Università degli studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”
Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo

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The ANC between Home and Exile

Reflections on the Anti-Apartheid Struggle in Italy and Southern Africa

edited by
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Preface

The publication of this book coincides with twenty-one years of democracy in South Africa since the end of apartheid and the first democratic elections of 1994. Three years earlier, another anniversary, the centenary of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the oldest African nationalist movement on the continent and, since 1994, South Africa's ruling party, prompted the calling of a conference in Naples, Italy, where this book has its origins.

The ANC centenary was marked by a year-long series of celebrations that kicked off on 8 January 2012 in Mangaung (Bloemfontein), where the ANC had been founded a hundred years earlier. While the majority of these events took place in South Africa, the centenary was also observed in many other countries across the world. These worldwide commemorations are, in part, a trace of what had once been the global anti-apartheid movement: possibly the largest and most successful international solidarity movement of all times.

Understandably, most of the initiatives around the ANC centenary were of a celebratory nature. But the occasion also provided a moment for more critical reflection on the ANC's historical trajectory over the last one hundred years. In particular, the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Johannesburg and South African History Online organised a conference in Johannesburg in September 2011 with a view to framing some of the debates around the centenary.[1] Moved by a similar objective, in November 2012, the Centro Studi sull'Africa Contemporanea (CeSAC) at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" (UNO) and the Wits History Workshop[2] organised a joint international conference

[1] See the publication that this conference produced: A. Lissoni, J. Soske, N. Erlank, N. Nieftagodien and O. Badsha (eds). *One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories Today.* Johannesburg: Wits Press and SAHO, 2012.

[2] The conference was organised under the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding between University of the Witwatersrand and University of Naples "L'Orientale" to develop

titled "The African National Congress between Home and Exile", from which this publication takes its name. The conference was held in Naples on 19 and 20 November, and brought into close dialogue the Anglophone scholarship on the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa with Italian research as well as activists from both countries. One of its aims was to create intellectual synergy between the two contexts that are usually separated by language.

This volume draws directly on the panels and papers that were presented by the group of scholars and activists who participated in the Naples conference in 2012. Like the conference that gave rise to it, one of the aims of the book is to reflect historically on the different experiences of the ANC and the struggle against apartheid both in South Africa and in exile, particularly in the Italian context. Since the end of apartheid there has been a significant growth of the literature on the histories of liberation struggles in southern Africa. But, while the international solidarity movement in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and the Nordic countries has received a fair amount of scholarly attention, the development of solidarity networks and movements in other countries has so far been under-represented in the historiography.[3] This imbalance projects the erroneous impression that a country like Italy played only a marginal role in supporting the peoples of southern Africa in their connected struggles against colonialism, white minority rule and apartheid oppression and exploitation. Therefore, a second aim of this publication is to give a more central place to Italy, both as a site from where the ANC operated in exile, and as a key

areas of cooperation between the two institutions. See http://www.unior.it/ateneo/3628/1/accordi-internazionali.html, accessed 3 November 2014.

[3] For example, see C. Gurney. "'A Great Cause': The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, June 1959 - March 1960". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1, 2000, pp. 123-144; R. Fieldhouse. *Anti-Apartheid: The History of a Movement in Britain: A Study in Pressure Group Politics.* London: Merlin, 2005; D. Herbstein. *White Lies: Canon John Collins and the Secret War against Apartheid*. Oxford: James Currey, 2004; T. Sellström. *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Vols 1 & 2. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999 and 2002; D.R. Culverson. *Contesting Apartheid: US Activism, 1960-1987*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999; F.N. Nesbitt. *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 3: International Solidarity*, parts 1 & 2. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2008, contains historical surveys of anti-apartheid movements in countries throughout the world, including Italy (see the chapter by C. Fiamingo, "Italy, 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime, and its Internal Opposition").

centre of international solidarity. The internal resistance and exile movements have also been treated as discrete experiences in much of the literature on the South African liberation struggle. A third aim of this anthology is thus to bring these different contexts into conversation by viewing them as part of the same continuum.

The book is divided into four parts, reflecting the themes of the panels around which the conference was organised. Part I, which opens with a framing chapter by Antonio Pezzano about the Italian literature on South Africa, considers the Italian context and experience. On the one hand, there is the Italian government's ambivalent relationship with the apartheid state (Maria Cristina Ercolessi's chapter), and on the other hand, the development of a solidarity movement in Italy through direct links with the ANC and other southern African liberation movements, particularly Frelimo (Cristiana Fiamingo's chapter). Cristiana Fiamingo raises the alarm that, with few exceptions, notably Reggio Emilia's Istoreco and the Benny Nato Centre (whose experiences are related in Part IV), the archives of the Italian anti-apartheid movement are under threat of being lost to posterity, and its history therefore under threat of being forgotten.

The chapters in Part II, by South Africa-based historians linked to the Wits History Workshop, span the South African and African contexts. Noor Nieftagodien reflects on the significance of the ANC centenary celebrations in South Africa in terms of the production of history, arguing that the ANC's own narrative of liberation occludes other experiences of resistance and memories. Tshepo Moloi reconsiders the relationship between the ANC in exile and the internal resistance movement, which much of the existing literature views as largely disconnected, claiming that the ANC had little influence on events in South Africa during the 1980s. By focusing on Thembisa as a case study, Moloi shows that the resurgence of confrontational politics in the township was closely linked with the underground network of the ANC and its armed wing (Umkhonto we Sizwe, or MK) in neighbouring Botswana. Arianna Lissoni and Maria Suriano's joint contribution moves further afield, considering the legacies and transformation of the ANC's transnational links with, and presence in, other African countries, specifically Tanzania, in the post-liberation period. Their chapter describes the experiences of the Tanzanian wives of South African exiles repatriated from Morogoro to South Africa, as well as the hardships suffered by Tanzanian women who were "left behind" by their partners.

The relationship between apartheid, exile and artistic creation, is the subject of Part III. Itala Vivan reviews the literary production of South

African writers whose lives were influenced by various forms of exile and displacement as a result of apartheid, from the 1950s onwards. Apartheid's dramas are represented in the art of William Kentridge, in particular in a series of animated short films titled *Drawings for Projection*, which is analysed in Maria De Vivo's chapter. South African writer Makhosazana Xaba, a former MK cadre, speaks of her own exile and involvement in the liberation movement as a woman, in a selection of her poetry accompanied by an introductory note.

The last part of the book bears testimony to the importance of Italian solidarity with South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle and to the continuing friendship between the two countries through two concrete experiences – those of the city of Reggio Emilia and of the Benny Nato Centre. Vincenzo Curatola is the president of the Benny Nato Centre in Rome, which is named after Henry Benny Nato de Bruyn, the ANC chief representative in Italy between 1985 and 1991. His contribution, co-authored by Raffaella Chiodo Karpinsky, is drawn from the catalogue of an exhibition on Italy's contribution to South Africa's liberation and provides an outline and chronology of the Italian anti-apartheid movement. The concluding chapter by Istoreco's former president, Mirco Carrattieri, and Gianluca Grassi bears testimony to the long and ongoing history of friendship between the ANC and the city of Reggio Emilia, whose antifascist tradition and practice of decentralised cooperation placed it at the forefront of Italian anti-colonial and anti-apartheid activism. Knowledge about this rich history has the potential of modelling new future ways of relating based on the principles of collaboration amongst equals and shared values that create possibilities for disrupting patterns where inequalities and oppression are reproduced.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Department of Human and Social Sciences, the PhD programme in African Studies, and the Research and Education Centre "Women's Archives" at the University of Naples "L'Orientale", for their contribution along with CeSAC to the realisation of the conference that gave rise to this edited volume. We are particularly grateful to the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies which contributed to the realisation of the conference and agreed to publish this book in the new series *Il porto delle idee*, and to the Wits History Workshop for their support in the production of the book.

