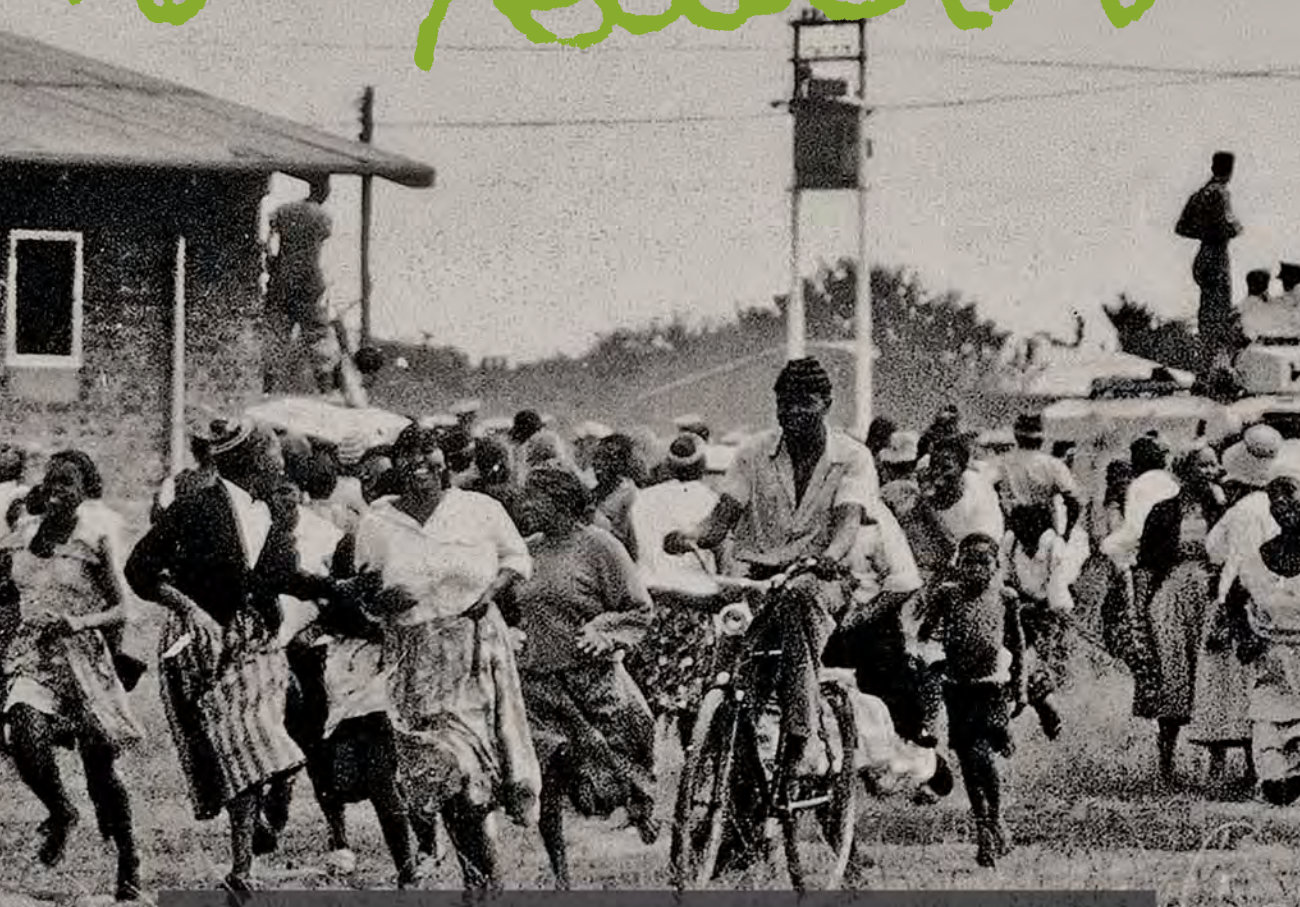


PART TWO 1960 – 1975



16. Tambo



MISSION IN EXILE

"People were running in all directions ... some couldn't believe that people had been shot, they thought they had heard firecrackers. Only when they saw the blood and dead people, did they see that the police meant business." Petrus Tom, resident of Sharpeville

On 21 March 1960, the breakaway Pan Africanist Congress organised peaceful anti-pass protests around the country. In Sharpeville, Vereeniging, 20 000 PAC protesters marched to the local police station demanding to be arrested for not carrying their passes.

The police became jittery and fired into the crowd killing at least 69 men, women and children, and wounding nearly two hundred.

