few details available of what this training looked like and how many were being trained, however, what we do know is Khotso was leading a group of SAYRCO combatants training in Nigeria sometime in the late 1970s after his US tour. Unfortunately, little trust existed between IRE and SAYRCO so not much was done to exchange knowledge and/or embark on guerrilla training missions together. Nevertheless, as 1980 began both armed wings felt confident in their ability to open an effective third front (the first two being MK and APLA) out of Botswana to bring down the apartheid regime.

### **Negotiations with the ANC-SA and the formation of the BCMA, January 1977 – May 1980**

While the IRE and SAYRCO were busy consolidating themselves abroad, inside the country attempts were being made to unite the fractured BCM exiles and create better

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<sup>487</sup> WHP A2675/I/20, G. Gerhart, 'Notes/report on Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seatlholo speaking at a meeting sponsored by NSCAR (National Student Coalition against Racism) at Horace Bond auditorium', Columbia, February 25th, 1977, p. 1.

<sup>488</sup> WHP A2675/III/796, 'Khotso [Seatlholo] Gives America the Inside Story...', interview, *The World*, May 22nd, 1977, pp. 1-2; WHP A2675/III/796, D. Ndlovu, 'Amandla! The Story of the Soweto Students Representative Council,' in *Weekend World*, July 31st – August 28th, 1977 five part series, p.7.

<sup>489</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/22, 'New BCM Leaders slam ANC, PAC, Corruption', *SANA Bulletin*, May 1980, No.13, p. 1; WHP A2675/III/621, H. Isaacs, 'Reflections of a Black South African Exile', MA Thesis, 1986, p. 364; Vusi Mchunu interview, p. 18.

structures to deal with the Soweto Uprising exodus. In order to do this the Black People's Convention (BPC) at its 5<sup>th</sup> Congress in Durban from January 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 1977 created an External Affairs Secretariat with Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu as its Director-General. To ensure the internal wing had more control over what was happening among the BCM exiles, the Director-General was to report directly to Thamsanqa Zani who was named the new Secretary of External Affairs based inside the country.<sup>490</sup> This move officially handed Nengwekhulu a mandate of authority from inside the country. At the same Congress, Steve Biko was elected Honorary President of the BPC as a part of the secret negotiations that were going on between the BPC and top ranking officials of the ANC-SA and PAC.<sup>491</sup>

These decisions were not met with enthusiasm by some of the members of the IRE and other wings of BCM scattered around southern Africa and parts of Europe and North America.<sup>492</sup> In a publication by some independent Black South African Marxist-Leninists called *Ikwezi*, based out of London and allied loosely with IRE, this attempt by the internal leadership to essentially exert control over the exile groups by handing Nengwekhulu a mandate was condemned. For them, the 'question of the mandate is alienated from the masses since it denies dynamism and dialectical process of the development of leadership from the people and their struggle'.<sup>493</sup> They felt this move by the BPC would constrain the secretive work groups like the IRE were carrying out to reform their armed wing. For the

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<sup>490</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0045/01, 'Memorandum on B.P.C. External Affairs Programme', n.d., pp.1-5; ANC Archives LUM/088/0045/02, 'Minutes of Extra-Ordinary B.P.C. Congress', January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1977, pp.1-9; WHP A2675/III/274, H. Nengwekhulu, 'Discussion on BCM External Offices', 1979, pp. 1-11. Zani would later join the PAC and APLA in exile.

<sup>491</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0045/01, 'Memorandum on B.P.C. External Affairs Programme', n.d., p.5.

<sup>492</sup> ANC Archives LSM/104/0038/01, 'Present Tasks of the Azanian Revolution. From "Isandlwana"', *Ikwezi*, No. 13 (October 1979), pp. 28-36.

<sup>493</sup> ANC Archives LSM/104/0038/01, 'Present Tasks of the Azanian Revolution. From "Isandlwana"', *Ikwezi*, No. 13 (October 1979), p. 32.

writers of *Ikwezi* it demonstrated that the internal leadership of BCM, and some externally like Nengwekhulu, were out of touch with the desires of the Black masses to launch a Black Consciousness-inspired armed struggle. Moreover, the internal wing seemed unaware of the political and diplomatic topography of exile.

As the various wings of the rapidly fracturing BCM continued to move in their own respective directions, they received word about the death of Steve Biko.<sup>494</sup> His murder at the hands of the apartheid state delayed plans to bring the various BC groups under either an umbrella organisation or a unified structure. His death also setback other plans that were being made with the ANC-SA as it pertains to talks on unity.<sup>495</sup> In a letter to Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu around this time Oliver Tambo, worrying that momentum was being lost on negotiations, wrote that Biko's death must be used to 'pursue the efforts, in which he was deeply involved, to galvanise our fighting people into a united revolutionary force'.<sup>496</sup>

It is widely known that the last years of Steve Biko's life were dedicated to forging unity among the ANC-SA, PAC, Unity Movement (UM), and BCM.<sup>497</sup> Some, like his close colleague Saths Cooper, contend he was killed in prison because the apartheid

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<sup>494</sup> S. Biko, 'Steve Biko. Editorial, *Pro Veritate*', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge*, pp. 744-745; M. Ndlela, *For the Fallen: Honouring the Unsung Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle* (Sandton, KMM Review Publishing, 2013), p. 19.

<sup>495</sup> ANC Archives LUM/082/0010/67, 'Letter from O.R. Tambo to Mr. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu', n.d. but most probably October 1977, p. 1.

<sup>496</sup> ANC Archives LUM/082/0010/67, 'Letter from O.R. Tambo to Mr. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu', n.d. but most probably October 1977, p. 1.

<sup>497</sup> WHP A2675/1/13, 'Gail Gerhart interview with Peter Jones, Cape Town, July 21st, 1989', pp. 12-18; WHP A2675/1/26, 'Gail Gerhart interview with Malusi Mpumlwana, New York, November 30th, 1987', pp. 1-6; L. Wilson, 'Bantu Steve Biko: A Life', B. Pityana, M. Ramphele, M. Mpumlwana, and L. Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers 1991), pp. 66-67; T. Mbeki, 'Steve Biko: 30 years after', in C. van Wyk, ed., *We write what we like: Celebrating Steve Biko* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2007), pp. 21-40; N. Alexander, 'An Illuminating Moment', in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander, and N. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 157-180.

security forces had caught wind of his efforts, and their potential for success, and went overboard with their torture of him to gain answers.<sup>498</sup> Determined to continue Biko's work, throughout 1977 and 1978 Nengwekhulu exchanged a number of letters with ANC-SA leaders like Tambo, Alfred Nzo, and others trying to agree upon a date for a meeting between him and Oliver Tambo.<sup>499</sup> When Barney Pityana came into exile sometime in 1977, the former Secretary-General (SG) and President of SASO added to Nengwekhulu's efforts although he focused more on organizing meeting spaces for a BCM consultative conference.<sup>500</sup> Despite Tambo and Mbeki wanting to continue negotiations, the wider ANC-SA leadership did not take kindly to these BCM exiles writing letters to different embassies requesting space to meet as many were suspicious of their motives.<sup>501</sup>

Originally the BCM conference Pityana and others were organizing was set to be held in Kenya from December 22<sup>nd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 1979. In October of that year in London some key figures such as Pityana, Jeff Baqwa, Clarence Hamilton, Drake Koka, and Siphon Buthelezi organised a pre-meeting to go over some of the main themes they wanted to discuss.<sup>502</sup> While ironing out plans for this conference, Pityana and Ben Khoapa succeeded in organizing a meeting between them and Thabo Mbeki in Lusaka on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979. Although Tambo was unable to attend, Mbeki brought with him some former APLF cadres

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<sup>498</sup> WHP A2675/I/8, S. Cooper, 'Speech in Harlem at Biko memorial', September 25th, 1987, pp. 1-5.

<sup>499</sup> ANC Archives LUM/082/0010/67, 'Letter from O.R. Tambo to Mr. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu', date unclear probably October 1977, page numbers also unclear; ANC Archives LUM/082/0010/54, 'Letter from M.G. Makgothi to Mr. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu', p. 1; ANC Archives LUM/082/0010/02, 'Letter from Alfred Nzo to Mr. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu', 7/2/79, p. 1; ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/10, 'Letter from Joe Nhlanhla to Mr. Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu', August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>500</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/07, 'Letter from B. Pityana to Zambian High Commission', June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1979, p.1.

<sup>501</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/09, 'Letter from Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu to Mr. O.R. Tambo', August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979, p.1.

<sup>502</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/15, 'Minutes of the Consultation meeting', October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1979.

such as Welile Nhlapo to show that the ANC-SA was accepting of Black Consciousness.<sup>503</sup> According to Welile Nhlapo, he, Mafole, Keith Mokoape and Thenjiwe Mtintso (who was in Lesotho with Chris Hani) had been asked prior to this meeting to draft a document that laid out what the BCM was and suggest some steps to further the discussions that had been happening between Steve Biko and the ANC-SA inside the country.<sup>504</sup>

As Nengwekhulu had visa issues that hindered his ability to leave Botswana, he could not attend this meeting which left Pityana to lead the BCM delegation. A number of BCM activists, particularly the IRE and SAYRCO, while not against this meeting were adamant that they did not want to be absorbed by the ANC-SA. Instead, they wanted the talks to focus on ways for a more cooperative relationship to be cultivated.<sup>505</sup> While scholars such as Maaba and Mzamane have accurately sketched the overall contours of this negotiation, they did not provide this wider context of the numerous simultaneous efforts by BCM exiles to form armed wings as Pityana entered into negotiations.<sup>506</sup> Understanding this context is important to grasping why Pityana conceded that he could not speak for all factions of BCM, Mbeki complaining at the mixed messages they were getting from BCM, and why the April 1980 BCM conference ended with Pityana leaving the movement.

When the conference began it was noted that besides BCM's wariness of white communists, 'the two organisations shared in large measure the same ideological

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<sup>503</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/17, 'Summary of proceedings in Consultation between the African National Congress and Representatives of Black Consciousness', December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979, pp. 1-5; WHP A2675/1/14, 'Ben Khoapa telephone conversation with Tom Karis', Cleveland, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>504</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 19.

<sup>505</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/17, 'Summary of proceedings in Consultation between the African National Congress and Representatives of Black Consciousness' December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979, pp.1-5; Charles Mthombeni Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Soweto, Orlando East, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016, pp. 20-23; Strike Thokoane Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Meyerton, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, pp. 12-13; Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Pretoria, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>506</sup> Maaba and Mzamane, 'The Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, 1979-1990', pp. 1361-1363.

positions'. Furthermore, Pityana proposed that to work more closely with the ANC-SA, the 'BPC could provide training for political cadres who could then be channelled into more revolutionary work of the ANC'.<sup>507</sup> While this was a positive development, the ANC-SA noted that there were a number of different groups who fought under the banner of BCM and many of them were openly unfriendly to the ANC-SA. Pityana responded by saying he 'regretted the manner of their handling that led to bitterness and mistrust'. He also explained that BCM was formed 'to provide opportunities for all South African militants to make [a] full contribution to the struggle' and so was not designed to replace the ANC-SA or PAC.<sup>508</sup> Yet, aware of the fierce independence of IRE and SAYRCO, Pityana, ever the savvy diplomat, made it clear he did not yet have a mandate from BCM organisations to make firm agreements with the ANC-SA as their consultative conference had yet to take place.

This was acceptable to the ANC-SA delegation and as the meeting progressed there seemed to be a broad agreement that both organisations would work together to coordinate support for legal institutions against apartheid internally and externally. Pityana also made it clear they were against seeking OAU recognition but expressed concern on what the role of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Inkatha had with ANC-SA.<sup>509</sup> In

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<sup>507</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/17, 'Summary of proceedings in Consultation between the African National Congress and Representatives of Black Consciousness', December 8th, 1979, p. 1. Note, this seems to be honest to Biko's original intentions according to an interview with Peter Jones. However, even Jones admitted that Biko and others who were on the inside did not know how complex the exile scene was. In hindsight Jones argued, this proposal was naïve and other agreements would have been made had Biko and others gained a better understanding of the politics of exile. Bringing the organisations together the way they envisioned just would not work. See WHP A2675/1/13, 'Gail Gerhart interview with Peter Jones, Cape Town, July 21st, 1989', pp. 12-13.

<sup>508</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/17, 'Summary of proceedings in Consultation between the African National Congress and Representatives of Black Consciousness' December 8th, 1979, p.2.

<sup>509</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/17, 'Summary of proceedings in Consultation between the African National Congress and Representatives of Black Consciousness', December 8th, 1979, p.4. This was a position that cadres such as Bokwe Mafuna had already arrived at in the mid-1970s as they sought support



response, Mbeki laid out that the SACP was part of those national forces against apartheid historically. However, Mbeki bluntly said the ANC-SA did not 'accept responsibility for Chief Buthelezi's and Inkatha's political stance'.<sup>510</sup> This frank response was appreciated and Pityana closed by stating that his movement looked 'forward to the mutual position that all militants can be part of revolutionary movement without necessarily belonging to the ANC'.<sup>511</sup> The ANC-SA seemed generally open to this position but stressed the meeting be kept confidential.

A few months later, after much struggle and toil BCM was able to have its first consultative conference in exile in London.<sup>512</sup> Yet again, Nengwekhulu was unable to attend leaving Pityana to take the lead in the conference proceedings with Ben Khoapa, Basil Manning, Siphon Buthelezi, and Jeff Baqwa serving as the other senior leadership.<sup>513</sup> Still in Paris, Bokwe Mafuna was made aware of the conference and received an invitation, however, in a recent interview he said due to circumstances beyond his control he was unable to attend although he supported their efforts.<sup>514</sup> His presence would be missed as bringing together the fiercely independent BCM organisations in exile would prove a demanding task.

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from the OAU for their armed struggle efforts. See Toivo Asheeke interview with Bokwe Mafuna, December 7th, 2016, Johannesburg, pp. 13-14.

<sup>510</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/17, 'Summary of proceedings in Consultation between the African National Congress and Representatives of Black Consciousness', December 8th, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>511</sup> 'ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/17, 'Summary of proceedings in Consultation between the African National Congress and Representatives of Black Consciousness', December 8th, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>512</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/15, 'Minutes of the Consultation Meeting [pre-meeting for BCM conference]', October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1979, page numbers unclear; WHP A2675/III/275, 'The Immediate Tasks of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, pamphlet of the External Wing', n.d. but probably the latter part of 1980, pp. 1-15.

<sup>513</sup> G. Houston, ed., B. Maaba and X. Mangcu interview, 'Buthelezi, Siphon', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 4 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), p. 12.

<sup>514</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Bokwe Mafuna, December 7th, 2016, Johannesburg, pp. 23-24.

According to interviews with various IRE members such as Charles Mthombeni and Vusi Mchunu, as well as documents from the conference, the representatives of IRE wanted to take the lead in the conference in the discussions on armed struggle. They reasoned that as they had a number of contacts throughout Europe and the Middle East who could help train them as guerrillas, and as some of their members were already trained, they were in the best position to spearhead the building of a new armed wing. Mchunu remembers that, 'We [IRE] were at a peak in terms of our... Europe work, networks with liberatory people, we had fighters that [were] working in Botswana and so on; we had got strong'.<sup>515</sup> They were also pushing for a more umbrella/federal structure for the new organisation so the various groups could retain as much autonomy as possible, like the PLO, so that eventually they could come together as one as Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) had in 1964.<sup>516</sup>

Given this perspective, the delegates of the conference, many of whom did not know Pityana, rejected what they felt was his conciliatory attitude towards the ANC-SA. A number of the IRE contingent and others like Strike Thokoane felt Pityana had a hidden agenda to push them to dissolve as organisations and join the ANC-SA. These fears seemed confirmed when Pityana rejected their desire to continue efforts to build-up the armed wings as he felt more efforts should be made to produce a newsletter, *Solidarity*.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> Mchunu Interview, p.21.

<sup>516</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/26, 'Positions and Suggestions to B.C.M. Re-Organisational Conference (Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort – a B.C.M Collective', n.d. but most probably mid-late 1980, pp. 24-26.

<sup>517</sup> Strike Thokoane interview by Toivo Asheeke, Meyerton, December 2nd, 2016, pp. 12-13. Another viewpoint by Ben Khoapa, key organizer of the BCPs, has also been pushed. Due to lack of evidence and research from myself, I relegated it to the footnotes. According to Khoapa, he believes UM elements and Trotskyites had infiltrated the movement and gained influence over newer converts to Black Consciousness, especially those who came to the movement post-1975. He believes it was them who influenced the hostility towards the ANC-SA and was the reason why Pityana, and eventually he himself, left the movement. See WHP A2675/I/14, 'Ben Khoapa, telephone conversation with Tom Karis, Cleveland, October 11th, 1980', pp. 1-2.

The IRE did not understand this as they already had launched their own publication, *Isandlwana*, it seemed this was not something Pityana wanted to support although SAYRCO, who came to the conference with the largest contingent, seemed to embrace the idea. As tensions mounted Baqwa dropped a bombshell when he openly questioned Pityana's notes on the meeting between them and the ANC-SA that he presented to the BCM delegates. This, combined with disagreements with the IRE and the vocal presence of some Trotskyite cadres of UM pushed Pityana on the second day to leave the conference and openly join the ANC-SA, much to the shock of Nengwekhulu still stuck in Botswana.<sup>518</sup> Unfazed by his departure, the remaining members of the conference decided to retain their full independence from the ANC-SA and PAC. At the close of the conference the BCMA was officially formed, following the IRE suggestion, as an umbrella organisation.<sup>519</sup>

At the end of the conference the newly minted BCMA stated that ideologically, Black Consciousness at the global level embraced the idea of a 'free, democratic and

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<sup>518</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/20, 'Letter from M.S. Choabi to Comrade Thabo', March 6th, 1980, p.1. This letter is interesting because apparently Choabi claims to have heard from Pityana in early 1980 that he was going to join the ANC-SA and break with BCM publicly. The decision was being kept under wraps because Pityana wanted to try and bring others with him. This has not been confirmed by me or other documents that I have read with Pityana himself, however, this was the impression many delegates had of Pityana during the conference. Furthermore Pityana, like many others, came from an ANC-SA background, while at Fort Hare University in the 1960s. For information on Pityana at Fort Hare see D. Massey, *Under Protest: The rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2010), pp. 191-204; ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/21, 'Press Release: Statement by Interim Committee on London Conference', May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1980, pp. 1-2; LUM/088/0043/22, 'New BCM Leaders slam ANC, PAC, Corruption', *SANA Bulletin*, No.13, May 1980, pp.1, 3; WHP A2675/I/14, 'Tom Karis telephone interview with Ben Khoapa, Cleveland, October 11th, 1980', pp. 1-3.

<sup>519</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/26, 'Positions and Suggestions to B.C.M. Re-Organisational Conference (Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort – a B.C.M Collective', n.d., pp. 24-26; M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches: A Courageous Journey by South African Patriots* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2015), pp. 60-61; Charles Mthombeni interview by Toivo Asheeke, Soweto, Orlando East, November 30th, 2016, pp. 9-10; Vusi Mchunu Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Johannesburg, December 15th, 2016, pp. 13-21. Vusi Mchunu and Mthombeni were members of the IRE.

socialist Azania'.<sup>520</sup> Furthermore, making a clean break with some of the contentious policies of the BPC prior to its banning, as well as severing claims to leadership by Nengwekhulu in Botswana, they voted overwhelmingly to dissolve the External Directorate. They also made sure to recognize all other South African movements fighting for the overthrow of apartheid as they felt their role as BC activists was to bring the warring factions together.<sup>521</sup> Most importantly, determined to learn from the lessons of the ANC-SA and PAC about being trapped in exile and becoming, at least to their eyes, disconnected from the masses, they emphasised that 'the mainstay of the struggle for national liberation in our country rests on the struggling masses within the country, and not on specialised entities abroad'.<sup>522</sup>

Additionally, a five person interim committee was set up 'consisting of Basil Manning in London, Dodo Motsisi and Mkhalelwa Mazibuku in West Germany, Andrew Lukele in the United States and Gerald Phohojoe in Botswana'.<sup>523</sup> Yet, in the wake of the conference the various BCM organisations were still unable to work together effectively. Charles Mthombeni believes this is because despite agreeing to the idea of unity, they had not done the necessary practical work to make it a reality. They did not trust each other and while there was no deep antagonism, according to Mthombeni, this hindered their ability to build the necessary structures and communication networks to build their movement

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<sup>520</sup> WHP A2675/III/275, 'The Immediate Tasks of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, pamphlet of the External Wing', n.d. but probably the latter part of 1980, p. 5.

<sup>521</sup> WHP A2675/III/275, 'The Immediate Tasks of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, pamphlet of the External Wing', n.d. but probably the latter part of 1980, pp. 7-8.

<sup>522</sup> WHP A2675/III/275, 'The Immediate Tasks of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, pamphlet of the External Wing', n.d. but probably the latter part of 1980, p. 9.

<sup>523</sup> 'Postscript' in *Africa Confidential*: Vol. 21 No.11 May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1980, p. 5; ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/22, 'New BCM Leaders slam ANC, PAC, Corruption', *SANA Bulletin*, May 1980, No.13, p. 1, 3.

further.<sup>524</sup> This became even more complicated with the revitalization of AZAPO in the early 1980s and their decision, under advisement of some BCMA cadres like Strike Thokoane, to send the now released Mosibudi Mangena into exile to lead and reform the BCMA.<sup>525</sup>

### **Overtaken by Events: The Capture of Khotso, the fall of IRE, and the rise of AZANLA, June 1981 – January 1990**

The need for a more centralised BCMA structure became apparent in June 1981 when Khotso Seatlholo, restless in exile, decided in early 1981 to infiltrate South Africa. He wanted to rally support for SAYRCO and the wider Black Consciousness position during the five year anniversary of the Soweto Uprising. Working closely with a woman named Loate, he moved around the townships of Soweto spreading information about his movement in exile. Loate had, according to some reports, arranged a meeting between him and AZAPO and the PAC's youth wing the Azanian Youth Unity (AZANYU). Loate was a member of AZANYU and she also helped set up a meeting between Seatlholo and Thami Mazawi, the news editor of the *Sowetan*. Unfortunately, word reached the authorities that Seatlholo was moving around in Soweto. A few days after his arrival while traveling to a meeting with Loate they were ambushed, attacked, and arrested on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1981. In court they were charged with terrorism and the promotion of a terrorist organisation. Both were found guilty with Seatlholo sentenced to ten years imprisonment and Loate to five.

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<sup>524</sup> Mthombeni Interview, p. 21.

<sup>525</sup> WHP A2675/I/16, 'Lybon Mabasa interview with Gail Gerhart, New York City, April 7th, 1991', p. 19; M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches: A Courageous Journey by South African Patriots* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2015), pp. 14-17; Strike Thokoane Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Meyerton, December 2nd, 2016, pp. 16-17; Mchunu Interview, p. 21.

Their arrests stifled the development of SAYRCO which would be plagued by money problems throughout the 1980s.<sup>526</sup>

Back in Botswana, according to Mchunu, the government stepped up efforts to place people in Dukwe and the house the IRE had built on the border to store their weapons became an issue as the person left to watch things vanished along with their weapons. Some IRE cadres initially thought the local authorities had done something to him and almost retaliated. Thankfully, cool heads prevailed and they discovered he had just left and somebody else had taken their weapons. Yet, this caused even more frustration which was compounded by the fact that many of them were particularly ‘unhappy about the leaders that had stayed in Europe’.<sup>527</sup> All these frustrations came to a head with the arrival of Mosibudi Mangena in Botswana under orders from AZAPO leadership to bring order to those in exile.<sup>528</sup>

In December 1981 at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Botswana region of the BCMA, Mangena was elected as its chairperson succeeding Mpotseng Kgokong. Moving swiftly to counteract the fractured nature of the organisation he, along with others not aligned to SAYRCO and IRE in the Botswana region, pushed for a BCMA conference to be held to centralize organisational authority and responsibility with an elected executive. At this conference which took place in August 1982, five were elected to the

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<sup>526</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, ‘The Apprehension of Comrade Khotso Seatlholo’, n.d. most probably late 1981, pp. 1-2; WHP A2675/III/785, ‘Letter from Levy Kotane to Chair of UN Anti-Apartheid Committee re detention of SAYRCO President [Khotso] Seatlholo’, July 27th, 1981, pp. 1-2; WHP A2675/III/17, ‘Seatlholo and Loate Trial, began December 1981 and ended March 11th, 1982 and took place at the Joburg Regional Court,’ n.d.; WHP A2675/III/785, ‘Notice to Vacate Plot 2325’, May 26th, 1988, p. 1; WHP A2675/III/785, C. Bapela, ‘Response: Plot number 2325’, May 30th, 1988, pp. 1-5.

<sup>527</sup> Mchunu Interview, p. 20.

<sup>528</sup> WHP A2675/I/16, ‘Lybon Mabasa interview with Gail Gerhart, New York City, April 7th, 1991’, p. 19; Mangena, pp. 14-17.

central committee: Mangena (chairman), Mandisi Titi (SG), Tau Morwe (TG), and Kgokong (Publicity and Information Secretary). These four were empowered to co-opt a Secretary for Defence which Mangena decided would be Nkutsoeu 'Skaap' Motsau who was still inside the country serving a banning order. After the conclusion of this AGM arrangements were made for him to escape which led to his arrival in Botswana in February 1983.<sup>529</sup>

As BCMA solidified its structure Mangena remarked at how difficult it was to gain international support and recognition for their new effort as often, and here he is referring to the ANC-SA, 'freedom fighters from the same country would try to prevent their compatriots from waging the struggle against the enemy, unless those freedom fighters affiliated to their organisation'.<sup>530</sup> Instead of a fierce spirit of cooperation, there was a vicious energy of competition that existed among the South African liberation movements. For Mangena, BCMA's shock at the attitude of the ANC-SA was caused because 'we had come from a culture of free political activity inside our country that fostered solidarity rather than division and fragmentation. We eulogised the imprisoned and exiled leadership figures of the older liberation movements and offered our political platforms to activists of the banned organisations whenever possible. Thus, the politics of mutual antagonism was a bit weird for us'.<sup>531</sup> He also pointed out that many large support groups in the western countries were uneasy and distrustful of the pro-Black stance of BCMA and grilled them

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<sup>529</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, p. 52.

<sup>530</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, p. 54.

<sup>531</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, pp. 55-56.

on their attitude towards whites and were anxious over what they would do if they came to power.<sup>532</sup>

Nevertheless, there were other BCM adherents in exile who had far more experience with the competitive nature of liberation movement politics in exile. Furthermore, they had connections to a number of radical organisations across Europe and the Middle East. The IRE cadres were present in Botswana and were willing to assist Mangena and the newly reformed BCMA, but, they rejected the authoritative nature with which they were approached. Mdlalose and Mchunu in particular felt that Mangena, Mpotseng, and Motsau were not interested in working with the IRE but in dominating them.<sup>533</sup> This infuriated them because they had been in exile longer and had successfully built and rebuilt networks in Europe and the Middle East among radical groups to help them receive military training. Mangena believed these cadres were undisciplined, too disconnected from events inside South Africa, and did not want to submit themselves to the internal movement. The end result was BCMA was unable to incorporate the IRE or SAYRCO deeply into its structures.

When Motsau eventually arrived in Botswana he was given the tedious task of yet again reorganizing an armed wing given the inability of the factions of BCM in exile to work effectively together.<sup>534</sup> Motsau and a few others formed AZANLA and were able to quickly get its military programme adopted by the BCMA's central committee in 1983. After its adoption, a similar question faced AZANLA that faced previous BCM formations in exile: where to train, where to recruit, and where to get weapons? Finding help became

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<sup>532</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, p. 58.

<sup>533</sup> Mdlalose interview, pp. 21-23.

<sup>534</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, pp. 58-59.



a serious challenge as most nation-states were either openly hostile towards them (such as Zambia), ignored them (Botswana and Tanzania), or politely curbed them (many Western and Eastern European states).<sup>535</sup>

However, similar to the APLF in 1974 with the PAC, AZANLA got a big break when according to Mangena, ‘In the middle of 1984 the EPLF agreed to train us if we could make it to their liberated areas within Ethiopia’.<sup>536</sup> According to him and Strike Thokoane, this offer was first made in the April 1980 conference to the London-based interim committee, but, as they were sceptical of the viability of armed struggle they suppressed information of this contact. Motsau and Nlomani Mabusa were the two chosen to go and receive this training and were unofficially named the Biko Unit. Throughout 1985 they trained in Nakfa, Eritrea where the EPLF was headquartered while also spending some time in Iraq for further instruction. During this time they were able to meet Isaias Afewerki who was one of the leading figures of the EPLF.<sup>537</sup> The Biko Unit trained in live combat situations and were struck by how many female commanders there were and sought to replicate and expand upon this in AZANLA. Later some of their units were to train in Libya after Colonel Gaddafi in 1982 created Al Mathaba of which they became members in 1986.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> WHP A2675/III/275, ‘BCMA: Basic Documents’, 1987, pp. 1-4; Pp. 60-61.

<sup>536</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, p. 62.

<sup>537</sup> On the EPLF see, D. Connell, *Against All Odds: A Chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution* (Trenton, The Red Sea Press, 1993); J. Young, ‘The Tigray and Eritrean People’s Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34, 1 (1996), pp. 105-120; D. Pool, ‘The Eritrean People’s Liberation Front,’ in C. Clapham, ed., *African Guerrillas* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 19-35; D. Pool, *From Guerrillas To Government: Eritrean People's Liberation Front* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2001); G. Kibreab, *Critical Reflections on the Eritrean War of Independence: Social Capital, Associational Life, Religion, Ethnicity and Sowing Seeds of Dictatorship* (Trenton, The Red Sea Press, 2008), pp. 149-418.

<sup>538</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, pp. 97-102.

By December 1985 the Biko Unit had returned to Botswana. Unlike the APLF, the BCMA decided to keep much of their armed struggle training activity secret from their wider membership who were not on the central committee as conditions in Botswana in the mid-1980s were not what they were in the mid-1970s.<sup>539</sup> This created some problems Mangena remarked as, ‘We had to balance the need-to-know basis of many of our programmes with the democratic process that was the hallmark of our organisations. In fact, quite a few rumblings of discontent began to be heard from a few of our members, bemoaning the decline of democracy within our ranks. Some of these ultimately left the organisation’.<sup>540</sup>

In 1986 Shaap Motsau informed the central committee of his plan to train cadres in the Qwa Qwa Mountains in South Africa, much to the disbelief of the rest of the central committee. Motsau, Kenneth Malele, Naphthalie Mgoaskeng, Frans Pule, Nkosana Mavusa and Strike Thokoane went to Qwa Qwa to set things up with the help of a local man named Charles Mogotsi. Mogotsi helped transport cadres to the mountains, most of whom were from Soweto. Much of the training they underwent was map-reading, survival in the rural areas, theories of armed struggle, discipline, some of the principals of Maoism, and the history of BCM. There were also a number of women with them in this camp as well as those spread out in Botswana.<sup>541</sup> According to Strike Thokoane, who was one of the leading trainers in Qwa Qwa, teaching these cadres discipline was critical. In his own words, ‘The main thing was the emphasis on discipline because if we do not do that you are going to compromise us... so we were training them on how to be disciplined by using

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<sup>539</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, pp. 62-67.

<sup>540</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, p. 67.

<sup>541</sup> Strike Thokoane interview, pp. 18-20. Strike was particularly talented at infiltration and staying undetected inside the country.

the political weapon. How to form cells, because what we wanted was that these groups should go, each individual will form their own cell'.<sup>542</sup>

As their units grew more effective they began infiltrating South Africa more and more, particularly the Bantustan of Bophuthatswana. They would sabotage various infrastructures, leave pamphlets, and were developing the capability to directly attack the security forces.<sup>543</sup> On the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1990 during a routine armed sabotage mission in Bophuthatswana some AZANLA guerrillas clashed with the Bophuthatswana Defence Force.<sup>544</sup> Though, with the unbanning of banned organisations earlier in February 1990, the release of Nelson Mandela shortly after, and the independence of Namibia, global events overtook BCMA as pressure mounted for a peaceful solution to the end of apartheid. In order to not risk alienation from the masses of South Africa – who at this point were heavily influenced by the trade union activism that exploded in the 1980s, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), and the figure of Mandela – AZANLA was dissolved.

### **Conclusion: A Missed Chance**

Looking back at the founding conference of the BCMA in April 1980, Charles Mthombeni lamented that ‘we missed a chance... to grow you know, effectively, to be a force. We could have been a greater force than what did BCMA later became’.<sup>545</sup> This chapter closes on this sombre note as we critically analyse why BCM did not grow into a

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<sup>542</sup> Strike Thokoane interview, p. 21.

<sup>543</sup> Strike Thokoane interview, p. 24.

<sup>544</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*, pp. 93-124.

<sup>545</sup> Charles Mthombeni interview p. 23.

dominant force, on par with the ANC-SA in exile. Much of this has to do with the ANC-SA having more resources than BCM, successfully outmanoeuvring them in the diplomatic arena, and BCM's own inability to manage the fiercely independent groups drawn to fight under its banner. We will begin however by recapping certain differences these last few chapters teased out between BCM and the ANC-SA/MK and PAC/APLA.