Arianna Lissoni and Antonio Pezzano

Acronyms and abbreviations

AAM	anti-apartheid movement
Agip	Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli (General Italian Oil Company)
ANC	African National Congress
APTC	Alexandra People's Transport Committee
AREA	Archivio Reggio Emilia-Africa
AWEPAA	Association of West-European Parliamentarians for Action against Apartheid
Azapo	Azanian People's Organisation
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BLAs	Black Local Authorities
CeSAC	Centro Studi sull'Africa Contemporanea (Centre of Contemporary African Studies)
CeSPI	Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (Centre for International Political Studies)
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian General Confederation of Labour)
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Workers' Trade Unions Confederation)
Codesa	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
Cosas	Congress of South African Students

Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
DC	Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy)
EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Community
Enel	Ente Nazionale per l'Energia Elettrica (Italian National Electricity Board)
Erab	East Rand Administration Board
FIM	Federazione Italiana Metalmeccanici (Italian Metalworkers' Federation)
FIOM	Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici (Federation of Metal Workers Employees)
FLS	Frontline States
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
GCC	Germiston City Council
Idoc	International Documentation and Communication Centre
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IISH	International Institute of Social History
ILO	International Labour Organization
Ipalmo	Istituto per le Relazioni tra l'Italia e i Paesi dell'Africa, America Latina, Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Institute for Relations between Italy and the Countries of Africa, Latin America, Far and Middle East)
Istoreco	Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società contemporanea in provincia di Reggio Emilia (Institute for the History of Resistance and Contemporary Society in the Province of Reggio Emilia)

KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MAIS	Movimento per l'Autosviluppo Internazionale nella Solidarietà (Movement for International Self-Development Based on Solidarity)
MDC	Movement for a Democracy of Content
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)
MOLISV	Movimento Liberazione e Sviluppo (Movement for Liberation and Development)
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
NAT	Department of National Intelligence and Security
NiZA	Nederlands instituut voor Zuidelijk Afrika (Netherlands Institute on Southern Africa)
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)
PdUP	Partito di Unità Proletaria (Proletarian Unity Party)
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party)
PWV	Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging
Putco	Public Utility Transport Corporation
RAC	Residents Action Committee
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
RPMC	Regional Politico-Military Council
SACP	South African Communist Party

Sactu	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference
SADET	South African Democracy Education Trust
SAHA	South African History Archive
SO	Senior Organ
Somafco	Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College
SRB	Shipping Research Bureau
Swapo	South West Africa People's Organisation
TCA	Thembisa Civic Association
TRA	Thembisa Residents Association
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TTC	Thembisa Town Council
UDF	United Democratic Front
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Labour Union)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WLJ	Women's League of Justice

PART I

The ANC and the Struggle against Apartheid in Italy

CHAPTER 1
Studies on South Africa in Italy: A Historiographical Survey

ANTONIO PEZZANO

This chapter reviews the Italian historiography on South Africa since the 1970s, following the evolution of the anti-apartheid movement. In Italy, unlike in the English-speaking academy, there was not a significant production of literature on South Africa before the end of apartheid. Italian scholars of African Studies, in particular the historians, did not focus their studies and research on this area of the continent; they were more interested in the Horn of Africa or northern Africa, because of the Italian colonial history.

Until recently, most writing about South Africa and southern Africa took the form of historical pamphlets penned by militants or journalists, rather than academics. Cristina Ercolessi has argued that there is insufficient continuity in scientific, educational, or thematic studies of southern Africa to create a field of research and produce a discourse.[1] Furthermore, the lack of fieldwork research and the major focus on studies of international relations which have characterised the Italian academy and historiography, particularly in the 1980s, resulted in an unbalanced analysis of internal and external factors involved in ending apartheid, in favour of the latter. Italian literature was scarcely linked to the international historiographical debate on southern Africa, with the exception of some articles by Ruth First: "Regimi coloniali dell'Africa australe", published in 1979 in volume IV of *Storia dell'Africa e del Vicino Oriente*, edited by Alessandro Triulzi, in the series *Il mondo contemporaneo* (pp. 159-189); and "L'apartheid e l'apporto dei capitali stranieri", in *Politica Internazionale*, 1, 1980. These articles were

[1] M.C. Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe e la storiografia Italiana". In A. Giovagnoli, G. Del Zanna (eds). *Il mondo visto dall'Italia*. Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2004, pp. 161-172.

republished in a collection of her writings, translated into Italian after her brutal assassination: *Ruth First: alle radici dell'apartheid*, edited by Anna Maria Gentili, who was her colleague at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo.[2] In addition, some articles by Ruth First were also published in the political and cultural review of the Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano, PCI), *Rinascita*, in the 1960s and 1970s.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, given the predominance in Italy of non-academic works on southern Africa, the debate on South Africa was introduced by militants' pamphlets in the mid-1970s. As Cristiana Fiamingo and Cristina Ercolessi note in this volume, the first publications about the struggle against apartheid and the liberation movements in South Africa were originated by the Movimento Liberazione e Sviluppo (MOLISV) and other activist groups' initiatives.

The militant publications

In this context, one of the first publications worthy of mention is *Sud Africa. L'apartheid del capitale*, written by Mario Albano at the time of the independence of the former Portuguese colonies but published in 1976.[3] It introduced the Italian public to a Marxist approach in the interpretation of apartheid, which until then had been considered simply as a degeneration of system and an aberration of humanity. Again, it is interesting to point out that the input came from a militant and that it was not strictly an academic work.

Mario Albano was an example of political commitment to the liberation movements in southern Africa, particularly in the former Portuguese colonies (he was the translator of Cabral's, Neto's and Mondlane's works), and later in South Africa. He was the national secretary of the international committee of the Proletarian Unity Party (Partito di Unità Proletaria, PdUP). He was entrenched in the debate of the internationalist left which at the time supported most of the African liberation movements, particularly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y Río de Oro, known as Polisario) in

[2] A.M. Gentili (ed.). *Ruth First: alle radici dell'apartheid*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1984. The other articles published in the volume were: the translation of "The Gold of Migrant Labour" in *Africa South in Exile*, 5, 3, April-June 1961, pp. 7-31, then republished in *Review of African Political Economy*, 25, 1982, pp. 5-21; excerpts from the book *Black Gold. The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983.

[3] M. Albano. *Sud Africa. L'apartheid del capitale*. Milano: Mazzotta, 1976.

Western Sahara and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, MPLA) in Angola. In 1974 most of the representatives of Third World liberation movements, including the ANC, were present at the PdUP Congress in Florence.[4] This militant position was reflected in Albano's book and in the sources he used. Although he consulted and referenced most of the material on the contemporary international and South African debate, he did not cite the new radical revisionist literature by militant scholars such as Harold Wolpe[5] and Martin Legassick,[6] and historians such as Anthony Atmore, Shula Marks[7] and Stanley Trapido,[8] which was changing the course of South African historiography in those years, but he did cite the works of other communist activists previously published in the 1960s, such as Jack and Ray Simons' book[9] and Brian Bunting's analysis of the ideology of the apartheid regime and its links with Nazism and the Third Reich.[10]

Albano's book adopted a Marxist approach which denounced apartheid as a functional system of labour exploitation and political control that allowed capital to produce a large amount of surplus. The analysis of racial segregation was based on categories of discrimination and the regulation of wages. In this perspective, the founding element of the Union of South Africa became the homeland, where the interests of the two forms of capitalism – agrarian and mineral – merged, at the expense of the majority of

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[4] See M. Albano. "La fase attuale dell'imperialismo". *Unità Proletaria*, III, 14, Luglio 1974.

[5] H. Wolpe. "Capitalism and Cheap Labour-power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid". *Economy and Society*, 1, 4, 1972, pp. 425-456.

[6] M. Legassick. "Legislation, Ideology and Economy in Post-1948 South Africa". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1, 1974, pp. 5-35; M. Legassick. "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence". *Economy and Society*, 3, 3, 1974, pp. 253-291; M. Legassick. "South Africa: Forced Labour, Industrialization, and Racial Differentiation". In R. Harris (ed.). *The Political Economy of Africa*. Boston: Schenkman and New York: John Wiley, 1975, pp. 227-270.

[7] A. Atmore and S. Marks. "The Imperial Factor in South Africa: Towards a Reassessment". *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 3, 1, 1974, pp. 105-139.

[8] S. Trapido. "South Africa in a Comparative Study of Industrialisation". *Journal of Development Studies*, 8, 3, 1971, pp. 309-320; S. Trapido. "South Africa and the Historians". *African Affairs*, 71, 285, 1972, pp. 444-448.

[9] H.J. Simons and R.A. Simons. *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950*. London: Penguin, 1969.

[10] Albano, *Sud Africa.* See the chapter "L'ideologia del regime", pp. 121-134. Although he did not cite Bunting in the footnotes of the chapter, he includes B. Bunting. *The Rise of the South African Reich*. London: Penguin Africa Library, 1969, in the bibliography.