The carnage of that afternoon would forever change the path of the liberation struggle – and would be a major turning point in the life of Oliver Tambo.

“...I was telephoned by Frene Ginwala ... with the news that the Indian government had issued Oliver, Yusuf and me with travel documents and that a plane would be arriving at 6:00 am the next day to collect us”

Ronald Segal, journalist and activist

Escape into Exile



The Sharpeville massacre shocked the world. Within days the government declared a state of emergency and put its armed forces on alert. Security police hunted down and detained hundreds of people, including many ANC and PAC leaders.

The ANC instructed Tambo, who was in Cape Town at the time, to leave the country immediately. But how? Ronald Segal, a young writer and ANC supporter, stepped in with a plan. He borrowed his parents' car and their chauffeur's cap, coat and gloves. Segal played the wealthy boss while Tambo posed as his driver, and they set off for Johannesburg

Risking arrest, Tambo went to say goodbye to a surprised Adelaide and the children at home in Wattville, Benoni. Tambo scooped Dali up into his arms and put Thembi on his lap, hugging them both. Adelaide went into the bedroom and packed a small blue suitcase for Oliver. It would be six months before Tambo would be reunited with his family in London.

The two men then travelled to Bechuanaland (now Botswana), which was a British protectorate at the time. South Africans did not need a passport to enter that country.

Seretse Khama (left), Tambo's old university colleague and soon to be independent Botswana's first president, gave him a safe place to stay.

After a few weeks, Tambo, Segal and Yusuf Dadoo of the South African Communist Party (SACP), who had since joined them, managed to leave Bechuanaland. Tambo had begun his journey of founding and building the Mission in Exile – a complex and exhausting task that would last for 30 years.

© K. Tambo



With the help of Ginwala, a South African journalist based in Tanzania (pictured here in the background), Tambo flew to Dar es Salaam and then on to Tunisia, where he addressed a conference in Tunis.

“Africa is one continent, one people, and one nation ... the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of the African continent.” Kwame Nkrumah, first president of the Republic of Ghana

The Rebirth of Africa



BAHA



BAHA



Greatstock/Corbis

Tambo's mission began with Africa's decade of independence. The ideal of Pan Africanism – a dream of a united union of independent African states was popular at this historic time. At the centre of this great drama was Kwame Nkrumah, liberator and president of Ghana, who hosted the All-African People's Conference in Accra in 1958.

After Tunis, Tambo visited and was warmly received by Nkrumah. But Nkrumah, unhappy about the split between the ANC and PAC, argued for unity between the organisations.

However, the dream of unity in Africa suffered a setback when the newly independent states split into two blocs. The more radical group led by Nkrumah favoured rapid political unity and promoted African socialism. It included Tanzania, Algeria, Libya and Egypt. Tambo was welcomed in many of these countries in the early 1960s.

The second, more conservative group, led by the Ivory Coast's Felix Houphouët-Boigny, promoted gradual economic unity.

“Tambo had to be careful not to alienate either of these two blocs. He had to manage his relationships with both groups in a way that would most benefit the South African struggle.” Luli Callinicos, historian and biographer of OR Tambo

These two blocs fused together in 1963, when they formed the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

But later, largely as a result of the determination and integrity of Oliver Tambo, some independent African states did support the ANC, often at great financial and security risk to themselves. Tanzania provided Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's armed wing, with land and premises.