According to Mdlalose what made BCM formations in exile different from the ANC-SA/MK and PAC/APLA were 'Our interactions with other people and organisations. Our willingness to read about other people's struggles, how they conduct them, especially Mao Zedong the Chinese. Especially the Vietnamese. Especially the Chinese'.<sup>546</sup> Moreover, they were not funded by the USSR or China which made them far more independent than the ANC-SA and the rapidly deteriorating PAC.<sup>547</sup> It also forced them to rely more heavily on a Black radical South African grounded tradition of struggle, something sketched out briefly by Xolela Mangcu and others, that was able to absorb and utilize other ideologies and strategies instead of being directed by them.<sup>548</sup> This influenced the creativity of the movement when it came to rethinking how to open up a new front in the war effort against apartheid from Botswana spoken about in chapter three.

Furthermore, their groundings with the US/Caribbean Black Power Movement, especially some of the organizing strategies of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), was deeply influential to their mostly non-hierarchical form of organisation. Most members had a prominent voice in the running of the organisations and

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<sup>546</sup> Musa Mdlalose interview, p. 23.

<sup>547</sup> WHP A2675/III/275, 'Mosibudi Mangena interview with Phillip Nyakoda: The BCMA in Perspective', *SAPEM*, July 1989, pp. 17-19.

<sup>548</sup> A. Odendaal, *VUKANI BANTU! The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1984); X. Mangcu, *Biko: A Life* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2014), pp. 33-78.

political debate and challenges to leadership was encouraged. This material and ideological independence made BCM more dangerous than others to apartheid because other nation-states or global capitalist interests could not strongly influence them if they won political power.

All of this this cannot be said about the ANC-SA/MK or PAC/APLA in exile. Chris Hani, the popular radical of the SACP and Chief of Staff of MK, stated in a 1992 interview that the USSR was so willing to supply them with military training and tactics they did not explore other ways to independently accomplish these tasks. Hani recollected that ‘Even our Military Combat Work (MCW) theory was really a duplication or a replica of the experience of the Bolsheviks, and we therefore failed to take that theory and apply it creatively to our own indigenous conditions’.<sup>549</sup> For the PAC, their internal problems hindered their ability to maintain a viable organisation which infected how they related and responded to other organisations such as the Bokwe Group/APLF. While under Mangena and new PAC leadership tensions were mostly healed, trust was never rebuilt and what seemed like a natural alliance in exile between BCM and PAC never took root.<sup>550</sup> Taken together, a larger coalition of radical South African organisations was unable to be formed and this only served to prolong the life of apartheid.

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<sup>549</sup> C. Hani, ‘The Future of the Party in a Democratic South Africa’, in G. Houston and J. Ngculu, eds., *Chris Hani : Voices of Liberation* (Pretoria, HSRC Press, 2014), p. 217.

<sup>550</sup> Unfortunately some of these tensions have continued into the post-apartheid period and in the contemporary FMF and RMF moments. While ideological allies during these struggles at times PASMA (the wildly popular youth wing of the PAC) and BLF (latest iteration of SASO/BPC) clash over tactics and strategies. Essentially each is jockeying with the EFF Youth Wing for dominance as the Black radical alternative of the mainstream to the ANC-SA. Many of these conflicts come back to some of these tensions in exile as each movement praises the same core leaders: Sobukwe, Biko, Hani etc. and has a strong appreciation for African radicals and African diaspora militants. On internal problems wracking the PAC see ANC Archives LSM/016/069/03, T. Ntantla, ‘The Crisis in the PAC’, April 4th, 1978, pp. 1-29; Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution*, pp. 120-155.

That said, BCM was outmanoeuvred in exile by the ANC-SA and betrayed by the PAC/APLA. Due to the older organisations having more connections among nation-states, the USSR, China, and a number of powerful NGOs, they were able to methodically isolate BCM from obtaining broad support in exile. As previous chapters have outlined this was done to ensure they would not threaten in particular the ANC-SA's claim in exile to be the "authentic liberation movement" and by doing so protect their status and financial resources.

Another dimension of this, something we have not spoken about in this dissertation, is what many BCM cadres inside South Africa believe to be the violent repression of their movement by the UDF and its aligned organisations called the Charterists. According to Puli Moloto-Stofile, Black Consciousness lessened in influence due to 'the rise of UDF [United Democratic Front]. The rise of UDF came with the Charterist [who] were actually murdering... BC people... It was a violent repression of Black Consciousness'.<sup>551</sup> This dissertation purposefully steered away from a close examination of the internal situation in the 1980s between AZAPO, UDF, Inkatha, the trade unions, and MDM because of how convoluted the narrative is. There was violence on both sides which was encouraged by the apartheid regime to sow as much confusion as possible as their regime lost legitimacy. This broke the alliances many of these organisations formed during the 1970s during BCM's height of influence.

At the same time, as previous chapters have also noted, all blame cannot and should not be placed on others. As Mthombeni discussed above, the various activists in exile were

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<sup>551</sup> Puli Moloto-Stofile Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Johannesburg, August 31st, 2017, p. 7.

unable to effectively unite and share skills and knowledge to build a stronger BCMA. The challenges of being in exile effected them in similar ways to the ANC-SA and PAC in the sense that it created distrust among activists who once were close friends or at the very least fellow activists. Furthermore, despite getting better with the gender question over time, this was something the movement still struggled with in the context of a South Africa and wider global context saturated with patriarchy and misogyny.<sup>552</sup> Moreover, until the BCMA, the movement lacked sophistication in deft political and diplomatic manoeuvrings among nation-states and other powerful NGOs that the ANC-SA mastered. Although this was part of its strength, it also hindered its ability to outmanoeuvre the ANC-SA's attempts to discredit them in the realm of global public opinion.

In terms of the impact of BCM on the South African struggle in the 1970s and 1980s, Vusi Mchunu compared it to the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (ICU) in the 1930s. Mchunu argued that during this time the ICU was more radical and widespread than the ANC-SA, due to this, and the lack of global connections, they were more easily violently repressed and politically outmanoeuvred.<sup>553</sup> It also provided a Black radical alternative for activists in South Africa during the 1970s to find a way to strike out at the apartheid regime when the ANC-SA/MK and PAC/APLA proved ineffective.

Sam Nolutshungu, one of the best scholars of BCM, concluded that the movement and its various organisations had a revolutionary impact. This was not so much because of its ideology or organisational structures 'but also by the nature of the political terrain

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<sup>552</sup> As a researcher searching for interviewees it took an inordinate amount of effort to find women to interview for this project. As time went on and more connections were found, it became clear that women were central to the founding and functioning of BCM from SASO/APLF up to BCMA/AZANLA.

<sup>553</sup> Vusi Mchunu interview, p. 22.

and the effects of the terrain on its political practice'.<sup>554</sup> Essentially, the apartheid system needed white supremacy in its most crude form to accumulate capital and reproduce itself. Moreover, it needed violence and co-optation to maintain and expand this structure. Due to this, although sounding a bit too structuralist, Nolutshungu argued BCM 'was a product of revolutionary circumstances which was itself driven to a profoundly subversive political role. It not only upset the rationalisation of capitalist, racial domination but provoked a state response which, in its turn, created greater militancy among young Blacks who became susceptible to radicalisation'.<sup>555</sup> Indeed, thousands subscribed to BCM organizing/mobilizing tactics and strategies and harnessed them to create entities such as APLF, SAYRCO, IRE, and BCMA.

Like Nolutshungu and others, this dissertation does not argue that BCM would have been drastically different than the ANC-SA if they came to power. What radical post-colonial governments across Africa and the Third World have shown is while seizing state power, either through peaceful means or force of arms can be useful, our economies and hence countries remain trapped in neo-colonial relationships. BCM in and of itself would not have been able to resist this alone and this is something their activists understood. What they offered was a rubric for mostly non-hierarchical organisation and a committed engagement with the grassroots movements in South Africa today who are returning to BCM need to understand to better guide their contemporary struggles.

As APLF, IRE, SAYRCO and BCMA tried to get themselves organised Black Consciousness cadres who had joined the ANC-SA/MK were rapidly radicalizing it and

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<sup>554</sup> S. Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa: Political Considerations* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982), p. 200.

<sup>555</sup> S. Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa*, pp. 200-201.



rebuilding it into a proper liberation movement. Yet, Welile Nhlapo, Thenjiwe Mtintso, Tebogo Mafole, and others were not the first BC cadres to join the ANC-SA/MK. Keith Mokoape and his group held that distinction and it is to their story that we turn to in the next chapter set in the context of the ANC-SA in exile's evolving relationship with the BCM.

## Chapter Five

### **The African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA)'s Evolving Relationship with the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in Exile, 1969 –1979**

An under-researched dimension of the exile politics of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) revolves around how they reacted in exile to the rising Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) during the 1970s. While much has been written about the ANC-SA's relationship with the Pan African Congress (PAC) in exile and at home, similar attention has not been given to how the ANC-SA responded to BCM's rise outside South Africa.<sup>556</sup> From what has been written, the dominant narrative argues BCM was not a serious threat and that despite some early tensions was eventually absorbed into ANC-SA structures.<sup>557</sup> This hegemonic narrative continues by arguing those who refused to be absorbed constituted a "Third Force" that was supported by international and national

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<sup>556</sup> For a brief list see T. Karis and G. Gerhart, "The Last Stage of Non-Violence, 1957-May 1961", in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964, Volume 3: Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964* (Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1977), pp. 307-324; T. Karis and G. Gerhart, "The Liberation Movements, 1964-1975", in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990, Volume 5: Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 19-61; T. Karis and G. Gerhart, "The Liberation Movements, 1975-1979", in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge*, pp. 279-310; S. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, pp. 40-48; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC in exile, 1960-1970' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 1 [1960-1970]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2004), pp. 375-433; K. Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa), 1959-1994* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2009), pp. 49-69; B. Maaba and M. Mzamani, 'The Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, 1979-1990', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 4 [1980 – 1990]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2010), pp. 1361-1398.

<sup>557</sup> S. Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa: Political considerations* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982), p. 149; G. Houston and B. Magubane, 'The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2007), pp. 371-451.

elements unfriendly to the ANC-SA. These dominant narratives while all-together not inaccurate, downplay the real anxieties felt by elements of the ANC-SA in exile during the 1970s and side-steps the righteous determination of some elements of BCM to form independent organisations.

Following Chris Saunders who argued that ‘The relationship between the history of the ANC and that of the broader liberation movement needs to be teased out in greater detail’, my research has found the interactions between the two movements in exile was dictated by a struggling ANC-SA reacting, at times constructively, to the growing legitimacy and independence of BCM in the early 1970s and in the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising.<sup>558</sup> While B. Maaba and M. Mzamane have correctly pointed out that ‘The relationship between the BCM and the ANC in exile began on a fairly high note but in a short space of time it evaporated’, they did little to excavate why and how this relationship soured.<sup>559</sup> This chapter, focusing on exile politics not the internal situation, argues that it was the ANC-SA who considered BCM a threat to its influence and in response proceeded to systematically discredit and marginalize it internationally. At the same time, they did accept some new recruits from BCM such as Keith Mokoape and his group of exiles although their absorption into the ANC-SA and its armed wing Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) was not as smooth as some would imagine. Excavating this overlooked history offers another perspective on how the ANC-SA ensured it would emerge in the post-1976 moment as the dominant South African organisation.

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<sup>558</sup> C. Saunders, ‘The ANC in the Historiography of the National Liberation Struggle in South Africa’ in K. Kondlo, C. Saunders, and S. Zondi, eds., *Treading the Waters of History and Perspectives of the ANC* (Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2014), p. 13.

<sup>559</sup> Maaba and Mzamane, ‘The Black Consciousness Movement of Azanian, 1979-1990’, p. 1378.

## Literature Review

My initial interest in this particular topic came from the work of Raymond Suttner who explored conflicting and contradictory ideological currents within the ANC-SA and the South African Communist Party (SACP).<sup>560</sup> Unlike other ANC-SA scholars, Suttner questioned ‘the tendency to see BC as an immature political maturation, which people left behind them in a process of political maturation to join the ANC’.<sup>561</sup> He was one of the few who argued against older scholars such as Stephen Ellis, Gregory Houston, Vladimir Shubin, and Ben Magubane who contended the ANC-SA convinced the upstart BCM to “mature out of” its Black radical ideology for a non-racialist class-based analysis.<sup>562</sup> Gregory Houston and Bernard Magubane champion this perspective as they trace the contours of the relationship between the two movements inside the country from the perspective of a growing ANC-SA underground. While they overstate their case as to the growing strength of the underground and downplay BCM’s central influence during the

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<sup>560</sup> R. Suttner, ‘Culture(s) of the African National Congress of South Africa: Imprint of Exile Experiences,’ in Henning Melber, ed., *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: The Unfinished business of Democratic Consolidation*, (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2003), pp. 181-188; R. Suttner, ‘The character and formation of intellectuals within the ANC-led South African liberation movement’ in T. Mkandawire, ed., *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development* (London and New York, Zed Books, 2005), pp. 118-120, 135; R. Suttner, *The ANC Underground in South Africa, 1950-1970* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), pp. 77-83.

<sup>561</sup> Suttner, *The ANC Underground in South Africa*, p. 154.

<sup>562</sup> S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 84-87; V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2009 2nd edition, org. 1999); G. Houston and B. Magubane, ‘The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s’ in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2006), pp. 371-451; G. Houston and B. Magubane, ‘The ANC’s Armed Struggle in the 1970s’ in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2006), pp. 453-530; J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve: Recollections of an Umkhonto Soldier* (Claremont, South Africa, David Philip Publishers, 2009), p. 85; S. Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 89-127.

1970s, they also do not track the complex processes a number of BCM activists like Mokoape had to undergo in exile to join the ANC-SA.

Even though Suttner is critical of how flippantly BCM has been dismissed by scholars like Houston and Magubane, he, like those he critiques, downplays how threatened the ANC-SA felt at the rise of BCM. In this, he is more akin to Hugh MacMillan who argued against those suggesting ‘the ANC was hostile towards the Black Consciousness Movement’, instead, ‘it [ANC-SA] was generally open to people of the Soweto generation, who strengthened and rejuvenated it at all levels.’<sup>563</sup>

Paying closer attention to how the ANC-SA interacted with BCM in exile disrupts Suttner and MacMillan’s contentions and makes a number of contributions to the literature on the exile experience and, to a limited extent, the importance of the Soweto Uprising. To begin with, as Tom Lodge and Macmillan have argued, the ANC-SA in exile over time began to take on the characteristics of a government-in-exile. In part, this was due to the dependency a number of ANC-SA members had on the leadership for their day-to-day survival and how dependent the organisation was on other nation-states for their survival/legitimacy.<sup>564</sup> To this latter point, the ANC-SA according to Macmillan, began to act like a party in political power and exerted its power in such a manner. Moreover, maintaining and expanding support from other nation-states was often based on proving

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<sup>563</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2013), p. 133.

<sup>564</sup> T. Lodge, ‘State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976-1986’, *Third World Quarterly*, 9, 1 (1987), p. 27; H. Macmillan, ‘The African National Congress of South Africa in Zambia: The Culture of Exile and the Changing Relationship with Home, 1964-1990’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 3 (2009), pp. 303-329.

other political organisations did not have mass support and events like the Soweto Uprising were led, or at least decisively influenced, by the ANC-SA.

According to Sifiso Ndlovu, the creation of this dependency was mostly unproductive as it led to ‘nepotism and created clientele networks that were divisive’.<sup>565</sup> Despite Ndlovu and earlier scholars like Scott Thomas illuminating how the ANC-SA shaped its diplomacy in exile, little attention was paid to how these efforts during the 1970s were directed at discrediting, co-opting and incorporating elements of Black Consciousness (BC).<sup>566</sup>

As it pertains to the expansive literature on the impact of the Soweto Uprising, Baruch Hirson’s detailed account of the student rebellion notably tracked some of its intricate details and was one of the first to connect the BC-inspired protests with a wider Black working class revolt.<sup>567</sup> Julian Brown’s recent work, building on the earlier work of Sam Nolutshungu, charted numerous seemingly disconnected political actions prior to the Soweto Uprising in order to contest narratives of the event as spontaneous.<sup>568</sup> More recently, a number of scholars have sought to explore the build-up to and broader national impacts of the Soweto Uprising from newer perspectives.<sup>569</sup> Despite the breadth and depth of this research from a domestic point of view, none have systematically focused on the

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<sup>565</sup> Ndlovu, ‘The ANC in exile, 1960-1970’, p. 398.

<sup>566</sup> S. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation: The Foreign Relations of the ANC since 1960* (London, Tauris Academic Studies, 1996).

<sup>567</sup> B. Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Schoolchildren’s Revolt that shook apartheid* (London, Zed Books, 2016, orig. 1979).

<sup>568</sup> Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa*, pp. 148-149; J. Brown, *The Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976* (Suffolk, James Currey, 2016).

<sup>569</sup> S. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprisings: Counter Memories of June 1976* (London, Pan Macmillan South Africa, 2017); S. Ndlovu, ed., *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 7: Soweto Uprisings: New Perspective, Commemorations and Memorialisation* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2017); A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto ’76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016).

fighters in exile between primarily ANC-SA and BC activists on who could lay claim to being the guiding force of the uprising.<sup>570</sup>

Moving past these debates this chapter draws on the pioneering work of Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot and his concept of silences in history, referenced in the introduction.<sup>571</sup> As mentioned earlier engaging with his insights offers a different way to imagine how future research should engage with South African liberation movement historiography. Similarly to Trouillot, although in a different context, more recently scholars such as Jon Soske and others have pointed out that countering ANC-SA centric narratives on the history of South Africa's liberation struggle requires the complication of 'a single heroic narrative of liberation'.<sup>572</sup>

That said, the first section of this chapter will excavate some of the positive early responses of the ANC-SA and SACP to the South African Students' Organisation (SASO). The chapter will then suggest it was the decision by some BCM activists in Botswana to form the APLF that prompted the ANC-SA to change its relationship to BCM. We will then sketch how the fight over the Soweto Uprising caused the ANC-SA to redouble their efforts to systematically marginalize BCM. Throughout this narrative we will keep an eye on the activism of Keith Mokoape and how his influence was central in convincing a number of BCM activists, in particular disgruntled APLF cadres, to radicalize the ANC-SA and its armed wing by joining. We will then conclude with some final thoughts.

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<sup>570</sup> A. Mafeje, 'Soweto and Its Aftermath', *Review of African Political Economy*, 11 (1978), pp. 17-30.

<sup>571</sup> M. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1995); M. Trouillot, *Haiti: State against Nation: The Origins of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).

<sup>572</sup> J. Soske, A. Lissoni and N. Erlank, 'One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Struggle History after Apartheid', pp. 30-31.

## Early Encounters with Black Consciousness, 1969 – 1972

While the ANC-SA in exile struggled to hold itself together in the wake of the Wankie/Sipolilo campaigns, the Hani Memorandum, and the Morogoro Conference, Black students in South Africa were beginning to assert themselves as a powerful political presence inside the country. One of the first indications of the ANC-SA's engagement with BCM comes in mid-1969 when they reported in their main publication, *Sechaba*, on a meeting where four white student leaders were removed from an all-Black meeting taking place at Alan Taylor residence at the University of Natal.<sup>573</sup> When SASO finally announced itself as an organisation for non-white students only there was some initial hesitancy to this as the ANC-SA in exile felt alliances with white students would be necessary.<sup>574</sup> However, knowing they had little influence on events inside the country, both the ANC-SA and SACP publications adopted a supportive paternal attitude to the new student activities taking place in the country. Furthermore, because they had little contact with this emerging generation of young activists these events forced both organisations to make efforts to reach out to them.

In addition to this initial curiosity at the budding activism of the movement, the ideas of Black Consciousness were debated and in surprising ways embraced among some of the highest leaders of the ANC-SA. One of the first indications of ANC-SA leadership's serious engagement with the ideas of BC are found in a letter by Oliver Tambo to an

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<sup>573</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, 'Life under Apartheid' in *Sechaba*, Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1969, p. 19.

<sup>574</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Sibeko, 'Students in Revolt (II): South African Students are Alive and Well and not Unaffected by World Events' in the *African Communist*, No. 38, Third Quarter 1969, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1969, pp. 31-43, NAHECS Collections.



unnamed member in the organisation in 1970. Tambo's biographer Luli Callinicos cites this letter as an example of Tambo's breadth of ideology, but does not place it within the wider context of a growing BCM.<sup>575</sup> In the letter Tambo writes that he believed the usage of the word "black" was a radical way to reshape the psyche of the population to better resist the dehumanization of apartheid. In BC fashion Tambo stated, 'Insofar as they are the opposition to white rule, they must recognize themselves as Black opposition'.<sup>576</sup> Furthermore, he argued that when we say, 'Africans, Coloureds and Indians are victims of white rule, what we are saying is that whether they are resisting or not, they suffer as Blacks'.<sup>577</sup>

Tambo followed this up by fiercely critiquing white progressives for trying to dictate the course of South Africa's struggle while not wielding much political power in white spaces. He argued that while as individuals some could identify with the Black struggle, as a collective, whites were the enemy. Additionally, Tambo believed using the term Black linked South Africans with the global struggle of Black people at the forefront of radical movements sweeping the globe. This latter point was not an isolated observation, as chapter one demonstrated in the early 1970s the Black Power Movement was at the pinnacle of its global influence. With Dar es Salaam serving as the unofficial headquarters of the African Liberation struggle the language of Black radicalism was the currency of many anti-colonial movements. Closely mirroring another prominent African leader praising Black Power at the time, Kwame Nkrumah, Tambo believed its development was important to understand as after centuries of oppression through slavery and colonialism

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<sup>575</sup> L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Claremont, David Philip Publishers, 2004), pp. 346-347.

<sup>576</sup> ANC Archives OTP/004/0033/01, 'Letter from Oliver Tambo to Unknown', 7/11/70, p.3.

<sup>577</sup> ANC Archives OTP/004/0033/01, 'Letter from Oliver Tambo to Unknown', 7/11/70, pp. 6-7.

Black people were now the ones ‘transforming the international structure of human relations’.<sup>578</sup>

By the end of 1970, the ANC-SA was quietly embracing the formation of SASO. In a document entitled “Suggested Tactics and Strategy in the Mobilisation and Organisation of Africans for the Revolution” ANC-SA cadres wrote approvingly of SASO’s recognition of ‘the inadequacies and deficiencies of NUSAS’. The document also approved of SASO’s mobilising efforts in the country but internally emphasised that they as the ‘ANC must give direction to the students by drawing closer to them and encouraging cadres to provide SASO with leadership’.<sup>579</sup> The youth were showing through their actions that they were ready to fight apartheid and this energy needed to be harnessed by the ANCS-SA to emerge from its own ‘period of discord, demoralization, defection and cynicism’.<sup>580</sup> According to Alfred Nzo, the ANC-SA’s Secretary-General (SG), since the failures of the Wankie/Sipolilo campaigns, top leadership within the ANC-SA themselves admitted ‘there has existed an outwardly prolonged period of lull’.<sup>581</sup> Even the SACP was forced to admit by the middle of 1971 that the emergence of SASO ‘could well be the most important event of the year’.<sup>582</sup>

However, while many within the ANC-SA were encouraged by the formation of SASO, some were growing wary. Much of their anxiety rested on their suspicion that this

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<sup>578</sup> ANC Archives OTP/004/0033/01, ‘Letter from Oliver Tambo to Unknown’, 7/11/70, p. 8. On Nkrumah’s public embrace of Black Power as a global movement relevant to Africa see K. Nkrumah, *The Spectre of Black Power* (London, Panaf Books, 1969).

<sup>579</sup> ANC Archives OTP/029/0248/09, ‘Suggested Tactics and Strategy in the Mobilisation and Organisation of Africans for the Revolution’, n.d., but probably 1970/1971, p.5.

<sup>580</sup> ANC Archives OTP/029/0248/09, ‘Suggested Tactics and Strategy’, n.d., but probably 1970/1971, p. 13

<sup>581</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0007/21, ‘Report of the Secretary-General to the July Session of the National Executive Committee’, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1971, p. 4.

<sup>582</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Sibeko, ‘South African Students Protest’ in *African Communist*, No. 44, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1971, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1971, p. 51.

formation would be used by the apartheid regime and its global allies to discredit the ANC-SA further, or (if not and), the Black masses of South Africa would stop looking to the older liberation movement for leadership in the fight against apartheid. In some internal notes, briefs, messages, and articles in its publication *African Communist*, this was a prime concern for the SACP. While they recognised their critiques of SASO had to be tempered, as their information on them was not complete as well as them deciding to operate as a legal organisation, SASO's focus on social welfare programs, cultural activities and scholarships was seen as being reformist. Furthermore, SASO's rejection of armed struggle disqualified them from being considered a revolutionary party. It was also emphasised that SASO was not the first group to push this seemingly radical Black Nationalist position, it had been done earlier they argued by the African National Congress of South Africa Youth League (ANCYL) and African Students Association (ASA) in the 1940s and early 1960s respectively.<sup>583</sup>

Nevertheless, the ANC-SA/SACP knew they did not have a strong presence within the country. Given this and the unfeasibility of starting a separate organisation inside the country to counter SASO many of its members, led by those in its Youth Section, advocated for more efforts to be made to win SASO to their side. It was also argued, in some ways in opposition to the two stage theory of revolution embraced by the ANC-SA/SACP at the time, that one of the positive contributions of SASO was its emphasis on the national

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<sup>583</sup> ANC Archives: The Records of the African National Congress: Lusaka, Mayibuye, and London (1960-1991), Box 4, SACP – ANC, Folder 6, 'Untitled SACP Brief', n.d., probably early 1970s, pp. 1-9; ANC Archives NAHECS collection, J. Kumalo, 'Letters to the Editor: South African Students' Who's Who' in *African Communist*, No. 46, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 1971, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1971, pp. 120-128; see the following for confirmation that Kumalo was the pen name in the *African Communist* for Ronnie Kasrils, J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 111.

question which for them seemed to be side-lined for the socialist revolution question.<sup>584</sup> At a paper delivered at an August 1971 ANC-SA Youth and Student Summer School in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) it was stated that in this regard ‘the role of black consciousness, its progressive side, not black chauvinism and exclusiveness, was discussed with understanding’.<sup>585</sup> In response to this an NEC meeting later that month resolved to establish contact with SASO ‘with a view to assisting them in their objectives and facilitating their contribution to the advancement of our struggle’.<sup>586</sup>

These statements came as pressure was mounting on the ANC-SA and PAC from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)’s African Liberation Committee (ALC). In an internal brief from the ANC-SA dated February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1972, the annual OAU-ALC report is referenced in which both liberation organisations in South Africa are being reprimanded for their ineffectiveness. In the context of the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) and the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC)’s growing successes against the Portuguese, and other armed guerrillas across southern African becoming more visible in their armed confrontations, many were wondering why similar successes were not seen in South Africa. The ALC seemed to believe, similar to opinions expressed by SASO that these failures were due to the unwillingness of the ANC-SA and the PAC to unite.<sup>587</sup> Still, the ANC-SA and PAC rejected efforts by the ALC to

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<sup>584</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0007/09, ‘Report on the A.N.C. Youth and Students Summer School held from 1<sup>st</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> August 1971 in the District of Erfurt G.D.R’, pp.1-4.

<sup>585</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0007/09, ‘Report on the A.N.C. Youth and Students Summer School’, p.2.

<sup>586</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0007/11, ‘Resolutions of the enlarged National Executive Committee Meeting’, August 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 1971, p.3 possibly a draft.

<sup>587</sup> ANC Archives LUM/005/0034/22, ‘For immediate action’, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1972, pp. 1-2.

force them to unite, both for different reasons, showing how deeply the splits ran between the two organisations.<sup>588</sup>

While the older liberation movements rejected efforts to unite them, in the wake of the May-June 1972 Tiro affair Black Consciousness became solidified as a movement for positive change in South Africa. This encouraged the ANC-SA to openly praise SASO's activism although many still had reservations about its politics and potential. In short order the pages of *Sechaba* became the site of rich debates on BC among ANC-SA cadres. A close reading of them reveals substantive disagreements within ANC-SA on questions of race versus class, armed struggle, and the importance of psychological liberation. Despite these differences, it was clear to the ANC-SA that BC was the radical movement inside South Africa and it was on them to find ways of building a mutually beneficial relationship with it if they were going to become relevant again.<sup>589</sup> This forced the ANC-SA's NEC to take another hard look at itself as it pertained to their own commitment to the struggle given how quickly events were moving inside the country. At an NEC meeting in October 1972 it was noted with disappointment that as a body they had not met for almost twelve months which had 'adversely affected our work. This is particularly so in light of the situation at home' where emerging Black organisations were successfully mobilizing the oppressed against apartheid in ways they as the ANC-SA were incapable of doing.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> ANC Archives LUM/001/0001, 'Algerian Unit', February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1972, pp.1-2.

<sup>589</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, D. Crowe, 'On Black Consciousness', in *Sechaba*, Vol. 6, No. 9, September 1972, p.11 and 'A reply to Dan Crow on... Black Consciousness', in *Sechaba*, Vol. 7, No. 2, February 1973, NAHECS Collection and O. Setlhapelo, 'Letters to the Editor: On Black Consciousness', in *Sechaba*, Vol. 7, No. 10/11/12, October/November/December 1973, pp. 54-56.

<sup>590</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0008/03, 'Report of the Secretary to the Meeting of the Revolutionary Council, Lusaka, 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1972', 11.10.72, p. 1.

What's more, BCM's outspoken stance against Bantustans, white liberalism, and their unequivocal self-identification of Black called into question the ANC-SA's policy of forming broad coalitions (which included working with Bantustans and whites), legal vs illegal organizing, and the wider Congress Alliance framework. It also exposed the reality of the ANC-SA's internal reconstruction efforts as highly 'inadequate in relation to the tasks we have to carry out'.<sup>591</sup> Tied to this, as it pertained to the question of mass mobilization and the Black Consciousness organisations, 'contact between these organisations from below and above, is necessary. If we view these organisations as component parts of the forces of national liberation, then no conflict between us and them need arise'.<sup>592</sup> They also engaged in a thoughtful self-critique of their own inability to recruit from inside the country and/or to build effective underground cells.<sup>593</sup>

This reality forced the SACP to also openly embrace the activism of Black Consciousness organisations in the wake of the Tiro affair, although, theirs was a more critical embrace. In an article in the *African Communist* December 1972 issue by Alexander Sibeko (Ronnie Kasrils' SACP/MK name) SASO was praised for its role in cultivating this new militant attitude in Black students in such a short span of time.<sup>594</sup> Sibeko also emphasised how the positive construction of being Black outweighed its negative repulsion of whites that while necessary and understandable, at some point needed

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<sup>591</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0008/03, 'Report of the Secretary to the Meeting of the Revolutionary Council', p. 5.

<sup>592</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0008/03, 'Report of the Secretary to the Meeting of the Revolutionary Council', pp. 8-9.

<sup>593</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0008/03, 'Report of the Secretary to the Meeting of the Revolutionary Council, Lusaka, 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1972', 11.10.72, pp. 1-14.

<sup>594</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Sibeko, 'Students fight for freedom', pp. 73-87. According to James Ngculu, Alexander Sibeko was one of Ronnie Kasrils' many pseudonyms, see J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve: Recollections of an Umkhonto Soldier* (Claremont, South Africa, David Philip Publishers, 2009), p. 111.

to be overcome. Notably, Barney Pityana was referenced explicitly as being one of the BC leaders moving in this direction and throughout *Sechaba* and the *African Communist* publications he, more than Nengwekhulu or Biko, was cited as one of BC's more radical leaders.<sup>595</sup> Indeed, Biko was isolated as one of the leaders to be critiqued for a lack of historical perspective which had the potential to lead BC on an "erroneous path".<sup>596</sup> Sibeko then went on to charge that SASO needed to 'clarify its views about the nature of revolutionary change in South Africa, and its concept of the future... [and] develop its ideological concepts along the lines of the national emancipation, and the Freedom Charter as the policy programme for a free South Africa'.<sup>597</sup> However, he admitted SASO's ability to do this depended upon how effective the ANC-SA/MK could be in their internal actions which even Sibeko admitted had been minimal over the past few years.

Nevertheless, in a later issue the SACP Central Committee was clear that,

Although it still lacks clear and consistent expression the concept of Black Consciousness and the psychological liberation of the African people has its roots in, and is part of the battle for the unity of the oppressed masses and their leadership of the whole national democratic alliance. We therefore see the current, public spread of the ideas of Black Consciousness as reflecting basically a positive aspect of one of the realities of our struggle.<sup>598</sup>

At the same the SACP through its publication was adamant that Black Consciousness needed to embrace Marxism-Leninism in order for it evolve into a revolutionary organisation.<sup>599</sup> This would become a regular refrain throughout the pages of its major publication, SACP internal reports, and ANC-SA publications/statements. In

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<sup>595</sup> As we saw in previous chapters, Barney Pityana would later join the ANC-SA although he has claimed this did not mean he renounced his Black Consciousness politics.

<sup>596</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Sibeko, 'Students fight for freedom', p. 81.

<sup>597</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Sibeko, 'Students fight for freedom', p. 82.

<sup>598</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, 'Unity is the key: Statement of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party', in *African Communist*, No. 52, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1973, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973, p. 26.