Africans. Apartheid originated in the articulation of the industrialisation process at the beginning of the twentieth century, which systematically structured the power relations of class formation and buttressed corporate profitability by reducing the costs of black labour, which had been increasingly urbanising, to the lowest possible.[11] The other founding element of the apartheid regime was identified as the repressive military apparatus which was implemented after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, with the defence budget increased three and then six times in just a few years to underpin the ongoing integration and cooperation of South African with international capital.[12] In fact, industrial development did not allow independence from international trade, in terms of raw materials and in terms of the increased demand for consumer, producer and equipment goods. Fundamentally, Albano's discourse is inspired by the international anti-imperialist solidarity of the 1970s leftist movements.

Until the mid-1980s, Italian publications on South Africa were mainly the propagandistic material and documents of international solidarity movements and parties which supported the liberation movements. Unfortunately, this documentation did not become a corpus of historiographical literature, as occurred in some other countries, thanks to the work of scholars and academics. As Ercolessi[13] and Fiamingo[14] note, this fragmented documentation could be lost, so that the history of anti-apartheid activity in Italy is at risk of fading into oblivion.

This scarcity of literature in Italy reflects the lack not only of a tradition of studies on South and southern Africa, but also of political and diplomatic interest in the region until more recently. It was because of liberation struggles in the 1970s and subsequent solidarity movements that some scholars started to become interested in South Africa.

The end of apartheid and the transition to a new democratic South Africa in the Italian literature

In fact, it was only in mid-1980s when the apartheid regime started to show obvious cracks that some publications on South Africa began to

[11] Albano, *Sud Africa*. See the second chapter on the analysis of wages (pp. 58 ff.).

[12] *Ibid*. See the chapter "Gli strumenti della repressione", pp. 135-152.

[13] Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe", pp. 164-165.

[14] See Chapter 3, "The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Italy: Processes, Mechanisms and Heritage", in this volume.

appear, outlining possible future scenarios. The titles of these publications were meaningful, all inscribed in a semantic field of conflicting change: *South Africa at the Crossroads: Development and Conflict* by Emilio Biagini;[15] *After Apartheid: The Process of Change in South Africa* edited by Gian Paolo Calchi Novati[16] and *South Africa: The Conflict of Apartheid* by Emiliani, Ercolessi and Gentili.[17]

Biagini's voluminous book is the least significant of the three above-mentioned publications, although it was the outcome of fieldwork in the Cape, which was unusual for Italian scholars at that time. It is a systems analysis of the spatial dimensions of conflict and development which suffers from an excessive emphasis on cultural and religious features and stages of development. It is too centred on the white and Afrikaner community, probably as a result of the choice of the then Cape Province as a case study, while it does not pay enough attention to the agency of Africans, who are considered as subjected and exploited victims whose actions in the background range from resistance to apathy. The analysis focuses on the violent reactions of elites to the stress caused by the imbalances of the system. This conservative reaction of the elites, who tried to maintain and protect their identity, their position of power and their privileges against change, is considered as a social pathology.

The other two volumes were the products of two different institutes of research on international affairs: the Institute for Relations between Italy and the Countries of Africa, Latin America, Far and Middle East (Ipalmo) and the Centre for International Political Studies (Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, CeSPI). Ipalmo initially aimed to investigate political and economic scenarios in Africa, Latin America as well as in the Middle East and the Far East, particularly in areas of strategic importance to Italian foreign policy. In the 1980s, Ipalmo shifted its focus to international aid policies and international development cooperation and it became an advisor to the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry on these matters. It also published *Politica Internazionale*, a journal of international relations and politics, with a focus on developing countries. CeSPI has been the research centre of the PCI, although it was an independent research centre on international relations at the time of the mentioned publication.

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[15] E. Biagini. *Sudafrica al bivio: sviluppo e conflitto*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1984.

[16] G. Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid. Il processo di cambio in Sud Africa*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1986.

[17] M. Emiliani, M.C. Ercolessi, A.M. Gentili (eds). *Sud Africa. I conflitti dell'apartheid*. Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1987.

These two books were not historical works or case studies but research-group political analyses on the crisis of the apartheid regime and the possible future scenarios of change, and they were not based on formal field research. Both stressed the role of political actors, such as the ANC and the United Democratic Front (UDF), in the struggle for liberation, and both pointed out the necessity to raise the "South African question" in international fora and councils like the United Nations, as well as to impose and strengthen sanctions and disinvestment against the apartheid regime.

In *Dopo l'apartheid*, Calchi Novati[18] related the "South African question" to decolonisation and to the broader struggle of liberation movements against white supremacy in southern Africa. The racist South African government presented itself as the last white bastion and had always been preventing the process of decolonisation. However, in the Durban strikes of 1973, and then in the Soweto uprisings of 1976, the agency of Africans played a significant role in radicalising the conflict.[19] Mannini's chapter[20] in the book illustrated the complexity and variety of the African liberation movements, but lacked a direct knowledge of actors and based the analysis only on secondary sources. Mannini therefore privileged the ANC's position as the only plausible counterpart in possible negotiations with the apartheid government, although he recognised the weakening of Umkhonto we Sizwe's (MK) guerrilla forces after the Nkomati Accord and the radicalisation of internal struggles, with their strategy of ungovernability. Nevertheless he had a cautious approach towards the newborn Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and he questioned the UDF's ability to control protests from below. He considered these spontaneous and anarchical, reproducing the simplified social dichotomy between the marginalised youth of the townships who protested, also violently, and the cadre of the African petty bourgeoisie who controlled the leadership of the movement (even in the Azanian People's Organisation [Azapo] and the UDF). Moreover, he highlighted the role of churches and the role of Inkatha, which was more popular than other movements in Italian and international public opinion at the time.

[18] G. Calchi Novati. "Introduzione. Razzismo, riformismo, rivoluzione: verso lo scontro?". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 13-32.

[19] P. Valsecchi. "Le forze innovative entro il sistema di potere bianco". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 33-73.

[20] M. Mannini. "Il movimento di contestazione". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 74-115.

In the same volume, Fabio Tana's chapter[21] gives more importance to the external factors. The "South African question" is placed in the Cold War strategic scenario, which conditioned the conduct of Western countries, including Italy, towards the South African government. In effect, the vision of the author reflected US diplomatic action, moving between the use of threat and the Reaganian "constructive engagement". The chapter concludes that while the economic crisis weakened white supremacy and buttressed the logic of confrontation, sanctions might also have contributed to the isolation of the apartheid regime in favour of dialogue and change.

The third volume, edited by Marcella Emiliani, Maria Cristina Ercolessi and Anna Maria Gentili and titled *Sud Africa: i conflitti dell'apartheid*, presents a different view. The starting point of the analysis is the conflictive situation of the South African regime in the mid-1980s. The "reforms" of the Botha government opened up spaces where the liberation movements were able to articulate a united political agency. Their open defiance resulted in hard repression and the states of emergency that closed any possibility of dialogue and reform. This dramatic crisis of the system detonated the "South African question" across the world. However, in the international councils, Western countries and developing countries disagreed on the resolutions to be taken about sanctions and disinvestment.

Botha's "reforms" never called into question white supremacy, but instead, tried to modernise it according to the changes that had been occurring in the international context. Botha gave more space to the private sector and adopted a managerial and technocratic style of governance, using various committees of experts. But his core policy was inspired by his "total strategy" and all reforms were intended to rationalise the spatial planning of racial segregation. The new element in his strategy was the cooption of a segment of the black population (the urban middle classes, Indian and Coloured groups) combined with the repression of resistance, particularly in the townships, where parallel power structures were established. At the same time, the strategy aimed to destabilise the whole southern African region. Gentili's[22] chapter in the book focused on the Nkomati Accord. She read it as a tactic directed at maintaining the status quo, implementing reform policies that favoured big business and consolidating their regional supremacy. However, after negatively interpreting the agreement as an

[21] F. Tana. "Il peso dei fattori esterni". In Calchi Novati (ed.). *Dopo l'apartheid*, pp. 116-195.

[22] A.M. Gentili. "I rapporti tra Sud Africa e Mozambico: la parabola dell'accordo di Nkomati". In Emiliani *et al.* (eds). *Sud Africa. I conflitti dell'apartheid*, pp. 163-181.

unconditional capitulation, the ANC realised that the internal struggle could be enhanced, regardless of logistics based in Mozambique. This strategy worked, and in fact helped the ANC leadership of the forces opposed to apartheid to gain international recognition.