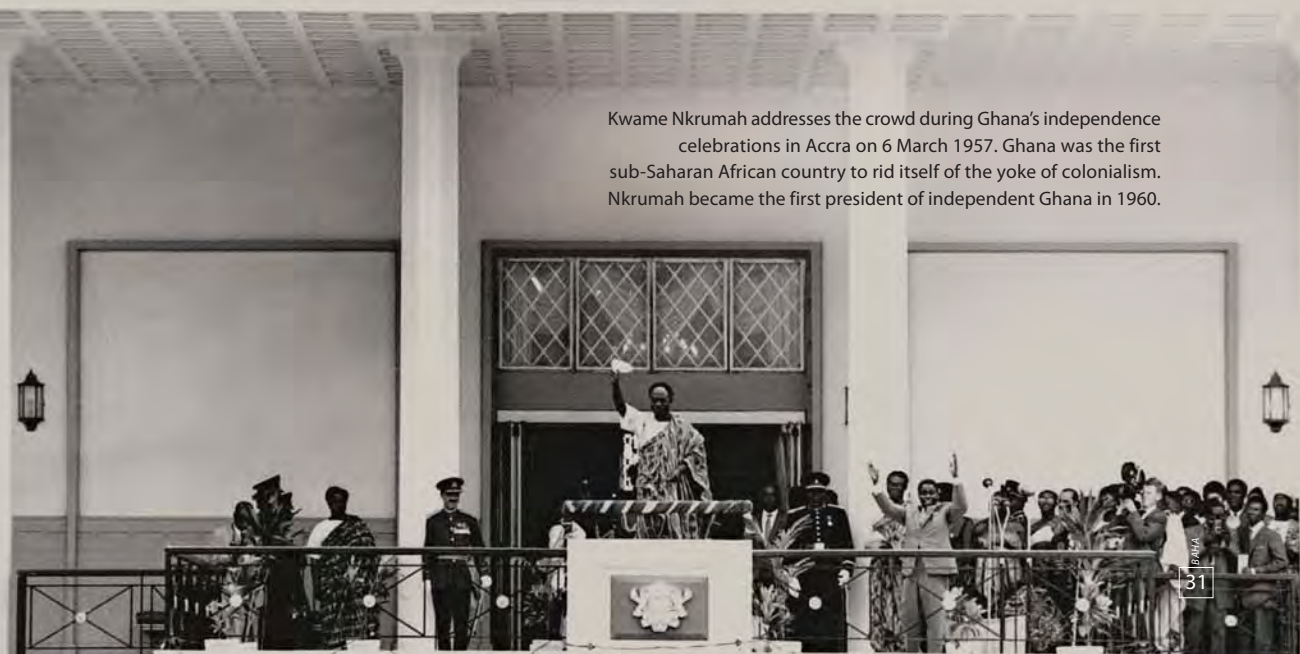
BAHA

In 1965, when Zambia became independent, President Kenneth Kaunda reached out to the ANC, offering them a base in Lusaka. Kaunda respected Tambo profoundly and they developed a warm friendship. He considered Tambo to be a great African leader, who was both humble and a master of diplomacy.

Other countries, particularly Angola and Mozambique, also provided crucial support to the ANC when they became independent, some years later.



Kwame Nkrumah addresses the crowd during Ghana's independence celebrations in Accra on 6 March 1957. Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African country to rid itself of the yoke of colonialism. Nkrumah became the first president of independent Ghana in 1960.



① H. Tambo



In addition to the legendary Kwame Nkrumah, Tambo met and was influenced by other African giants, or founding fathers, such as Julius Nyerere (pictured here with Tambo), Kenneth Kaunda, Amílcar Cabral and Patrice Lumumba.

These leaders were strong Pan Africanists and encouraged the ANC and PAC to work together. Tambo supported the idea in principle, wanting to bring the PAC back into the ANC motherbody.

“Oliver treated members of the PAC and other organisations with respect. He emphasised that the enemy was the racist government, not the PAC.” ES Reddy, Principal Secretary, UN Special Committee against Apartheid

The United Front organised a march in Oxford Street in London in 1961 to protest against the visit of South Africa's Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd. The march, led by (from left) Oliver Tambo, Fanuel Kozonguizi (SWANU), Yusuf Dadoo, Fenner Brockway (Labour MP) and Nana Mahomo, attracted a large number of supporters. Verwoerd was in London to stage a walkout of the Commonwealth, telling world leaders not to interfere in South Africa's internal policies. Despite the bravado, South Africa's exclusion from the Commonwealth was a setback for the apartheid government, and a sign of the isolation to come.

VERWOERD MUST GO!

The United Front

As much as he disliked the limelight, Oliver Tambo was now the international face of the ANC. He had to travel the world, meeting heads of state and other leaders.



Soc. hiba

Soon after moving into exile, Tambo met with two PAC leaders, Nana Mahomo and Peter Molotsi in Dar es Salaam, where they discussed ways of working together. Tambo is pictured here with Nana Mahomo, Yusuf Dadoo and an unidentified woman.

In April 1960 the ANC became part of a United Front together with the PAC, the SA Indian Congress (SAIC) and the South West Africa National Union (SWANU), the forerunner of SWAPO.

"Our friendship was anchored in the strong bonds of comradeship rooted in the historical fact that we were fighting the same enemy." Sam Nujoma, SWAPO



Courtesy of Luli Callinkes

Under Tambo's guiding influence, the United Front made surprising progress in the short time of its existence:

- It lobbied the British Commonwealth to expel South Africa.
- In 1961 Tambo and the PAC's Vusi Make presented the United Nations with a memorandum for sanctions against South Africa.
- It joined the Anti-Apartheid Movement (formed by Father Huddleston in 1959).
- It called on independent African states not to allow South African ships into their harbours, and aircraft to land on their soil.