<sup>599</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, 'Unity is the key: Statement of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party', in *African Communist*, No. 52, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1973, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973, p. 27.

many ways it demonstrates the pressure that was on the ANC-SA/SACP to show South Africans, Africa, and the world that they were still relevant to the political struggles taking place inside South Africa. In the context of Marxist-Leninist struggles dominating the headlines at the time, pointing out BC's lack of an open engagement with Marxist-Leninist theory differentiated the ANC-SA from BC. Nevertheless, the ANC-SA still had to praise SASO as 'one of the most relevant organisations in this search for the black man's real identity and of his liberation'.<sup>600</sup> Still, much of their discussions on the movement was paternalistic as on the one hand they did not always agree with its political ideology but on the other they had to show the world that while this new movement was powerful, they were not central to the overthrow of apartheid, the ANC-SA was.

This latter point becomes clearer in a letter from the ANC-SA Secretary General (SG) Alfred Nzo to the SG of the OAU in early February 1973.<sup>601</sup> In this letter, which was also sent to the SG of the UN, Nzo discusses how the recent militant activity of Black workers (focusing explicitly on the Durban Strikes of 1973), students, church groups and others has led to brutal responses of the South African government. This brutality needed to be condemned by the progressive forces of the world and assistance was needed 'in all possible ways, [for] the leading political force, the African National Congress, to consolidate and develop further the political upsurge which must lead employing all possible methods including armed struggle to the eventual overthrow of the hated fascist regime'.<sup>602</sup> Obviously, the ANC-SA was using BC's activism at home to advance its own

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<sup>600</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, 'Black students unite' in *Sechaba*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1973, pp. 2-5.

<sup>601</sup> ANC Archives LUM/090/0002/07, 'Letter to the Secretary General of the OAU from Alfred Nzo', February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>602</sup> ANC Archives LUM/090/0002/07, 'Letter to the Secretary General of the OAU from Alfred Nzo', February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1973, p. 1.



cause in the international community while at the same time, as we have seen above, quietly trying to seek ways to contact the leadership of SASO and BPC.

By the end of 1973 the pages of *Sechaba* continued its mostly strong defences of BCM. One of the strongest defences was given by a long-time ANC-SA member Ontisitse K. Setlhapelo, in a letter to the Editor.<sup>603</sup> Setlhapelo began by critiquing those in the organisation who doubted BC had done anything to be considered a radical movement in South Africa. Black Consciousness, to him, was the most important political development since the banning of organisations in 1960 and so the ANC-SA was ‘faced with the historical task of rising to the challenge posed by the forces of Black Consciousness in South Africa. Instead of us decrying these forces and thereby aiding our tormentors, it is necessary that the ANC gears itself to lead and to provide armed protection for these forces’.<sup>604</sup> While Setlhapelo was clearly ANC-SA and embraced the Freedom Charter, he uplifted Black Consciousness as a movement that was ‘anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly capitalist and have nothing to do with racial exclusiveness’.<sup>605</sup>

### **Keith Mokoape, the APLF, and the ANC-SA/MK, September 1972 – December 1976**

This was the context of debates within the ANC-SA in the early 1970s. It was also around this time when some of the first cadres of Black Consciousness left South Africa,

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<sup>603</sup> He would later be expelled from the ANC-SA as a part of the Group of Eight who critiqued the ANC-SA, particularly in the wake of Morogoro, for allowing whites to become members of the organisation, see “‘Expulsion of a Conspiratorial Clique.” Statement by the National Executive Committee of the ANC, Morogoro, December 11, 1975 (abridged)”, in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, 1964-1979*, pp. 402-403.

<sup>604</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, O. Setlhapelo, ‘Letters to the Editor: On Black Consciousness’, p. 54.

<sup>605</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, O. Setlhapelo, ‘Letters to the Editor: On Black Consciousness’, pp. 55-56.

unaligned to any organisation except SASO, determined to find the armed struggle. The Tiro Affair, as we saw in previous chapters, was central in convincing activists to leave student and local politics in order to find the armed struggle. Keith Mokoape, the younger brother of stalwart Black Consciousness activist Aubrey Mokoape, would lead this group into exile. Born in 1947, he completed his matric at Hofmeyr HS in Atterdigeville in 1967 and then went to Turfloop University and earned a BSc with a focus on Zoology and Botany from 1968-1970. These were the key years when BC was forming as a movement and Keith, with his older brother Aubrey, was very active in the growth and development of SASO at the University of the North. In 1971, after completing his BSc, he applied to and was accepted into the University of Natal Non-European Section for medical studies.<sup>606</sup> In his first year of studies Mokoape recalled that ‘during the elections of the SRC [September 1971], Students Representative Council, I became President’.<sup>607</sup> As Presidents were automatically on the SASO Executive Board, he now took on a leading role in the national politics of SASO.<sup>608</sup>

Musa Mdlalose, who we know from previous chapters as one who would become one of the key members of the Bokwe Group and the Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE), remembers his former classmate as ‘a talkative fellow, he was always full of energy’.<sup>609</sup> This energy often made him one of the more exuberant participants in the Formation Schools organised by leaders such as Steve Biko where Keith Mokoape remembers ‘we would... compare the different revolutionary movements and where they

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<sup>606</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Keith Mokoape, Midrand, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017, pp. 1-2.

<sup>607</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 2.

<sup>608</sup> M. Ramphela, *Across Boundaries: The Journey of a South African Woman Leader* (New York, The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1996), pp. 58-59.

<sup>609</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Musa Mdlalose, Pretoria, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016, p. 2.

were, where they failed'. They also engaged with the politics of Black Power in the United States as well as the writings of Amilcar Cabral to help think through their own unique position in apartheid South Africa. At one particular workshop, demonstrating the non-alignment of BC to any one liberation movement, Mokoape remembers being put into a group 'that was studying the positives and negatives of the ANC and another group was studying the PAC and another group was studying the Unity Movement another group was studying the Communist Party and then we would come back together to plenary and say all of them ultimately failed and we must do something better'.<sup>610</sup>

In the aftermath of the 3<sup>rd</sup> SASO GSC of July 1972, in which Keith Mokoape openly declared he would not be returning to school because he was ready for armed struggle, the question he and his group faced was how they were going to get abroad.<sup>611</sup> The reality of the ANC-SA and PAC not having an effective underground fuelled much of the drive of these SASO activists to go into exile to see why nothing was being done. After finding a route to Gaborone through Sikwane the group crossed into Botswana sometime in late September 1972 determined to either join the older liberation movements or form their own unit.<sup>612</sup>

When they arrived in Gaborone, Mokoape and Mtulu reached out to students at the University of Botswana, some of whom were directly affiliated with the Southern African Students Movement (SnASM), to ask how to contact the liberation movements. Much to

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<sup>610</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 2.

<sup>611</sup> WHP A2675/III/621, H. Isaacs, 'Reflections of a Black South African Exile' (MA Thesis, 1986), p. 58; WHP A2675/I/8, Gail Gerhart interview with Saths Cooper, October 4th, 1987, New York City, pp. 15-16; 'Interview with Deborah Matshoba', in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander, and N. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 276-277.

<sup>612</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 2 and p. 6.

their surprise, they were told to go to Francistown, a little over four-hundred kilometres away, and ask local taxis there where the ANC-SA representative was because they had no presence in Gaborone. This information was confirmed by Malebo and Tshabalala who had gone to the Nigerian and Zambian High Commissions to ask about the whereabouts of the liberation movements. A few days later they caught a bus to Francistown and when they arrived a local taxi took them to the home of the ANC-SA Representative Jerry Mbuli who, much to their shock, was staying in a place on the outskirts of the small town with ‘some goats running around in his yard and we say Jesus, these are the freedom fighters... That’s how we joined the ANC, by chance’.<sup>613</sup>

Their frustrations would continue when they told Mbuli that they wanted to receive training for armed struggle, they were informed, much to their shock, that the ANC-SA had closed all of its camps and MK currently was not accepting new recruits.<sup>614</sup> This is important because as we saw previously in the propaganda of *Sechaba* and the *African Communist*, the unwillingness of BCM to openly declare for armed struggle was one of the main criteria used to discredit the movement as a rival to the ANC-SA. Later writings on the ANC-SA during this time like those of Houston and Magubane do not delve into this reality yet they continue to use the rationale that the ANC-SA was a superior movement because of their commitment to armed struggle.<sup>615</sup> Hugh Macmillan troubles this analysis as he has written, from his perspective as an ANC-SA activist in Zambia during the 1970s,

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<sup>613</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 7.

<sup>614</sup> G. Houston, ed., S. Mathabatha interview, ‘Mbuli, Jerry’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 4 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), p. 359.

<sup>615</sup> G. Houston and B. Magubane, ‘The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s’ in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]*, p. 377.

that in the early 1970s MK was ‘effectively disarmed’.<sup>616</sup> As we see from the case of Mokoape and his group, Macmillan’s words are a better match of MK’s reality at the time.

Jerry Mbuli informed them that ‘unless you go to school to continue our medicine [studies] there is no way in which they can help us’. This was the same message for the next few months as they came to Mbuli’s house regularly to inquire about the status of them leaving for military training. But, the message remained the same with top ANC-SA leaders like Thomas Nkobi and Gertrude Shope being called by Mbuli to explain to the young Black Consciousness cadres why they could not go for training. Instead, they wanted the young men to accept scholarships to continue their medical studies abroad. This Mokoape and his colleagues refused as ‘That is not what we came here for, we came here for the armed struggle. It was a big fight’.<sup>617</sup>

The PAC, it seems, was not a serious presence in Francistown at this time so Mokoape and his comrades formed their own little BC unit of operatives and tried to teach themselves how to conduct sabotage missions. After some time they began living at White House, the collection point for various southern Africans from the various liberation movements in Francistown.<sup>618</sup> As the months rolled by this unit tried, but failed, to sabotage a number of installations supporting the apartheid regime. Additionally, they began reading books, articles, and newspapers from across the radical world to enhance their world-view as most of these texts were banned or not easily available to them inside

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<sup>616</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2013), p. 101.

<sup>617</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 8.

<sup>618</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 8. For other sources citing the importance of White House in Francistown see H. Shityuwete, *Never Follow the Wolf: An Autobiography of a Namibian Freedom Fighter* (South Africa, Mayibuye Books, 1987), pp. 86-90; L. White, ‘Students, ZAPU, and Special Branch in Francistown, 1964-1972’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 6 (2014), pp. 1289-1303.

the country. At this point, they were not officially members of the ANC-SA or MK but were their own independent unit trying to support efforts by the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) in Rhodesia against the white settler regime.<sup>619</sup>

After a few months of living at White House a number of Zimbabwean refugees were deported back to Rhodesia by the Botswana authorities around May 1973.<sup>620</sup> Some were captured by the Rhodesian army at the border and imprisoned as terrorists while some escaped and secretly returned to Francistown on foot. When they arrived Keith Mokoape and his comrades took it upon themselves to hide them from the Botswana authorities in the outskirts of Francistown. They would secretly bring them food and other materials while trying to figure out ways to get them legal refugee status in Botswana. After some weeks of this Dumiso Dabengwa, a rising commander of ZAPU/ZIPRA, arrived in Gaborone and inquired about the status of some of the local Zimbabwean refugees.<sup>621</sup> When he arrived in Francistown the Black Consciousness activists informed him about the situation facing these undocumented refugees. In thanks for their work helping these Zimbabweans who were potential ZAPU/ZIPRA recruits, Dabengwa agreed to let them slip onto flights to Zambia with them so they could go to the ANC-SA HQ in Lusaka.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, pp. 8-9.

<sup>620</sup> G. Mazarire, 'ZANU's External Networks 1963-1979: An Appraisal', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, 1 (2017), pp. 91-93.

<sup>621</sup> S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 103-105; D. Dabengwa, 'Dumiso Dabengwa', in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, eds., *The Thabo Mbeki I Know* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2016), pp. 80-87; D. Dabengwa, 'Relations between ZAPU and the USSR, 1960s-1970s: A Personal View', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, 1 (2017), pp. 215-223.

<sup>622</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, pp. 9-10.

Upon arriving in Lusaka the group was allowed to stay at ZAPU houses until contact was made with the ANC-SA. Once this was done, Mokoape and his unit were reassigned to ANC-SA houses across the capital. During this time Mokoape recalls,

Now the ANC meets us constantly, that was April 1973.<sup>623</sup> And the ANC says go to school and we say no way... And ultimately they decided to say yes, we shall train in a game reserve, Luangwa game reserve. So we trained in the Luangwa game reserve by instructors of the Luthuli Detachment. And we discovered that these guys actually knew their stuff. It further convinced us, after having read a lot about the ANC in Botswana, and appreciated the fact that we were right in joining the ANC by chance... we got trained in basically home-made guerrilla tactics. Home-made, guerrilla tactics and indeed Chris Hani felt out of these young men I am not going to sit here any longer [I'm going to] Lesotho... and I'm taking three of them.<sup>624</sup>

Chris Hani took Makwezi, Gwaza, and Malebo with him on his journey to Botswana and this could in part explain how he was able to survive for months around the Johannesburg area without being caught. Timothy Gibbs, who has written in some detail about Hani and his work in Lesotho, does not speak of these cadres who infiltrated South Africa with him, instead, Hani is constructed as having found a way alone to survive underground for months.<sup>625</sup> Makwezi, Gwaza, and Malebo had deep connections with local Black Consciousness groups and more than likely tapped into these networks to help Hani survive underground. After some months living underground Hani and his small unit moved to Lesotho to formally establish an ANC-SA underground. In Lesotho much of the focus of his recruiting efforts was engaging with the Black Consciousness organisations of

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<sup>623</sup> This date is more than likely inaccurate as the Zimbabwean refugees Keith speaks about were deported in May 1973. This is probably either late May or June 1973.

<sup>624</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 10. This account differs from S. Ellis and T. Sechaba who argued in their earlier work in 1992 that Mokoape and his cadres had been trained in Egypt and the USSR before being infiltrated back into the country to rebuild underground networks which helped Chris Hani. Mokoape was never infiltrated as an underground operative inside South Africa. While eventually Mokoape would go to these places for training, this happened in the 1980s not the mid-1970s, see S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid*, p. 72.

<sup>625</sup> T. Gibbs, 'Chris Hani's "Country Bumpkins": Regional Networks in the African National Congress Underground, 1974-1994', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 4 (2011), pp. 679-680.

the Eastern Cape particularly those located in King Williamstown Town where Biko was banned.<sup>626</sup>

This narrative complicates how top ranking members of the ANC-SA NEC often spoke about this first wave of recruits who decided to join them after the student strikes of 1972. According to Alfred Nzo these BC cadres ‘came to the ANC on their own, convinced that since they sought to continue the struggle as underground operatives and as armed combatants, the ANC provided the logical base for them to fulfil their objectives’.<sup>627</sup> The first part is clearly not true, they joined the ANC-SA, as Mokoape recalls, by accident and it was only through their commendable resourcefulness that they received training as guerrillas. What is true, according to Mokoape, is the ANC-SA was accepting of them as fighters in the struggle even though they did not agree with their Black Consciousness politics.<sup>628</sup> This can in part be explained by the reality that the ANC-SA/MK needed these cadres as recruits and could not afford to turn them away once they began their work.

The arrival of these five new Black Consciousness recruits seems to have ignited a fire in the bellies of MK commanders who, like Hani, divided these recruits among themselves and began moving decisively into the Forward Areas (Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and post-April 1974 Mozambique) to build underground MK cells. Keith Mokoape was assigned to work in Botswana under MK Commander Isaac Makopo, their military instructor in Zambia, while Archie Tshabalala, who had a gift for languages, was

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<sup>626</sup> Interview with Comrade Chris Hani (SACP Offices, Rissik Street, Johannesburg; 23rd and 31st March 1993; Interviewer Luli Callinicos, transcribed by Sheila Weinberg), pp. 23-32, accessed online at the following <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/communist-university/BrxSqVx11CM> ; T. Gibbs, ‘Chris Hani’s “Country Bumpkins”’, pp. 677-691; G. Houston and J. Ngculu, eds., *Chris Hani: Voices of Liberation* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2014), p. 24.

<sup>627</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/01, A. Nzo, ‘Statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on some questions of the unity of the Patriotic Forces of South Africa’, 4/7/79, p. 8.

<sup>628</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 11.



assigned to work in Mozambique.<sup>629</sup> Unfortunately, Mokoape was arrested at the border of Botswana and Zambia and was not allowed to enter the country. Forced to return to Lusaka he had was reassigned to Swaziland as it was rapidly becoming an important transit country for potential ANC-SA/MK recruits who were beginning to leave South Africa in larger numbers.

Apparently Oliver Tambo himself wanted Mokoape in Swaziland as he reasoned ‘there will be BC ones [recruits], there will be young ones, the revolution is on, especially after the 1974 FRELIMO rallies’. The ANC-SA/MK leadership knew he had been a key figure in SASO and was better equipped to recruit these cadres to their organisation who, like he had been, were highly sceptical of joining the ANC-SA and MK given their lack of a presence in the country to that point.<sup>630</sup> This is confirmed by a recent interview I conducted with Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini, a SASO activist who joined the ANC-SA in Swaziland, who remembers Keith Mokoape and Thabo Mbeki speaking to a group of them about the movement and the need to rebuild underground structures inside the country. Much of what convinced her to join the ANC-SA was Mokoape’s history as a leader in BCM and his ability, because of that history, to understand her politically.<sup>631</sup>

While the ANC-SA/MK underground was slowly building itself up, thanks in no small part to the new BC recruits, others in the international community were beginning to notice the lack of an organised, effective, and clearly ANC-SA inspired presence inside the

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<sup>629</sup> G. Houston, ed., S. Ndlovu interview, ‘Makopo, Isaac’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 4 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 207-238.

<sup>630</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, pp. 10-11.

<sup>631</sup> High Commissioner of South Africa to Namibia Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Windhoek, August 16th, 2017, pp. 6-12.

country as the SASO/BPC Trial seized local and national headlines.<sup>632</sup> This began to worry many in the ANC-SA's political leadership as it was becoming increasingly self-evident that the rising legitimacy of BCM was a threat to their claim to be the vanguard of the South African anti-apartheid forces inside the country.

At a conference in Geneva that took place from September 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 1974 an ANC-SA delegation of Alfred Nzo, Duma Nokwe, Ruth First, and Essop Pahad expressed strong displeasure at the International University Exchange Fund (IUEF) and World University Service (WUS) for funding groups in South Africa like SASO without ANC-SA approval.<sup>633</sup> The Political Commission of this conference wanted to make this support official but the ANC-SA delegation successfully fought it on the basis that 'all assistance should be channelled to our organisation which has the necessary experience and knowledge of the complicated situation inside South Africa'.<sup>634</sup> The ANC-SA representatives argued, with little evidence, that the recent events inside South Africa (FRELIMO Rallies) demonstrated how 'the Black super-exploited workers and the militant youth, are turning to the road of revolutionary struggle chartered by the African National Congress'.<sup>635</sup> This claim had no basis in fact but needs to be understood in the wider

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<sup>632</sup> WHP A2675/III/757, 'The Trial of SASO/BPC Detainees', author unclear, 1975, pp. 1-15; ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, 'Interview: Sechaba talks to Shun Chetty' in *Sechaba*, November Issue 1979, pp. 3-4; On the SASO/BPC Trial see L. Wilson, 'Bantu Steve Biko: A Life', in B. Pityana, M. Ramphele, M. Mpumlwana, and L. Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers 1991), p. 63; T. Karis and G. Gerhart, 'The Black Consciousness Movement: Confronting the State, 1972-1976', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge* (1997), pp. 147-148.

<sup>633</sup> ANC Archives, OTP/029/0248/18, A. Nzo, 'Report on the International non-Governmental Conference against Apartheid and Colonialism in Africa', October 1974, pp. 3-4.

<sup>634</sup> ANC Archives, OTP/029/0248/18, A. Nzo, 'Report on the International non-Governmental Conference against Apartheid and Colonialism in Africa', p.4.

<sup>635</sup> ANC Archives OTP/058/0549/04, 'Paper submitted by the African National Congress of South Africa to the International Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations against Apartheid Colonialism in Africa, held in Geneva, 2-5<sup>th</sup> September, 1974', p. 3.

context of the ANC-SA delegates to this conference being alarmed at how popular BCM had become.

Back inside South Africa, restlessness among some BCM activists was growing as the ANC-SA and PAC seemed unable to mount an effective armed insurrection against the apartheid regime. Always cognizant to the eventuality of the necessity to take up arms, a few BCM activists became convinced they needed to look to themselves to revitalize the armed struggle.<sup>636</sup> Inspired by Keith Mokoape's outspokenness, one year after his departure another BC group led by Bokwe Mafuna left for Botswana with hopes of forming a broad South African/Azania Liberation Front with the ANC-SA and PAC.<sup>637</sup> When this failed, as chapter three has pointed out, Mafuna's group formed the Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF) to complement BCM's growing protest actions inside the country.<sup>638</sup> In time, and driven by some ideological affinity and practical expediency, the APLF aligned itself with the PAC. Through their alliance with the PAC, the APLF was able to send some of its cadres for military training to camps in Libya and Syria in

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<sup>636</sup> Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa*, pp. 171-172, 180.

<sup>637</sup> K. Mokoape, T. Mtintso, and W. Nhlapo, 'Towards the Armed Struggle' in B. Pityana, M. Ramphela, M. Mpumlwana, and L. Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town, David Phillip Publishers, 1991), pp. 137-142; T. Karis and G. Gerhart, 'The Black Consciousness Movement: Confronting the State, 1972-1976', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge*, pp. 120-155. Mafuna was also fleeing bannings orders he had received with other SASO/BPC members in March 1973. However, in an interview with him he made it clear he was leaving anyways, the bannings merely accelerated his plans. See Toivo Asheeke interview with Bokwe Mafuna, December 7th, 2016, Johannesburg, pp. 1-5.

<sup>638</sup> Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa*, pp. 171-172, 178-186; M. Mangena, *On Your Own: Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa/Azania* (Braamfontein, Skotaville Publishers, 1989), pp. 150-151; M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches: A Courageous Journey by South African Patriots* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2015), pp. 59-60. Also see Chapter 3.

September 1975.<sup>639</sup> It was around this time that ANC-SA/MK gave orders for their own fledgling underground to accept new recruits for military training.<sup>640</sup>

Black Consciousness as a political philosophy was not only finding independent ways to form an armed wing, but was through Mokoape and his group also finding a comfortable home within the ANC-SA/MK. Mokoape recalls that he and his companions were clear that ‘when we join the ANC that not one bit of Black Consciousness are we going to abandon... Black Consciousness and African Consciousness and African Nationalism, are the same’.<sup>641</sup> This seemed to have had a noticeable impact on how the ANC-SA and SACP were engaging with the movement and its ideology. Dr. Dadoo, an influential member of the SACP Central Committee, saw no fundamental contradiction between their non-racial Marxist-Leninist ideology and Black Consciousness. For Dadoo BC was ‘a fully justified and healthy response to the insulting arrogance of the white supremacists’.<sup>642</sup> While they did not agree with some of what the movement did there seemed to be a shift in opinion in the SACP. It was a shift it seemed towards a BC position as it pertained to the armed struggle as Dr. Dadoo wrote that what the struggle needed was ‘the simultaneous intensification of mass struggles in the cause of which the people will

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<sup>639</sup> ANC Archives OTP/035/0304/01, D. Gadibone and B. Nguna, ‘The Joint Statement’, 9/7/1977, p. 1; ANC Archives Lusaka Mission Part II (hereafter LUM) 088/0043/02, W. Nhlapo and T. Mafole, ‘The Exile: Black Consciousness Movement Students’, 6/12/77, p. 3; Mokoape, Mtintso, and Nhlapo, ‘Towards the Armed Struggle’ in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana, and Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility*, p. 139; W. Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2005), pp. 1-30; S. Zikalala, ‘Snuki Zikalala’ in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, eds., *The Thabo Mbeki I Know* (Johannesburg, Pan Macmillan, 2016), p. 320.

<sup>640</sup> G. Houston and B. Magubane, ‘The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s’, p. 403. Undoubtedly, the increased activism of SASO inside the country was influential to this decision as events like the FRELIMO rallies had galvanised many. See J. Brown, ‘An Experiment in Confrontation: The Pro-Frelimo Rallies of 1974’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38, 1 (2012), pp. 55-71.

<sup>641</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 11.

<sup>642</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS, Dr. Y. Dadoo, ‘South Africa – A Time of Challenge’, in *African Communist*, No. 56, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1974, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, p. 41.

feel their strength and gain more and more confidence in their capacity to meet and challenge the enemy on the ground'.<sup>643</sup> Similar to what BC had meant when it stated a psychological revolution was needed before any serious planning and execution of armed struggle could take place, the SACP seemed to be moving towards that position, perhaps due to new recruits into their party like Keith Mokoape.

This ideological clarity in the importance of the psychological elements of any revolution, helped Mokoape, as it did Gwaza in Lesotho with Chris Hani, build an impressive network in Swaziland as he was able to engage with the youths from BC on their concerns with the ANC-SA. Mokoape's posting to Swaziland came at a critical time for the ANC-SA, with Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau winning their political independence from Portugal and there still being no serious armed activity taking place inside the country. Even Oliver Tambo was openly admitting that his organisation while politically still a force was 'ill-managed, poorly directed and badly led'.<sup>644</sup> Furthermore, it was becoming self-evident to key members of the ANC-SA underground in Swaziland like Stanley Mabizela that 'SASO is strong and on a national level' and consequently was highly influential on the political consciousness of recruits trickling in.<sup>645</sup> Plans for the seizure of political power in South Africa through force of arms needed to get underway

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<sup>643</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, Dr. Y. Dadoo, 'South Africa – A Time of Challenge', in *African Communist*, No. 56, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1974, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, p. 46.

<sup>644</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, 'The Seizure of Power: Presidential Address submitted by Comrade O.R. Tambo', in *Sechaba*, Vol. 9, No. 5, May 1975, p. 6.

<sup>645</sup> University of Cape Town Special Collections (hereafter UCTSC): ANC – Correspondence, General Correspondence, 1958-1991: Between various comrades (London, Lusaka, Dar es Salaam) (hereafter ANCLLD), 'Letter from Stanley Mabizela to Comrade', March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1975, pp. 1-4.

with more seriousness than had been exhibited up to this point and Mokoape was one of the ANC-SA/MK's most successful recruiters in the Swaziland underground.<sup>646</sup>

Due to Mokoape's successes in Swaziland, he was again reassigned to Botswana.<sup>647</sup>

According to Mokoape, his main mission was to work among the Bokwe Group/APLF and his plea to them, many of whom he knew from his days as in SASO, was that they could,

turn the ANC around into a fighting organisation... we are the ones more organised with our networks inside the country, we can swell their ranks, and actually make sure that we do not sit back and say because there are buffer countries from Botswana and Namibia... we said no we are going to fight.<sup>648</sup>

Before arriving in Botswana, Mokoape was sent back to Dar es Salaam in early 1976 to be debriefed by the political and military leadership. It was while waiting for new orders at the University of Dar es Salaam that he received a call from Joe Modise that there were some BC cadres stuck in the airport and he and others should go there to see what they could do for them. Upon arriving in the airport he saw many of his old friends like Welile Nhlapo and Tebogo Mafole. After speaking with them about their situation as APLF cadres betrayed by the PAC and discussing some of their concerns with the ANC-SA's policies, he helped them get back to Botswana. During these discussions it seems he had successfully convinced at least Nhlapo and Mafole to leave the Bokwe Group/APLF and join the ANC-SA/MK.<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> ANC Archives LUM/005/0031/08, 'Letter to Mandy from Stanley Mabizela', June 27th, 1976, pp. 1-2; S. Manong, *If We Must Die: An Autobiography of a former Commander of uMkhonto we Sizwe* (South Africa, Nkululeko Publishers, 2015), pp. 40-43.

<sup>647</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), pp. 23-24; G. Houston and B. Magubane, 'The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Vol. 2 [1970-1980], p. 415.

<sup>648</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 11.

<sup>649</sup> G. Houston, ed., G. Houston and B. Magubane interview, 'Williams, Timothy', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued), Vol. 4* (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 657-658; Keith Mokoape Interview, pp. 11-12; Welile Nhlapo Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Johannesburg, January 14th, 2017, pp. 14-16.

Not all who were BC in this group stuck at the airport were able to get tickets back to Botswana. After Nhlapo and his group left, some like January Masilela (MK name Che Ogara) remained. These cadres were BC but had been recruited by the PAC in Middleburg and then routed by them to Swaziland, from there they were sent to the camps in Libya. They could not go to Botswana as they had agreed to join the PAC in Swaziland, but, they too had become disenchanted with the PAC and its in-fighting they had experienced first-hand in the Libyan camps. A day after Nhlapo's group flew out they sent a message to Mokoape asking to join the ANC-SA. Mokoape came to them and after a thorough assessment of their desires made it clear to them that they 'first had to go to... the PM [Prime Minister's] office... [as] the PAC must know they are leaving it and joining the ANC'.<sup>650</sup>

Shortly after this he flew to Botswana where, unlike the last time, he was able to make it through immigration controls and into the country. Inside Botswana he worked closely with Snuki Zikalala, who the Botswana authorities recorded had come across the border on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1974, and Makopo who was the ANC-SA Chief Representative and top commander of MK in Botswana.<sup>651</sup> Charles Mthombeni, who we know from previous chapters as a member of APLF and IRE, recalls Mokoape in Botswana 'was one of the people who was trying to recruit us into the ANC... he would tell us that you guys are

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<sup>650</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, p. 14.

<sup>651</sup> Botswana National Archives (BNA: BP Vol. 6): Refugee Advisory Committee Gaborone (Correspondence); OP/27/19, 'Minutes 56, Ad. Sec', 13.8.74, p.1; Strike Thokoane remembers that during his time in Botswana Keith constantly made efforts to recruit him to the ANC-SA, see Strike Thokoane Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Meyerton, December 2nd, 2016, pp. 10-11.

wasting your time here [with APLF and IRE]' and had noticeably, in Mthombeni's mind, abandoned Black Consciousness.<sup>652</sup>

Eventually Nhlapo, Mafole, and Williams came to this ANC-SA/MK unit to say they were willing to join their organisation. Once Nhlapo and others joined more cadres from the various BC organisations joined.<sup>653</sup> Despite disbanding, BCM's attempt to turn to armed struggle had signalled its intention to be considered a liberation movement on par with the ANC-SA.<sup>654</sup> By mid-1976 Tambo was pressuring the Swedish government, who was a consistent funder of BCM organisations, to stop financing BCM as this was, in his opinion, creating tensions between BCM and ANC-SA. Instead, Tambo argued, money for the liberation of South Africa should be flooded through the ANC-SA.<sup>655</sup> From this point onwards the ANC-SA in exile abandoned its supportive, albeit paternal attitude towards BCM and began to more openly construct them as opponents.<sup>656</sup>

### **Controlling the Narrative around Soweto, January 1977 – July 1979**

Following the fall of the APLF, the next important moment in the engagement of the ANC-SA and BCM came with the Soweto Uprising. The shooting by white police of unarmed Black children protesting not only the implementation of Afrikaans in the schools, but a host of other social ills, triggered a lengthy and bloody rebellion that transformed the

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<sup>652</sup> Charles Mthombeni Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Soweto, November 30th, 2016, p. 16.

<sup>653</sup> Keith Mokoape Interview, pp. 14-15.

<sup>654</sup> ANC Archives, Fort Hare University, Alice, South Africa (hereafter ANC Archives), OTP/035/0304/01, D. Gadibone and B. Nguna, 'The Joint Statement', 9/7/1977, pp. 4-5.

<sup>655</sup> Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa, Volume II*, pp. 400-413.

<sup>656</sup> The qualifier of ANC-SA in exile is critical here as internally, given the repressive conditions of living under the apartheid police state, the various movements (PAC, BCM, ANC-SA) worked relatively well together as they needed to rely on each other to survive.



landscape of the anti-apartheid struggle. None of the liberation movements in exile were ready for this uprising nor the thousands of refugees who streamed into exile looking for weapons and training to return and fight the Boers. The ANC-SA and its allies in the international community were caught off-guard.<sup>657</sup> In response, the ANC-SA needed to construct a narrative of the student rebellion which recognised BCM's contributions, which were too clear to deny, but downplay its importance to the planning and execution of the uprisings.

The South African Students Movement (SASM) and the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC), are universally recognised as key organisations in the planning of the march and the rebellion that followed.<sup>658</sup> Recent scholarship has attempted to argue, with some truth, that a number of SASM members were actually ANC-SA underground activists.<sup>659</sup> The implication being that while on the surface they spouted Black Consciousness ideas, deep down, they were and had since the early 1970s been loyal to the ANC-SA. Although this claim can be subjected to some scrutiny, it does not follow that BCM organisations controlled the Uprising as many of them were also caught off-guard. As it pertains to the ANC-SA, controlling the narrative of Soweto took on an added level of urgency when some of the uprisings leaders, in particular Tsietsi Mashinini and

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<sup>657</sup> A. Mafeje, 'Soweto and Its Aftermath', pp. 17-30; N. Diseko, 'The Origins and Development of the South African Student's Movement (SASM): 1968-1976', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1992), pp. 40-62; T. Karis and G. Gerhart, 'The 1976 Soweto Uprising', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge*, pp. 156-188; T. Simpson, 'Main Machinery: The ANC's Armed Underground in Johannesburg During the 1976 Soweto Uprising', *African Studies*, 70, 3 (2011), pp. 415-436; B. Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash*, pp. 174-213; S. Mkhabela, 'Action and Fire in Soweto, June 1976', A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto '76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), pp. 55-64.