After all, apartheid, as a legal system of racial discrimination, was institutionally organised by the state to favour capitalist development. The entire legislative framework had to facilitate the recruitment of a cheap labour force, incapable of negotiating its work conditions. Notwithstanding the consolidation of the industrial sector and the interpenetration of Afrikaner and English fractions of capital, the South African economy still depended on the international system, namely on exports of the MEC (minerals-energy complex) and imports of capital goods or assets. That interpenetration was favoured by the massive repression designed to annihilate political opposition movements after the massacre of Sharpeville in 1960. However, the economic crisis in the 1970s soon became a social and political crisis of the apartheid regime, which reacted in an authoritarian way, with the Botha government wielding the power of big business and the military. Beyond the economic and social reforms in favour of the urban middle classes, Botha's government implemented drastic, tight mobility and influx control policies. So the advantages gained by a few sections of the black population were overshadowed by the intolerable, harsh repression of the majority.[23]

Apart from some works on the Italian community in South Africa in late 1980s,[24] a new wave of publications coincided with the end of apartheid and the transition to democracy. But, again, they did not become a systematic line of research on South African history and politics, nor of the relations between Italy and South Africa. This is explained by the fact that the Italian literature on South Africa, and more generally on Africa, conforms to mainstream research or, particularly in the past, to broad ideological frameworks rather than rigorous analyses of local politics, policies and issues of governance. The result was a focus on normative aspects and the

[23] A.M. Gentili. "La Repubblica del Sud Africa: ideologia e politica dell'apartheid". In Emiliani *et al.*(eds). *Sud Africa. I conflitti dell'apartheid*, pp. 23-93.

[24] See G. Sani. *Storia degli Italiani in Sud Africa: 1489-1989*. Edenvale: Isando Press, 1989; M. Gazzini. *Zonderwater: i prigionieri in Sudafrica, 1941-1947*, Roma: Bonacci, 1987, on Italian war prisoners; T. Filesi. *Italia e Italiani nella Guerra Anglo-Boera, 1899-1902*. Quaderni della Rivista «Africa» 12, Roma: Istituto Italo-Africano, 1987, on the opposing positions of the Italian government and public opinion on the Anglo-Boer War. While the government declared its neutrality, public opinion, still imbued with the Risorgimento spirit, was sympathetic to the Boers and against the British imperialists.

selection of sources and voices of the elite or political leaders who led the struggle. This approach reduced the possibility of research based on the complexity of local debates and the participation of social actors, even after the emergence of public interest in topics such as the end of apartheid and the transition to democracy in South Africa.[25]

During the time of the transition and at its accomplishment in the new democratic system, three volumes tried to understand, in different ways, where this process was driving the new South Africa.[26]

The first publication, edited by Anna Maria Gentili, contains the proceedings of a conference held in Bologna in April 1992, during the time of Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) and after the referendum for the white electorate that de Klerk called to support the negotiation process. Numerous Italian scholars[27] discussed the negotiations and various perspectives of political and constitutional change in South Africa with their South African peers and activists.[28] The starting point of the conference and the book was the legacy of the apartheid regime, tracing the historical roots of inequalities at the time of the mineral-industrial revolution and the creation of the Union of South Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The papers, particularly Terreblanche's article,[29] warned against a normative approach which reduced the end of the apartheid to the abolition of the legislative framework without eradicating the structural inequalities that had deepened

[25] Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe", pp. 167-168.

[26] A.M. Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento politico e costituzionale.* Proceedings of the conference held in Bologna 1-3 April 1992. Bologna: Maggioli Editore, 1993; C. Robertazzi. *Verso un nuovo Sudafrica. Dall'apartheid allo stato multietnico*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1995; I. Vivan (ed.). *Il Nuovo Sudafrica. Dalle strettoie dell'apartheid alle complessità della democrazia*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1996.

[27] Among them, it is worth mentioning those who had been contributing to the debate on the South African situation in the previous years: Anna Maria Gentili and Matilde Callari Galli from the University of Bologna, both on the Anti-Apartheid Committee of Bologna that co-organised the conference with the University of Bologna; Alessandro Triulzi from the University of Naples "L'Orientale"; Maria Cristina Ercolessi, researcher at CeSPI; and Gian Paolo Calchi Novati from the University of Urbino.

[28] Kader Asmal, Thozamile Botha, Robert Davies, Colin Bundy, Dullah Omar and Harold Wolpe from the University of Western Cape; Gerhard Erasmus and Sampie Terreblanche from the University of Stellenbosch; Blade Nzimande from the then University of Natal; Smangaliso Mkhatshwa from the Institute of Contextual Theology; and Viviene Taylor from the National Institute for Prevention of Crime and Rehabilitation of Offenders.

[29] S. Terreblanche. "A Perspective on South Africa's Social, Political and Economic History on the Threshold of the Transition to a Post-apartheid Society". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 81-104.

over at least 120 years. These inequalities could be classified as structural inequalities in the redistribution of power-property-control and racial inequalities of income-opportunity-consumption. His analysis highlighted how a consolidated power bloc of the apartheid regime tried to retain power after 1994 by virtue of its «experience and efficiency».[30]

The rest of this conference and publication examined the state, society and political democracy issues. In particular, the debate focused on the constitutional process and structure, which reflected the political nature of the negotiations, as Dullah Omar and Kader Asmal both argued.[31] Smangaliso Mkhatshwa's and Thozamile Botha's papers dwelled on the role that civics and trade unions played during the transition, which was evident with the creation of the UDF in 1983.[32] According to Mkhatshwa, in the new South Africa, civics should become the driving force at the local level for the democratisation of government and development. On the other hand, Botha denounced the role of development agencies created by industrial capital after the Soweto riots since they prevented a process of development from below and simply perpetuated inequalities.

All papers reflected a concern with the political violence that had erupted during the transition. If we were to summarise the analysis of this period, according to the vision expressed in the book, we would have to say that social disintegration after the abolition of the apartheid legislation made the political negotiations difficult; subversive thrusts were absorbed in an ambiguous political, social and economic context of dramatic change. Inkatha tried to create a low-intensity conflict to establish a conservative front and to undermine the credibility and power of the National Party government and the ANC. However, other social actors, including trade unions and civics who had been the protagonists of the 1980s struggles, helped to overcome the stalemate. The time factor was crucial for the success of the transition.

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[31] A.M. Omar. "Democratic Majority Rule vs. Power Sharing". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 123-136; K. Asmal. "South Africa: The Constitutional Crossroads". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 227-240.

[32] S. Mkhatshwa. "Governing from Below". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 137-159; T. Botha. "Towards the Transformation of Traditional State and Private Sector Funded Development Agencies into Community Empowering Institutions: The Case of the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the Independent Development Trust". In Gentili (ed.). *Sudafrica: processi di mutamento*, pp. 161-184.

The inevitability of the process, notwithstanding the violent climate of the early 1990s, was also the point of a monograph by Chiara Robertazzi. However, she questioned the challenge of the new South Africa as a "democratic and multi-ethnic State" and the sustainability of the balance of power that the figure of Mandela guaranteed. But she was more concerned with new possible forms of social exclusion than the endurance of democratic institutions. South Africa indeed had strong and independent intermediate institutions, such as universities, the media, and trade unions that prevented any autocratic drift. Robertazzi raised further doubts about the expectations of the new South Africa as a driving force for the whole continent. The analysis is, however, affected by the fact that the book is the outcome of research undertaken in US libraries rather than on the field in South Africa itself.[33]

In another volume, edited by Itala Vivan in 1996, the analysis on the perspectives of the new South Africa was entrusted to ten scholars, most of them South African.[34] The target of this book was also non-specialists, with the aim of widening the reading audience on South African issues. Vivan considered the new South Africa as a social, cultural and political laboratory. The vision of an innovative South Africa was substantiated in the multiple identities which had been segregated in "ethnic" and "racial" spaces but had persisted and had been waiting for liberation. All the contributions focused on the transition from apartheid to democracy. The chapter by Gian Paolo Calchi Novati[35] set South Africa within the African context and pointed out the need to decolonise and democratise South African history and historiography. On the whole, the volume presents a positive view on the future of South Africa and its transformation.[36]

In the last decade, Itala Vivan has edited two more volumes, which were collections of papers written by Italian, South African and international scholars that aimed to monitor the state and the evolution of the "rainbow

[33] Robertazzi. *Verso un nuovo Sudafrica*.

[34] Besides the editor, Itala Vivan, and Gian Paolo Calchi Novati, all authors who wrote in the book were South African scholars. Most of them came from the University of Cape Town: Thomas William Bennett, Emile A. Boonzaier, Thandabantu Nhlapo, Nigel Worden; others, such as Steven Friedman and Caroline White, were from the Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg.

[35] G. Calchi Novati. "La storia perduta, la storia ritrovata". In Vivan (ed.). *Il Nuovo Sudafrica*, pp. 3-37.