But at home in South Africa, the PAC did not support the United Front and it was dissolved in 1962.

“The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come ...” Umkhonto we Sizwe, 1961

A Time To Fight



On 16 December 1961, a new organisation inside South Africa, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), announced that it was embarking on armed struggle. It would focus on acts of sabotage, it said, and would try its utmost to avoid the loss of human life.

To mark the launch of MK, electrical substations and government buildings were blown up in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Durban. Umkhonto we Sizwe went on to carry out 200 acts of sabotage between 1961 and 1963.



A few weeks before the launch of MK, ANC President Albert Luthuli received the Nobel Peace Prize. In his acceptance speech, Luthuli hinted at the people's growing frustration with the apartheid government's violent responses to peaceful protests.

Tambo – like Chief Luthuli – was a committed Christian and had hoped that armed struggle could be avoided. Tambo was not part of the decision to form MK, but he accepted it. He now had the difficult task of explaining to the world that there was no choice but to turn to armed struggle.

“There is no longer any possibility to liberate South Africa from apartheid with peaceful means.”
Oliver Tambo, 1964



In November 1962, the ANC held a Consultative Conference in Lobatse, Botswana. It was at this conference that Robert Resha (pictured here with Tambo) prematurely made a statement to the press linking the ANC and MK. This put pressure on Tambo to claim MK as the ANC's military wing.

A few months after the conference, the ANC formally announced to the world that it was a revolutionary movement and that MK was indeed its military wing.

“Our fundamental aim is ... the seizure of power, which is not the prerogative of the white minority.” ANC Statement after the Lobatse Conference

In January 1962, MK's Commander-in-Chief Nelson Mandela, now operating underground, left South Africa to lobby support from independent Africa for the armed struggle. Mandela was particularly anxious to report to Tambo about the important decision to launch MK. They are pictured together here in Addis Ababa at a conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa.

Oliver Tambo

The Tambo Family: Making Sacrifices

South African exiles faced many hardships and deprivations. The Tambo family was no exception. Each member of the Tambo family paid a heavy personal price.



University of Dundee

When Mandela went to London in June 1962, he broke the news to Tambo that the ANC was posting him to its headquarters in Tanzania. Adelaide Tambo had recently given birth to their third child, Tselane, and was holding down a demanding job as a nurse. She decided to stay on in London, often working double shifts to support the family.

Tambo regarded himself as the head of the 'ANC family'. He was anxious to give as much as he could to the young people in exile. Ironically, Tambo who was 'father of the nation' in exile, was seldom there for his own children.

The children Tembi, Dali and Tselane, saw little of their mother and even less of their father. They went to boarding school and felt cut off from the struggle.

"I felt you could only be British if you were white. Yet I did not feel like a South African either ... Culturally I was a little black Englishman." Dali Tambo



Oliver & Adelaide Tambo Foundation

Adelaide remembered that there were always young South African refugees coming to stay. Some, like Thabo Mbeki (pictured here at his graduation ceremony in Sussex in 1965, with Adelaide Tambo and Michael Harmel), were regular visitors and would bring news of their father.



Courtesy of Barbara Harmel

"Their parents were on Robben Island. They ran away to Lusaka, then they were sent abroad ... At one point, there were 16 kids altogether." Adelaide Tambo



Oliver & Adelaide Tambo Foundation

As they grew older, the children worried about the safety of their father, believing he was in constant danger. Tembi Tambo remembers that in their prayers they would ask God to let their father die at home. But not all the memories are painful. There are some happier ones too:

"Dad had a sense of fun! One day we sat him down and promised to bring him 'something very special' to drink. We concocted a mixture of fruit juice, tomato sauce and washing-up liquid. Dad drank it all up, smiling at 'the delicious drink'. The joke was on us!" Tembi Tambo

"When I was a 12 and 13 year old, one of my favourite things to wear was my Dad's jerseys. He was always away travelling, and they sat, ignored, languishing in his wardrobe ... They were too big, which I loved and they hung down to my thighs, which I loved and they were thick wool or cashmere, which I loved and they usually had the scent of Daddy on them, which I loved." Tselane Tambo

“We salute the heroes of Rivonia. Their imprisonment is not the end of the liberation struggle or of resistance to tyranny ... it is the beginning of a new and decisive stage.” Oliver Tambo

The Rivonia Trial



Mayibuye Archives



BAMA



Walt Hinton Collection

During 1963 and 1964 the apartheid government reacted with a brutal campaign of detentions and torture of thousands of activists. They captured many underground operatives, in the first instance, mainly guerrillas from Poqo, the armed wing of the PAC. The number of prisoners on Robben Island swelled.