<sup>658</sup> S. Ndlovu, 'The Soweto Uprising: Part I: Soweto', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2007), pp. 317-350; J. Brown, *The Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976* (Suffolk, James Currey, 2016), pp. 160-177.

<sup>659</sup> Houston and Magubane, 'The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s', pp. 371-451.

Khotso Seatlholo of the SSRC went into exile in August 1976 and January 1977 respectively.<sup>660</sup>

As the uprising intensified and gradually spread across the country Mashinini and Seatlholo became international icons of Black struggle in South Africa.<sup>661</sup> When they fled into exile a host of anti-apartheid organisations, states, and other South African organisations – both those in support of and in opposition to South African freedom – bombarded them with offers of support and promises of alliances. A number of media outlets with differing political agendas were keen to provide these young Black activists with a platform to articulate in their own words what needed to happen to end apartheid in South Africa. The ANC-SA was equally desperate to ensure these activists endorsed them as the main liberation movement, or at the very least, diplomatically acknowledge their past contributions to the struggle and hopes for a future intensification of actions.<sup>662</sup>

With the eyes of the world on these two activists in early 1977 they both bluntly denounced the ANC-SA as an ineffective liberation movement, rejected all attempts by them to claim credit for the Soweto Uprising, and declared in no uncertain terms that whites were their oppressors and all they wanted were guns and training to go back and fight them.

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<sup>660</sup> WHP A2675/III/796, D. Ndlovu, 'Amandla! The Story of the Soweto Students Representative Council,' in *Weekend World*, July 31st – August 28th, 1977 five part series, pp.4-7. We want to make it clear here that many of the early leaders of the Soweto Uprising did not hold such negative views towards the ANC-SA, as will be briefly shown later. In exile however these two figures, Mashinini and Seatlholo, grew to prominence given their leadership of the SSRC.

<sup>661</sup> Karis and Gerhart, 'The Liberation Movements, 1975-1979,' in T. Karis and G. Gerhart (eds), *From Protest to Challenge: Volume 5* (1997), p. 282.

<sup>662</sup> WHP A2675/I/20 G. Gerhart, 'Notes/report on Tsietsi Mashinini on Black TV, January 9th, 1977, New York City, pp. 1-7; WHP A2675/I/20 G. Gerhart, 'Notes/report on Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seatlholo speaking at a meeting sponsored by NSCAR (National Student Coalition against Racism) at Horace Bond auditorium', Columbia, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1977, pp. 1-2; WHP A2675/I/17, Interview with George Houser and Prexy Nesbitt, March 30th, 1977 by Tom Karis, p. 1; ANC Archives, OTP/035/0304/01, D. Gadibone and B. Nguna, 'The Joint Statement', 9/7/1977, p. 4; G. Houston, ed., N. Ramoupi interview, 'Mji, Sikose', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 4 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 390-392, 404.

They also made it clear, counter to the ANC-SA's diplomatic strategy in exile, that being against apartheid did not mean you were on the side of the Black masses.<sup>663</sup> ANC-SA leaders were furious. Mistakenly, they had expected Mashinini and Seatlholo to praise or at the very least be respectful towards the ANC-SA's past contributions. Mashinini and Seatlholo did none of this as from their perspective the ANC-SA or MK were not organisations they knew to be active inside the country against apartheid.<sup>664</sup>

Moving swiftly to counter these statements the ANC-SA through *Sechaba* published pieces by two well-known BC leaders who had recently openly joined the ANC-SA when they escaped into exile. Nkosazana Dlamini and Tebello Motapanyane, former Vice-President (VP) of SASO and Secretary-General (SG) of SASM respectively, wrote articles arguing the ANC-SA underground was present in South Africa during and before the events of June 16<sup>th</sup> and they themselves had been members.<sup>665</sup> Nkosazana Dlamini went so far as to denounce BCM cadres in Botswana, more than likely remnants of the APLF, as being mobilised by enemies of South Africa as a "Third Force". Motapanyane was more measured in his comments but also discussed how he and a few others were influenced by the ANC-SA to form underground cells in the years prior to the Soweto Uprising. While some of their statements mirrored Mashinini's and Seatlholo's as it pertained to constructing whites as the enemy as Black Consciousness defined it, both

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<sup>663</sup> WHP A2675/I/20, Interview with Tsietsi Mashinini on Black TV, January 9th, 1977, New York City, pp. 1-7; WHP A2675/I/20 G. Gerhart, 'Notes/report on Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seatlholo speaking at a meeting sponsored by NSCAR (National Student Coalition against Racism) at Horace Bond auditorium', Columbia, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1977 (1-2).

<sup>664</sup> G. Benneyworth, 'Armed and Trained: Nelson Mandela's 1962 Military Mission as Commander in Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Provenance for his Buried Makarov Pistol', *South African Historical Journal*, 63, 1 (2011), pp. 78-101.

<sup>665</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, N. Dlamini, 'The ANC is the answer' in *Sechaba*, Vol. 11, 2nd Quarter 1977 (April 1977), pp. 25-37; ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, T. Motapanyane, "How June 16 Demonstration was planned" in *Sechaba*, Vol. 11, 2nd Quarter 1977 (April 1977), pp. 49-59.

endorsed the ANC-SA as the only organisation capable of bringing freedom to South Africa.<sup>666</sup>

Another youth activist with knowledge of BCM who worked with the ANC-SA to counter Mashinini and Seatlholo was Sikose Mji, the sister of former SASO President Diliza Mji and daughter of a well-known member of the ANC-SA. In a recent interview, she recalls never being impressed by BCM but when the Soweto Uprising broke out, she and an underground ANC-SA cell did what they could to support the students. Eventually she drew the attention of police and was forced to leave the country, by October 1976 she arrived in Dar es Salaam determined to join MK.<sup>667</sup> ANC-SA leaders like Tambo, products of the sexism and classism of their social reality, rejected her request to join MK apparently because they knew her relatively wealthy father would not have wanted her to go to the camps in Angola.

Instead of joining MK, she was asked to accompany Tambo and Thabo Mbeki as part of a delegation to the United States. Upon their arrival in New York City she was asked to write and present a speech to the UN Special Committee against Apartheid. After it was approved by ANC-SA representative to the UN Johnny Makatini, it was read in front of the committee and received with much fanfare.<sup>668</sup> Newspapers from all over covered her speech as many were desperate for information on the Soweto Uprising that was still

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<sup>666</sup> Recent research by MK historian Thula Simpson has argued that while the ANC-SA underground was present during the Soweto Uprising, it did not cause or instigate it. See T. Simpson, 'Main Machinery: The ANC's Armed Underground in Johannesburg During the 1976 Soweto Uprising', *African Studies*, 70, 3 (2011), pp. 415-436.

<sup>667</sup> G. Houston, ed., N. Ramoupi interview, 'Mji, Sikose', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 19601-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 4 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 387-399.

<sup>668</sup> This speech took place on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1976.

taking place. Shortly after her successful speech she was asked to go on an official ANC-SA sponsored speaking tour of the United States.<sup>669</sup>

During this tour she was asked by ANC-SA representatives to go to Harlem because they heard Mashinini was about to give a speech. As she had been a classmate of Mashinini she agreed recalling that she ‘needed to counter whatever false [things] he would say about the ANC in particular’.<sup>670</sup> A few years later, again traveling with Tambo and Mbeki but this time to Nigeria, she met Mashinini and again challenged his narrative of the Uprising and conditions in South Africa. Back in the US after months of being on a speaking tour, she, with the help of the ANC-SA, moved to France to study and again chose to combat some BC cadres who she claims were there causing trouble for the ANC-SA.<sup>671</sup>

Controlling the narrative of the Soweto Uprising in the context of this back and forth between the ANC-SA and leaders of the SSRC formed an important backdrop to an NEC meeting which took place in July 1977. At this meeting Alfred Nzo stated that one of the key tasks of the movement was to project itself as the ‘authentic leader of the revolutionary struggle of our people’.<sup>672</sup> While the SACP would admit primary leadership and political inspiration of Soweto came from the SASM, as well as acknowledging the unpreparedness of the ANC-SA/MK to protect the protesting youths, BCM was now

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<sup>669</sup> G. Houston, ed., N. Ramoupi interview, ‘Mji, Sikose’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 400-404.

<sup>670</sup> G. Houston, ed., N. Ramoupi interview, ‘Mji, Sikose’, p. 404.

<sup>671</sup> G. Houston, ed., N. Ramoupi interview, ‘Mji, Sikose’, pp. 406-407.

<sup>672</sup> Karis and G. Gerhart, eds., ‘Document 108. Report on meeting of the ANC National Executive Committee, Morogoro?, July 15<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 1977 (abridged)’, in *From Protest to Challenge*, p. 700.

openly discredited as a vehicle to provide a sustained political and armed challenge to the apartheid state.<sup>673</sup>

Oliver Tambo would continue this assault on BCM with a focus on its ideology, in a fascinating reversal from his earlier position he now argued the conflict was no longer about Black vs white as the movement and the world ‘has passed that stage’.<sup>674</sup> Nzo would give a harsher reading by claiming that after the apartheid regime and its imperialist allies ‘failed to project the Bantustan traitors as the only acceptable and true leaders of the oppressed African majority [ignoring the fact that the ANC-SA was working with some of them like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi], attention is now focused on sections of the Black Consciousness Movement to provide new allies for imperialism’.<sup>675</sup>

However, the death of Steve Biko in prison on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1977 combined with the banning of all Black Consciousness organisations by the apartheid regime one month later forced the ANC-SA leadership to walk back some of these statements. Even Jack Simons, a prominent white Communist in the ANC-SA later assigned to run political education courses in MK’s Angolan camps, noticed the intense reaction by MK recruits in Novo Catengue when news arrived of the bannings.<sup>676</sup> As knowledge of Biko’s horrendous torture was revealed to the world and to new recruits inspired by BC arriving in MK’s camps, opinions among many rank-and-file ANC-SA/MK activists and international allies

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<sup>673</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, ‘The Way Forward from Soweto’ (Political Report Adopted by Central Committee of SACP April 1977” in *African Communist*, Issue 70, Third Quarter 1977 (September 1st, 1977), pp. 21-50.

<sup>674</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, O. Tambo, ‘ANC President explains the Struggle: Oliver Tambo interviewed after the important summit meeting in Luanda’ in *Sechaba*, Vol. 11, 4th Quarter 1977 (October 1977), p. 11.

<sup>675</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Nzo, ‘Impact of the Underground ANC’ in *Sechaba*, Vol. 11, 4th Quarter 1977 (October 1977, extracts from SG statement), p. 16.

<sup>676</sup> University of Cape Town Special Collections: BC 1081 Jack Simons Collection, ANC – Umkhonto We Sizwe Diarised Notes; Folder P.29.10.4.

turned pro-Biko and by extension, for a time, pro-BCM. Due to this surprising turns of events the ANC-SA was forced to move with this wave of pro-Biko sympathies or risk alienation from many in the international community, its own recruits, and the people of South Africa.<sup>677</sup>

Alfred Nzo now deftly praised the movement by saying,

no one can doubt the positive role played by the Black Consciousness Movement in arousing and asserting the national identity, pride and confidence of the blacks... Above all, it has contributed in the unparalleled mobilisation of the black masses and drawn them close to the main stream of revolutionary struggle. Admittedly, there [they] were independent organisations and not ANC fronts... they served as a vital constituent in the liberation struggle.<sup>678</sup>

Two things stand out about this statement. To begin with, praise was now being heaped on BC for being more than an elitist, student-based intellectual movement. Nzo also walked back earlier statements the ANC-SA made claiming BCM was a front for the ANC-SA or largely under the leadership of underground ANC-SA cadres. Nevertheless, as the year drew to a close the ANC-SA dubbed 1978 as the year where they would push harder for 'the recognition of the ANC as the legitimate and sole representative of the people of South Africa'.<sup>679</sup>

In response to this call from the leadership, the fall of the APLF, the growth of the ANC-SA's underground, the formation of more BCM organisations in exile, and the swelling of MK's ranks with the Soweto generation, attempts to discredit and marginalize

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<sup>677</sup> ANC Archives OTP/069/0717/02, P. Laurence, 'Man of deep conviction' in *Daily Dispatch*, 15/9/77, Patrick Laurence; 'U.S. Urges caution in future dealings with South Africa' (SR/65/11/21/77), pp. 1-3.

<sup>678</sup> ANC Archives LUM/053/0008/25, A. Nzo, 'Statement on recent Kruger Bannings broadcast over Radio Freedom Luanda', October 25th, 1977, p. 3.

<sup>679</sup> ANC Archives LUM/054/0089/02, 'African National Congress (S.A.) Programme of Action for 1978' (date and author unclear, presumably it is the end of 1977), p. 3.

BCM increased.<sup>680</sup> In one example an ANC-SA comrade referred to as ‘Dilinga’ wrote a letter to Tambo in April 1978 informing him that SSRC students in Nigeria had recently approached the Nigerian government for permission to obtain visas. The SSRC members intended to fly to Mozambique for a conference or congress where they would form an organisation called the ‘Revolutionary Youth Council’ (probably SAYRCO). According to this little cited document located in the ANC-SA’s Fort Hare Archives, Dilinga suggested that the best way to co-opt this space, given the global popularity of the SSRC at the time, was to work with their allies in Mozambique to allow the conference to happen and then flood it with their own people to get them on the ANC-SA side.<sup>681</sup>

In another example Chris Hani, who had now risen to become the top commander of MK’s underground in Lesotho, in no small part thanks to the BCM cadres who he was working with, met with top level Lesotho government officials in June 1978 to address rumours of BC cadres being invited to the Human Rights Symposium being hosted there in July. In this meeting he curiously denounced the Black People’s Convention (BPC) as an organisation being projected by some ‘as an alternative Movement to undermine the struggle being waged by the ANC’. Despite the BPC and SASO being banned by the apartheid regime the year before he demanded SASO/BPC not be invited.<sup>682</sup>

With these plans in motion by the end of 1978 the ANC-SA was back to claiming in international circles, particularly non-African spaces, that they were central to the events

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<sup>680</sup> On some of the newer BCM formations in exile after APLF see, Maaba and Mzamane, ‘The Black Consciousness Movement of Azanian, 1979-1990’, pp. 1361-1398; Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches*; also see chapter three.

<sup>681</sup> ANC Archives OTP/028/0229/01, Dilinga, ‘Letter to the President-General: Urgent and Confidential’, April 29th, 1978, pp. 1-2.

<sup>682</sup> ANC Archives LUM/008/0050/01, ‘Top Secret: Summary of Top Level Consultations between Lesotho and ANC (SA) held in Maputo on 5th and 6th June 1978’, p. 5.



of the Soweto Uprisings. At a December 1978 IUEF meeting ANC-SA representatives claimed that their ‘militants participated in the youth uprising triggered[f]g by the Soweto massacre in 1976. Since then, there has been continuous action throughout the country by units of Umkhonto We Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC’.<sup>683</sup> Given these “facts”, they argued any support that was not given to ANC-SA/MK directly needed to cease. This was most assuredly not the case as even top MK commanders like Ronnie Kasrils and Joe Slovo, as well as other scholars of the Soweto Uprising, were clear that the ANC-SA had at most a minimal presence before and shortly after the uprising.<sup>684</sup>

By January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979 Tambo’s annual message to the ANC-SA and its allies was emphasizing the differences between the ideologies of BC and the ANC-SA. Now constructing BC as anti-white and borderline reverse racist, Tambo extolled the world on how the ANC-SA through its timeless Freedom Charter was fighting for a South Africa that would belong to all who lived in it.<sup>685</sup> A few months later in a statement read by Nzo on the NEC’s perspective on the unification of the liberatory forces of South Africa, it was argued that if BCM refused to be absorbed, they would be seen as competitors.<sup>686</sup>

This statement by the ANC-SA’s SG is worthy of some attention. It opened by citing in detail the ANC-SA’s earlier public support of Black Consciousness. Nzo then went on to argue that after finally establishing contact with this internal movement their

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<sup>683</sup> ANC Archives LUM/054/0009/08, ‘A Statement by the African National Congress of South Africa at the Board and Assembly meeting of the IUEF held in Geneva on 1st-5th December, 1978’, p. 2.

<sup>684</sup> WHP A2675/I/35, Victoria Butler interview with Joe Slovo, February 1988, pp. 1-4; WHP A2675/I/14, Howard Barrell first interview with Ronnie Kasrils, August 19th, 1989, pp. 241-242; WHP A2675/I/35, T. Karis, G. Gerhart, and S. Thobejane interview with Joe Slovo, Johannesburg, October 15th, 1990, p. 6

<sup>685</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, ‘O.R. Tambo: January 8th Message’ in *Sechaba*, April Issue 1979, pp. 2-5.

<sup>686</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/01, A. Nzo, ‘Statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on some questions of the unity of the Patriotic Forces of South Africa’, 4/7/79, pp. 1-10.

relationship soured because the external wing of BC, referring more than likely to the APLF, fed negative reports to the internal branch about the ANC-SA. Despite this challenge, Nzo correctly stated the ANC-SA had been able to convince a number of BC cadres to join them. However, Nzo also claimed, with dubious correctness, that many of these newly recruited members were asked to stay in BCM organisations and ‘work to expand and strengthen them as independent entities drawing in all forces that sought to struggle for a democratic South Africa’.<sup>687</sup>

### **Conclusion: Absorption or Radicalization?**

In closing, this chapter has argued that the relationship between the ANC-SA and BCM in exile was dictated by the need for the ANC-SA to stay relevant in the struggle against apartheid. As long as BCM was willing to restrict itself to non-violent direct action inside the country against apartheid the ANC-SA found little cause to construct it as an enemy. At most, they became friendly rivals to the much older organisation. While ANC-SA would have preferred to absorb them into their structures, as they had with Keith Mokoape and others, it was not seen as necessary nor was the ANC-SA capable of doing so in the early 1970s. However, when certain elements of BCM refused to join the ANC-SAMK and formed an independent armed wing and attempted to discount ANC-SA influence on the Soweto Uprising, they became constructed as an enemy.

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<sup>687</sup> ANC Archives LUM/088/0043/01, A. Nzo, ‘Statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on some questions of the unity of the Patriotic Forces of South Africa’, p.6. We use the word dubious here because Nzo, as we have shown, clearly bent the truth to his, or his organisation’s, benefit on numerous accusations as it pertained to discrediting BCM to uplift the ANC-SA. He offered no evidence, and later Tambo confirmed this to be a fact, that the ANC-SA had very little influence on BCM in exile or in the country.

Whether on purpose or accidental, BCM emerged at a time when the ANC-SA/MK was weak and unable to effectively lead the mass struggle against apartheid at home.<sup>688</sup> Consequently, they were seen by many inside South Africa and in exile as the dominant ideology and political organisation which threatened the financial security, material support, and international recognition the ANC-SA enjoyed in exile.<sup>689</sup> Thinking back to 1975, top ranking SACP member and MK commander Joe Slovo remembers that within ANC-SA/MK and their international allies ‘there was a feeling that we were being upstaged by the emerging Black Consciousness’.<sup>690</sup> Hence, if members of BCM in exile chose not to join the ANC-SA, they would have to be delegitimised as a movement in the eyes of the world. Central to this was the scramble for Soweto where it is widely acknowledged by scholars and activists such as Tom Lodge and others that while the ANC-SA did the least for the Soweto Uprising, they benefitted the most.<sup>691</sup> What is not mentioned, and what this chapter tries to demonstrate, is they benefitted at the expense of BCM.

This also leads us to interrogate what Keith Mokoape and a number of others who joined ANC-SA and/or MK means. On the one hand it is clear this organisation offered to some a clearer route to organize and mobilise the South African people against the apartheid regime. This was something they could not find in BCM as its progress in exile was very slow, as we saw in chapters three and four, and life in the ANC-SA was materially

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<sup>688</sup> Even top ranking ANC-SA members in the Forward Areas like Stanley Mabizela recognised this reality during the 1970s, see WHP A2675/I/16, ‘Interview with Stanley Mabizela by Dan Swansen’, more than likely early 1980, pp. 25-26.

<sup>689</sup> Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, pp. 63-72; Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa Vol. II: Solidarity and Assistance, 1970-1994* (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), pp. 398-410; S. Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (London, Hurst & Company, 2012), pp. 170-171

<sup>690</sup> WHP A2675/I/35, T. Karis, G. Gerhart, and S. Thobejane interview with Joe Slovo, Johannesburg, October 15th, 1990, p. 6.

<sup>691</sup> T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*, p. 339; R. Suttner, *The ANC Underground in South Africa*, p. 59; T. Sellstrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, p. 407.

better. Strike Thokoane was clear in a recent interview that people like Mokoape joined the ANC-SA because the latter ‘had the resources’.<sup>692</sup> Bokwe Mafuna when asked this question argued the same.<sup>693</sup> In sum, the ANC-SA was able to mobilise more resources to take material care of their members, provide them with jobs/education, and had a better funded military training experience and infiltration potential.

On the other hand, Keith Mokoape did believe BCM should and could radicalize the ANC-SA/MK. This chapter has clearly shown that most of the recruits to the party of Oliver Tambo did not come because of ideological reasons. They brought their Black Consciousness politics and organizing experiences with them and this, at least at the lower and mid-levels, influenced the ANC-SA/MK. From the publications of *Sechaba* and the *African Communist* we see a level of embrace by the ANC-SA and SACP towards BCM which is not to be discounted. At the same time, we also see on the broader global level how the ANC-SA pushed back against this influence when it became clear how potentially powerful the movement was. Therefore, this chapter has from the perspective of the ANC-SA demonstrated that its influence and rise to dominance was not a smooth road guided by the Freedom Charter and non-racialism, but a road to power deeply indebted to the Black Consciousness generation.

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<sup>692</sup> Strike Thokoane Interview by Toivo Asheeke, Meyerton, December 2nd, 2016, p. 11.

<sup>693</sup> Toivo Asheeke interview with Bokwe Mafuna, December 7th, 2016, Johannesburg, p. 21.

## **Chapter Six**

### **'A Tale of Two Armies': Black Consciousness and/in Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK), June 1976 – November 1985**

#### **Introduction: The Ideological Armour of Black Consciousness**

The previous chapter showed how Black Consciousness (BC) recruits of 1972 helped rebuild African National Congress of South Africa's (ANC-SA) forward areas and underground structures in the mid-1970s. It also sketched how the ANC-SA in exile sought to either absorb elements of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) or outmanoeuvre them diplomatically in order to project itself as the sole authentic liberation movement. This chapter builds on this foundation by critically excavating the contributions of components of the Soweto Generation, many of whom were politicised by BCM, to the transformation of MK from 1976 – 1985. This time period is critical in the history of the ANC-SA as it saw MK operatives in larger numbers than ever before infiltrate and execute missions inside South Africa. ANC-SA scholars and activists have isolated this period as one which, through the increased profile of MK as a symbol of resistance to the regime, the organisation was able to reassert itself as the leading South African liberation movement. While the importance of the Soweto generation on this resurgence is widely acknowledged, the central role played by BC within this moment has been mostly overlooked.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>694</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection (loose pamphlet), O. Tambo, 'Umkhonto We Sizwe, Born of the People', December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1986 pp. 1-10; ANC Archives LSM/097/0010/06 'Report of Commission on National Structures, Constitutional Guidelines and Codes of Conduct adopted at the Second National

Azanian People's Liberation Front (APLF) cadres, already trained as guerrillas, joined MK towards the end of 1976 and were rapidly promoted as commissars and mid-level commanders. Despite being able to relate better with the new recruits to the movement, these guerrillas were initially met with suspicion from older cadres from the 1950s and 1960s generation. These older cadres, called *mgwenyas*, were also deeply suspicious of Soweto generation recruits who exhibited BC thinking or were friendly with its praxis. Moreover, many of the women heralded as ushering in a change in how MK dealt with the gender question had rich histories in BCM that played a decisive role in how they challenged the patriarchy of the ANC-SA armed struggle. These histories in BCM have been mostly minimised which has had the effect of silencing the experiences they brought with them into the movement. Grappling with this influence is important because as the 1980s progressed two armies began to emerge within the ranks of MK.

One was composed primarily of Soweto generation recruits who made up the majority of the rank-and-file and mid-level level commanders whose youth and energy revitalised the ANC-SA and its armed wing. Many had a deep grounding in BC which was part and parcel of their radicalizing presence in MK. This army looked to commanders like Chris Hani, Joe Slovo, and Jacob Zuma for inspiration as they were perceived as being similarly radical and determined to infiltrate South Africa.<sup>695</sup> The second army was composed mostly of *mgwenya* commanders/commissars, the Security Department (nicknamed Mbokondo meaning grinding stone), and some MK leaders like Joe Modise

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Consultative Conference of the African National Congress', June 1985, pp. 51-55; J. Ngcucu, *The Honour to Serve: Recollections of an Umkhonto Soldier* (Cape Town, David Phillip Publishers, 2009), p. 176.

<sup>695</sup> Tom Lodge described Hani and Zuma as part of a 3<sup>rd</sup> dominant strand of ANC-SA leaders who came to their own in the 1960s and 1970s. They were younger than the 1940s and 1950s generation and considered more militant. See T. Lodge, 'State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976-1986', *Third World Quarterly*, 9, 1 (1987), p. 27.

and Mzwai Piliso. These cadres came from a different activist tradition and did not understand the BC politics or township culture of these new recruits. While on the surface the tensions between these two armies was perceived as primarily a difference in age, it masked deeper contradictions that events like the 1981 Spy Ring, 1984 MK Mutinies, and the Kabwe Conference brought into stark relief.

## Literature Review

Up till now an exploration of the reverberations of BC within MK in the late 1970s and 1980s has not been attempted in the rich canon on MK. In Vladimir Shubin's work on the southern African liberation struggle from the perspective of the USSR, little attention is paid to the impact of the Soweto generation, let alone Black Consciousness, to the regeneration of MK in the mid to late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>696</sup> Martin Legassick's work while rightly critical of petty bourgeois liberal tendencies within the ANC-SA/MK, is also silent on BC and its impact, or lack thereof, on MK during the mid-late 1970s and 1980s.<sup>697</sup> More recent scholars like Thula Simpson, despite delivering masterful histories on the evolution of MK and the impact of USSR training on its organisation, have done little to explore the ideological impacts of BC within the ANC-SA's armed wing.<sup>698</sup> In other works, particularly *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* volumes, while the BC roots of many of MK's new recruits of the 1970s is acknowledged, various contributors

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<sup>696</sup> V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2009 2nd edition, org. 1999); V. Shubin, *The Hot "Cold War": The USSR in Southern Africa* (South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), pp. 239-263.

<sup>697</sup> M. Legassick, *Armed Struggle and Democracy: The Case of South Africa* (Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 2002), pp. 7-9.

<sup>698</sup> T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town, Penguin Books, 2016).

downplay its influence by arguing, with little evidence, that these cadres “left” BC or “graduated” to a higher form of consciousness when they joined the ANC-SA/MK.<sup>699</sup> Former Soweto Generation MK recruit and later commissar James Ngculu furthers this argument when describing how his generation ‘arrived... as raw material whose only interest was the AK47 and bazooka... [yet] left as seasoned cadres of MK, fully informed about the politics of the ANC’.<sup>700</sup> Chris Hani who worked closely with BCM adherents while posted to Lesotho (1974-1982) argued in an interview in 1993 that the ANC-SA and SACP helped change Black Consciousness ‘from a narrow, rather conservative nationalist movement’ to one willing to embrace non-racialism and socialism.<sup>701</sup>

While the perspective of these participants and scholars of MK is to be respected, it does not tell the entire truth of the transformations that took place within the ANC-SA’s armed wing at the critical juncture. According to Keith Mokoape, Thenjiwe Mtintso, and Welile Nhlapo, BCM cadres like them who joined the ANC-SA/MK in the 1970s ‘injected a qualitatively new approach into the conduct of the armed struggle’.<sup>702</sup> Over a decade later Raymond Suttner picked up this line of thinking by acknowledging that ‘BC people who joined the ANC left a mark on the latter, changing aspects of its thinking and strengthening certain currents within it’. Moreover, Suttner critiqued the tendency within the ANC-SA, particularly among cadres like Ngculu, and in scholarship ‘to see BC as an

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<sup>699</sup> G. Houston and B. Magubane, ‘The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s’ in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2006), pp. 371-451; G. Houston and B. Magubane, ‘The ANC’s Armed Struggle in the 1970s’ in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2006), pp. 453-530.

<sup>700</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 85.

<sup>701</sup> Interview with Comrade Chris Hani (SACP Offices, Rissik Street, Johannesburg; 23rd and 31st March 1993; Interviewer Luli Callinicos, transcribed by Sheila Weinberg), p. 30, accessed online at the following <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/communist-university/BrxSqVx1ICM>.

<sup>702</sup> K. Mokoape, T. Mtintso, W. Nhlapo, ‘Towards the Armed Struggle’, in B. Pityana, M. Ramphela, M. Mpumlwana, and L. Wilson, eds., *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers 1991), p. 142.



immature political maturation, which people left behind them in a process of political maturation to join the ANC'.<sup>703</sup> Hugh Macmillan in his recent work on the ANC-SA in Zambia has similarly argued that BCM revitalised the ANC-SA at all levels.<sup>704</sup>

But what did this impact look like? How did BCM “revitalise” the ANC-SA/MK? And furthermore, what accounts for the negative perceptions on BCM by cadres such as Ngculu and other scholars of MK? Building on Stephen Davis’s conception of Novo Catengue and other camps in Angola as spaces of both repression and the positive foundation of the newly re-forged MK, this chapter will attempt to answer these queries by interrogating the role BC played within those divergent constructions.<sup>705</sup> Additionally, while some have argued armed struggle is itself a masculinist project, Black Power scholars like Joy James and Robyn Spencer have hinted that this perception and reality has more to do with the patriarchy of the men within armed wings than armed struggle itself as a tool of resistance.<sup>706</sup> This chapter builds on their analysis by showing how women who joined MK in the 1980s, many from BCM, subverted, challenged, and contested the patriarchy

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<sup>703</sup> R. Suttner, *The ANC Underground in South Africa, 1950-1970* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), p. 154. Also see R. Suttner, “The character and formation of intellectuals within the ANC-led South African liberation movement” in T. Mkandawire, ed., *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development* (London and New York, Zed Books, 2005), p. 135. In an earlier dissertation Stephen Davis also discussed, briefly, the presence of Black Consciousness or what he called neo-Africanism, within MK as one where these youths often challenged the leadership of the elders, see S. Davis, ‘Season of War: Insurgency in South Africa, 1977-1980’ (PhD thesis, Tufts University, 1982), p. 186.

<sup>704</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2013), p. 133.

<sup>705</sup> S. Davis, ‘Cosmopolitans in Close Quarters: Everyday Life in the Ranks of Umkhonto We Sizwe (1961-Present)’ (PhD thesis, University of Florida, 2010), p. 40; S. Davis, ‘Training and Deployment at Novo Catengue and the Diaries of Jack Simons, 1977-1979’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 6 (2014), pp. 1325-1342.

<sup>706</sup> J. James, ‘Framing the Panther: Assata Shakur and Framing Black Female Agency’, in J. Theoharris, K. Woodard, D. Gore, eds., *Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle* (New York, New York University Press, 2009), pp. 115-137; R. Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2016), pp. 35-60.

within the movement to attempt to reshape it into a space where women could more easily cultivate an independent presence and power.

In addition to tracking the challenges women of BCM made in MK, another useful method to capture the impact of BCM on MK is by exploring the organising strategies used by university activists at the University of Fort Hare during the late 1960s and early 1970s. As generations of ANC-SA, South African Communist Party (SACP), and MK leadership either trained there or were influenced by its graduates, Fort Hare serves as an important location to broadly understand the difference between the two organizing traditions. We have hinted at some of these differences in organising and mobilising strategies in previous chapters, Daniel Massey's work on this history at Fort Hare is instructive as it helps better illustrate this point.<sup>707</sup>

According to Massey, when Black Consciousness led activism began to form at Fort Hare in the late 1960s many, like Barney Pityana, were initially sceptical about its horizontal leadership structure and brazenly confrontational protest style. Much of this hesitancy emanated from petty bourgeois students (many of them children or relatives of Chiefs) from the rural Transkei and Natal who distrusted the bold Black Nationalist politics of groups like SASO whose adherents were drawn primarily from the townships in Johannesburg and Durban. Unlike the more affluent students who made up Fort Hare's early population, these new students came from much humbler backgrounds and often had to work and/or earn scholarships to pay for their school fees. These new cadres, 'Out of the dusty streets of Azanian townships' were called abaKaringas (rebels) and were

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<sup>707</sup> D. Massey, *Under Protest: The rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2010).

qualitatively ‘a different type of youth and fighter’ from the previous organising tradition at Fort Hare.<sup>708</sup> Adding to the rich protest tradition at Fort Hare the abaKaringas pioneered the tactic of making collective decisions on how to mobilise against the authorities instead of having a small group of leaders decide what the masses were to do. Furthermore, they replaced the ANC-SA Youth League (ANCYL) tradition of forming special committees to negotiate secretly with the administration with the demand that the white administrators come and address the students directly.<sup>709</sup> Moreover, leadership of the movement was constantly challenged, questioned, and forced to give a full account of itself to members and supporters regardless of age, experience, or national affiliation.