[36] See also S. Friedman. "Quanto durerà il miracolo? Politica e nuova democrazia". In Vivan (ed.). *Il Nuovo Sudafrica*, pp. 69-109.

nation". One of these, which was the result of a conference held at the University of Milan in November 2004,[37] was published after ten years of democracy and was in many ways a continuation of the 1996 volume, either because almost the same group of scholars wrote in both (for example Thomas W. Bennett and Gian Paolo Calchi Novati) or in terms of the themes and issues dealt with in the chapters. The book emphasised that, notwithstanding the awareness of errors and failures during the transition process, South Africa still had strong institutions and a legal justice system that people believed in, partially thanks to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which contributed to the restructuring of a collective identity in a reframed social body. The last volume edited by Vivan *et al.*[38] was published in 2012, and, as the subtitle suggested (*The Rainbow Nation after Twenty Years of Liberation*), analysed the historical and social dynamics, the international role and the cultural transformations of the new South Africa. The book lies largely within the field of cultural and post-colonial studies, as most of the papers focus on literature and cultural aspects, while fewer papers than was the case in the previous collections provide a historical, political and socio-economic perspective.[39] Nonetheless, doubts and questions about the positive future of the rainbow nation are more evident, particularly regarding racial tensions and national identity, with alarming trends such as xenophobia and media restriction – South Africa is still perceived as an interesting "laboratory".

Following the growing interest in the democratic transition in South Africa, which marked a watershed in world history, other books[40] were published during those years. They focused particularly on two important and innovative features of the new democratic South Africa: the new constitution and the process of national reconciliation through the TRC.

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[37] I. Vivan (ed.). *Corpi liberati in cerca di storia, di storie. Il Nuovo Sudafrica dieci anni dopo l'apartheid*. Milano: Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2005.

[38] L. de Michelis, C. Gualtieri, R. Pedretti and I. Vivan (eds). *Prisma Sudafrica. La nazione arcobaleno a vent'anni dalla liberazione (1990-2010)*. Firenze: Le Lettere, 2012.

[39] M. Flores d'Arcais. "Il peso del passato: l'immagine del Sudafrica tra storia e memoria", pp. 17-28; A. Pallotti. "Sudafrica e Africa dopo la fine dell'apartheid: rilancio dello sviluppo e gestione della sicurezza", pp. 29-45; C. Fiamingo. "La reintegrazione socio-economica degli ex-combattenti sudafricani", pp. 47-62, in De Michelis *et al.* (eds). *Prisma Sudafrica.*

[40] R. Orrù. *La Costituzione di tutti. Il Sudafrica dalla segregazione razziale alla democrazia della "rainbow nation"*. Torino: Giappichelli Editore, 1998; M. Flores (ed.). *Verità senza vendetta. L'esperienza della Commissione sudafricana per la Verità e la Riconciliazione*. Roma: Manifestolibri, 1999.

Romano Orrù, a professor in Constitutional Law, was driven to analyse the case of South Africa and to consider it a "constitutional laboratory" through the idea of the "rainbow nation", represented in the new constitution that repudiates apartheid and is based on the democratic principles of equality and freedom, non-racialism, non-sexism, the rule of law and fundamental human rights. It expressed interesting solutions not only for the country itself, but for all societies that had experienced profound divisions.

Although his analysis focused on the constitutional system and on reconciliation and reconstruction, Orrù was aware of the complex political, social and economic context and the conflictive history of South Africa. He recognised an advanced institutional framework that has been difficult to implement completely because of a problematic political and social environment. He also spoke of the "South African miracle" because of the agreement that the country was able to reach, especially if seen in the context of other realities in the continent and in the world. The new South Africa was born out of a negotiation process which respected the rules. This allowed the continuity of the state with a short-term government of national unity and allowed the general elections to be held with full universal suffrage. This process was assured by the figure of Nelson Mandela who embodied the ideals of reconciliation between oppressed and oppressors. The challenge posed to the constitutional framework would be to eradicate the social and economic legacies of apartheid without stopping the economic engine. In practice, this had to result in the fight against unemployment and poverty, the accomplishment of a land reform programme, the redistribution of national wealth, and service delivery in an environment of social peace and collaboration between political and economic power-holders.

The other event of world significance in the post-apartheid transition which found a space in the Italian literature was the TRC. A book worthy of being quoted is *Verità senza vendetta* (Truth without revenge), edited by Marcello Flores. It is an anthology of the most significant proceedings of the TRC, translated into Italian with a long introduction by the editor entitled "Verità e giustizia nel Sudafrica democratico" (Truth and justice in democratic South Africa). Marcello Flores is a contemporary historian who specialises in the Cold War, communism and the subject of memory as new source in historiography. His analysis of the TRC is part of a wider critical analysis on the post-Cold War change that occurred after 1989. It is also part of debates over history and justice, where history and memory, and truth and punishment intertwine in complex situations, as was the case in Bosnia and Rwanda during the same period. However, the South African TRC emerged

as the most original way of coming to terms with a violent and divisive past. In addition to the 1976 youth uprising, Flores recognised the end of the Cold War as the historical landmark of rapid change in South Africa. In 1989 F.W. de Klerk became president, succeeding P.W. Botha who had prevented any substantial change under the states of emergency during the so-called reformist period of apartheid in the previous decade. The speech by de Klerk on 2 February 1990 was the starting point of the transition that ended with the elections in April 1994. The transition period was a dynamic but at the same time violent, unstable and contradictory period. The new constitution and the TRC concluded this process.

The TRC had the task of reconstructing the violations of human rights committed between 1960 and 1993 in order to prevent similar crimes in the future. Transparency and truth were requested for forgiveness within a political compromise. The full disclosure and public acknowledgement of abuse and suffering had to counterbalance amnesty. The TRC gave priority to the voices of victims over the applications for amnesty. At the heart of the issue there was the dilemma of "punishment or reconciliation". The political compromise that allowed for a successful transition, emphatically called a "negotiated revolution", pushed the legal process into the background. The historical experiences of post-war courts, such as Nuremberg, have not always resulted in justice and the punishment of crimes. Victims often seek the factual, followed by the moral and political truth, more than the mere legal truth. However, although the TRC was produced by a political compromise that enabled the entire constitutional process, it is not a direct political resolution. The TRC did not have to construct a new collective memory, but had to start a process, based on a common public ethic of shared values inspired by human rights, which the new government and institutions had to consolidate and make permanent. Memory was the outcome, not the objective. It could be achieved through the use and narration of the truth. The focus on truth more than justice meant that amnesty was not given priority. Reconciliation comes after the emergence of the truth, which should be not only factual, but also historical. The punishment was part of collective participation; it was the sanction of community. Nonetheless, Flores concludes that real reconciliation can only happen when the injustices and inequalities of apartheid have been eradicated.[41]

[41] M. Flores. "Introduzione. Verità e giustizia nel Sudafrica democratico". In Flores (ed.). *Verità senza vendetta*, pp. 7-63.

The new generation of researchers

At the turn of the new millennium, Italian research on South Africa started to grow, thanks to a new generation of researchers affiliated to African Studies centres, notably at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" and in the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Bologna. The PhD programmes of the two universities gave some young researchers the opportunity to move to an international setting for their work, with long periods of research in South Africa, as well as providing the opportunity to focus on topics more integrated with and related to South African and international streams of research. Their approaches were more interdisciplinary, combining historical with social and political science research methodologies. This new wave of research partly resulted in a new journal on African, Mediterranean and Middle East Studies, *Afriche e Orienti*, created by a group of researchers and scholars mainly coming from the two above-mentioned universities. One of the first issues of the journal, published to coincide with the South African elections of 1999, dealt with the South African transition.[42] The papers, apart from the introductory paper by Maria Cristina Ercolessi[43] on the electoral results and their consequences for the political system, were written by young Italian scholars engaged in primary research in South Africa. They reflected an interest in the nature of the post-transition South African democratic state. In particular, Franco Barchiesi[44] looked at the role of Cosatu in the democratic government and in the social stabilisation of the country; Antonio Pezzano and Sebastiana Etzo [45] focused on local government reform and service delivery; and Massimiliano Giamprini [46] focused on the crime issue. All these young researchers got their degrees either at the Universities of Bologna (Barchiesi and Giamprini) or Naples (Etzo and Pezzano). We could add to this group two other young researchers from Bologna – Barbara Bompani, who dealt with identity and religious movements, and Arrigo Pallotti, who was more interested in the regional system and the role of the Southern African

[42] See *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, Autumn 1999.

[43] M.C. Ercolessi. "Sudafrica, 1994-1999: elezioni e sistema dei partiti". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 2-7.