In 1963, a group in MK, headed by Govan Mbeki (centre) and Joe Slovo, devised a plan, ‘Operation Mayibuye’. It proposed an ambitious training programme of 7 000 guerrillas. People would be mobilised into an underground system of small cells.

Operation Mayibuye aimed to shift MK from sabotage to military attacks to harass South Africa’s large, well-equipped army. Joe Slovo, one of its authors, left the country to present the project to Tambo. But before the plan could be discussed, disaster struck.

In June 1963, the Special Branch raided MK’s secret headquarters on Liliesleaf farm in Rivonia, north of Johannesburg, and arrested almost the entire elected leadership – including Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, Elias Motsoaledi, Dennis Goldberg and Andrew Mlangeni. Together with Mandela, who had already been arrested the previous year, they were charged with sabotage and conspiracy and potentially faced the death penalty.

After Mandela and his comrades were sentenced to life imprisonment, Oliver Tambo paid tribute to them.



The spear was passed to Oliver Tambo. In addition to leading the Mission in Exile, he became the new commander of MK. He carried the weight and the future of the struggle on his shoulders.

Here Tambo meets a group of South Africans who have arrived in Dar es Salaam to join the ANC in exile in November 1962. The group includes Thabo Mbeki (centre, in conversation with Tambo), as well as Manto Mali (later Tshabalala-Msimang, in front in a black dress).

Joe Slovo

Tambo Turns To The East

Perhaps Joe Slovo, Tambo's brilliant and often funny comrade, had a point when he once said: "There are only two sorts of people in life you can trust – good Christians and good Communists!"



The MK army in exile grew rapidly in the mid-sixties. The Rivonia arrests had smashed resistance inside the country. As a result, hundreds of young people left to join MK and were sent for guerrilla training.

By 1965, nearly one thousand cadres were living in makeshift camps in Tanzania. An army requires help and funding for training, equipment and food. Countries in the West refused to help with the armed struggle. African countries also were not willing or able to give support.

"But back then, who could predict the long haul of the struggle? At that juncture, overwhelmed by rapidly unfolding events at home, Tambo was obliged to tackle challenges strategically, step by step, so that exiles could carry the struggle further than they otherwise could have done at home."

Luli Callinicos, historian and biographer of OR Tambo



So Tambo turned to the East and went to the Soviet Union for direct military support. ANC members had been to Moscow before, but Tambo visited there for the first time in 1963, together with Communist Party and ANC stalwart, Moses Kotane. The Russians received Tambo warmly and agreed to give money and arms – and this was to increase over the years.

Besides the Soviets, other Eastern Bloc countries helped too. Bulgaria, for example, supplied educational courses, and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) donated an ANC office, accommodation and the printing of the ANC's Sechaba and MK's Dawn.



When Tambo visited Moscow in 1963 – one of many visits – he thanked the Soviets for their generous support. As Tambo was not a Communist, he let it be known even to these most generous supporters that it was the ANC that they were helping and not the SACP.

"In Moscow in 1970 we were having a meal with one of the members of the Central Committee. This chap Munschka remarked, 'there's Joe [Slovo] here, Moses [Mabhida]; of course Oliver my friend, who is not a Communist' – and OR took strong exception to the division of his delegation. He sort of burst out ... 'This is an ANC delegation!'"

Joe Matthews, attorney and ANC member



A Russian missile on display during the annual May Day Parade in Red Square in Moscow in 1963.

“In the beginning, there was Oliver Tambo. And he changed everything. He was instrumental in launching the biggest, longest and most successful solidarity engagement ever undertaken by Sweden.” Pierre Schori, Swedish diplomat

The Scandinavian Connection



Politically, the Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – straddled East and West. They had never colonised countries in Africa, Asia or South America. Tambo, pictured here with Ernst Wigforss of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, was quick to grasp the potential strategic importance of these countries.

Tambo's political and diplomatic challenge was to span East and West. The Scandinavian countries were horrified with apartheid. And while they understood that an armed struggle was necessary, unlike the Eastern Bloc countries, they were reluctant to support it. Tambo pointed out to them that the ANC needed other forms of support too.



In 1962, Tambo addressed the Afro-Scandinavian Youth Congress in Oslo, Norway. The congress responded by calling for “total economic, diplomatic and cultural sanctions” against the apartheid regime.