Consequently, when these abaKaringas went into exile in the mid-late 1970s they had not come from the liberal/hierarchical tradition of the previous generation of Oliver Tambo, Alfred Nzo, and Joe Modise.<sup>710</sup> The ANC-SA, powerfully influenced by the liberal tradition out of Fort Hare, has been described by Macmillan as being closer to the Christian Socialism of the United Nationalist Independence Party (UNIP) despite the powerful influence of the SACP and USSR.<sup>711</sup> When the abaKaringas arrived in the camps, although younger and not as highly ranked as the mgwenyas, they, according to MK historian Stephen Davis ‘appeared to be no less politically motivated than their elders’ and seemed ‘to exude a greater sense of confidence and independence derived... from the psychological reinforcement provided by BCM’.<sup>712</sup> This confidence and independence

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<sup>708</sup> WHP A2675/III/785, M. Mokoena, ‘Our Struggle, our solidarity, our united effort’ in Special Bulletin of the SAYRCO, August/September 1981, pp. 11-16, p. 15.

<sup>709</sup> Massey, *Under Protest* (2010), pp. 210-216.

<sup>710</sup> ANC Archives LUM/027/0007/01, ‘Some notes on morality: A Discussion document for the A.N.C.’, n.d., author unclear; Massey, *Under Protest* (2010), pp. 235-236.

<sup>711</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963-1994* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2013), p. 6.

<sup>712</sup> S. Davis, ‘Season of War’, p. 186.

would clash with the cadres they met in the campus while at the same time pushing the movement to better execute its armed struggle.

The work of South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) historian Christian Williams has, with the analysis of Steve Davis and Massey, also been influential to this chapter. Williams's work on Kongwa, a Tanzanian based guerrilla camp that from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s hosted a number of different southern African liberation movements simultaneously, pioneered a detailed critical exploration of how people lived and interacted in the camps and how this prefaced the post-colonial repressiveness of the soon to be parties in political power.<sup>713</sup> Focusing on SWAPO, Williams demonstrated how some commanders utilised their positions of power and authority to control new recruits and discipline those who challenged their authority or diverged from the party's political outlook. While Kongwa and other camps were critical spaces for the cultivation of Pan-Africanism and training for the war against the apartheid regime, how they operated simultaneously reinforced and created new hierarchies. While I take exception to Williams's implied conclusions, that the liberation struggle was a waste because it merely replaced the political system of apartheid with Africans, the level of detail he provided as to how people lived in the camps and how systems of oppression were cultivated is useful for the purposes of this chapter.

With this in mind the next section will provide a brief overview of the regional context in southern Africa in the mid-1970s with a focus on Angola and the challenges the

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<sup>713</sup> C. Williams, 'Living in Exile: Daily Life and International Relations at SWAPO's Kongwa Camp', *Kronos*, 37 (2011), pp. 60-86; C. Williams, 'Practicing pan-Africanism: An Anthropological Perspective on exile-host relations at Kongwa', *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 37, 3-4 (2014), pp. 223-238; C. Williams, *National Liberation in Postcolonial Southern Africa: A Historical Ethnography of SWAPO's Exile Camps* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) faced to gain and hold political power. We will then move to a broad overview of some of MK's camps throughout Angola and track the BC praxis of many of the new recruits and how it interacted with the mgwenyas in the camps. The next section tracks efforts by the ANC-SA/MK/SACP leadership to challenge the political groundings of these new recruits. The following section explores the anti-sexist work new recruits initiated to attempt to recreate MK while the following section will survey of the biographies of some key BCM personalities who joined ANC-SA/MK and were able to flourish.<sup>714</sup> We will then excavate how simmering anger against BCM cadres transformed into open hostility and closer incorporation during the 1981 Spy Ring, 1984 MK Mutinies, and 1985 Kabwe Conference. The conclusion will recap key arguments and present a more complex picture of the impact of this new generation and suggest an alternative explanation as to why so many of them were not infiltrated into South Africa.

### **Transformations across the southern African political/military landscape: April 1974 – February 1977**

Angola's independence in November 1975 in the wake of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974 reshaped the struggle against white minority rule in southern Africa.<sup>715</sup> Almost overnight the soldiers of the Portuguese army who had lead the coup against the regime ended the wars in the African colonies. Unlike other colonies like

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<sup>714</sup> The following text which tracked the impact of Black Power figures as they moved into electoral politics was influential to how I thought through this section, see C. Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

<sup>715</sup> FRELIMO Statement, 'The Coup d'Etat of April 25<sup>th</sup>' in A. Braganca and I. Wallerstein, eds., *The African Liberation Reader (Vol 1): The Anatomy of Colonialism* (London, Zed Press, 1982), pp. 34-37; R. Varela and J. Alcântara, 'Social Conflicts in the Portuguese Revolution, 1974-1975', *Labour*, 74 (2014), pp. 151-177.

Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau where the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) and the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) were dominant, Angola was locked in a three way rivalry between the MPLA, the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA), and the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA).<sup>716</sup>

The MPLA was able to win a hastily organised election whose results were disputed by the FNLA and UNITA with the tacit approval of their imperialist allies.<sup>717</sup> This dispute led to a vicious civil war – which never truly ended until 2003 (when Jonas Savimbi of UNITA was finally killed) – as a departing Portuguese colonial administration and army did little to ensure a peaceful transition of power. As a result, Angola became a central battlefield of what Shubin accurately describes as the “Hot” Cold War as the United States and its allies backed the FNLA and UNITA while the USSR and Cuba supported the Marxist-Leninist oriented MPLA.<sup>718</sup> Agostino Neto of the MPLA became President in November 1975 and was able – with the help of the USSR, Cuba, and to a lesser extent the

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<sup>716</sup> J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution: Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare* (1962-1976) (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1978), pp. 130-282.

<sup>717</sup> It must also be noted that many cultural Black Nationalists in the United States like Amiri Baraka were supportive of UNITA and for a time silently applauded efforts to overthrow the Moscow-backed MPLA. Other Black Power radicals like Walter Rodney challenged this perspective from within the Black Radical Tradition to propose MPLA was the organisation capable of creating a better life for the people of Angola and fighting imperialism. See Special Collections Research Centre George Washington University Gibson Papers (hereafter SCRC-GWUGP), Series 1, MS2302 Box 3 Folder 1: Correspondence September – December 1975 ‘Letter to Ms. Florence Tate from Richard Gibson’, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1975; ‘Letter to David Sibeko from Richard Gibson’, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1975; ‘Letter to Ms. Florence Tate from Richard Gibson’ December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1975; ‘Letter to Chairman Amiri Baraka from Richard Gibson’ February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1976; W. Rodney, ‘Marxism and African Liberation’, 1975, available at <https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/rodney-walter/works/marxismandafrika.htm>, retrieved February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>718</sup> P. Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2016, org. 2013).

People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN, SWAPO's armed wing) and MK – to push back a joint attack from the FNLA, UNITA and Zairean forces.

By 1976 MPLA had secured most of the major cities, chiefly Luanda, and was in the process of securing the northern and eastern parts of the country. The FNLA, who had struck from the north, was mostly defeated forcing its CIA-backed leader Holden Roberto into exile. As the MPLA and its allies pushed south to defeat UNITA their advance was halted as the South African Defence Force (SADF), given the go-ahead by the United States, intervened to prevent the Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola (FAPLA), the armed wing of MPLA, from conquering up to the border with Namibia. Their intervention was successful and they established a buffer zone between the radical new government and Namibia's northern border. With the FNLA mostly defeated in the north and UNITA and SADF contained to the south-east/far eastern areas of Angola, MK, PLAN and the Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) were able with the assistance of MPLA, the USSR, and Cuba to build guerrilla bases across areas secured by the FAPLA. The Cubans and Russians agreed to help with their training and a number of bases were jointly operated.<sup>719</sup>

Engineering was one of the first camps opened in Angola towards the end of 1976 and was used primarily as a holding camp for new recruits, mostly from MK, but some PLAN and ZIPRA guerrillas were also present. Funda opened later in 1976 and was used as a finishing camp for those about to be sent to the front, yet, malaria was rife in this camp

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<sup>719</sup> J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution* (1978), pp. 241-282; V. Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2009 2nd edition, org. 1999); I. Saney, 'African Stalingrad: The Cuban Revolution, Internationalism, and the End of Apartheid', *Latin American Perspectives*, 150, 33, 5 (2006), pp. 81-117; P. Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom*.

forcing it to close in 1979 with its facilities moved to a new camp named Caxito. Novo Catengue (often spelled Katengue) was opened in early 1977 and would differ from Funda in that it was designed to not only train cadres in the art of guerrilla warfare, as conceived by MK, but to train a politically conscious cadre capable of carrying the ideas of the ANC-SA to the people inside South Africa. Quibaxe was opened later in 1977 and Fazenda was opened in 1978. When independence came to Zimbabwe in 1980 the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) gave its camps to the ANC-SA. In 1979 Camp 13, the infamous Quatro, was opened and was used to imprison those suspected of being enemy agents and traitors to the cause.<sup>720</sup>

Novo Catengue (NC) was where the first significant influx of Soweto generation recruits were trained.<sup>721</sup> Here, ideological training towards the ANC-SA/SACP's socialist non-racialist vision, the Freedom Charter, and the National Democratic Revolution would grow to be emphasised on equal terms with that of armed struggle. This emphasis would increase when it became clear that Black Consciousness philosophy was a foundational piece of the political consciousness of the new recruits.

### **“A Different Type of Youth and Fighter”: Roots of Black Consciousness in the University of the South**

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<sup>720</sup> Although the different camps had unique structures depending on the time they were built and/or their intended purpose, the general hierarchy of the camp was as follows: Camp Commander, Camp Commissar, Chief of Staff, Chief of Logistics, and a Recording (Security) Officer. Each Company (CY) would have a Company Commander, Commissar, and Training Team as well as a News Team, see J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), pp. 44-45; S. Manong, *An Autobiography of a former Commander of uMkhonto we Sizwe* (South Africa, Nkululeko Publishers, 2015), p. 58.

<sup>721</sup> Ronnie Kasrils gave it this nickname seemingly as a parody to the University of the North (Turfloop) known to be the unofficial HQ of SASO and where many of their new recruits were educated, see R. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: My Undercover Struggle against Apartheid* (New Hampshire, Heinemann, 1993), p. 178.



According to James Ngculu this new camp was nicknamed ‘the University of the South’ because ‘it was the cradle of a new cadre of the African National Congress. It was here that cadres were educated not only in the art of war but in politics and philosophy’.<sup>722</sup> Former MK commander and SACP member Ronnie Kasrils is credited with providing this nickname as it offered a high level of political training.<sup>723</sup> In the beginning living conditions at NC were poor as there were constant shortages of war materials, food, medicine, clothes, cigarettes, and other supplies.<sup>724</sup> Jack Simons, the white Communist member assigned to NC to run the political education classes, noted when he first arrived a few months after its opening that there were ‘blocked toilets, no pit latrines... excreta all around, few hundred yards from quarters. Food remains dumped near Kitchen – fermenting’.<sup>725</sup>

The semi-tropical climate in Novo Catengue was one many South Africans found difficult to manage as they were unprepared for the humidity, malaria, and a host of other minor and major diseases that plagued the area. The Cuban soldiers at the camp who jointly ran the training courses lived much better than MK as they seemed to be used to the semi-tropical climate and had effective strategies for keeping themselves as safe as possible from some of the diseases in the area. According to Simons the Cubans ate ‘apart, prepare own

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<sup>722</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p.52.

<sup>723</sup> R. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous* (1993), pp. 178-179. Kasrils though could not have been ignorant to the fact that in naming it such, it in some ways stood in contention with Turfloop, generally considered one of the main bases of Black Consciousness, which was named the University of the North.

<sup>724</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), pp. 37-39. James Ngculu and others recall that because of these intense shortages a barter system began to emerge between MK cadres and local Angolans called arenjaro (meaning to make a plan). These transactions were mostly forbidden by the MK leadership but given the shortages they often turned a blind eye towards it while many higher ranking officers themselves secretly participated in it.

<sup>725</sup> University of Cape Town Special Collections: BC 1081 Jack Simons Collection, ANC – Umkhonto We Sizwe Diarised Notes; Folder P.29.10.4 (no pages numbers in diary, hereafter to be referred to as Simons diary).

food (of higher quality), drink boiled water' and had a doctor constantly on call who only treated MK guerrillas in serious cases.<sup>726</sup>

Julius Mokoena of the Luthuli Detachment was the camp commander and Francis Meli was Camp Commissar, however, Meli was later replaced by Mark Shope the General Secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU).<sup>727</sup> The lower and mid-level platoon/company commanders and commissars were heavily staffed by former APLF members such as Nhlapo (MK name Arthur Sidweshu) and Mafole (MK name Dan Cindi) as well as former BCM activists from inside the country like Joel Netshitenzhe.<sup>728</sup> James Ngculu remembers 'The instructors in Novo Catengue camp were mainly Cubans, but they were assisted by members of the mgwenya group and the mid-70s group – those who left South Africa before the Soweto Uprisings and had been trained before us'.<sup>729</sup> These three groups of trainers: the mgwenya's, mid-70s group (APLF disproportionately), and Cubans would exert a considerable amount of ideological influence on the new recruits in Novo Catengue.

The ANC-SA and those allied to it, both white and Black, were well aware of the extent to which new recruits coming into their movement in the wake of the Soweto Uprising were baptised in BC. In an interview with Howard Barrell in the late 1980s, Ronnie Kasrils described this generation who joined MK as 'more imbued with the ideas of black consciousness'.<sup>730</sup> Omry Makgoale, a former South African Students Movement

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<sup>726</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary; J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), pp. 38-39.

<sup>727</sup> Mark Shope, who with Jack Simons ran the political education courses, was later reassigned to Nigeria under orders from the ANC-SA/MK/SACP leadership to combat the influence of SSRC and SAYRCO cadres getting training there.

<sup>728</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, pp. 17-18; S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 91.

<sup>729</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 58.

<sup>730</sup> WHP A2675/I/14, 'First Interview with Ronnie Kasrils by Howard Barrell, August 19th, 1989', p. 248.

(SASM) activist and participant in the June 16<sup>th</sup> Uprising who eventually joined the ANC-SA/MK recalls many new recruits ‘would come with Black Consciousness because in South Africa mostly it was Black Consciousness’.<sup>731</sup> What did this BC politics/orientation mean in relationship to the ANC-SA/MK? Even though ideologically it meant a more Black centred approach to thinking through the struggle, it was the political independence of BCM influenced recruits that stands out.

This political independence clashed at times with a more stringent and hierarchical ANC-SA/MK in exile. When the Soweto generation arrived the power structures within MK hardened and certain leaders became adept at producing cadres loyal to them, those who challenged leadership were branded as anti-leader and often were accused of being spies. According to SACP stalwart and Soweto generation guerrilla Jabulani Nxumalo, SACP/MK name Mzala, this had the negative effect of stifling ‘critical or objective thinking, and it has never encouraged democratic proceedings’.<sup>732</sup> An example Mzala recalled of this clashing political orientation came sometime in 1979 when Mongezi Stofile, ex-SASO President, challenged Oliver Tambo in a meeting with Youth Members on him continuing to hold talks with Gatsha Buthelezi. While Tambo handled it well, others around Tambo like Nzo were furious at this open challenge. Ngculu confirms this

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<sup>731</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 14; This view is also supported by research done by Phil Christenson who was at the time an aid on Republican Senator Richard Luger’s staff. However, Christenson’s report is clearly anti-communist and was not concerned with exposing human rights violations of prisoners and recruits to the ANC-SA/SACP. Consequently it is to be read with a high degree of caution as it pertains to the ideological subjectivity of the author. Nevertheless, he conducted interviews with hundreds of ANC-SA/SACP recruits in various refugee camps across southern Africa and his research matches with Omry Makgoale’s account of the majority of new recruits to the ANC-SA in the late 1970s were BC oriented. See ANC Archives OTP/055/0515/03, P. Christenson, ‘Staff Investigation of Human Rights Abuses of Black South African Exiles by the “Liberation Movements”’, June 22nd, 1988, pp. 1-10.

<sup>732</sup> WHP A2675/1/27, ‘Notes on Mzala Nxumalo talk by Gail Gerhart, October 12th, 1990’, p. 2. His perspectives on the ANC-SA/MK while accessible in the Wits Historical archives have strangely been little used in scholarly work on ANC-SA/MK in exile. Although widely acknowledged by cadres such as Kasrils as a top ranking SACP/MK cadres, his interviews with Gail Gerhart and others have been underutilised.

loyalty of elders, particularly of the Luthuli Detachment, as whenever the new recruits ‘would complain about something they would say we have nothing to complain about compared to what they had gone through. They would encourage us to be disciplined and loyal to the movement in order to bring the day of our victory closer’.<sup>733</sup>

Mzala believed this mentality developed among the older generation during the 1960s among a group that coalesced around Oliver Tambo and the ANC-SA President’s own determination to ‘present a united face to the world’. The downside to this, according to Mzala, was the ANC-SA ‘paid a heavy price for this in lack of democracy, and in the lack of creative and rigorous thinking, getting out in front of the situation instead of always just reacting’.<sup>734</sup> Others like Stephen Ellis have laid blame for this on the SACP given its relationship with the USSR and the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (GDR)’s Staatssicherheitsdienst (SSD, Ministry for State Security), commonly known as the Stasi. While this has elements of truth, Mzala’s reasons hold slightly more weight as most of the initial commanders and commissars who had problems with this new generation were not in the SACP.<sup>735</sup>

Nonetheless, far more important than their BC praxis, these new recruits came into exile burning with the desire to obtain training in guns, explosives, and tactics in order to return home to fight the apartheid regime.<sup>736</sup> As Makgoale recalls, many ‘after the Uprisings [those] who were not affiliated with it [Black Consciousness, they] were just fed

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<sup>733</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 98.

<sup>734</sup> WHP A2675/I/27, ‘Notes on Mzala Nxumalo talk by Gail Gerhart, October 12th, 1990’, p. 3.

<sup>735</sup> T. Simpson, ‘Military Combat Work: the Reconstitution of the ANC’s Armed Underground 1971-1976’, *African Studies*, 70, 1 (2011), pp. 113-117; S. Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC is Exile, 1960-1990* (London, Hurst & Company, 2012), pp. 152-171. Thula Simpson does not directly link the training MK received from the Stasi with the repression in the camps, however, he does show how influential their thinking was among some members of the newly created Security Department.

<sup>736</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 67.

up by the shootings... joined because now their relatives died, were shot and killed, and they felt that no, we need to go and take arms'.<sup>737</sup> Yet, when they entered the MK camps, as Steve Davis has correctly pointed out, their ability to survive and thrive, or not, depended to a large extent on, 'The degree to which students accepted the premise that Black Consciousness was incomplete without Marxist-Leninist theories of revolution [as this] determined the tenor of relations between students and the camp administration'.<sup>738</sup>

### **An ANC-SA/SACP Program and Plan for Political Education: 'Enter Jack Simons'**

It can be argued that it was this BC orientation, or at least non-ANC-SA orientation, which convinced the leadership of the ANC-SA/MK to appoint special political instructors for the new cadres. In a July 1977 NEC meeting where the progress of the MK camps in Angola was discussed, Alfred Nzo the Secretary-General (SG) of the ANC-SA took time to highlight the fact that a 'group of suitably qualified and experienced comrades has been appointed to conduct political lectures to assist the political developments of the young comrades who have recently joined our movement since the beginning of the current political upsurge in our country'.<sup>739</sup> Nzo argued this was important not only for the camps but for actions in the country as this new influx of recruits highlighted the need for them to more aggressively push the struggle on the ideological, political, and military level. Eight tasks to accomplish this were given but two stand out as telling in the context of this increased emphasis on political instruction. The first was to 'raise the level of political

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<sup>737</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 15.

<sup>738</sup> S. Davis, 'Cosmopolitans in Close Quarters', p. 173.

<sup>739</sup> A. Nzo, 'Report on meeting of the ANC National Executive Committee, Morogoro?, July 15-24, 1977 (abridged)' in *From Protest to Challenge* (1997), p. 698.

understanding throughout the movement and consolidate the political unity among all its members, inside and outside the country, inside and outside Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK)'. The eighth point argued the ANC-SA must through its actions and activism ensure that it is seen as the sole 'authentic leader of the revolutionary struggle of our people'.<sup>740</sup> As it pertained to the last point, chapter five showed how this consolidation was happening internationally, we now see parallel efforts to impose this internally.

One of the key members of this political instruction team was the venerable white communist Jack Simons. Simons was born on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1907 to an Anglo-Afrikaner mother and an English father. He earned his PhD in 1937 and married Ray Alexander in 1941. After being forced to leave South Africa in 1965 given he and Ray's outspoken stance against the apartheid regime, they moved to Zambia where they worked closely with the ANC-SA trying to re-organise itself in exile.<sup>741</sup> Starting in June 1969 Comrade Jack, as he was affectionately called, began running political education classes in Lusaka for ANC-SA, MK, SACP, Women's Section, and Youth Section cadres with 20-30 comrades, including Chris Hani, attending. A number of topics were discussed but most focused on Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and events taking place in the United States centring on the Black Power Movement. Jack Simons also began lecturing at the University of Zambia in Sociology from 1969-1975. After Soweto, Mzwai Piliso of MK's Department of Personnel and Commander Joe Modise asked Comrade Jack to go to the new Angolan

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<sup>740</sup> A. Nzo, 'Report on meeting of the ANC National Executive Committee, Morogoro?, July 15-24, 1977 (abridged)' in *From Protest to Challenge* (1997), p. 700.

<sup>741</sup> M. Sparg, J. Schreiner, G. Ansell, eds., *Comrade Jack: The Political Lectures and Diary of Jack Simons, Novo Catengue* (South Africa, Real African Publishers, 2001), pp. 1-4.

camps to join Mark Shope in teaching the new comrades the politics and policies of the ANC-SA and its non-racialist class first vision.<sup>742</sup>

Simons landed in Luanda on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1977, shortly after Steve Biko's murder, and left for Novo Catengue a few days later with Mzwai Piliso. Simons kept a meticulous diary of his experiences in the camp and much of the substance for this section is drawn from it.<sup>743</sup> From the beginning, Simons noticed many of the new cadres at Novo Catengue 'resisted political instruction' as they were focused only on gaining military training.<sup>744</sup> In many ways the criteria the ANC-SA/MK leadership used to recruit particular members lent itself to this orientation as they wanted recruits who were 'young, fit, [and] adventurous. Political consciousness secondary'.<sup>745</sup> Many of these very same cadres, Simons further noted, were not highly educated as most of them were from working class and/or peasant backgrounds. Ngculu believed many cadres struggled in classes or were uninterested because they were conducted in English, which was not fluently spoken among those who had not finished high school.<sup>746</sup>

Despite these challenges, Simons was in many ways the perfect SACP member to send to NC. According to James Ngculu he 'would always emphasize that our study of Marxism-Leninism should not be Europeanised, but must always be placed in the context of the adverse conditions in South Africa. He made a point that the course should be simple and understandable to everybody, irrespective of educational background'.<sup>747</sup> In addition

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<sup>742</sup> Sparg, Schreiner, Ansell, eds., *Comrade Jack*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>743</sup> I am indebted to Stephen Davis for sharing the importance of these diaries to my work. He used them closely in his own about Novo Catengue.

<sup>744</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>745</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>746</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 64.

<sup>747</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 66.

to co-authoring a rich text entitled *Class and colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* with Ray Alexander, in mid-1975, Jack wrote a report for the leadership of the ANC-SA/SACP on the FRELIMO trials in particular *The state vs. Saths Ivan Cooper and Others*.<sup>748</sup>

In his syllabus and lectures Jack Simons dealt briefly with Black Consciousness, but placed it within a larger history of African Nationalism since 1800.<sup>749</sup> A glance at the syllabus Simons used shows much of what was taught at Novo Catengue during his two stints of duty. Sections to be covered ranged from Scientific Method, African Technologies, Industrial Revolution, Historical Materialism, Forces of Production, Relations of Production, The Communist Manifesto, African Civilizations, Political Revolutions, Bourgeois Revolutions, Objective and Subjective conditions, Permanent Revolution, and Socialist Internationalism to name just a few.<sup>750</sup> Mark Shope focused much of his time taking the cadres through the history of British trade unions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and what this meant for South Africa. Both added to this work by teaching the history of the ANC-SA, which was unknown to many of the new recruits, and sketching its relationship to the SACP and MK.<sup>751</sup>

A close reading of the syllabus offers some explanations into why there were clashes in the camps during the political education segments by cadres who felt what they were being taught was not relevant to the liberation of South Africa. Indisputably, much

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<sup>748</sup> H. J. Simons and R. E. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Penguin African Library, 1969); University of Cape Town Special Collections: BC 1081 Jack Simons Collection, Organisations B (cont.), BPC, 1970-1977, J. Simons 'The state vs. Saths Ivan Cooper and Others', 7/12/75, pp. 1-8.

<sup>749</sup> Sparg, Schreiner, Ansell, eds., *Comrade Jack*, p. 23.

<sup>750</sup> Sparg, Schreiner, Ansell, eds., *Comrade Jack*, p. 116.

<sup>751</sup> However, Mark Shope did attack Anton Lembede in some of his lectures on the history of the ANC-SA's engagements with African Nationalism as promoting too much of a Garveyite vision of change in South Africa. See University of Cape Town Special Collections: BC 1081 Jack Simons Collection, ANC Articles, P. 31.7 Mark Williams Shope continued, 1977-1984, M. Shope, 'Lecture 6: African National Congress, its approach to the question of African Nationalism', n.d., pp. 1-13.



of this rejection, as was mentioned above, was because many were not literate, could have been spies, or were impatient to be re-infiltrated back home to carry on the fight. But, it is clear that others were inspired by Black Consciousness and this is where most of the sustained challenges to Simons on the ideological plain came from. According to the biographers of Simons as ‘the only white man in the camp’ he was constantly challenged in his lectures by a strong ‘generation of militantly black consciousness (BC) youth’.<sup>752</sup>

### **“Dissident Groups”: The Presence of a Militantly Black Consciousness Youth**

Following Stanley Manong and Omry Makgoale’s experiences in 1977 after joining MK in Angola provides fascinating insights into how ubiquitous BC was in these camps in the post-Soweto 1970s. Upon arriving in Angola, Manong and his cadres were deployed to Engineering where they joined about 300 new recruits, many of whom had been directly involved in the June 16<sup>th</sup> Uprising and subsequent events. Julius Mokoena supervised their basic training in ‘Politics, Small Firearms, March and Drill and Military Combat Work (MCW)’.<sup>753</sup> Manong remembers that his platoon commissar was Joel Netshitenzhe (MK name Peter Ramokoa or Mayibuye) who had a rich history of SASO activism at the University of Natal throughout 1975 and 1976.<sup>754</sup>

At the end of Manong’s first week of training at Engineering about forty cadres were selected to travel to the GDR. One of those selected was Omry Makgoale (MK name

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<sup>752</sup> Sparg, Schreiner, Ansell, eds., *Comrade Jack*, p. 29.

<sup>753</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 59.

<sup>754</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 58; J. Netshitenzhe, ‘Joel Netshitenzhe’ in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, eds., *The Thabo Mbeki I Know* (2016), p. 239.

Sidwell Moroka).<sup>755</sup> Tebello Motapanyane who had been the SG of SASM and one of the key leaders of the June 16<sup>th</sup> March was in this group as well.<sup>756</sup> Upon arriving in GDR Makgoale and his group were taken to Teterow where the SACP, led by Ronnie Kasrils and Pallo Jordan, and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), ran most of their political education as a compliment to their arms and explosives training.<sup>757</sup> Makgoale remembers the key political subjects being ‘Marxist-Leninist philosophy... Marxist-Leninist socialism [and]... Marxist-Leninist political economy’.<sup>758</sup> During these classes the Freedom Charter was brought up and analysed predominantly in classes run by Kasrils. In these lectures they became increasingly exposed to the SACP critique of Black Consciousness, arguing for a class critique over a race critique, which convinced some, like Makgoale, to transition ‘from BC analysis of things toward what is called class analysis of things’.<sup>759</sup>

However, not all agreed with the notion that to evolve in their thinking they had to move past BC and embrace a class analysis. Makgoale recalls ‘some people did differ with the communist analysis, the class analysis, they wanted to stick to Black Consciousness... of course the instructors tried to convince the students... that Black Consciousness was a step in the ANC history’. While those who were committed to a BC perspective held firm to many of its central tenets, explaining it as a “step in ANC-SA history”, essentially the two stage theory of the National Democratic Revolution, did convince some that the ANC-

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<sup>755</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, pp. 10-11. To confirm ANC-SA/MK cadres going to GDR for training see V. Shubin, *A View from Moscow* (2009).

<sup>756</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 145.

<sup>757</sup> R. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous* (1993), p. 126; Omry Makgoale Interview, pp. 11-12.

<sup>758</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 11.

<sup>759</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 12.

SA/MK was the best organisation, regardless of its political ideology, to join in order to bring down apartheid.<sup>760</sup>

Back in the sweltering heat of central Angola, Stanley Manong and the rest of the recruits finally got word of their eventual departure from Engineering for NC.<sup>761</sup> They arrived in late April 1977 and were reorganised into four companies. Manong was in Company (CY) II with January Masilela (MK Che Ogara) serving as his political commissar. Che Ogara, if we recall from chapters three and five, was a member of a Black Consciousness group in South Africa called AFRO who joined Welile Nhlapo and Tebogo Mafole in Libya to receive military training with the PAC.<sup>762</sup> In addition to him, Manong remembers that Tebogo Mafole was the Commander of Platoon One in CY III.<sup>763</sup>

As we mentioned earlier Nhlapo and Mafole's group of former APLF/Bokwe Group comrades were, with the older mgwenya's and Cuban soldiers, the main instructors of the Soweto generation entering Novo Catengue from 1977-1979. According to an interview conducted with Welile Nhlapo the training they received by the Cubans in Angola was comparable to what the APLF received when they went for advanced training in Syria.<sup>764</sup> The combination of having already received military training and being seasoned activists in BCM placed the former APLF comrades in an important position

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<sup>760</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 1.3

<sup>761</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), pp. 61-66. It would be interesting to know if this was actually the case. These cadres I suspect were former APLF comrades like Nhlapo and Mafole, it is very possible they were told by their superiors to tell others they had been trained by FAPLA and SWAPO. I have no evidence however to support this hypothesis.

<sup>762</sup> T. Moloi, "'Let's begin to participate fully now in politics': Student politics, Mhluzi Township, 1970s", in A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise*, pp. 129-130; Nhlapo Interview, p. 10

<sup>763</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 91.

<sup>764</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 19. Nhlapo remembers Joe Modise asking him to assess the training the Cubans were giving in relation to what he had received in Libya and Syria. Nhlapo believed the training was comparable to what he and others received.

within MK. Nhlapo, who eventually became the commissar of CY II remembers that comrades like himself and Mafole ‘understood BCM, we came from that, and then... as Commissars... [we] could deal with those questions. We could deal with them’.<sup>765</sup>

Importantly, Nhlapo’s BC politics did not prevent him from accepting an offer by Mark Shope while in Novo Catengue to join the SACP.<sup>766</sup> Joining the SACP for Nhlapo did not mean renouncing, abandoning, or evolving from Black Consciousness for something greater. In his own words, ‘When you talk about the liberation of the Africans and Black people in general, as a priority that defines a National Democratic Revolution, that resonated with our own [BC] thinking and understanding;’.<sup>767</sup> Many, as we saw with some of those in Makgoale’s class, shared these sentiments and as the months rolled along Jack Simons noted how the SACP influence in the camp was growing suggesting there was more in common between the two political ideologies than either side knew of.

Nevertheless, cadres like Nhlapo did clash with SACP thinking, especially when it came to the figure of Steve Biko. When word reached them in Novo Catengue about the death of Biko there was a mixed reaction in the camp. The rank-and-file, lower, and mid-level commanders mourned his loss and praised his life’s work while some in the leadership like Francis Meli, who was the Political Commissar for NC at the time, dismissed him as a CIA agent.<sup>768</sup> Nhlapo was one who took exception to accusations of

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<sup>765</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 20.

<sup>766</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 18.

<sup>767</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 15.

<sup>768</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 15; Welile Nhlapo Interview, p. 19. Others like Jack Simons seemed not to care too much about Biko’s death as no mention of it was made in his diaries of life in NC, however, he did talk about the banning of BCM organisations.

Biko being CIA or at best a Black liberal, as seemed to be the conclusion from some SACP and ANC-SA publications discussing the life of Biko.<sup>769</sup> Nhlapo recalls,

the day Steve Biko died I addressed the whole detachment because I used to coordinate with some of the people the news analysis thing... when Biko died we did a news analysis and then I had to talk about Biko as a person.

Nhlapo remembered that a few questioned his loyalty to the ANC-SA/MK because of his strong defence of Biko but he was resolute and responded to some of these concerns by saying,

There was no serious empirical evidence of why he had to come to that conclusion and when I challenged him [Meli] on the basis of my knowledge and understanding of who the person is and this was enough to make those who questioned Biko rethink their position.<sup>770</sup>

Nhlapo was not the only one who challenged the thinking of the ANC-SA/SACP. Others like Absalom Mampe were accused by high-ranking mgwenya commanders and Simons as being part of a dissident group within the camp due to their critiques of Marxism in the latter's classes. According to a comrade Tilly Iansson<sup>771</sup> – a former secretary of SASM – who Simons spoke with to gain a better understanding of who Mampe was, Mampe was known in the Fort Hare area for his work running an illiteracy school. This

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<sup>769</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, F. Meli, 'Book Review: I Write what I like' in *Sechaba*, February Issue 1979, pp. 30-31; ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, Toussaint, "'Fallen Among Liberals" – An Ideology of Black Consciousness' in *African Communist*, Issue 78, 3rd Quarter 1979 (September 1st, 1979), pp. 18-30.