[44] F. Barchiesi. "COSATU e governo democratico tra istituzionalizzazione politica e marginalizzazione sociale". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 8-13.

[45] A. Pezzano and S. Etzo. "Sviluppo e riforma del governo locale". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 14-19.

[46] M. Giamprini. "La criminalità in Sudafrica". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3, 1999, pp. 23-27.

Development Community (SADC) – to support the hypothesis that a school of southern African studies was being born in Italy.

It is interesting to note that this new research stream focuses on issues that are relevant not only to South Africa, but to the entire region and even the whole continent. The issue of citizenship and its definition – looking at it from the local, regional and transnational scales – and the idea of moving beyond the formal and normative approach of democracy – looking at crucial topics such as land reform, migration, the relationship between state and social movements, neo-liberal reforms and their impact on the state and its functions, and the mobilisation of identity – were at the core of these new studies.[47]

The new wave of interest in and research on South and southern Africa was undertaken by this group of scholars who, despite the difficulties created by funding cuts in Italian universities, particularly in African Studies, over the last decades, were able to gain co-funding from the Italian Department of Education, University and Research (MIUR) for two cycles of projects, one in the second half of the period 2000-2009 and another one in the first half of the 2010s. The first Project of National Interest (Prin) was coordinated by Anna Maria Gentili from the University of Bologna, its focus made clear in its title: "Governance and Institution Building, 'Virtuous Circle' of the Poverty Alleviation and Developmental Policies in Southern Africa?". Beyond the Universities of Bologna and "L'Orientale" of Naples, some scholars from the Universities of Turin and Rome were also involved in the project.

The research was a comparative multidisciplinary study on developmental processes and strategies to fight poverty and to empower citizens in the southern African region. It aimed to verify whether, and to what extent, the approach linking good governance with poverty reduction and social inclusion policies was able to affect the processes of forming both social equality (access to social citizenship and basic services, poverty alleviation, income redistribution, reduction of horizontal and spatial inequalities between urban and rural and in gender relations) and political inclusion (access to political citizenship, civic freedoms, political participation in decision-making processes at different levels, including decentralised government).

The research unit of the University of Naples "L'Orientale", coordinated by Maria Cristina Ercolessi, focused on "Governance Reforms, Social

[47] Ercolessi. "L'Africa australe", pp. 168-170.

Exclusion, and Fight against Poverty in Southern Africa: The Cases of South Africa and Angola". Sebastiana Etzo and Antonio Pezzano, who completed their PhD programmes with long periods of fieldwork,[48] focused on the South African case.

The research was based on the premise that strong social and economic imbalances and inequalities inherited by the former apartheid regime were largely unchanged after more than a decade since the first democratic elections. Despite the creation and growth of a black middle class and a rich elite, one third of the population was still classified as poor; the country was experiencing high levels of unemployment with limited opportunities for the younger generation, and the wide quality-of-life gap between urban and rural areas persisted. Social citizenship did not follow the achievement of civic and political rights, especially for the mass of African have-nots, the poor, unemployed or temporarily employed (mainly young) people. The laissez-faire choices set out by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR), the macro-economic policy document adopted in 1996, prioritised the requirement for competitiveness as demanded by global markets through the search for investors' trust and foreign investment, over state intervention focused on redistribution. The latter was more serious in a country like South Africa, with high indexes of vertical and horizontal social inequality.

A further premise underpinning this body of research was that the different articulations of the "transition" from the apartheid regime to a democratic system in South Africa were not necessarily coherent. In most cases, political and social citizenship was not strengthened. The process of institution-building (local government reform and decentralisation) and the implementation of correlated policies (service delivery) at central as well as local level, circumscribed and limited the spaces for the political and social action of citizens, social movements and other local actors, reducing them to passive "beneficiaries" of top-down policies. Although the post-apartheid state "contracts out" some of its functions, particularly those related to welfare, it keeps a strong central executive power, strengthened by the undisputed dominant political position of the ANC. In this context, the local

[48] Antonio Pezzano completed his PhD Programme in History of Africa at the University of Siena in 2004, with a thesis on *African Small and Micro Entrepreneurs in the Witwatersrand: A Historical Perspective*. Sebastiana Etzo completed her PhD Programme in African Studies at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" in 2004, with a thesis on *Local Government Restructuring and the Emergence of Urban Social Movements in Post-apartheid South Africa. The Case of Johannesburg*.

becomes an autonomous place of production and consumption and the local government a contracting authority responsible for services, but not committed to supply them (this process is known as corporatisation, that is, the separation and autonomy of the supply units from the municipal council).

The research also analysed urban governance, in particular the local government reforms and their policies aimed at fighting poverty and social exclusion. The city is understood as a political, jurisdictional, economic and social space and as a network of actors and interests participating in local-level dynamics and struggles. Major attention was thus given to new social actors, protagonists of complex political and social dynamics at the local level.

The research resulted in a publication, edited by Ercolessi,[49] on governance and development policies in southern Africa. The book has a first part on Angola and a second part on post-apartheid South Africa, which included the chapters by Pezzano and Etzo that focused respectively on governance, participation and urban poverty, and on housing policies and informal settlements in Durban.[50] This field of research was followed up by Antonio Pezzano who then focused on informal trading policies in the City of Johannesburg. The research is still in progress as part of a new national research project: "State, Plurality, and Change in Africa".[51]

During 2009 and 2010, when the spotlight was on South Africa because of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, a mass of popular newspaper articles and non-academic monographs were published about South Africa, but they had no scientific value. (An exception might be the special issue that *Limes*, the Italian journal of geopolitics, dedicated to South Africa.)[52]

Instead, it is worth mentioning, in concluding this review of Italian historiography on South Africa, a couple of paperbacks published by two important Italian academic publishers in 2009. The first one is a historical review written by Mario Zamponi, researcher at the University of Bologna

[49] M.C. Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche di sviluppo in Africa australe*. Roma: Carocci, 2009.

[50] A. Pezzano. "Politiche di sviluppo o strategie di lotta alla povertà?". In Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche*, pp. 69-73; A. Pezzano. "*Governance*, partecipazione e povertà urbana". In Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche*, pp. 75-99; S. Etzo. "Le politiche sulla casa e la rivolta degli insediamenti informali a eThekwini/Durban". In Ercolessi (ed.). *Governance e politiche*, pp. 101-119.

[51] This is a broader research project in which most of the Italian scholars on African Studies are involved. The Naples unit, coordinated by Professor M.C. Ercolessi, focuses on North and southern Africa.

[52] "Il Sudafrica in nero e bianco". *Limes*, 3, 2010.

and editor of *Afriche e Orienti*;[53] the second was written by Veronica Federico, a young scholar of Public and Constitutional Law, who spent some years as a PhD student and research fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand, and focused on institution-building and the new constitutional framework of South Africa.[54]

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the Italian historiography of South Africa produced at the time the anti-apartheid movement developed. As pointed out in the chapter, the first approach to South and southern African studies in Italy was almost militant, rather than formally academic. Particularly in the 1970s, the publications were inspired by the international solidarity leftist movements and parties and were published in their journals/reviews or propagandistic documents. This documentation did not become a corpus of historiographical literature and is getting lost over time.

In the mid-1980s, the obvious crisis of the apartheid regime led some Italian scholars and researchers to focus their work on South Africa. But the most significant publications were political analyses of the crisis of the apartheid regime and the possible future scenarios of change, rather than historical works.

Publications were more numerous in the 1990s because of the historical transition from apartheid to democracy. Most of these were published around the turning point of the democratic elections in 1994 and examined the challenges of the future for the "rainbow nation". Some publications focused particularly on innovative features of the new democratic South Africa, such as the new constitution and the process of national reconciliation through the TRC. They were mostly written by scholars of other disciplines, attracted by the particular and exceptional nature of the events. Despite all those new publications, a body of historiographical literature on South Africa had not yet been created in Italy. Nevertheless, at the turn of the new millennium, a young generation of scholars, particularly in the Universities of Naples and Bologna, spent long periods of fieldwork as visiting researchers at South African universities, focusing on topics more integrated with and related to

[53] M. Zamponi. *Breve storia del Sudafrica. Dalla segregazione alla democrazia*. Roma: Carocci, 2009.

[54] V. Federico. *Sudafrica*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009.

South African and international streams of research, and more concerned with the nature of democracy in terms of citizenship and social and economic transformation. Their approaches were also more interdisciplinary, combining historical with social and political science research methodologies. Although they have not yet created a real critical mass or a new school of studies, these new researchers have certainly contributed to the development of Italian literature on South Africa.