“My problem in calling for pressures on South Africa is to convince the youth to convince their governments and people that it is not the South African goods that are cheap, but the forced labour of the Africans ... The enemies of Africa are those devoted friends of apartheid – governments, countries or concerns – which have trade agreements with South Africa.”

Oliver Tambo



Sweden was the first western European state to give official recognition to the ANC and formal support to the liberation movements by providing education, food, clothing and medical care.

At Tambo's suggestion, Sweden became an active partner to the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM). The writer Per Wästberg (pictured here) was a leading figure in the AAM and often invited prominent South Africans, such as Duma Nokwe and Ruth First (pictured here), to participate in their programmes. Sweden also gave the ANC an office in Stockholm.

From early on, Tambo's personal and political skills made a strong impression in these countries. In 1962 he addressed workers at the Labour Day demonstrations in Gothenburg, Sweden, where he was warmly received.



“Repeated reports indicate that South Africa is enjoying an economic boom. This is no doubt encouraged by a sense of security induced by the belief that with arms supplied by its friends, the South African government is able to ensure stability.” Oliver Tambo, UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, 1964

The United Nations



Source unknown

“My first impression of Oliver was very positive. He grew in stature as time passed, but I had no reason ever to modify my impression of him as a warm, modest, thoughtful and statesmanlike person.”

ES Reddy, Principal Secretary, UN Special Committee against Apartheid



Port Hare Archives

During his 30 years as the leader of the ANC in exile, Tambo continually lobbied – and often addressed – the United Nations.

One of his most memorable speeches at the UN was a few weeks before the Rivonia Trial began in 1964. He explained how the structural violence of apartheid had driven the liberation movement to armed struggle, after 50 years of peaceful protest.



Proppert/Getty Images

“What we are asking the world to do is not to solve our problems for us but to assist us to solve those problems ... The demand is that no arms be supplied, that there should be no trade with South Africa, that there should be economic sanctions.” Oliver Tambo, UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, 1968

Not a single Western power joined the Special Committee against Apartheid, which was frequently blocked by the United States, Britain, and France, who were selling arms to the apartheid regime.



A policeman blocks a group of anti-apartheid demonstrators from entering Downing Street in London on 29 June 1970, to protest against the supply of arms to South Africa.

Frank Barratt/Keystone/Getty Images

Q K. Tambo

Skilful Diplomacy



Fort Howe Archives

Many African states won their independence in the early 1960s – but in some ways, it was not true independence. They continued to be economically exploited by their former colonial masters. In addition, several were also bullied by the economic and military might of the powerful apartheid regime.

“We stopped using South African railways for exporting copper, so they began bombing the railways, bombing bridges of the roads we were using towards Tanzania and Malawi.”

Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia

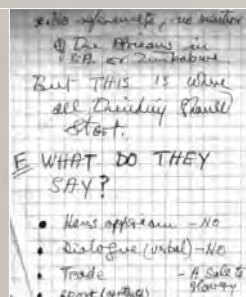


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In April 1969, thirteen African governments tried a new approach to end white minority rule in southern Africa. They signed the Lusaka Manifesto, proposing that the ANC and SWAPO call off their armed struggle and negotiate with South Africa. The Manifesto was endorsed by the OAU.

“There is the published correspondence between President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Mr John Vorster, Prime Minister of South Africa in 1968, which appears to have been a build-up towards the Lusaka Manifesto. Either individually or on behalf of a group of states, Kaunda was fishing in troubled waters to see where the fish and crocodiles lay.”

NM Shamuyarira, political scientist



Oliver & Alexander Tambo Foundation

The Lusaka Manifesto was completely at odds with the ANC's approach. In a speech to the OAU, Tambo pointed out that the liberation movements had not been consulted about the Manifesto. In any event, the ANC did not believe that the apartheid regime was going to negotiate unless they were put under massive pressure. The notes that Tambo prepared for his speech to the OAU can be seen here.

As it turned out, the South African government rejected the Lusaka Manifesto. The OAU then changed course and declared its support for the liberation movements in the Mogadishu Declaration of 1971.



The Mogadishu Declaration of 1971 stated that no African state should talk to the apartheid government. African airports, railways and harbours, like Dar es Salaam, were closed to South Africa. South Africa was increasingly cut off from the rest of the continent.

Between Lusaka and South Africa stood two major obstacles: the apartheid government's friendly neighbours Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Mozambique. MK formed a strategic alliance with the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), fighting alongside ZAPU while making their way southward to South Africa. Here Tambo is pictured with James Chikerema of ZAPU, planning an incursion into South Africa through Rhodesia in 1967.