<sup>770</sup> Welile Nhlapo Interview, pp. 19-20; It is also interesting to note that the ANC-SA regularly accused members, both high and low ranking, of their organisation of being CIA spies. Such was the norm in progressive/radical social movements of the times. One example is the accusation of Thabo Mbeki being a spy due to his close connection with a CBS group who had been trying to make a documentary on the ANC-SA. Alfred Nzo the Secretary-General had to release a statement to the membership refuting these allegations. See ANC Archives LUM/082/0007/05, A. Nzo, 'Letter to all members of the African National Congress of South Africa from Alfred Nzo', n.d. This also might explain one of the reasons why Francis Meli was so unpopular in the camps, so much so that he was quickly removed from his post as Political Commissar of NC and placed in charge of Sechaba in London. Granted he also had an alcohol problem and often neglected his duties as commissar and seemed to want special treatment in the camps. Nevertheless, the figure of Biko would have been popular in the camps so openly accusing him of being a CIA would not have gone down well.

<sup>771</sup> I have a strong suspicion that this is Tebello Motapanyane of SASM but I have not been able to find other documents or oral accounts to confirm this connection.

more than likely meant he was a member of BCM's Literacy Programs meaning he was involved on some level with Black Consciousness before coming to NC. It also seems he had risen quickly through the ranks in MK to become a section commissar, yet, given his outspoken critiques of Marxism, he was under suspicion as being one of the 'opposition' leaders in the camp.<sup>772</sup>

In addition to Mampe, Simons was also deeply suspicious of Tilly Iansson, the same man who had given him some background information on Absalom Mampe. Iansson was a Political Instructor in the 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon which was considered by some of the commanders to be the "bad egg" in the detachment. Simons writes of them as a peculiar bunch because they obtained good grades in his classes and followed orders. Yet, Simons describes them in his diary as a 'group of malcontents [that] stirs up defiance on trivial issues'. They apparently were quiet during company classes, vocal in platoon meetings, and overall very anti-authority but did not deliver ideological attacks in the open. Simons was deeply concerned about this group as he believed they were growing in strength.<sup>773</sup> It is safe to assume that with Tilly's history in SASM and the overall strong orientation of the new recruits to Black Consciousness, this Platoon was known on some level to engage in BC thinking which aggravated and concerned Simons.

Other indications of the strong presence of BC within MK camps in Angola and in particular Novo Catengue can be seen in the debates that ensued between mid-level commanders/commissars and rank-and-file recruits on the question of the Bantustans. Simons and others in the leadership of the ANC-SA/MK/SACP disagreed with their

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<sup>772</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>773</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

rejection of working with the Bantustans as they believed they could be used. Oliver Tambo himself defended Inkatha's Chief Gatsha Buthelezi within the ANC-SA/SACP/MK and in public consistently up until 1980 until they fell apart.<sup>774</sup> According to Platoon Commissar Netshitenzhe, he and other MK youths in the camps were deeply agitated and alarmed with the ANC-SA when they heard about this meeting and it caused much tension in the camps.<sup>775</sup>

This tension with top leadership exacerbated divisions between rank-and-file and mid-level mgwenyas and Soweto generation recruits in ways that went beyond a generation/age gap. According to Simons's diary a comrade named Mwama, an mgwenya educator and head of security Simons was friendly with in NC, was untrusting of the political attitudes of some of the recruits as he believed they were not loyal to the ANC-SA. A comrade Baanda according to Simons's diary saw these recruits as criminals, especially those in CY III where Mafole was commissar. Others like a comrade Theodore were angry at the ANC-SA for not having greater care over who they selected as he believed most of the new recruits were not serious freedom fighters.<sup>776</sup> Simons believed this reflected attitudes of general mistrust and a widespread fear of infiltration more so than an ideological/political divide.<sup>777</sup> The answer was more than likely both as Omry

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<sup>774</sup> For notes on the ANC-SA and Inkatha meeting in 1979 see ANC Archives LUM/065/0004/07, 'Consultative Meeting – 29/10/79 to 30/10/79', pp. 1-31. It is also important to keep in mind the friendship ties that existed between those of the older generation. Tambo and Buthelezi had gone to Fort Hare together and both were active in fighting for better rights for the students. Buthelezi also knew Mandela from these times and this often gave each respective leader the impression they could "reason" with the other.

<sup>775</sup> J. Netshitenzhe, 'Joel Netshitenzhe' in *The Thabo Mbeki I Know*, p. 246. There were others within the ANC-SA/MK who were confused with this meeting, chief among them, Chris Hani who was based in Lesotho, see ANC Archives LUM/027/0005/08, 'Letter from Chris to Comrade Alf', n.d., (seems to be April 14th, 1980), p.1.

<sup>776</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>777</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

Makgoale recalls that ‘some of the leaders of the Communist Party did not trust Black Consciousness’.<sup>778</sup>

This divide is further revealed when looking at how some young militants from Turfloop University interacted with mgwenyas around the question of the selection of leaders.<sup>779</sup> These recruits according to Simons were not in support of how some political instructors were being appointed as it was taking place without the approval of the larger body. Simons’s diary notes a conversation he had with a comrade Raymond, of the Luthuli Detachment, who felt because of these challenges these particular recruits were emerging as a dangerous ideological opposition to the ANC-SA/MK/SACP leadership in the camps. Simons considered this might be a ‘carry over of SASO and BPC attitudes’ and decided to keep a closer eye on this group in his lectures.<sup>780</sup>

This independent thinking and questioning of everything they were being exposed to was a hallmark of Black Consciousness’s political culture in South Africa. Omry Makgoale believes that due to the

background of Black Consciousness... where we interrogate, we were more prone to ask questions in a democratic way, questioning things, we were not so much like subservient to the communist theory without questioning, everything that we were taught we questioned, we interrogated it... We brought in vibrancy of thinking and political thought and so on.<sup>781</sup>

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<sup>778</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 15.

<sup>779</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary. On the importance of Turfloop to Black Consciousness see A. Heffernan, ‘Black Consciousness's Lost Leader: Abraham Tiro, the University of the North, and the Seeds of South Africa's Student Movement in the 1970s’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 1 (2015), pp. 173-186; A. Heffernan, ‘The University of the North: A regional and national centre of activism’, in A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto '76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), pp. 45-54.

<sup>780</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>781</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 17.



Nonetheless, as time moved on the camp leadership began to react more sharply and publicly to the differing opinions concerning how the camp was being run. Julius Mokoena towards the end of November 1977 delivered a lengthy lecture to the entire camp on discipline as recruits were refusing to participate in drills and, most importantly to him, challenging certain political ideas. After the lecture Simons noted how Mokoena was highly concerned that ‘only some are loyal to ANC [,] we ought to see that every commissar is loyal, active’ and correctly pushes the party line.<sup>782</sup>

One of the missions of Simons in NC was to run political education classes for those who were going to be future instructors. In order to fit these classes into the packed schedules of the instructors/commissars, these classes were conducted at night. These special classes were designed for a select group of comrades. Nhlapo and Mafole, after he was transferred to CY II, were some of those chosen to take part which got underway in earnest after Mokoena’s speech on discipline.<sup>783</sup> Simons’s reaction to them in his class is noteworthy.

While Simons does not mention them by name, Nhlapo confirmed in an interview with the author that he was in CY II and attended Simons’s night classes. James Ngculu also remembers them taking part in these night classes and being from CY II.<sup>784</sup> Simons’s suspicions in his diaries are focused on three cadres from CY II who joined his classes ‘but do not take part in discussion’.<sup>785</sup> Upon learning they will be posted to administrative jobs in various centres he writes in a separate entry, again with concern, that many of the

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<sup>782</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>783</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), pp. 67-68.

<sup>784</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>785</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

previous first wave of recruits from Botswana, Nhlapo's crew, were not in his opinion appropriately cross-examined about their political affiliations or beliefs before being allowed to join the ANC-SA/MK.<sup>786</sup>

On a rainy afternoon a few days after Mokoena's speech Oliver Tambo, Joe Modise, MPLA, and Cuban representatives arrived at Novo Catengue to officially congratulate the first detachment on completing training. During Oliver Tambo's speech he too pushed for an intensification of Marxist-Leninist teachings within MK. At this same graduation ceremony Tambo named the trainees in this camp the June 16<sup>th</sup> Detachment and reassigned about two hundred cadres for infiltration missions, Frontline State work, political/diplomatic posts, or for other assignments at various camps around Angola. As the days and weeks dragged on those who for one reason or another were left in the camps mixed with a new influx of recruits. They also had many who were BC aligned and determined to go home, as time went on tensions in the camps rose again. They eventually grew to a point where Political Education classes were turned into grievance spaces where cadres of the reformed CY I lead critiques about the ANC-SA/MK. On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1977 Simons noted that the previous night fourteen 'rebels' from CY I were removed from the camp, despite the secrecy with which this was done Simons was in support of this action.<sup>787</sup>

As the New Year got underway the new recruits and those who were still for various reasons stuck in NC continued to place the question of the Black Consciousness on the table. Their engagements with the Soweto Uprising, SASM, and SASO, according to

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<sup>786</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary. Simons's opinions toward Nhlapo would change later but at the writing of this particular entry he was not trusting of Nhlapo and his crew.

<sup>787</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

Simons, took place mostly in the political lectures for commissars which he was now exclusively running. In these night classes Simons noted that some agreed BC was influenced primarily by the Black Panthers and ‘other trends among USA Blacks’. Furthermore, they had ‘no ideology other than Black Culture (form of Negritude) and vague notion of self-reliance and private black enterprise. No attempt to prepare for action after BCM had succeeded in the indoctrination’. Moreover, Simons argued in these classes that the Black Community Programmes (BCPs) were not to be taken seriously as they were petty bourgeois, reformist, and anti-Marxist.<sup>788</sup> While these points were not greeted with too much open dissent, Simons recalled being strongly challenged when he tried to argue that by March 1976 SASM was no longer BC as they had contacts with the ANC-SA underground.<sup>789</sup>

Another memorable episode Simons recorded in his diaries was a concern expressed by a Soweto generation recruit (unnamed) who ‘suggested that SASO, unable to receive military training by direct means, joined MK – but intend to return to SASO after training’. This matched what many who were affiliated with BCM outside the camps, like Drake Koka, also believed. In an interview with Tom Karis he argued that many ‘students have joined the ANC but only because it could provide them with things. But some of them told Koka they were really still BPC and in fact were moving ANC in a BPC direction’.<sup>790</sup> This probably fuelled suspicions by cadres, particularly of the older

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<sup>788</sup> On the importance of the BCPs see L. Hadfield, *Liberation and Development: Black Consciousness Community Programs in South Africa* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2016).

<sup>789</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary; ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, ‘Message of the National Executive Committee of the ANC(SA)’, in *Sechaba*, Vol. 11, 1st Quarter 1977 (January 1977), pp. 2-5; ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, A. Nzo, ‘Impact of the Underground ANC’, in *Sechaba*, Vol. 11, 4th Quarter 1977 (October 1977), pp. 15-17.

<sup>790</sup> WHP A2675/I/14, ‘Notes from Interview/impressions of Drake Koka by Karis, November 22nd, 1977’, pp. 1-4.

generation, that these new recruits were not loyal to the ANC-SA/MK and would set the stage for later suspicions that would wrack the MK camps throughout the 1980s.

### **‘Reflecting the Society that Produced us’: Black Consciousness and Challenging Gender Norms/Patriarchy within MK**

In addition to challenging the dogma of the SACP and the hierarchical structures of MK, the question of the objectification/ownership of women’s bodies, patriarchy, male chauvinism, and the toxic masculinity within the ANC-SA/MK was another arena of struggle women politicised by BCM engaged in while in MK.<sup>791</sup> Shireen Hassim has argued in her work on women in the ANC-SA that until the late 1980s, the dominant position within the ANC-SA ‘was that the emancipation of women was secondary to and contingent upon national liberation. The task of women activists was to mobilise women for the broader struggle’.<sup>792</sup> Rachel Sandwell discussed how tensions formed between the older women in the ANC-SA and newer recruits around questions of patriarchy and the role of women in an armed movement.<sup>793</sup> Violet Moloi, an MK cadre, remembered that although women were able to fight to receive the same training as men, sexism was rife within the ANC-SA’s armed wing. Moloi recalled that, ‘Though we all had the same training, women were faced with the task of having to prove themselves more than men. Our military centres reflected the society that produced us’.<sup>794</sup>

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<sup>791</sup> ANC-SA/MK was not unique in this.

<sup>792</sup> S. Hassim, *Women’s Organisations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority* (Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p. 32.

<sup>793</sup> R. Sandwell, “‘Love I Cannot Begin to Explain’: The Politics of Reproduction in the ANC in Exile, 1976-1990”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 1 (2015), p. 68.

<sup>794</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, V. Moloi, ‘A woman’s place... is in MK’ in *Umkhonto we Sizwe: 30th Anniversary Souvenir Magazine*, 1991, p.6.

Overall, Ngculu writes that ‘the impact of the women’s movement was weak, and feminist issues tended to be scorned as foreign... This position changed in the 1980s. A new type of woman joined the ranks of MK, helping to revolutionize the ANC and put the issue of gender on the agenda’. The women credited with leading this transformation were drawn from BCM and in later years the United Democratic Front (UDF), a reality that has not been deeply explored by scholars on women in MK. Women like Mtintso, Zou Kota, and Nosiviwe Mapisa ‘were accustomed to being vocal and assertive’ in large measure due to their history of activism prior to joining MK.<sup>795</sup>

Additionally, according to Moloï, the structural injustices within MK as it pertained to women extended into recruitment of women back home. Moloï believed ‘90 percent of women found in the ranks of MK were not necessarily a result of a conscious recruitment campaign on the part of the ANC and MK’.<sup>796</sup> Guerrillas like Thenjiwe Mtintso, who joined the ANC-SA from BCM sometime in 1979/1980, remembered some of her male comrades trying in daily interactions, political education classes, and military training to address gender injustice. Despite their best efforts, it was not enough to reverse the deeply rooted patriarchal norms that saturated the movement.<sup>797</sup> In response, a number of women took matters in their own hands and in camps like Novo Catengue began approaching political instructors to demand they receive separate political education classes. In these

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<sup>795</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 149.

<sup>796</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, V. Moloï, ‘A woman’s place... is in MK’ in *Umkhonto we Sizwe: 30th Anniversary Souvenir Magazine*, 1991, p.6.

<sup>797</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, T. Mtintso, ‘Interview: Extracts from an interview with ex-combatant and recently elected SACP Central Committee Member Thenjiwe Mtintso by Devan Pillay’ in *Umkhonto we Sizwe: 30th Anniversary Souvenir Magazine*, 1991, pp. 6-7.

early years the Women's Section of the ANC-SA did not have a notable presence in the camps so these independently forming groups were critical for women.<sup>798</sup>

Furthermore, in the early years women 'were generally deployed in the rear as typists and general office workers, or in the Amandla Cultural Ensemble'.<sup>799</sup> This had ramifications for their prospects of rising within MK as one earned promotions based in large part on completing infiltration missions into South Africa and/or how effective one operated in the Frontline Areas. Moloji accurately captured this dynamic of deployment to the front as it 'reflected to a large extent the attitudes towards women. The majority of women were deployed in combat-related duties like communication and medical and secretarial tasks both in the camps and the home front. Very few were deployed in combat'.<sup>800</sup> Additionally, as many MK commanders [and some in the APLF like Bokwe Mafuna] incorrectly believed women were by nature not good fighters, countless women were never given the chance to prove themselves which restricted their ability to contribute to the struggle against apartheid.<sup>801</sup> As Thenjiwe Mtintso would later point out these biases fuelled a structurally unequal system which defacto locked women out of the higher leadership positions.<sup>802</sup>

These structural inequalities extended to the unequal of treatment between men and women as it pertained to pregnancies, which also affected deployment to the Frontline States and infiltration missions into South Africa as scholars such as Lissoni, Sandwell,

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<sup>798</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>799</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 149.

<sup>800</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, V. Moloji, 'A woman's place... is in MK', p. 6.

<sup>801</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, V. Moloji, 'A woman's place... is in MK', p. 6.

<sup>802</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, T. Mtintso, 'Interview', pp. 6-7.

and Suriano have shown us.<sup>803</sup> Women were often forced/tasked with the responsibilities of wearing intrauterine devices (IUDs) to prevent pregnancy but men were not put under equal pressure to consistently wear condoms. According to MK law if a woman was pregnant both she and the man were to be sent out of the camps to Tanzania where the ANC-SA had built a children's crèche where new-borns were to be raised.<sup>804</sup> In practice men rarely came forward to claim equal responsibility for the pregnancy and women were often put under pressure to not reveal who the father was as being reassigned to the crèche was seen as a punishment. Moreover, led by conservatives in the ANC-SA Women's Section, abortions were discouraged although they were made available.<sup>805</sup>

Furthermore, while the ANC-SA Women's Section was tasked 'with providing an adequate supply of hygienic underwear, clothes and other sanitary requirements as well as advice about health issues' the predominately male leadership running the camps 'lacked knowledge of women's issues – politically, emotionally and physiologically'.<sup>806</sup> Thenjiwe Mtintso, one of the founding thinkers and builders of BCM, stands out as an example of the impact Black Consciousness had on reshaping the ANC-SA/MK along gender lines. Ngculu recalls that when she first came to the camps she was given special training and treatment but immediately rejected this as patronizing and sexist and demanded to train with the male comrades.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>803</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, T. Mtintso, 'Interview', pp. 6-7; M. Suriano and A. Lissoni, 'Married to the ANC: Tanzanian Women's Entanglement in South Africa's Liberation Struggle', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 1 (2014), pp. 129-150.

<sup>804</sup> M. Suriano and A. Lissoni, 'Married to the ANC: Tanzanian Women's Entanglement in South Africa's Liberation Struggle', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 1 (2014), pp. 129-150; R. Sandwell, "'Love I Cannot Begin to Explain": The Politics of Reproduction in the ANC in Exile, 1976-1990', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 1 (2015), pp. 63-81.

<sup>805</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), pp. 151-153.

<sup>806</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 151.

<sup>807</sup> J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 150.

Looking back at her experiences in MK, Mtintso acknowledged many women were trapped in society's stereotypes of what their own capacities were as it pertained to guerrilla training. While she and others tried to fight these internalised beliefs, it was not enough to combat the sorely lacking praxis of the men in the camps, as a result, Mtintso believed conditions were never optimal to create an environment where the most amount of women could succeed. As it pertains directly to the July 16<sup>th</sup> Detachment, it was one of the first detachments of MK that had a 'sizeable number of women... but most have now fizzled out. Their interest in the army ended'.<sup>808</sup> Careful not to construct herself as unique, Mtintso was clear that her situation was different as she had been politically active for a number of years in BCM and while in Lesotho had gained experience working in the Forward Areas prior to coming to the camps. Because of this, 'I did not feel any pressures because I was a woman. I was not quiet about gender issues'.<sup>809</sup>

While BCM provided a route to cultivate an outspoken voice and determined stance about their central role to the liberation of South Africa in the armed wing and political/diplomatic realm, exposure to communism for others was equally important. SACP comrade Rosita drew upon the lessons of her father and the communist party to understand that 'a woman can achieve whatever a man can, only she has to work harder'.<sup>810</sup> Her later deep engagement with Lenin exposed her to the positions of the USSR outside of the influence of the anti-communist South African regime. She eventually embraced Marxism-Leninism which led to her eventually being recruited by the SACP. While

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<sup>808</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, T. Mtintso, 'Interview', p. 7.

<sup>809</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, T. Mtintso, 'Interview', p. 7.

<sup>810</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, Rosita, 'As a woman, my place is in the Party', *African Communist*, Issue 99, 4th Quarter 1984 (December 1st, 1984), p. 45.



undergoing further ideological training in the USSR she felt socialism was the only route to women's emancipation.<sup>811</sup>

Rosita's narrative was a part of a rich debate in the 1980s within the journals of the SACP (*African Communist*), ANC-SA (*Sechaba*), and MK (*DAWN*) engaging with sexism, patriarchy, and women's rights within the movement. Rosita was one who believed that while there were problems, women on the whole were being treated equally in the movement. Another comrade based out of Lesotho, name not given, agreed with Rosita and argued women were being treated equally. She believed that to argue differently was to devalue the real accomplishments of the women currently active in the movement. While acknowledging there was not numerical equality within MK, women were powerfully contributing to its success.<sup>812</sup> Cynthia Madlala, MK name, agreed with Rosita and the comrade from Lesotho as she described her life and training as an MK combatant as being a positive one overall.<sup>813</sup> Furthermore, Madlala argued that, 'Our politics teaches that a woman is first a comrade and then a woman, not vice versa'.<sup>814</sup>

Phyllis Jordan on the other hand seemed to agree more with Mtintso and Moloi. Jordan believed the woman question had been neglected allowing male chauvinism to permeate all sections of the African liberation movements.<sup>815</sup> What made this neglect

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<sup>811</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, Rosita, 'As a woman, my place is in the Party', pp. 45-48.

<sup>812</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, Anonymous, 'Letter to the Editor: Is there sexual equality in the movement?', in *African Communist*, Issue 99, 4th Quarter 1984 (December 1st, 1984), pp. 109-111.

<sup>813</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, C. Madlala, 'Women Forum: We saw mischief in every order' in *Dawn*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1985), pp. 20-21.

<sup>814</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, C. Madlala, 'Women Forum: We saw mischief in every order', p. 21.

<sup>815</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, P. Jordan, 'Black Womanhood and National Liberation', in *Sechaba*, December Issue 1984 (December 1984), pp. 3-15. Phyllis Jordan was the mother of ANC-SA radical intellectual Pallo Jordan. Hers was another life of activism and intellectual pursuits that has been mostly hidden given her gender. For some information on her see, T. Bell, 'South African women's rights activist Phyllis Ntantala-Jordan dies at 96 in the US', *Mail & Guardian*, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016, available at

worse was it crippled their overall capacity to fight the white settler regimes and reflected ‘The effect of White domination on the Black people... in its treatment of African women’.<sup>816</sup> Building on the work of Black radical womanists such as Frances Beal, Jordan argued women were the most oppressed producers and as women as they experienced a triple oppression along gendered, racial, and class lines.<sup>817</sup> Furthermore, Jordan lambasted men who spoke of feminism and Women’s Liberation but were sorely lacking in their practice. These men, she argued, were merely paying lip service to these terms in order to conceal their ‘traditionalist attitudes against the rights of women and mask the fears and inadequacies of men who feel threatened by the loss of the power they at present exercise over women’.<sup>818</sup>

All in all, these new recruits were far from the blank slates they often have been described as by some in the ANC-SA/MK leadership.<sup>819</sup> Most of this new wave of recruits had made the decision to go into exile to find the armed struggle – whether with the ANC-SA, PAC, or BCM – due to the Soweto Uprising. Many were not recruited by the ANC-SA/MK underground structures and this was demonstrated in the fact that many were not clear about the relationship between the ANC-SA and MK or even knew what the ANC-SA was. In a later analysis done on the biographies of those in the camps it was shown that more than 75% never had been in contact with the ANC-SA before coming abroad.<sup>820</sup>

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<https://mg.co.za/article/2016-07-20-south-african-womens-rights-activist-phyllis-ntantala-jordan-dies-at-96-in-the-us>.

<sup>816</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, P. Jordan, ‘Black Womanhood and National Liberation’, p. 4.

<sup>817</sup> F. Beal, ‘Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female’, in T. Bambara, ed., *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (New York, Washington Square Press, 2005, orig. 1970), pp. 109-122.

<sup>818</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, P. Jordan, ‘Black Womanhood and National Liberation’, p. 14.

<sup>819</sup> ANC Archives, LUM/011/0018/30, ‘Proposals for the Agenda for the joint meeting of representatives of the NEC and Education Committees of the ANC(SA) to take place at Morogoro, September 30th to October 3rd, 1978’, pp. 1-2; ANC Archives, LUM/027/0007/01, ‘Some notes on morality: A Discussion document for the A.N.C.’, n.d., pp. 7-9.

<sup>820</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

In some ways the accusations by older recruits concerning the newer ones not being loyal to the ANC-SA was a correct assessment, they were loyal only to the freeing of their people from apartheid.

### **‘Turning MK into a Fighting Force’: BC in ANC-SA/MK**

This new generation of MK recruits, many of whom had come from and retained their Black Consciousness world-view, remade and revitalised the ANC-SA/MK. Not only did they swell the ranks of the armed wing and provide an energetic boost to a flagging organisation, but they participated in missions, revamped the political department, and tried to bring the ANC-SA more in line with the thinking of their people within South Africa. As the years went on those of the June 16<sup>th</sup> and Moncada Detachments would leave an indelible mark on the ANC-SA/MK. For Ronnie Kasrils, this generation ‘became the new leaders and, by the way, the commanders of MK, the most capable... some... are today chief reps in various countries, others who are in key positions in the underground and MK’.<sup>821</sup>

When Jack Simons returned for his second tour of duty as a political education instructor at Novo Catengue in late 1978 he was surprised at how little he was needed as many of those he and Shope had trained were effectively running political education sessions.<sup>822</sup> Cadres like Omry Makgoale would later rise to become the Chief of Staff of Engineering camp, then later a pivotal member of MK’s Security Department in charge of screening new recruits, and more famously a bodyguard for Oliver Tambo.<sup>823</sup> Stanley

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<sup>821</sup> WHP A2675/I/14, ‘First Interview with Ronnie Kasrils by Howard Barrell, August 19th, 1989’, p. 249

<sup>822</sup> UCT Special Collections, Simons Diary.

<sup>823</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, pp. 13-16.

Manong and his fellow Soweto generation colleague Thabo Mavuyo were in November 1977, shortly after their graduation, recruited by Keith Mokoape to replace Snuki Zikalala and himself in Botswana's MK underground. Manong was promoted to Chief of Operations, responsible for planning missions inside the country, and Mavuyo was named Chief of Reconnaissance and Infiltration for the Botswana MK underground, both served throughout 1978 and parts of 1979.<sup>824</sup>

Another member of the Soweto generation who trained at Novo Catengue was Motso Mokgabudi, codenamed Obadi, who distinguished himself as a member of the Special Operations Unit (aka Solomon Mahlangu Unit) commissioned by Oliver Tambo to carry out sensitive infiltration/sabotage missions. Most famously he planned, with Joe Slovo, and personally led, unlike Slovo, the successful action to detonate explosives at the SASOL plant in June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1980. Its success was received positively by MK's allies and it electrified many Black South Africans internally and allies of the struggle world-wide.<sup>825</sup> Similarly, June 16<sup>th</sup> and Moncada Detachment guerrillas like Stephen Mafoko, Humphrey Makhubo, and Wilfred Madela formed MK units that hit police stations across South Africa, notably in Silverton and Soekmekaar, throughout the late 70s and into the 80s. In the Silverton raids, some eye witnesses heard those responsible shout "Black Power".<sup>826</sup>

Still others like Joel Netshitenzhe were eventually promoted to work on the Politico-Military Council (PMC), the replacement in the early 1980s for the Revolutionary

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<sup>824</sup> See S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), pp. 91-103.

<sup>825</sup> 'South Africa: The Party Faithful' in *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 31, No.1 (1990), pp. 2-3; Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous* (1993), p. 186; Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid* (1992), p. 106; Houston and Magubane, 'The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1970s', pp. 508-511. Tragically Obadi would be one of those killed by the SADF raid on Matola in Maputo on the night of January 30th, 1981.

<sup>826</sup> ANC Archives NAHECS Collection, 'Inside South Africa' in *Sechaba*, January Issue (1981), pp. 12-17; J. Ngculu, *The Honour to Serve* (2009), p. 147; T. Simpson, *Umkhonto We Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (2016), p. 265.

Council (RC), after a short stint in Radio Freedom. He was then reassigned to work in the Department of Internal Propaganda (DIP) in the lead-up to the Kabwe Conference of 1985.<sup>827</sup> Welile Nhlapo was reassigned out of NC to become deputy Editor of *Sechaba* (under Frances Meli) in early 1979. After some time he too was placed in the DIP and as time went on he began to focus more on International Relations and became key in trying to rebuild ANC-SA relations with ZANU-PF.<sup>828</sup> Thenjiwe Mtintso before coming to Angola for training in the early 1980s worked closely with Chris Hani's MK underground in Lesotho after she joined the ANC-SA sometime in early 1979.<sup>829</sup> She was among those who helped him rethink how the ANC-SA would recruit and build an underground in the Eastern Cape in the context of a powerful current of BC saturating the area. Even the top level ANC-SA/MK leadership were forced to admit that their Forward Area in Lesotho had the best tactics in the organisation for building underground units. She rose in MK's ranks but went even higher within the SACP.<sup>830</sup>

Jabu Moleketi, one of the key operatives of one of MK's most successful units called the G-5, was a cadre indoctrinated heavily in BC politics before joining the ANC-SA/MK in exile. He had been a SASM member in high school and was part of an underground that he describes as BC inspired with Super Moloji, Billy Murphy, and Roller

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<sup>827</sup> J. Netshitenzhe, "Joel Netshitenzhe" in *The Thabo Mbeki I Know* (eds. Sifiso Ndlovu and Miranda Strydom, 2016), pp. 240-245.

<sup>828</sup> W. Nhlapo, 'Welile Nhlapo' in S. Ndlovu and M. Strydom, *The Thabo Mbeki I Know* (2016), pp. 271-275. Chapter four briefly discussed his role in the negotiations between BCM and the ANC-SA in December 1979.

<sup>829</sup> G. Houston, ed., B. Maaba interview, 'Jordan, Baba', in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 1960-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued), Vol. 4* (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 148-150.

<sup>830</sup> ANC Archives NACHES Collection, T. Mtintso, 'Interview' (1993), pp. 6-7; N. Gasa, 'Tribute to Thenjiwe Mtintso', in *African Communist*, No. 135, 4th Quarter 1993, pp. 44-47. I have not been able to find much on Tebogo Mafole except that he might have served for a time in Cairo as the ANC-SA rep for Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO). Later he and Nhlapo would become diplomats for South Africa to the United Nations.

Masinga. According to Moleketi BC was where one grew politically, ‘It played quite an important role in one’s life, developing what one would say was a spirit of defiance and understanding that we were equal to whites and that there was injustice. Black Consciousness definitely meant that’.<sup>831</sup> He and some others left South Africa in December 1976 through Mozambique where they were given a crash course in firearms, explosives, and other sabotage work. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1977 they were finally re-infiltrated and tasked with helping to rebuild the ANC-SA/MK underground as members of the Transvaal Urban Machinery under the command of Sphiwe Nyanda. His unit’s job was to gather intelligence and do some sabotage missions. Their intelligence reports were critical for MK as it was used to attack a number of police stations from 1977-1979.<sup>832</sup>

More could be added to this list, the essential point has been to show how central this Soweto generation, chiefly those who had a prior history as activists in Black Consciousness and made up the core of the June 16<sup>th</sup> and Moncada Detachments, were to the remaking of the ANC-SA/MK in ways that went beyond a mere physical and/or emotional contribution.

### **Clash of the Two Armies of MK, 1981-1985**

Tragically, the vast majority of the new recruits of the Soweto generation, and subsequent generations, found themselves trapped in the camps in exile until the early

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<sup>831</sup> G. Houston, ed., B. Magubane interview, ‘Moleketi, Jabu’, in A. Temu and J. Tembe, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: Contemporaneous Documents, 1960I-1994/Liberation War Countries (continued)*, Vol. 4 (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota, 2014), pp. 463-471, p. 465.

<sup>832</sup> G. Houston, ed., B. Magubane interview, ‘Moleketi, Jabu’, in *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, pp. 468-471.

1990s and were never able to rise in the ANC-SA/SACP/MK. This combined with a host of other problems pushed new recruits, led by the Soweto generation, to demand a consultative conference be held by the ANC-SA. The last conference had been held in 1969 at Morogoro and the new recruits felt a similar conference was needed to make some changes to the ANC-SA/MK. This demand made a number of mgwenyas fear these calls were a ploy for this new generation to push for positions of power and authority within the organisation through elections. Omry Makgoale, who after serving some time as Tambo's bodyguard became Chief of Staff of MK's Luanda branch from 1981-1984, recalls,

whenever they were problems we wanted more democracy and of course because the ANC in exile... was closer to Communist Party, they did not really believe in democracy in the sense of questioning things. The Communists were more like regimental type... so some of the things we wanted were not in line with what they expected and this is why we had some episodes in MK as a result of our background from BC.<sup>833</sup>

As the 1980s unfolded top MK and SACP commanders began to institute harsher and more punitive rules to govern not only the discipline of its cadres but their political orientations as well. The reasons for this uptick have been explained in a number of ways. To begin with MK was being infiltrated by spies and a few of the disturbances in the camps can be traced to their actions. The food poisoning incident in Novo Catengue in September 1977, two mini-mutinies in 1979 and 1981, as well as a few other incidents more than likely were influenced in part by agents. Secondly, while the armed sabotage actions of MK were increasing in intensity and frequency, far too many units were being caught and/or killed by the apartheid security authorities. Some of this was due to errors made by

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<sup>833</sup> Omry Makgoale Interview, p. 17. Some would argue the Morogoro conference of 1969 shows the ANC-SA, SACP and MK were open for democracy within the movement. However, it should be noted while other liberation movements had regular or semi-regular conference, the ANC-SA had not had one since. Consequently, those who had been elected onto key positions on the NEC and RC were mostly never challenged for their positions and opportunities for new leadership to emerge were few and far between (exceptions Thabo Mbeki and Chris Hani).

underground units, however, a disturbing amount were caused by SADF and South African Police (SAP) elements attacking and/or arresting/killing cadres as they crossed the borders into South Africa making it palpable information on their infiltration spots was being leaked. Lastly, with pressure mounting on MK to execute its stated goal of taking over the state through armed force, ideological conformity to the SACP/ANC-SA line was seen as necessary.