CHAPTER 2
Italy and Apartheid South Africa: Between Innovation and Ambivalence, 1976-1990

MARIA CRISTINA ERCOLESSI

The present chapter will deal with Italy's foreign policy towards the apartheid regime in South Africa during the period 1976-1990, from the Soweto uprising to the liberation of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners in February 1990, which started the transition to a democratic South Africa. The choice of this time frame is mainly motivated by the intensification of both domestic and international mobilisation against apartheid. On 21 March 1978, coinciding with the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the United Nations (UN) Special Committee against Apartheid proclaimed the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, officially launching the International Year against Apartheid declared by the UN General Assembly.

The 1980s witnessed a significant increase in international protest against apartheid both within the UN and other international bodies like the Commonwealth, and by grassroots movements, trade unions, political parties and Members of Parliament (MPs) in Western countries. Such mobilisation, which became widespread in the US and in Europe in the second half of the decade following the declaration of the state of emergency by the Pretoria government, called for more stringent measures against the South African white minority regime, exercising considerable pressure on Western parliaments and governments.[1] A number of Western governments (the US administration, individual European governments, and the European Commission) were induced – notwithstanding their reluctance to do so – to adopt packages of actions both punitive (economic sanctions and more or

[1] For a detailed picture of such processes, see SADET (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 3: International Solidarity*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2008.

less selective embargoes) and "positive", i.e. measures meant to support civil society and organisations (from the churches to the trade unions) as well as to contribute to the betterment of social conditions for the black masses of South Africa.[2]

Italy, too, was forced to take into account increasing pressures coming from the domestic environment (the Italian anti-apartheid movement) and the international context: the hardening of anti-apartheid resolutions in the UN General Assembly and Security Council, and the demands of its African partners, especially in southern Africa.[3] At the same time, the Italian government tried to balance its policy towards the non-aligned developing world against its membership of the Atlantic Alliance (relations with the US) and its traditional commitment to European cooperation. Such a position is clearly visible in the pre-Soweto period, especially in the UN, where on the one hand Italy used to express firmer condemnations of the apartheid regime than other Western partners, but on the other, its lack of compliance with voluntary sanctions, especially the arms embargo established by the UN Security Council in 1963, belied the political rhetoric and was repeatedly denounced by the UN Special Committee against Apartheid in the 1960s and

[2] At the time, the debate revolved around sanctions vs positive actions both in the US and in the European community; the governments and political forces unwilling to apply economic sanctions against apartheid argued that sanctions would hurt mainly the African population by reducing economic growth and increasing unemployment while stiffening the apartheid regime's resistance to change. As is well known, this was the main argument of the US "constructive engagement" (A. Thomson. *US Foreign Policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and Margaret Thatcher's government. Greatly overlooked was the role that punitive actions like sanctions could play in setting in motion a political and social process within white society and political establishment in favor of negotiations. See also D.G. Anglin. "Ripe, Ripening, or Overripe? Sanctions as an Inducement to Negotiations: The South African Case". *International Journal*, XLV, 2, 1990, pp. 360-385.

[3] It must be recalled that in the second half of the 1980s Italy greatly increased its official development aid (ODA) to Africa and by the end of the decade became the main donor in the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference region; Italy was the most important ODA partner of socialist Mozambique and Angola and on friendly terms with the Frontline States. As we shall see below, such a position benefited from a long history of solidarity with and support for the liberation movements of southern Africa by leftist political parties as well as sectors of Catholic groups, and helps explain why Italy was able to play such a relevant role in the Mozambican peace process in the early 1990s. On Italy as ODA donor in Africa, see Chapter 1 in M.C. Ercolessi. *Conflitti e mutamento politico in Africa. Il ruolo degli attori esterni e delle relazioni inter-africane*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1991, pp. 25-85. For a shorter analysis in English, see M.C. Ercolessi. "Italy's Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa". In S. Brune, J. Betz, W. Kuhne (eds). *Africa and Europe: Relations of Two Continents in Transition*. Munster and Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 1994, pp. 87-107.

1970s.[4] In the 1980s the need to behave within the European consensus became the recurrent leitmotif of the Italian government's declarations, especially in the domestic arena of the Italian parliament, exposing the reactive rather than proactive character of Italy's policy towards apartheid.

In the following pages I shall focus on the posture adopted in the 1980s by Italian official institutions, i.e. the Italian coalition governments and parliament, with a special emphasis on the political debate triggered by the attempts by MPs of left-wing parties (the Italian Communist Party [PCI] and the so called Independent Left)[5] to promote a firmer policy against apartheid and the adoption of concrete economic measures of embargo and disinvestment. The development of the Italian anti-apartheid movement, which was influenced by the same leftist organisations and in turn influenced leftist parties and trade unions, will remain in the background except for references relevant to our main subject.[6] Nor will the positions and internal debate of the main political parties of the time – whose policies towards sub-Saharan Africa have been scantly researched so far, with the partial exception of the Communist Party – be analysed.[7]

Regional solidarity and the anti-apartheid struggle

Available official sources by the Italian government, ministries and/or parliamentary institutions (the Assembly, the Foreign Affairs Committee of

[4] See the former Secretary of the Special Committee against Apartheid, E.S. Reddy. *Italy and Arms Embargo against Apartheid South Africa. My Reminiscences*, 27 February 2010, http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=6866&t=United, accessed 15 May 2014. This document is one of the very few references to Italy in the online archive of the ANC. The ambiguities of Italy's stance in the 1960s and 1970s are detailed in M. Rossi. *Tutela dei diritti umani e realpolitik. L'Italia alle Nazioni Unite (1955-1976)*. Milano: CEDAM, pp. 253-254, and C. Fiamingo. "Movimenti anti-Apartheid in Italia, dalla genesi alla proclamazione del 1978 anno internazionale della lotta contro l'Apartheid. Documenti (e memoria) a rischio". *Trimestre Storia-Politica-Società*, XXXVII, 13-14, 2004, pp. 369-390.

[5] The Sinistra Indipendente (Independent Left) was composed of MPs elected in the electoral rolls of the Communist Party without being members of the same party; it included intellectuals and personalities of civil society, often of Catholic belief. In parliament they acted as a separate group from the one represented by the PCI.

[6] For the evolution of the Italian anti-apartheid movement see Fiamingo's chapter in this volume, as well as C. Fiamingo. "Italy, 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime, and Its Internal Opposition". In SADET (eds). *The Road to Democracy*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 691-703.

[7] The most comprehensive work on the subject is P. Borruso. *Il PCI e l'Africa indipendente. Apogeo e crisi di un'utopia socialista.* Firenze: Le Monnier, 2009.

the Chamber of Deputies, and the Senate)[8] show very clearly that the apartheid system per se drew only scant and scattered attention at the institutional level for most of the period concerned. In fact, South Africa received less attention in decision-making circles than other parts of Africa, for example the Horn of Africa and other southern African countries, especially the former Portuguese colonies. Official declarations by the government or the Foreign Affairs Ministry are usually found in general programmes and reports concerning Italy's aid policy and its priorities in Africa – a fact which underlies the foreign policy instruments that Rome was willing and/or able to select and apply in its strategy towards the continent.

Development and humanitarian concerns officially shaped foreign policy towards Africa, allowing Italy to develop an approach more consistent with regional realities and less obsessed with Cold War considerations, thus taking some distance from the more "globalist" approach of the Reagan administration. In the 1980s Italy's intense development cooperation with socialist governments in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola differed from Washington's strategy of isolation of these regimes. At the same time, the emphasis on development, dialogue and solidarity freed the Italian government – and to a large extent political parties as well – from the need to frame a coherent strategy to combat apartheid and to implement concrete measures of sanctions against the white regime in South Africa. The issue of racial segregation and separate development was primarily confined to, and dealt with at the multilateral level in the UN General Assembly, where Italy could voice its condemnation on "moral grounds" while at the same time avoid having to take more active initiatives.

Before proceeding to a more detailed analysis of Italy's policy towards apartheid South Africa, I would like to anticipate three main points which inform my understanding of such policy.

Firstly, during the 1970s and 1980s it was practically impossible to disentangle in the Italian political debate a "South African question",[9] separate from the broader situation of southern Africa (solidarity with liberation movements, destabilisation of the Frontline States [FLS], development cooperation with the newly independent countries of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe). Such merging was partly justified by the

[8] Such sources can be consulted in the digital archives on the official websites of the Chamber of Deputies (http://storia.camera.it/) and the Senate of the Italian Republic (http://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/relazioni/archiviostorico, accessed 17 November 2014).