ANC Rejuvenated In Morogoro

It was becoming clear that this was to be a long struggle, and a long exile. Frustrations began to build up among the rank and file, and some began to question Tambo's leadership.



International Institute for Social Sciences



Mqotsi Family



Topham/The Image Works

"You cannot boil rice outside of the pot." Amilcar Cabral, guerrilla leader, Guinea-Bissau

Hundreds of people had left South Africa in the early 1960s, believing that they would be back home, gun in hand, after a few weeks' training. By the late 1960s, many in the ANC were becoming restless, wanting to return home to fight the enemy – they wanted to go and boil the rice inside the pot.

The apartheid regime had become increasingly arrogant, forcibly removing blacks from 'white' areas and jailing thousands of men and women for failing to produce a pass.

MK's first military campaign happened in August 1967 with the Luthuli Detachment led by Chris Hani. Tambo accompanied the Detachment until they crossed the Zambezi River into Wankie in Rhodesia.

"We lost 10 to 12 people, but we ... also killed about 20 enemy troops, and captured a lot of supplies." Chris Hani, MK soldier

A handful of cadres led by Chris Hani were separated from their unit and entered Botswana illegally – where they were imprisoned for two years. Hani is pictured here with the Mqotsi family in Botswana, who took him in after his release from prison.

After Wankie, angry MK cadres accused the leadership of arrogance. Tambo called for a consultative conference.

At the Morogoro Consultative Conference in Tanzania in 1969, Tambo had to confront various tensions inside the ANC.

After President Luthuli's sudden death in 1967, Tambo had become acting president of the ANC. Now, in a show of humility, he resigned from this position. Delegates at Morogoro elected a totally new National Executive Council – but unanimously re-elected Tambo as president.

The conference made a number of historic decisions, such as broadening the membership of the ANC to include whites, coloureds and Indians. It also set up a non-racial Revolutionary Council and resoundingly endorsed both the armed struggle and mass political struggle. Tambo emerged strengthened from the conference. Morogoro reinvigorated the ANC.

“Blacks are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game that they should be playing. They want to do things for themselves and by themselves.”

Steve Biko, leader of the Black Consciousness Movement

Historic Times At Home

The Morogoro Conference in 1969 injected new life into the ANC in exile. But while this was happening time did not stand still inside South Africa. Historic events were unfolding at home.



Mayibuye Archives

Two trials took place in South Africa in 1969 which revealed that the resistance movement was functioning. In February and March, Dorothy Nyembe, a leader in the Women's League, and 11 others were charged under the Terrorism Act with conspiracy to overthrow the government. They were found guilty of harbouring MK cadres and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.



SABA

In May and June, police detained and tortured dozens of activists throughout the country. Twenty-two, including Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, were put on trial.

Madikizela-Mandela and her co-accused Martha Dlamini are pictured here on 20 September 1970, the day they were freed after being detained under the Terrorism Act. Madikizela-Mandela is carrying Martha Dlamini's grandson who was born during their imprisonment.



Daily Dispatch

In 1969, black (African, coloured and Indian) university students broke away from the multi-racial National Union of South African students (NUSAS). They formed the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), which adopted the philosophy of black consciousness. Steve Biko, who was elected its first president, spearheaded an awakening of the resistance movement inside the country.



Mayibuye Archives

In 1973, a seemingly spontaneous strike by black workers began in Durban, and spread throughout South Africa. The Durban strikes led to the birth of the modern trade union movement in South Africa. Militant worker organisations brought a new dimension to the struggle.



Mayibuye Archives

When Mozambique won its independence from Portugal in 1974, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) organised pro-FRELIMO rallies throughout the country. Nine BCM leaders were tried and imprisoned under the Terrorism Act for these activities.



Workers read a newspaper account of a clash between police and black miners at the Western Deep Levels Gold Mine in Carletonville on the West Rand (now part of Gauteng) on 12 September 1973.

Strong Foundations

In the first decade of exile, Tambo achieved a great deal – he built the Mission in Exile, establishing strong links with the UN, the OAU, Scandinavia and the Eastern Bloc. He had managed to put apartheid on the international agenda.

“By the mid-1970s, Tambo had built a united ANC, with strong diplomatic and financial connections. When the students rebelled in the 1976 uprising, the ANC was ready to receive them as they streamed outside the country in their thousands.”