Within this panicked context Stanley Manong and Tebello Motapanyane were among those arrested and jailed by MK under the suspicion of being enemy agents when the Spy Ring of 1981 was uncovered. In June or July 1981 Manong and Motapanyane were sent to a camp, nicknamed ‘Iran’, run by FAPLA where suspected enemy agents were being held. They and others were interrogated and many were physically beaten by the inquisitors on whether they were agents or not. Manong was not sure why he was under suspicion but surmised that between a blown operation in Botswana, which he was blamed for, and information given to MK that while in South Africa he had been approached by BOSS to spy on BPC, he had become a marked man.<sup>834</sup> Manong recalls that, ‘For the first time in my life, I started doubting the wisdom of having joined the ANC. In my wildest dreams, I never imagined the ANC could be so brutal against its own innocent members’.<sup>835</sup> After being held in this camp for nearly seven months in January 1982 without warning him, Motapanyane, and another cadre named “China” were sent to Quibaxe camp. It was only towards the end of 1982 that he and Motapanyane were cleared of suspicion but the

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<sup>834</sup> P. Trehwela, *Inside Quatro: Uncovering the exile history of the ANC and SWAPO* (Sunnyside, Jacana Media, 2009), pp. 135-139; S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 160-166.

<sup>835</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 165.



former SG of SASM, Motapanyane, refused to participate in MK activities after the interrogation process he went through as a suspected SAP agent.<sup>836</sup>

Cadres like Manong and Motapanyane were just a few of the victims of the heightened sense of security that ripped through MK after the Spy Ring of 1981 was uncovered. These cadres as part of the Soweto Generation were among those who often challenged leadership on a number of questions and were pushing for the holding of a consultative conference. These qualities had made them factionalists as far as many *mgwenyas* were concerned and eventually legal codes in MK began to be made broadly attacking what the leadership perceived as factionalism with the intent to weaken the organisation.<sup>837</sup>

One year after the release of Manong and Motapanyane, an MK Military Code was circulated throughout the camps with the intent to enforce discipline within MK. Large portions of the document focus explicitly on discipline and obedience as necessary qualities for a guerrilla of MK. If one was insubordinate, especially towards commissars and commanders, harsh punishment was justified. Code seven is of particular interest as it pertains to its wording as it stated, ‘Any act or speech that provokes tribal or regional animosities or spreads disunity by means of factionalism and/or racism shall be an offense’.<sup>838</sup> The racism charge is interesting. According to MK’s own accounts about 90% of MK were African while the rest was divided between Indians and Coloureds. With the

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<sup>836</sup> S. Manong, *If We Must Die* (2015), p. 176-188.

<sup>837</sup> ANC Archives LSM/034/0018/03, ‘Resolving Matters of Discipline: Draft’, n.d., (more than likely 1980s) author unclear, pp. 1-6.

<sup>838</sup> See the O’Malley: Heart of Hope website which was accessed by the author on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016, <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/031v02424/041v02730/051v02918/061v02984.htm>; S. Davis, ‘Cosmopolitans in Close Quarters: Everyday Life in the Ranks of Umkhonto We Sizwe (1961-Present)’ (PhD thesis, University of Florida, 2010), p. 156.

exceptions of Joe Slovo, Jack Simons, Ronnie Kasrils and a few Russian commanders, there were very few white cadres in MK in Angola. Hence the question, who were they talking about? Kasrils provides us with a clue when he notes in his own autobiography that he never experienced racism from the cadres because he was white, which surprised him, implying there was a perception that Blacks *could* be racist against whites.<sup>839</sup> While undoubtedly this rule would also have applied to relations among Africans, Indians and Coloureds, we must add whites to that category as well. By doing so, Black Consciousness becomes a target in this code as it was perceived by the leadership to be anti-white as well as a faction producing ideologies that went against those of the ANC-SA/MK.

Understanding this atmosphere is key to grasping why a few months later MK would hit its lowest point with two large mutinies in January and March of 1984. While these mutinies are widely known and written about, they have not been written about in the context of this heightened suspicion and distrust by the ANC-SA/MK towards Black Consciousness. Most accounts have argued it was viciously suppressed due to hyper-paranoia of the leadership, the Stalinist/Stazi training of the Security Department of MK, lack of democracy within the organisation due to the latter, and outright corruption of the organisation.<sup>840</sup> Oliver Tambo's biographer Luli Callinicos argued, 'Mature soldiers had imbibed the lessons of political patience through experience and an understanding of strategy and tactics in their long-term mission. The young intakes were impatient... they were unschooled in politics or revolutionary theory or ANC history and had not necessarily

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<sup>839</sup> Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous*, p. 153.

<sup>840</sup> WHP A 3318f12, R. Douglas, 'The Report of the Douglas Commission, 1993', 7.1.93, pp. 1-64; S. Ellis, MBOKODO: Security in ANC camps, 1961-1990, *African Affairs*, 93, 371 (1994), pp. 279-297; L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Claremont, David Philip Publishers, 2004), pp. 464-472.

internalised organisational discipline'.<sup>841</sup> The ANC-SA itself through the Stuart Report partly acknowledged the latter but attributed most of the problems to inept leadership.<sup>842</sup> However, none of these report or articles, except according to Hugh Macmillan the Shishuta Report, make serious mention of Black Consciousness.<sup>843</sup> Looking at who was arrested and imprisoned in the aftermath of the mutiny reveals this omission and the charge of youths having not cultivated revolutionary discipline to be strongly misguided.

As the January 1984 mutiny reached its conclusion the rebels held a meeting in early February and decided to form and elect a Committee of Ten (CoT) to organise, but not lead, discussions between them and MK's Regional Command.<sup>844</sup> The CoT was comprised of Bongani Motwa, Zabu Maledza (Ephraim Nkondo), Kate Mhlongo (Head of Women's Section in Angola), Jabu Mafolo (Commissar of Amandla), Siphon Mathelula, Grace Motaung, Moss Thema, Simon Botha, Khotso Morena and Sidwell Moroka (Omry Makgoale who was elected in absentia as he was in Luanda).<sup>845</sup> The first meeting was scheduled for February 7th, 1984 at 10h30 with a report back planned at 14h00. None of this took place as FAPLA arrived at Viana camp early in the morning in an attempt to disarm the MK rebels. There was some exchange of fire at the beginning but CoT leaders

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<sup>841</sup> L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Claremont, David Philip Publishers, 2004), p. 457.

<sup>842</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, 'Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People's Republic of Angola – March '84', pp. 1-33.

<sup>843</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years*, p. 152. I have not been able to access this report.

<sup>844</sup> I do not believe them calling themselves the Committee of Ten (CoT) was accidental. In the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising and the banning of BC organisations a group emerged in Soweto, most former BC activists, who called themselves the CoT. This group proved to be a thorn in the side of the apartheid regime trying to impose puppet leaders on the rebelling Soweto population. They also irritated the ANC-SA in exile because they refused to acknowledge them as the sole authentic liberation movement, were open with their BC politics, and encouraged the formation of groups like AZAPO. That said, I have no evidence to clearly demonstrate this connection between the two groups.

<sup>845</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, 'Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People's Republic of Angola – March '84', pp. 21-22.

intervened before tensions escalated further to enable ‘the disarming to take place without serious fighting’.<sup>846</sup>

A number of other small isolated issues occurred but in early February an ANC-SA appointed commission arrived after most of those who participated in this mutiny surrendered, were arrested, and had been sent to Quatro. The Stuart Commission, as it came to be called, was tasked with interviewing the rebels to figure out what caused the mutiny and suggest necessary changes to the National Executive Committee (NEC). Makgoale, who had not even been present when the mutinies started, had also been arrested and taken to Quatro because he was one of the names put down for the CoT.

Why did this mutiny happen? The Stuart Commission offered a number of reasons. The immediate build-up to the rebellion was traced to what they argued was a deterioration in the quality of leadership in MK since Novo Catengue was attacked and destroyed by SADF forces in March 1979. According to them, NC was a well-organised and non-hierarchical camp with good training and well thought-out logistics.<sup>847</sup> Since its destruction a culture of elitism began to emerge with administrators demanding and receiving special privileges as it pertained to access to food, cigarettes, liquor, perceived sexual favours of women, and the procurement of labour from the rank-and-file.<sup>848</sup> Furthermore, there was an increased tendency by leadership to label those who were openly critical as being anti-authority and working for enemy agents. Many of those who spoke out were persecuted by leadership and cases of ‘destructive punishment’ increased as a

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<sup>846</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, ‘Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People’s Republic of Angola – March ’84’, p. 22.

<sup>847</sup> As we know from our previous sections the claim that NC was non-hierarchical is highly questionable.

<sup>848</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, ‘Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People’s Republic of Angola – March ’84’, p. 4.

method utilised by these leaders to respond to ‘disciplinary problems’ which infuriated the comrades in the camps.<sup>849</sup>

One unanimous response of all those in the camps as to what their major grievances were centred on ‘the security department [which] carried out tasks which are not supposed to be theirs – the tasks of disciplining offenders’, succinctly, it had abused its authority. This abuse of power was compounded by cadres not having enough contact with regional let alone national leadership as both had stopped coming to the camps. Consequently, the commission concluded it was not an enemy plot although the presence of many ‘enemy agents, suspects, malcontents and undisciplined elements’ did not help matters.<sup>850</sup> As for the CoT itself, the commission concluded that it too was not an organised conspiracy, yet, ‘some of the leading members of the Committee as well as those closely connected with them have a long history of dissention and anti-movement activities. For years they have exploited every opportunity to ferment regionalism and undermine the organisation’s leadership and policies. Some have illusions of power and leadership’.<sup>851</sup>

Some of those interviewed believed there existed within MK two armies, one imperialist and one progressive with Mzawi Piliso (head of the Department of Intelligence and Security also called NAT) and Andrew Masondo (National Commissar, a position created in 1976 during Soweto Uprising) belonging to the former while cadres like Hani

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<sup>849</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, ‘Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People’s Republic of Angola – March ’84’, p. 6.

<sup>850</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, ‘Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People’s Republic of Angola – March ’84’, p. 24. Again, note the language.

<sup>851</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, ‘Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People’s Republic of Angola – March ’84’, p. 24. The last line in this quote is interesting as Makgoale had earlier been demoted because of his demands that the ANC-SA hold a consultative conference in the late 1970s. While he was able to regain good favour, his connection with the January 1984 MK Mutiny might have rekindled suspicions about his loyalties.

and Slovo fell into the latter.<sup>852</sup> While the Stuart Commission dismissed this opinion as isolated, this chapter suggests this was an accurate assessment of the situation in MK as many in the leadership of ANC-SA/MK, as well as middle and low-ranking mgwenyas, were on the whole oppositional towards BC from as early as Novo Catengue. With this in mind it is not surprising that the CoT was looked at with such anger and resentment as all came from a Black Consciousness background, none perhaps more strongly than Ephraim Nkondo, MK name Zabu Maledza.<sup>853</sup>

Omry Makgoale recalls Nkondo being older than many of the Soweto generation as he came from the age group of Steve Biko and was a student at Turfloop from 1972 to 1975. In 1975 he went into exile where he joined the ANC-SA.<sup>854</sup> Nkondo was eventually based in Swaziland and is remembered by new recruits traveling through this Forward Area as one who guided them once they got there. From scattered sources he had been jailed once before by MK command in 1982 for disciplinary reasons, around the same time as Manong and Motapanyane, but was released that same year.<sup>855</sup> After which he rose to become Chief Propaganda Officer for Angola. After he and many others in the CoT were arrested, they were taken to Quatro. There, according to Omry Makgoale, he died, allegedly of suicide. Makgoale recalls that,

he seemed to have committed suicide but what actually happened was that, I do not know how he got the rope, because I was next to his cell. You see his cell was at the corner next to his cell was my cell. And there were four cells, isolation cells, so... I think at night you know I did hear that sound you know, that [gurgling sound] because he probably when I imagine, the window behind

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<sup>852</sup> WHP A 3318f, J. Stuart, 'Report of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People's Republic of Angola – March '84', p. 25.

<sup>853</sup> Omry Makgoale interview, p. 20.

<sup>854</sup> G. Houston and B. Magubane, 'The ANC's Armed Struggle in the 1970s' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2 [1970-1980]*, pp. 477-478.

<sup>855</sup> I have not been able to ascertain whether this arrest was because of the Spy Ring or something else, however, it more than likely was part and parcel of the wider hysteria against anybody who was questioning certain leaders in exile.

him, small window, these bars that are like burglars bars, so I think that he tied the rope there, tied himself so when he was dying he was kicking around... I heard the sound you know but I did not really know what the sound was for. So in the morning when the guards came to open and check and so on, and then I heard that you know the guards were saying he killed himself.<sup>856</sup>

Omry recalls that Quatro held a mixture of cadres who were clearly there for their Black Consciousness views as well as those who were there because they were agents, insubordinate, or like him, fiercely independent.<sup>857</sup> Makgoale himself maintains his innocence as it pertains to organizing the mutiny, as he was in Luanda at the time, although he did agree with their complaints he rejected their methods. The conditions of the cadres was one which he deeply understood as it seemed, even by admission of the Stuart Report, that this was the only way for them to get the attention of leadership. Whether they were fighting in their minds under the banner of Black Consciousness or not, one of the results of this mutiny and another one in March 1984 was it forced the ANC-SA leadership to make plans to organize a Consultative Conference. In a recent interview with the author Makgoale made it clear that the 1984 MK Mutinies forced this although it had been a demand by BC cadres from as early as the late 1970s. Even the Stuart Commission itself proposed a National Conference be organised as one of the many restructurings that needed to occur within ANC-SA/MK to solve the problems which lead to the mutiny.<sup>858</sup>

In the months leading up to the Kabwe Conference, set to take place in June 1985, a commendable democratic process did take place where leadership tried to obtain the opinions of as different sections of ANC-SA/MK on where the party was to go from here. A close reading of the documents compiled suggests the section entitled “Mass Struggles”

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<sup>856</sup> Omry Makgoale interview, p. 22.

<sup>857</sup> Omry Makgoale interview, p. 22.

<sup>858</sup> Stuart Report, pp. 26-32; Omry Makgoale interview, p. 23; ANC Archives OTP/093/047/08, R. Johnson, ‘Suppressed voice of ANC waits to speak’, *The Independent*, Sunday 2 June, 1991, p.5.

seemed to be an area of interest by the various cadres of the ANC-SA/MK. Candidly, they spoke on the ANC-SA underground being ‘out of touch with the people – in fact it has a purely military image and there is little understanding between the military and political (forms of struggle)’.<sup>859</sup> One of the ways to rectify this was to, ‘Place the BCM on the agenda of political education inside the country’.<sup>860</sup> On “Internal Mobilisation”, similar to many of the critiques levelled to the movement by BCM, it was expressed that leadership was too far away from the arena of struggle and needed to do more to ground itself with internal struggles. Centrally, as it pertained to “Political Life” within the ANC-SA/MK, cadres wrote the organisation needed to become more open to ideological challenges to its doctrines and not avoid these discussions.<sup>861</sup>

### **The Kabwe Conference: The Victory and Defeat of Black Consciousness in MK**

After months of consultations and debates on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1985, with over 250 delegates in attendance, Oliver Tambo stepped to centre stage in Kabwe, Zambia to open the consultative conference. The date chosen was not accidental as it was part and parcel of attempts by the ANC-SA/MK to seize symbolic ownership of the Soweto Uprising, Tambo’s opening remarks on it and Black Consciousness are worth noting. After dispelling any notions of the ANC-SA being in or having been in crisis – blatantly ignoring the 1984 MK Mutinies which had a 90% participation rate – he launched into discussion

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<sup>859</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/03, ‘African National Congress National Consultative Conference June 1985: National Preparatory Committee Documents’, n.d., p. 4.

<sup>860</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/03, ‘African National Congress National Consultative Conference June 1985: National Preparatory Committee Documents’, n.d., p. 4.

<sup>861</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/03, ‘African National Congress National Consultative Conference June 1985: National Preparatory Committee Documents’, n.d., pp. 7-12.



of the contribution of BC made to anti-apartheid activism.<sup>862</sup> Carefully, Tambo acknowledged that during the 1970s ‘Black consciousness became a fact of our political life’.<sup>863</sup> While still inaccurately claiming they were primarily inspired by the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns of 1967 and 1968, he applauded BC as ‘a distinct political and organisational force within our country’.<sup>864</sup> However, times had changed, consequently, the only place for BC was to solidify itself as the nationalist tendency ‘within the national democratic revolution independent of the ANC’.<sup>865</sup> That said, BCM needed to be praised for cultivating ‘the activism of our people into struggle... We should also recognize the significant input that the BCM made towards further uniting the black oppressed masses of our country by emphasizing the commonness of their oppression and their shared destiny’.<sup>866</sup>

Steve Biko was given special praise although Tambo strangely and inaccurately argued that from 1976 onwards Biko believed ‘the ANC is the leader of our revolution’.<sup>867</sup> On the Soweto Uprising, Tambo stated, in opposition to earlier statements by top leaders like SG Alfred Nzo that it ‘resulted in increasing the relative proportion of the youth and students within our ranks. *It brought into our midst comrades many of whom had had very*

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<sup>862</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, ‘Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985’, pp. 3-5.

<sup>863</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, ‘Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985’, p. 9.

<sup>864</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, ‘Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985’, p. 11.

<sup>865</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, ‘Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985’, p. 13.

<sup>866</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, ‘Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985’, p. 13.

<sup>867</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, ‘Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985’, p. 17.

*little contact with the ANC, if any*'.<sup>868</sup> Furthermore, he acknowledged that 'in 1976-77 we had not recovered sufficiently to take full advantage of the situation that crystallised from the first events of June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1976. Organisationally, in political and military terms, we were too weak to take advantage of the situation created by the Uprising. We had very few active ANC-SA units inside the country. We had no military presence to speak of'.<sup>869</sup> He continued by arguing this generation formed the nucleus for the June 16<sup>th</sup> Detachment which was central in the uptick of MK actions inside the country from 1977 – 1979.

Welile Nhlapo, who was a delegate to the conference, interpreted these statements as being designed to encourage hostile ANC-SA members to be more accepting of those coming from BCM as it would enable the entire movement to be better equipped to fight the apartheid regime.<sup>870</sup> Reflecting on this conference later Keith Mokoape, who was also in attendance, recalled that for him and others of Black Consciousness, this signified the incorporation of BC thinking into African Nationalism. In his own words he and others were now 'way above the little confines of the BC of the 60s, of the early 70s, we were internationalist freedom fighters. So we were going to the Kabwe conference with a broad framework of how ultimately we must bring down the regime'.<sup>871</sup>

Going forward, more was to be done to attempt to recruit white South Africans to the side of the ANC-SA and it was now made official that they would have a consultative conference every five years. Additionally those who could sit on the National Executive

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<sup>868</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, 'Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985', p. 18 (emphasis in italics mine).

<sup>869</sup> ANC Archives OTP/055/0521/01, 'Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress in Zambia, 16-23rd June, 1985', p. 19.

<sup>870</sup> Welile Nhlapo interview, p. 20.

<sup>871</sup> Keith Mokoape interview, p. 18. A number of Soweto generation and other youths were at Kabwe.

Committee (NEC), the highest decision-making body in the ANC-SA, was increased to thirty members. Of the new members, one was white (Slovo), two were Indians, and two were Coloureds.<sup>872</sup> While in many ways the adoption of Indians and Coloureds onto the NEC was a contribution of Black Consciousness, as previously only African were allowed, the addition of whites could be read as a reassertion of control by those loyal to non-racialism who operated outside of the BC framework. In November of 1985 Oliver Tambo gave an interview with *The Cape Times* declaring the ANC-SA hoped ‘our white compatriots will learn to understand is that we do not really see them as whites in the first instance. We see them as fellow South Africans in the first instance. They are as good as black’.<sup>873</sup> Arguably, in the context of having just had secret discussions with white businessmen from apartheid South Africa, Tambo in this interview can arguably be seen to be reassuring white South Africa that if the ANC-SA came to power they would be safe.<sup>874</sup>

## Concluding Thoughts

Writing in the immediate aftermath of the Soweto Uprising exiled South African scholar Archie Mafeje derided the desire of some of the youths he interviewed to use the ‘old and experienced organisations... to acquire military skills and diplomatic protection and then be discarded is naïve in the extreme and will, no doubt, back-fire in the end’.<sup>875</sup>

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<sup>872</sup> ANC LSM/097/0010/05, ‘Communique of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, presented by President Oliver Tambo at a Press Conference, Lusaka, Zambia, June 25th, 1985’, pp. 1-5.

<sup>873</sup> ANC Archives OTP/014/0108/16, ‘A Conversation with Oliver Tambo of the ANC’, *The Cape Times*, November 4th, 1985, p. 3.

<sup>874</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years*, p. 203.

<sup>875</sup> A. Mafeje, ‘Soweto and Its Aftermath’, *Review of African Political Economy*, 11 (1978), p. 28.

While at the time this seemed correct, our examination here has shown this derision to be both untenable and deadly accurate. On the one hand not only did these new recruits provide a numbers boost and emotional/energetic renewal to the ANC-SA, but they were central to the remaking of MK. On the other hand, while some were able to rise to key mid-level and later top level positions, the vast majority remained locked in the camps or at worse in the decrepit jails of Quatro. This complexity is missed not only in Mafeje's analysis, but in most of the historical accounts of MK's evolution post-Soweto.

According to SACP activist Mzala, who was one of those who in the pages of the *African Communist* mounted some of the strongest defences of BC, there were three types of Soweto generation cadres in the ANC-SA/MK. The first were 'noticed, chosen and promoted by the leadership because they are totally loyal and never question those above them' if they ever did question, they would be side-lined. According to Mzala, Welile Nhlapo was a good example of this type of cadre, as the 1980s progressed his rise onto the NEC at Kabwe seemed to be all but guaranteed as a number of younger cadres attending the conference were determined to vote him into this position of authority. He was known to be and praised as 'an outstanding youth leader in SASO before 1976' and as our chapter has shown was a willing recruit of the SACP.<sup>876</sup> However, according to Mzala, he had begun to question things in the movement in ways some of the top leadership did not appreciate and so when the elections came he did not garner enough votes to sit on the NEC.

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<sup>876</sup> WHP A2675/1/27, 'Notes on Mzala Nxumalo talk by Gail Gerhart, October 12th, 1990', p. 4.

The second type were cadres who were loyal to the ANC-SA but from the beginning of their membership were openly critical of the leadership. According to Mzala ‘Some became discontent because of stagnation in camps when nothing seemed to be happening. If they expressed this discontent, they were regarded as a threat, and the favoured method of silencing them was to accuse them of being agents... Others were not accused of being spies, but were squelched by being accused of being “anti-leader”, which was considered a very bad label to have pinned on you’. The third type do not rock the boat but secretly are critical of leadership and was often used by the second type of Soweto generation cadre to rally support against leadership.<sup>877</sup>

This second and third category of Soweto generation recruits were it seems the vast majority. It can be argued that one of the reasons many guerrillas of MK were not infiltrated back into South Africa was because they were not trusted by the leadership. Others like McKinley have suggested they were trapped in the camps because the leadership of ANC-SA were not serious about physically fighting with the apartheid government as most were politicians and diplomats.<sup>878</sup> Some like Legassick propose the leadership of the movement was always conciliatory towards apartheid and sublimated the class consciousness of their recruits, who wanted to go home to fight, for a bourgeois liberal vision of negotiated settlement which required most remain in the camps in Angola.<sup>879</sup> Still others, as we saw in earlier sections, argue that due to the level of infiltration of MK by

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<sup>877</sup> WHP A2675/1/27, ‘Notes on Mzala Nxumalo talk by Gail Gerhart, October 12th, 1990’, p. 4.

<sup>878</sup> D. McKinley, *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography* (London, Pluto Press, 1997), pp. 87-98.

<sup>879</sup> M. Legassick, *Armed Struggle and Democracy: The Case of South Africa* (Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 2002).

SAP spies and other “criminal” elements, paranoia set in over who was loyal enough to be infiltrated.

All of these positions have more than a few grains of truth locked within them. At the same time, all are missing an analysis of Black Consciousness within MK that was seen on the whole as a threat to the ANC-SA’s non-racialism. On a more practical level these new recruits, whether Black Consciousness or not, threatened the positions of relative power and authority many *mgwenyas* had grown accustomed to over the decades in exile.<sup>880</sup> Related to this, in an early article written by John Marcum, he correctly argued that trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were part and parcel of the psychology of exile. As the decades wore on this produced an insecurity as to what they actually were doing to bring down apartheid.<sup>881</sup> This was particularly the case with MK because unlike other armed wings they were not engaged in constant direct armed

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<sup>880</sup> Internal factors are very important as to why BC’s influence within ANC-SA/MK fell off drastically as the 1980s progressed. In the wake of the bannings of BCM organisations the ANC-SA refused to allow itself to ever lose control over the internal uprisings against apartheid. Consequently, while AZAPO was able to a limited extent to hold the BC line internally, organisations like UDF, MDM, COSAS, and the broader trade union movement while not created by the ANC-SA were more easily and diligently targeted for infiltration. Stronger and more efficient efforts were made, in no small part due to the ingenuity of the Soweto Generation recruits, to reach out to rising leaders in the internal struggles to bring them to the ANC-SA position early. A good example of this would be Thozamile Botha the founder of PEBCO. PEBCO was assuredly in its earliest years a BC inspired formation in the early 1980s, understanding how influential Botha was the Lesotho underground early on reached out to him and built connections with him so that when he was in trouble with the authorities he turned to the ANC-SA underground for help. He would eventually be elected to sit on the ANC-SA’s NEC in 1991. Still others have argued that the ANC-SA through its connections with the UDF targeted Black Consciousness aligned organisations with violence and in coordination with the state. Consequently, by the time of the Vaal Uprising (1984-1985), which triggered a new wave of recruits to MK, BC had greatly diminished in terms of its influence internally among many youth activists. This is a very complicated story and cannot be explored in the detail needed in this dissertation, however, it is something we must keep in mind when analysing why BC’s influence in MK decreased over the course of the 1980s.

<sup>881</sup> J. Marcum, ‘The Exile Condition and Revolutionary Effectiveness: Southern African Liberation Movements’ in C. Potholm and R. Dale, eds., *Southern Africa in Perspective: Essays in Regional Politics* (New York, Free Press, 1972), pp. 262-275. This is a theme my future research will explore in more detail. What were and are the psychological effects on contemporary African societies caused through the return of exiles during the liberation struggle? Can we construct a history of the liberation movements through the perspective of mental health? Perhaps doing so can help, or at least better grapple with, some of the current problems our societies are silently suffering through.

confrontations with SADF or SAP even in a classic guerrilla sense. Therefore, when these fiery youths came into exile demanding to be infiltrated back into South Africa and openly castigating the organisation for not bringing about the armed revolution they wrote about in their publications, it created a vicious response among some.

That said, it is undoubtable that the BC praxis many of the Soweto generation were exposed to enabled them to question and critique leadership in ways that surpassed even the Hani Memorandum in 1969. These new cadres did not blindly accept the Marxist-Leninism (some argued Stalinism) of the SACP/MK or the non-racialist broadly Christian socialist vision of the ANC-SA and some elements of MK. Furthermore, they were determined to not repeat the mistakes of the older liberation movements by staying so long in exile they were forgotten at home. This kind of cadre if infiltrated ran the risk of spreading a political line that uplifted other movements as the authentic representative of the South African people, not the ANC-SA. This was particularly a threat given the presence and temporary popularity of the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO), the Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE), and the soon to form Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA). To prevent this only cadres whose loyalty and ideological allegiance to the non-racialism of the ANC-SA was unquestioned were given tasks in the Forward Areas or inside the country.

This is a critical viewpoint missing from some of the pertinent critiques of the ANC-SA/SACP/MK in exile. Undoubtedly some new recruits learned useful intellectual and practical tools from SACP, Stasi, and the USSR, but, this should not be conflated with them being unformed clay who were eventually shaped into proper revolutionaries by these influences. By adding BC into this understanding of events some level of understanding

can be given as to why and how alternative futures of the direction of South Africa post-1994 did not manifest. Indeed, BC's vision was temporarily politically defeated. Yet, it remained and thrived as scholars such as Shannen Hill and others have carefully shown in the political culture of life in South Africa from Biko's death and the bannings of BCM organisations till the present day.<sup>882</sup> It was here, within what Amilcar Cabral once called the fruit of history as well as its determinant, in culture, that current generations of activists rediscovered one of the many sources of the Black radical politics they would need to understand and combat an ANC-SA government still deeply imbedded and enthralled in white monopoly capital.<sup>883</sup>

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<sup>882</sup> S. Hill, *Biko's Ghost: The Iconography of Black Consciousness* (Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2015); B. Peterson, 'Youth and Student Culture', in A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto '76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), pp. 16-23; M. Xaba, 'My Journey, Our Journey: Activism at Ongoye University', Heffernan and Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise*, pp. 119-127; L. Naidoo, 'Contemporary student politics in South Africa: The rise of the black-led student movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeeMustFall in 2015', Heffernan and Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise*, pp. 180-190.

<sup>883</sup> A. Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 138-154.



## **Conclusion: BCM's contribution to the independence of South Africa through the perspective of the armed struggle**

### **Towards a Negotiated Settlement, January 1988 – April 1994**

As the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC-SA) and Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) retooled and reshaped themselves in the aftermath of the Kabwe Conference, the battle of Cuito Cuanavale drew ever closer. Here, the Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola (FAPLA) and Cuban troops, supported by some MK and People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) cadres, defeated the combined forces of União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and the South African Defence Force (SADF). This, in combination with the growing anti-apartheid movement inside South Africa and across the world, forced the National Party (NP) to the negotiating table and eventually secured the independence of Namibia. Unfortunately, under the new premier of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, the Russians were at the same time rapidly reducing their military and economic support to their allies. Due to a combination of the draining war in Afghanistan and Gorbachev's *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, the USSR began encouraging its allies to adopt more conciliatory measures with the capitalist west. The Cubans could not afford to maintain their large military commitment in Angola without

USSR support and so all sides, including US Under-Secretary of State Chester Crocker and the NP, were willing to compromise.<sup>884</sup>

With the SADF and UNITA forces defeated, the Cubans and Angolans were more willing to accept an earlier US proposed linked withdrawal where if the Cubans left Angola the South Africans would leave Namibia. When this happened the Americans agreed to stop blocking the implementation of Resolution 435 paving the way for free and fair elections to take place in Namibia. In February 1990 F.W. De Klerk unbanned the ANC-SA and PAC, shortly afterwards Nelson Mandela was released from prison, and on March 21st, 1990 Namibia celebrated its independence. There was hope, among some, that free and fair elections and peace were soon to come in South Africa, this was not to be.

Inside South Africa an intense civil war was brewing between the ANC-SA/MK and elements of Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the latter being secretly being armed and financially supported by apartheid regime. Their conflict threatened to prevent the holding of free and fair elections. In the meantime, the ANC-SA was also attempting to transition from a radical exile movement with a secret underground to an internal legal political party. At their 1991 National Executive Committee (NEC) elections, many of the Soweto generation were effectively locked out of power, as were those who were in the forefront of the movement inside South Africa. Of those with clear BCM roots, Joel Netshitenze, Thozamile Botha, Cyril Ramaphosa, Billy Nair, and Mosiuoa Lekota were elected onto the newly expanded NEC. Ramaphosa, a former SASO Local Chairman now turned union organizer, was elected Secretary-

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<sup>884</sup> P. Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

General. Winnie Mandela, an outspoken internal activist against the apartheid regime, was also elected onto the NEC but not a position.

After their bannings were lifted in 1990, Chris Hani and others MK commanders were allowed to enter South Africa legally. In the years before his assassination he struck up a political friendship with Winnie Mandela. Hani was very popular within MK and most importantly among Black South Africans in the townships and rural areas. He was also in line to succeed an ailing Joe Slovo as the General-Secretary of the SACP. Winnie Mandela was arguably even more popular than Hani inside South Africa. Her outspoken rejection of apartheid, deep links with some in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), and her singular determination to remove the NP and redistribute land among the Blacks by any means necessary endeared her to the masses of South Africa.