Philip Bonner, historian



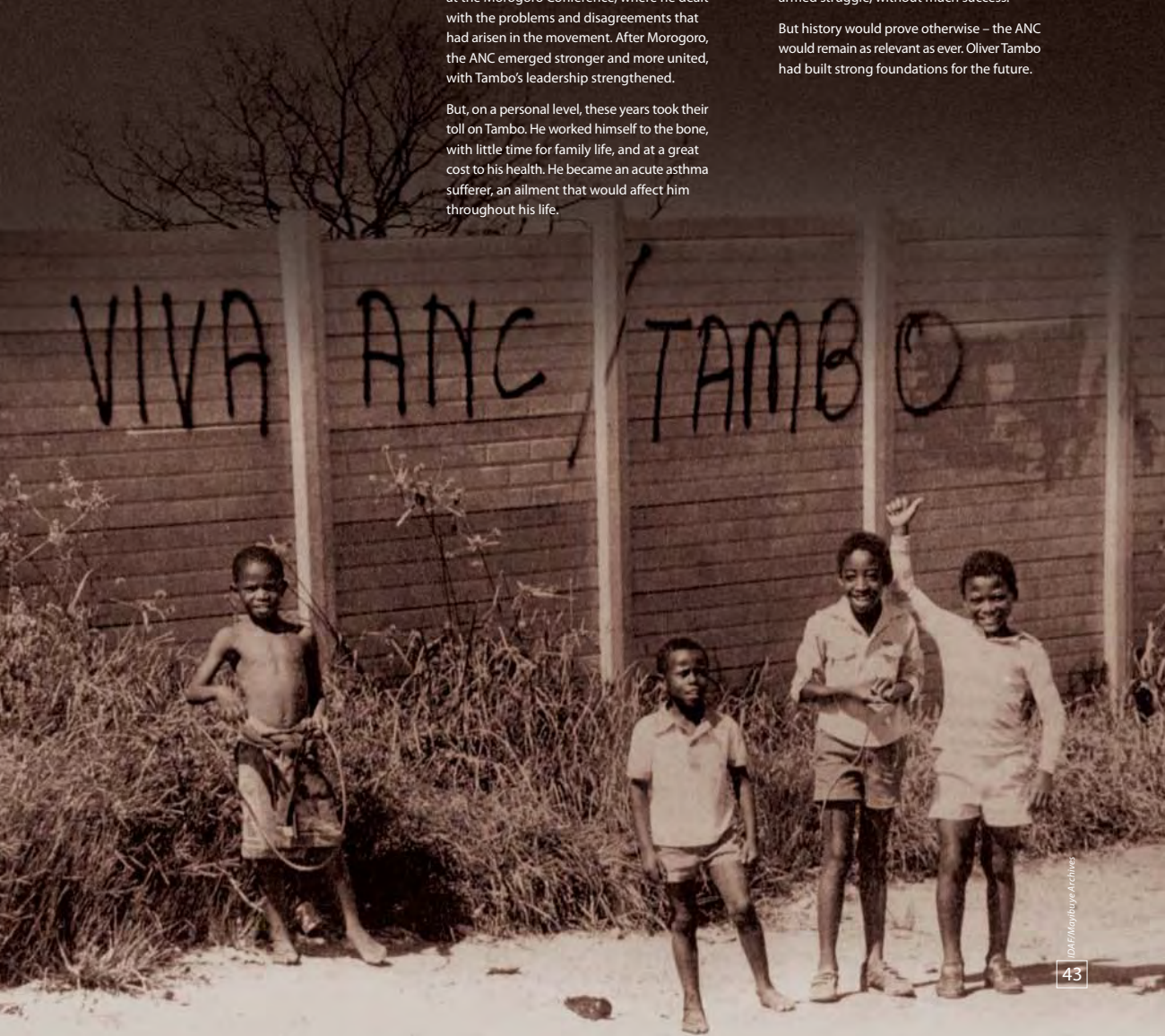
Moyibuyi Archives

Above all, Tambo held the movement together, with his quiet and consensual leadership style. This was shown most clearly at the Morogoro Conference, where he dealt with the problems and disagreements that had arisen in the movement. After Morogoro, the ANC emerged stronger and more united, with Tambo's leadership strengthened.

But, on a personal level, these years took their toll on Tambo. He worked himself to the bone, with little time for family life, and at a great cost to his health. He became an acute asthma sufferer, an ailment that would affect him throughout his life.

In the later 1960s and early 70s, events back inside South Africa threatened to overtake the ANC, which had been concentrating on armed struggle, without much success.

But history would prove otherwise – the ANC would remain as relevant as ever. Oliver Tambo had built strong foundations for the future.



Oliver Tambo Archives