A few months after their political friendship became known, Hani, disenchanted with the backroom fights for positions and disturbed by how disconnected the negotiation process had made ANC-SA from the masses, resigned as Chief of Staff of MK. He also resigned his place on the NEC and took up the position of General-Secretary of SACP full-time. This seemed to be a further sign to many on the right that their fears of a Hani-Winnie alliance were justified. Un-coincidentally, on April 10th, 1993 Hani was assassinated in his driveway by Janusz Waluś, an expendable tool of the forces of white supremacy.<sup>885</sup>

The country stood on the brink of civil war and it took a powerful but in hindsight perhaps misguided plea for peace by Nelson Mandela to calm the justifiably angry Black

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<sup>885</sup> G. Houston and J. Ngcucu, eds., *Chris Hani: Voices of Liberation* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2014).

masses. Two weeks later former ANC-SA President Oliver Tambo died peacefully and the country continued to mourn. Later that year Mandela and De Klerk received the Nobel Peace Prize, in April 1994 the ANC-SA won the first ever free and fair elections, and Mandela was named President of South Africa within a power-sharing government with the NP.

### **Concluding thoughts**

The purpose of this dissertation has not been to argue BCM would not have entered into a negotiated settlement with the NP if it had been the dominant movement. Mosibudi Mangena himself recalls feeling afraid of the implications of a civil war after he secretly infiltrated South Africa in the early 1990s to personally assess the state of the country. He and his colleagues were almost attacked numerous times by groups that had formed in various sections of the townships. A bloody civil war, already in its early stages, was on the horizon if another path was not offered. Those disproportionately impacted would be poor Blacks in the townships and rural areas. This was something Mangena and others in the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) and its armed wing wanted to avoid if possible.<sup>886</sup>

Neither does this dissertation wish to suggest that the ANC-SA/MK or the SACP (not to mention the liberation movements of the entire region) were not under constant

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<sup>886</sup> M. Mangena, *Triumphs and Heartaches: A Courageous Journey by South African Patriots* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2015).

pressure from the apartheid war machine.<sup>887</sup> This was the unceasing reality, as chapters five and six point out, many in these respective organisations believed their actions against BCM were critical to defeating apartheid. Moreover, many staunch BCM activists willingly joined the ANC-SA/MK/SACP and some were able to rise rapidly through the ranks.

What this dissertation has attempted to chart is how those in the ANC-SA and PAC who acted against BCM, both internally and externally, were misguided and ultimately hurt the wider fight against white supremacy and capitalism in South Africa. Keeping this in mind, I believe if BCMA, the Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE), and the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRSCO) had been able to unify themselves in exile and strengthen their connections with AZAPO, they could have established a forceful Black Nationalist alternative to the ANC-SA by the mid-1980s. As that did not happen, this dissertation has sought to chart an alternative topography of struggle that BCM organisations operating in exile imagined and sought to build beginning in the late 1960s.

In the introduction, we did a number of things. To begin with, we laid out three broad bodies of literature this dissertation locates itself within. The first, Black Consciousness literature, was presented chronologically instead of thematically to capture the ebbs and flows of its historiography since the 1970s. We suggested that two traditions existed in the research and writing of BCM historiography, an academic tradition and activist tradition. The former was and is influenced mostly by white scholars, although this is changing, yet contains within it hidden gems of Black scholars such as the work of

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<sup>887</sup> For just a few interesting pieces written in the 1980s see H. Campbell, 'War, Reconstruction and Dependence in Mozambique', *Third World Quarterly*, 6, 4 (1984), pp. 839-867; H. Campbell, 'Dismantling the Apartheid War Machine', *Third World Quarterly*, 9, 3 (1987), pp. 468-492.

Sam Nolutshungu. As the literature evolved since the 1970s we saw efforts made to both discredit the movement, or offer critical takes on its effectiveness, that have come to dominate much of how BCM was understood within South Africa's wider liberation struggle. More recently, those in the academic tradition like Leslie Hadfield and Julian Brown have recuperated the more radical details of BCM's contributions to the fight against apartheid rule. Nevertheless, the activist tradition has consistently captured a more radical vision of BCM from Mosibudi Mangena's first autobiography to Nigel Gibson, Andile Mngxitama, and Amanda Alexander's text on the resonance of BCM today.

This was followed by a broad discussion of the state of the literature dealing with the South African liberation struggle and the wider Southern African Liberation Movements. It was noted that recently there has developed a more working peoples take on the historiography of the various liberation movements across southern Africa. In addition to moving away from leadership-centric accounts and towards a working peoples' history, the literature has also sought to emphasise the regional and global aspects of the liberation movements. Keeping this in mind, the literature review also looked at the Global Black Power literature and tried to bring it into conversation with Southern African Liberation Movement history. The literature on Black Power has been mostly silent on the reverberations of the movement within Africa and in particular on the African liberation movements. Like the BCM literature and that of the South African liberation struggle, there has been little to no mention of BCM's attempts to form an armed wing and offer a different vision of a post-apartheid South Africa. Consequently, this dissertation fills gap in each of the three literatures with its focus on BCM's armed struggle.

The second half of the introduction dealt in some length with the work of Michel-Rolph Trouillot who has been deeply influential to this dissertation. His writings and research on the meaning of history, with the Haitian Revolution as his pivot, has been essential to my own understanding of the role of BCM in South Africa's history as well as that of the ANC-SA/MK. Trouillot's work offers those interested in the contemporary problems of the Pan-African world a framework for returning to our past revolutionary traditions while simultaneously offering critical takes of them that are not right-wing or dogmatically Marxist, but infused with radical Black Nationalism.

While his concept of the Haitian Revolution being "unthinkable" and his broader concept of "silences" in history remain his most well-known contributions to our thinking of racism in historical analysis, for my work, his treatment of Sans-Souci has been more useful to my meditations on "post-colonial" Africa through an engagement with the African liberation struggles. Trouillot's notion of the War within the War, as it pertains to his unique treatment of the uprisings of 1802-1803, is one of the most unheralded aspects of his work.<sup>888</sup> In it he both acknowledges the importance of the leadership of figures like Toussaint L'Ouverture and Henri Christophe against slavery and racism, while at the same time critiquing them for their treatment of maroon and Bossales (African-born) elements of the movement (who made up the majority). As it pertains to the maroon population and their rebellions from 1802-1803 against the French and the creole generals, Trouillot frames them as central to the overthrow of slavery, racism, and colonialism on Saint Domingue (Haiti). At times they operated independently of the regular armed forces of

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<sup>888</sup> M. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1995), pp. 31-69.

L'Ouverture, other times they operated as a part of the larger forces. Their contributions remain little known and respected, as were the betrayals they faced at the hands of CLR James's Black Jacobins (L'Ouverture, Christophe, and others) and in the opinion of this author numerous parallels exist between them and BCM in South Africa.

Following this engagement the introduction closed with a brief discussion of the sources used for this dissertation. Most of the primary documents used for each chapter were obtained at the ANC Archives at the University of Fort Hare and the Karis-Gerhart Papers at the University of Witwatersrand. The documents used at these archives ranged from memos, letters, public statements, court documents, interviews, and publications from the ANC-SA, MK, SACP, SASO, the South African Student's Movement (SASM), Black People's Convention (BPC), and a host of other BCM aligned organisations. These were amplified, or supplemented, over a dozen oral interviews I obtained in 2016 and 2017. The oral interviews were done mainly with cadres who were members of the Bokwe Group/APLF, Isandlwana Revolutionary Effort (IRE), the BCMA, the Azanian Liberation Army (AZANLA), and some former members of SASO. A few MK cadres were interviewed, such as Keith Mokoape and Welile Nhlapo, who were former SASO and/or APLF members who joined ANC-SA/MK. Gathering this material was tedious and a number of interviews with AZANLA comrades were not used for this dissertation given time constraints and lack of primary sources to confirm some of their narratives. In future publications these interview will be revisited in order to amplify the rich history of AZANLA in exile in the 1980s.

That said, the first chapter opened with a broad survey of the build-up towards armed struggle against colonialism in Africa in the late 1950s. Beginning with the First



All-African Peoples' Conference (AAPC), we attempted to sketch the discussions and debates that emerged among activists and intellectuals thinking through and planning African decolonisation. Disagreements within the First AAPC would be played out in most African Liberation Movements (ALMs) in its wake and had been seen, and would be seen later, within countless radical/revolutionary movements across the globe. From this we recounted how the African working people under white colonial rule themselves provided the tinder and sparks of armed rebellion in the various colonies. Little in the first half of chapter one can be considered new information. However, it is important to reemphasise the regional nature of what Vladimir Shubin has called the Hot Cold War.

The second half of chapter one discussed the powerful reverberations of the Black Power Movement among and within many of the ALMs in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Following the work of Seth Markle, this section of the chapter was grounded in the perspective of the Africans to show the resonance of Black Power among a number of armed decolonisation movements. This is an area of research little explored by scholars of Black Power's global reverberation and the ALMs. It also demonstrated how the founding activists of SASO were not unique in their embrace of Black Power. Many, if not all the liberation movements at some point in time positively engaged with Black Power.

Moreover, as some liberation movement figures and African heads of state believed (and still believe) Black Power had/has little relevancy to revolutionary African struggles, this chapter argues the contrary. Much of this belief stems from Black Power being interpreted, and often dismissed, as a movement primarily engaging in a politics of Black self-affirmation, identity politics, cultural nationalism (bordering on chauvinism), or economic independence. For states and peoples where the majority are Black, this was and

still is considered to some as something of minor importance. My research has shown this to not be true. Stokely Carmichael, James Forman, and Kwame Nkrumah were clear that for African decolonisation Black Power was anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and for African unity worldwide.

Tied to this was the importance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination to the ALMs, another underexplored topic of what some scholars have called the Black International in the Long 1960s.<sup>889</sup> In some ways, the concluding pages suggest King's assassination validated Malcolm X's 1964 warning to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and fledging ALMs to be wary of becoming embedded in American capitalist relations. In the early 1960s many ALMs and newly independent states wanted to be neutral or outright friendly with the United States. They hoped to cultivate positive relations with the United States to use as a counter-weight to the European colonial powers. While they may have spoken in the language of decolonisation the Americans, Malcolm X warned, acted only in the spirit of racist exploitation and oppression. By murdering Dr. King, this man of peace known and respected throughout the world, Black Power's message, eloquently, if not arrogantly, delivered by Carmichael was heard with different ears.<sup>890</sup>

Finally, the connection with Carmichael and Chris Hani's critique of the liberation movements and ANC-SA/MK respectively demonstrates the similarity of the two radical traditions from across the Atlantic. Hani and Carmichael, to our knowledge, had no contact

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<sup>889</sup> F. Wilkins, M. West, W. Martin, eds., *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

<sup>890</sup> S. Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell Run: Tanzania, Black Power, and the Uncertain Future of Pan-Africanism, 1964–1974* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2017).

or knowledge of each other during this time. Yet, their critiques were surprisingly similar and while the literature now, and internally inside the ANC-SA/MK after Morogoro, champion Hani as a reformer of the movement, the same acknowledgement has not been given to Carmichael. This despite Tanzanian newspapers and a number of letters to the editors by people living in Tanzania, as well as the PAC, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) embracing his critique at the time.

Furthermore, it is telling how similar the ANC-SA responded to both Hani and Carmichael, the former was imprisoned, had his membership stripped, and according to some was almost shot. In the case of Carmichael, he was slammed in the media with seemingly no sensitivity to the ramifications a public rebuke of him would cause in the imperialist media. How Hani was physically treated and how Carmichael was publicly denounced would preface how some in the ANC-SA/MK/SACP would react to the challenge of BCM and other insurgent voices in exile and in the camps.

On this note, the next three chapters took us through the early years of BCM and followed revolutionaries within the movement who went into exile in 1973 to continue the fight against the apartheid regime through force of arms. Chapter two focused on the links between BCM and Black Power, the early presence of the desire to embrace armed struggle, and the central role Black women played in building the movement. Much in this chapter is already well-known to most scholars of BCM and the ANC-SA/PAC. Where we tried to insert something new is in the realm of armed struggle and the understanding by many BCM activists that apartheid could only be overthrown if violence was used. This guided the actions of many of BCM's first converts such as Bokwe Mafuna and Keith

Mokoape who would later attempt to build such capabilities in exile when they felt their role in non-violent direct action had reached its limit. Importantly, their desire to pick up arms against apartheid oppression came from the reality of the failure of the ANC-SA/MK and PAC/Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) to mount their own stated mission of overthrowing the apartheid state through force of arms by the early 1970s.

The next two chapters chronicled the struggles and strivings of BCM activists to form an armed wing in exile, particularly in Botswana. This task was far harder than initially imagined and while they were eventually able to coalesce around the Azanian Peoples Liberation Front (APLF), IRE, SAYRICO, and BCMA/AZANLA, wider events in the region and internal contradictions overtook them thus minimizing their potential to form a powerful alternative to the ANC-SA/MK. Chapter three focused on the Bokwe Group/APLF as it grew from a handful of dedicated activists to an organisation with roughly, according to those involved, one-hundred cadres underground in Botswana. By 1975 they were able to acquire training in Libya and Syria as well as form tangible connections with youth organisations and independent cells inside South Africa. They refused to be absorbed into the ANC-SA/MK because they wanted to form a broad united front along the lines of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). While the ANC-SA/MK refused this offer, the PAC/APLA accepted which was how they were able to obtain training in Libya and Syria. Yet, the PAC/APLA was by this point, the mid-1970s, corrupt to its core. They betrayed the APLF by seeking to re-route them to their own camps in Tanzania which caused a split between the two organisations. The split was so damaging that eventually some APLF members like Welile Nhlapo and Tebogo Mafole left to join the ANC-SA/MK where they would prove central in the rebuilding of the MK after 1976.

The APLF was important for a few reasons despite disbanding in late 1976. To begin with, it signalled the desire of militants inside South Africa who were impatient with consciousness-raising work, independent Black institution-building (e.g. the Black Community Programmes), and non-violent mobilisations against apartheid oppression to build an armed wing. This is important to understand because it reveals BCM to be far more than a movement of elite intellectuals disconnected from the masses and unwilling to offer organised violent resistance against apartheid. Furthermore, the BCM activists' desire to build a guerrilla army in Botswana, close to the borders of South Africa, in ways not done by MK and APLA, opened a new war front the apartheid regime had to consider as it combated the liberation movement guerrillas. Additionally, the international links they formed reemphasises the importance of global support of South African movements in their fight against white supremacy and capitalism in South Africa.

Secondly, it shows that far from being a period of turmoil and uncertainty among South Africa's liberation organisations, the early 1970s was a time of vibrant political activity and creativity among some, chiefly, BCM. Often the history of the ANC-SA/MK and to a lesser extent the PAC/APLA dominates how we view various time-periods in South Africa's struggle. This engagement helps us move away from those narratives. Lastly, on a more sombre note, it revealed how both internal disagreements and rivalries between South African liberation movements hurt the overall fight against apartheid. By failing to find meaningfully ways to cooperate or unite against the white colonial regime oppressing their people at home, resistance against the NP regime was weakened.

Chapter four discussed attempts by BCM activists in exile to continue mobilising and organising an armed wing after the fall of the APLF. The organisations which followed

such as the IRE, SAYRCO, and BCMA/AZANLA continued to reject the idea of uniting with the ANC-SA/MK. They, like BCM at home, had their own independent vision of what an overthrow of apartheid would look like and, mostly importantly, had their own independent political praxis on how to organise themselves to fight apartheid. The IRE, led by former APLF cadres like Charles Mthombeni and Musa Mdlalose, and new recruits like Vusi Mchunu, tried to continue the work of forming an armed wing in exile. Tapping into earlier networks cultivated made with Palestinian organisations like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and forging new connections with a number of underground European leftist groups, this new BCM formation also was able to acquire military training.

While they were organising, Khotso Seatlholo and others separately formed SAYRCO out of a frustration with the lack of protection given to the South African students being shot by the apartheid police and army during the Soweto Uprising. Less is known of them than others, but what we do know is they obtained training in Nigeria and were not in conflict with other BCM organisations like the IRE. At the subsequent BCM conference in 1980 in London, they with the IRE and a number of other BCM groups agreed to form an umbrella organisation to unite themselves in exile. From what we know SAYRCO and the IRE seemed to have no issues with Barney Pityana leaving the organisation during this process due to disagreements in vision. Many at the conference felt Pityana wanted them to join the ANC-SA and Pityana felt these newer BCM activists were too influenced by Trotskyist elements. In the wake of Pityana's departure to join the ANC-SA, which shocked his good friend Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu in Botswana, the

BCMA was formed and a more open embrace of a Marxism-Leninism as a praxis offering some use to Black radicalism was signalled.

At the same time, as the discussion of the IRE, SAYRCO, and BCMA shows, internal disagreements crippled this attempt at unity, something Mthombeni would lament thirty years later. Especially as it pertained to the IRE and BCMA/AZANLA, when Mangena and Skaap Motsau came into exile in 1981 and 1983 respectively, an opportunity for sharing of skills and experience was lost. Hard feelings and disagreements over organising pushed the IRE to disband while the capture of Seatlholo inside South Africa destroyed SAYRCO. As for the BCMA/AZANLA, they grew in ways previous BCM formations in exile with armed wings had not. They had a more centralised command structure while striving against repressive hierarchies. By the late 1980s were successfully infiltrating armed groups into South Africa, particularly Bophuthatswana. As the chapter closed, we argued that with the defeat of the apartheid forces in Cuito Cuanavale, the fall of the USSR, and other global changes, BCMA was overtaken by events.

These chapters take us beyond the borders of South Africa and tracks attempts by radical BCM activists to build guerrilla armies that would do what MK and Poqo/Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) up to that point had not, work with the internal political struggles of the masses to overthrow the apartheid regime through the force of arms. The ANC-SA/MK and PAC/APLA were not the primary reasons why these formations failed in some of their attempts, yet, they did contribute to the hardship these cadres faced in their attempts to free their people from apartheid. A spirit of competition instead of cooperation dominated ANC-SA and PAC thinking in exile which weakened the wider fight against apartheid.

For some, the argument running through chapters two, three, and four that BCM was a liberation movement on par with the ANC-SA and PAC during the early part of the 1970s comes off as an overstatement. If we were merely discussing the movement in exile alone and in a vacuum, this opinion would be valid. However, as these chapters show, the internal strength of BCM was obvious, so much so that staunch allies of the ANC-SA like Sweden wanted to cut funding from the former to fund BCM. This was not, according to my research, solely because BCM was in their eyes less violent. It was, as Sellstrom has pointed out, based primarily on the situation in the country where the ANC-SA and PAC were simply not relevant to the growing anti-apartheid movement.

Consequently, for this short period of time, BCM was the movement most radical activists passed through and embraced. This internal strength, combined with growing attempts to form an armed wing, made it a liberation movement on par with the ANC-SA and PAC at this point in time. That said, the question does come as to how we define what constitutes a liberation movement. If we are counting representatives in foreign countries or state allies supplying arms and ammunition and training, then perhaps BCM does not qualify. On the other hand, if we are talking about mass support inside South Africa, serious attempts to form an armed wing, cultivating global allies, then BCM qualifies as one.

Chapters five and six on BCM and the ANC-SA/MK disturb traditional narratives by demonstrating how BCM was vital to the success of the organisation post-1976 while simultaneously being suppressed. Most critiques of the ANC-SA, and for that matter many of the liberation movements now in government, have incorrectly argued that these new political parties are little different from those they replaced. Some like the once progressive



John Saul have gone as far to argue things have gotten worse with these governments in power as they never took class analysis seriously.<sup>891</sup> Martin Legassick, considered the leader of the Marxist Workers Tendency in the ANC-SA, argues something similar, although he believes the organisation did not do enough to meld itself to the union movement. He, thankfully, does not believe the struggle was a wasted effort.<sup>892</sup> Stephen Ellis argues the repression the ANC-SA government currently exercises in South Africa is a result of them uncritically adopting the Stalinism and Stasi politics of the USSR and GDR respectively. He is closer to Saul in his conclusions as he also centred the corruption of ANC-SA/MK leadership in exile to foreshadow to the corruption of the movement when it came to political power.<sup>893</sup> Vladimir Shubin argues the USSR support was decisive in the ANC-SA's success but did not control the movement as others claim. The current problems experienced by the regime are no different than any radical movement that wins state power.<sup>894</sup>

None of these perspectives look to how Black radical politics were absorbed and suppressed within the ANC-SA/SACP/MK from the 1970s onward, hence, some of their narratives of this 1976 – 1985 time-period are incomplete. Chapters five and six argues the ANC-SA rose to become the dominant movement in part through the incorporation of

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<sup>891</sup> J. Saul, *A Flawed Freedom: Rethinking Southern African Liberation* (UK, Pluto Press, 2014).

<sup>892</sup> M. Legassick, *Armed Struggle and Democracy: The Case of South Africa* (Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 2002).

<sup>893</sup> S. Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (London, Hurst & Company, 2012). Ellis, bluntly, often sees no difference between the ANC-SA and apartheid under the National Party. While this is far more damaging to our understanding of history and contemporary struggles than those who uncritically defend the ANC-SA, it has rarely been openly critiqued as the latter perspective. Much of my dissertation was inspired as a critique of Ellis and Saul in their newer work on South Africa and southern Africa's liberation movements. By introducing BCM into the discourse, a movement founded in direct opposition to apartheid in all its forms (political, economic, cultural, psychological, spiritual etc.).

<sup>894</sup> V. Shubin, *The Hot "Cold War": The USSR in Southern Africa* (South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

BCM elements into its ranks, incorporating as shown Keith Mokoape, his group, and the APLF. The ANC-SA suppressed as well, those who joined it and who had a different vision of how the struggle needed to be built and executed. These cadres represented a political vision of freedom which centred structural changes in ANC-SA/MK to promote a more grassroots democracy and the redistribution of land to the Black masses. These cadres were strongly influenced by BC praxis even if they did not directly participate in any of its key organisations.

These two chapters do not argue that those who joined the ANC-SA/MK/SACP represented a dilution of BC radicalism. Keith Mokoape and Welile Nhlapo, to name a few, actually radicalised and enriched the ANC-SA/MK in ways that have not been discussed in any serious detail before. Some like Omry Makgoale argue the ANC-SA/MK/SACP enriched their political praxis by emphasising the importance of a class critique of oppression. They, like others, were central to the resurgence MK experienced in the post-Soweto moment. While some like Strike Thokoane of BCMA/AZANLA and Mthombeni of APLF/IRE saw their departures in a more negative light, it is clear from the evidence that cadres such as Mokoape and Nhlapo felt different.

At the same time, there was an active suppression of BC ideas within MK. This is clear and cannot be excused away by arguments pertaining to the reality of agents, saboteurs, and infiltrators. These were of course real and their actions hurt the capabilities of MK in ways chapter six clearly discusses as it pertains to large number of units being killed just as they crossed the borders into South Africa. Equally true were those who joined MK not fully understanding the level of commitment needed to be a full-time guerrilla. Corrupt and misguided leadership was also a real and damaging reality faced by

many in the camps. Nevertheless, none of this means some Black Consciousness adherents weren't targeted by some in the ANC-SA/MK/SACP as something to be stamped out and distrusted. As we saw with how Carmichael and Hani were treated in chapter one when they offered their criticisms, the ANC-SA/MK was fully capable of ruthless suppression against those who criticised them in unexpected ways.

These chapters also amplify the arguments of scholars like Raymond Suttner that there was much complexity in the intellectual fabric of the ANC-SA. Chapter five clearly shows how Acting-President Oliver Tambo and many ANC-SA cadres embraced BC and Black Power thinking in its early years. It also tracks a number of BCM activists like Keith Mokoape who joined the ANC-SA/MK (after much hardship), found comfortable political homes, and contributed decisively to the growth and radicalisation of the ANC-SA/MK. At the same time, there as was a constant shifting of political opinions and positions by the ANC-SA that often contradicted their earlier positions.

Tambo, for example, was very flexible in his embrace of Black radicalism. In the early 1970s he like many in the ANC-SA seemed to openly embrace the importance of Black Power and BC to South Africa's struggle against apartheid. By the mid-1970s there was a shift against BCM, more than likely due to the alliance of the APLF and PAC for the former to obtain military training. As the Soweto Uprising erupted and it became clear the ANC-SA and PAC had no serious role in its organisation or political praxis, unlike Black Consciousness as it pertains to the praxis, there is again even more hostility. This increased when Tsietsi Mashinini and Seatlholo went into exile and denounced the ANC-SA as being an ineffective organisation. By the mid-1980s, Tambo in an interview with the *Cape Times* claims whites claimed also be considered politically Black when in the early 1970s he

rejected this position. Throughout this Alfred Nzo, the Secretary-General of the ANC-SA, seemed the most politically honest in his rejection of BCM having any serious role in the fight against apartheid. He often openly denounced them as puppets of the apartheid regime and a hindrance to the larger struggle despite briefly backtracking after Steve Biko's murder in prison. Others feared BCM cadres who joined the ANC-SA/MK would take their positions of authority. Taken together, there was much fluidity, both productive and destructive, as it pertained to the ANC-SA's relationship with BCM.

These contradictions, especially as it pertains to Black Nationalist praxis within African Liberation Movements, which my dissertation has uncovered, is something future research must go. One can accept organisations like the ANC-SA, SWAPO, Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), MPLA and others as the dominant movements against oppressive regimes who offered a progressive/radical vision of the future while also being critical of how they treated other radical groups with different visions. At one point, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) was seen as the radical organisation in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe due to their avowed embrace of Marxism-Leninism over ZANU which was more Maoist (and non-incidentally Black Power). This is the contradiction inadequately illuminated in histories of the liberation struggles where essentially Black Nationalist organisations are disregarded as being revolutionary.

This is not to say some of the distrust was unfounded. In Angola, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) initially adopted the language of Black Power to frame themselves as the more organic representatives of the Black population against the mestizos and communists who ran the MPLA. For FRELIMO in 1969, Uria Simango similarly adopted some of the language of Black Nationalism in how

he framed his own expulsion from the organisation after he lost out in a power struggle with Samora Machel and Marcelino dos Santos. In South Africa the PAC was, for a time for the larger Pan-African world, considered to be the most revolutionary South African organisation. However, as the Potlako Leballo rose to power combined with their inability to receive secure financial backing from the socialist bloc with the exception of China, the PAC became a destructive force in the fight against apartheid. Similar narratives can be sketched with SWAPO and the South West African National Union (SWANU). Often, especially in his later years, Black Nationalists like Stokely Carmichael, who would later become Kwame Ture, wrongly and damagingly supported some of these formations and repressive states (Sekou Toure of Guinea-Conakry and Idi Amin of Uganda for example) over more radical formations who did not centre Black Nationalism.

Yet, this dissertation argues these represent, especially in the case of UNITA, Leballo's PAC, and Simango, counter-revolutionary trends within Black Nationalism. Through an exploration of Black Power and BCM, we can see the potential revolutionary Black Nationalism held for the liberation of southern Africa from colonial rule. Seen in this perspective, the ANC-SA/MK can be both anti-apartheid, socialist, and radical as well as repressive and oppressive to other Black radical trends. Apartheid was, and still is, the enemy in the shadows and in the open, however, for BCM in exile it wasn't the force directly hindering and/or repressing them, the ANC-SA and PAC were. It is a sad fact, and painful one indeed, but a true one nevertheless.

At the same time, the deeper argument calls for us to understand that given the immense power, global support, and brutality of the apartheid regime, the ANC-SA/MK and some elements of the PAC began to adopt certain tendencies of the oppressive

structures they faced. As the conflict raged on for decades with no ending in sight, combined with the strictly hierarchical structures these organisations adopted where most of those in the top leadership in the 1960s were still in power in the 1980s, they became vulnerable to this kind of transformation. It seems in the case of the ANC-SA/MK and elements of the SACP (which notably had a more fluid changing of leadership structures than the ANC-SA) many became so stuck in fighting apartheid they considered those who didn't adopt their vision of how the struggle needed to be executed, and indeed seemed to briefly threaten their hegemony over the opposition to apartheid, became constructed as an enemy. This hurt not only BCM organisations and BC inspired activists in exile, but the wider struggle against apartheid rule. It also confused activists at home who unlike those in exile, at least in the 1970s, had a rich and productive relationship with one another across organisations and some ideological spectrums. Biko himself sacrificed his life trying to bring unity to the warring organisations in exile and his loss, as well as countless others, might have been avoided had organisations like the ANC-SA/MK done a better job managing their relationships with BCM organisations.

### **Postscript: Musings on Contemporary Implications**

In closing, this has implications for ANC-SA politics today, for the first time in its history in 2017 the two front runners for the Presidency of the organisation came from BCM backgrounds.<sup>895</sup> Both were intimately involved in SASO before joining the ANC-SA and it should not be surprising from an age standpoint that these will be the new faces of ANC-SA leadership going forward. More so than age, the ANC-SA has had to respond

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<sup>895</sup> 'Ramaphosa, Dlamini Zuma in Tight Race to Lead ANC', Eye Witness News (December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017), available at <http://ewn.co.za/2017/12/16/ramaphosa-dlamini-zuma-in-tight-race-to-lead-south-africa-s-ruling-anc>.

to the critiques of the masses of its country who are still living in an apartheid constructed political economy and culture. Organisations like the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Black First, Land First (BLF) have been quick to capture the simmering anger of the Black masses at this continued state of affairs. Now, we see the ANC-SA slowly, but very clearly, embracing this new political culture as Cyril Ramaphosa, the new billionaire President, has declared land redistribution efforts will be accelerated.<sup>896</sup> They will need to do all they can because with the 2018 elections for President approaching, there are real fears of the ANC-SA losing its majority which would force it for the first time in its history to have to enter into a coalition government with other political parties.

In addition to the ANC-SA in power, this line of thinking holds an important key to understanding the powerful social movements rising across South Africa.<sup>897</sup> Movements such as Abahlali baseMjondolo, #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, and countless others have signalled the intent of the Black masses to re-engage with some of the Black Radical Traditions in South Africa.<sup>898</sup> For them, heroes like Robert Sobukwe, Steve Biko, Chris Hani, and Winnie Mandela in particular have become symbols of the type of leadership millions of Black South Africans seek to return to. In the Cabralian sense, they are returning to the source.<sup>899</sup> Moreover, the non-hierarchical organizing strategies, the rejection of charismatic leadership (although this is uneven), and incorporation (also

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<sup>896</sup> 'Ramaphosa vows faster land redistribution', ENCA (March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018), available at <https://www.enca.com/south-africa/ramaphosa-vows-faster-land-redistribution>.

<sup>897</sup> What follows has been heavily inspired by the following piece, L. Naidoo, 'Contemporary student politics in South Africa: The rise of the black-led student movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeeMustFall in 2015', in A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto '76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), pp. 180-190.

<sup>898</sup> N. Gibson, 'Upright and free: Fanon in South Africa, from Biko to the shackdwellers' movement (Abahlali baseMjondolo)', *Social Identities*, 14, 6 (2008), pp. 683-715.

<sup>899</sup> A. Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979).

uneven) of the race, class, gender, and sexual orientation questions into conceptions of revolutionary change mark these movements as unique to South Africa. In this, they share a common link with their comrades across the Atlantic in the more radical wings of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. One of the reasons this dissertation has striven to be as detailed as possible in its renditions of BCM and armed struggle is because I organize with cadres on both sides of the Atlantic who want to know as much as possible about this period in history.

This dissertation has also been detailed because, although it has been heart-warming to see this return to BCM, it has been heart-breaking to see the dogged presence of sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and toxic masculinity plaguing the current movements.<sup>900</sup> Many have uncritically taken what Biko or Sobukwe said and used it to animate their contemporary praxis. While they are correct to return to these silenced voices, they damage their current movements by doing so uncritically. Hence, the attempt whenever possible to centre the praxis of Black women and offer a committed critique of the movement. RMF and FMF have emerged within the global #BlackLivesMatter moment which is a political movement founded by three Black Queer women: Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi.<sup>901</sup> They, and many more, have opened a space for others across the globe, like the recently assassinated Brazilian Black lesbian radical

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<sup>900</sup> In this, I have not been immune as my acknowledgements pointed out. I have had to grow in ways as a hetero-cis male that I believe in previous eras I would not have had to, especially as it pertains to my awareness around my own patriarchy and toxic masculinity. Moreover, the discussions around mental health have also enriched my own political rubic of revolution and for that these contemporary struggles have gone further than the ANC-SA, BCM, SWAPO, Black Panther Party, and countless others.

<sup>901</sup> A. Garza, 'A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement', *Feminist Wire* (October 7, 2014), available at <http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/>; L. Naidoo, 'Contemporary Student Politics in South Africa: The rise of the black-led student movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall in 2015', in A. Heffernan and N. Nieftagodien, eds., *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto '76* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), pp. 180-190.



activist Marielle Franco, to be heard more clearly as they mobilise the masses against the multi-headed hydra that is capitalism. They come from a tradition of activists like Barbara Smith of the Combahee River Collective and Ella Baker, the founding mind of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Similar activists and organisations exist in the political constellation of South Africa's hidden past and emergent struggles. My generation needs to return to the source of this Black Radical Tradition, so coined by Cedric Robinson, in order to enrich our current strivings in southern Africa against Babylon in blackface, who are little more than overseers on the global plantation the capitalist world-economy has enslaved human life under.<sup>902</sup> If we are to overthrow its keepers and remake society anew all of us, myself included, must do more to incorporate into our political praxis the revolutionary work of women of colour and LGBTQIA activists. A Luta Continua!

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<sup>902</sup> C. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000, orig. 1983).

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