[9] In Italian: "questione sudafricana".

structural interdependence between the struggle against apartheid and the defense of the sovereignty and stability of neighbouring countries jeopardised by Pretoria's aggressive regional strategy. However, this also meant that Italy could implement a double-track policy which on the one hand stressed the need to reinforce regional cooperation (through the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference [SADCC] and the FLS) and economic independence from South Africa as well as the UN initiative on Namibia's decolonisation, while on the other hand refrained from applying more effective pressure on Pretoria and invoked "dialogue" as a means to persuade the white government to "reform".

Secondly, the choice to give priority in the political discourse to the preservation of sovereignty and independence of the regional states confronted by South Africa's destabilisation was largely shared by both government forces and opposition parties in parliament, including the PCI.[10] As I will show below, there were differences between the position of the coalition government and the stance of leftist parties concerning the degree of pressure to apply on Pretoria to promote domestic change, the liberation of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, the transition to a democratic South Africa and the end of apartheid. The PCI and leftist groups and personalities were generally in favour of selected sanctions and attacked government for the supply of military equipment and technologies to South Africa in violation of the arms embargo. But demands for a more stringent ban on the import of goods like coal, steel and gold surfaced quite late, in the second half of the 1980s, following the deterioration of the domestic situation in South Africa with the imposition of the second state of emergency, the shaping of a European consensus on a package of sanctions in September 1986 and the growing mobilisation of the international anti-apartheid movement.[11]

Thirdly, the existence of a largely shared national consensus did not prevent a degree of pluralism of actors, positions and actions, on both the government and the opposition side. On the government side, it must be recalled that the second part of the 1970s and the 1980s witnessed the

[10] From the end of World War II to its transformation in the Democratic Party of the Left (Partito Democratico della Sinistra, PDS) in 1991, the PCI was the second most voted party (after the Christian Democracy) and the main opposition party in parliament. Therefore in this chapter the term "opposition" refers to the Communist Party plus a few minor leftist groups.

[11] It may be useful to recall that at the time the Italian Communist Party was in principle against the imposition of sanctions as a means to punish international misbehaviour; cases in point were the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the hostage crisis in Iran.

growth of solidarity initiatives and campaigns "to combat hunger" in developing countries, and more generally an increase in public opinion interest in international solidarity and cooperation. Besides the support given by leftist parties to liberation movements, a growing array of Catholic/Christian groups, as well as newly founded NGOs and civil society organisations, started engaging with development and liberation issues.

In the second part of the 1980s, the making of Italy's policy towards Africa became more and more complex following the creation in 1985 of the Italian Aid Fund (FAI – Fondo Aiuti Italiani). The Fund, headed by a Foreign Affairs undersecretary and endowed with a great amount of resources for emergency and humanitarian aid, paralleled the action of the International Development Cooperation Department – the responsibility of another Foreign Affairs undersecretary in charge of African policy as well as development cooperation. It is worth noting that the undersecretary of the latter, Mario Raffaelli, largely prioritised southern Africa,[12] while FAI focused on the Horn of Africa and, to a lesser extent, on the Sahel region.

On the opposition side, three main factors contributed to the debate within the Communist Party: the activities of some communist-led local administrations, the most important of which was the Municipality of Reggio Emilia; the pressure of the anti-apartheid movement, trade unions, NGOs and civil society groups; and a more general and more open discussion on nationalist movements and socialist experiments both in Africa and in the Middle East, especially in the pages of the weekly official magazine *Rinascita*, by politicians, scholars and journalists.[13]

In the first half of the 1970s two major initiatives of solidarity were organised: the first was the "International Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of the Portuguese Colonies" (held in Rome in June 1970), mainly supported by the leftist parties and with the participation of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC – Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA – Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo – Frente de Libertação de Moçambique). The main outcome of this conference was the

[12] In the early 1990s Mario Raffaelli, together with the Catholic community of Sant'Egidio, was the main mediator in the peace negotiations in Mozambique.

[13] The roles of local governments and of the anti-apartheid movements are analysed in this volume by Mirco Carrattieri and Gianluca Grassi and Cristiana Fiamingo. For the debate on communist newspapers, see P. Borruso. *Il PCI e l'Africa indipendente*.

meeting between Pope Paul VI and the leaders of the three liberation movements, which amounted to a *de facto* recognition by the Vatican.

The second event was the "National Conference of Solidarity against Colonialism and Imperialism for Freedom and Independence of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola" organised in March 1973 by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. Delegates at the highest level of PAIGC, MPLA and Frelimo, as well as the South African representative for the ANC, Anthony Mongalo, participated in the conference. The three major Italian political parties (the Christian Democracy, DC, the Communist Party, PCI, and the Socialist Party, PSI) officially attended the conference and signed a joint document in favour of the independence of the peoples of southern Africa and against apartheid. The same parties (two of which, DC and PSI, were in government) entered the newly founded National Solidarity Committee based in Reggio Emilia.

The decolonisation of the Portuguese empire rearranged the priorities of Italy's foreign policy in the region in two directions: firstly, in terms of the relations to be established with the new socialist regimes of Angola and Mozambique; secondly, in terms of the goal of achieving the independence of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South-West Africa (Namibia). It is worth recalling, however, that this shift occurred while the Soweto uprising and ensuing harsh repression signalled the radicalisation of the internal social and political struggle in South Africa itself.

At the time, the Italian government and political parties opted for sustained support of Mozambique and to a lesser extent Angola, whose MPLA government was recognised in February 1976. In 1977 the undersecretary for African Affairs, Luciano Radi, visited both Maputo and Luanda, starting development cooperation programmes which were later extended to newly liberated Zimbabwe.[14]

It was in this context that the relationship between the Italian solidarity network and the ANC started to develop further. The ANC had had a representative in Italy since 1970 and used a room at MOLISV's premises in Rome as its office. After MOLISV moved to larger facilities around 1978,

[14] It may be worth recalling that in the Horn of Africa, Italy established friendly relations with both the socialist military regimes of Somalia and later Ethiopia, thus distancing itself from the more punitive attitude of the US. The main instrument of such policy in the Horn and in southern Africa was development aid. The rationale, which can be inferred from official declarations and documents of the time, seemed to be that cooperation in the field of development would be more useful to the goal of detaching Afro-Marxist regimes from the Soviet embrace than Washington confrontationist strategy.

the ANC was able to remain in the old office with the assistance, once again, of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, which also contributed to the publication in Italian of the ANC journal *Sechaba*.[15] In the same city, in November 1978, a "National Conference of Solidarity for the Independence and Sovereignty of the Peoples of Southern Africa against Colonialism, Racism and Apartheid" was organised in order to discuss and devise strategies to fight apartheid in Italy. The conference was supported by most of the Italian political parties and was attended by Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC, Sam Nujoma, president of the South West Africa People's Organisation (Swapo), and Robert Mugabe and Josiah Chinamano from the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe.[16]

In May 1980 the first solidarity ship sailed from Genoa to Maputo to deliver aid to the people of southern Africa and to South African exiles in the region, under the auspices of top leaders of the main political parties and trade unions. In late February 1982 a second "National Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa" was organised in Rome by Italian political parties and national trade unions. The conference launched the second solidarity ship as well as a campaign calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa.

Targeting apartheid in South Africa? The ambiguous unfinished sanctions

In the first half of the 1980s a number of decisive shifts in the southern African region forced Europe (the European Economic Community, EEC) and Italy to reconsider and rearrange their policies and priorities in the area. The independence of Zimbabwe, under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, opened the way to new forms of regional cooperation with the establishment of the SADCC and the FLS organisation; the "total strategy" pursued by the government of P.W. Botha destabilised the entire region, and in particular

[15] A digitalised version of *Sechaba* for the period 1978-1984 is available on the website of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia: http://www.comune.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/DocumentID/EA692E01ED25314CC1257A8B0032BCBF?opendocument, accessed 17 November 2014.

[16] Speeches and contributions to the 1978 conference are collected in R. Ledda (ed.). *Indipendenza e sovranità dei popoli dell'Africa australe: materiale di studio e documentazione tratto dalla conferenza nazionale di solidarietà con i popoli dell'Africa australe, Reggio Emilia 25-26 novembre 1978*. Roma: Edizioni delle Autonomie, 1979.

Angola and Mozambique, whose governments had to cope with destructive civil wars carried out by armed movements supported by Pretoria (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola [Unita] and the Mozambican National Resistance [Renamo] respectively). The question of Namibia was still unsettled while the new Reagan administration introduced the notion of a "linkage" between Namibia's decolonisation and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola within the framework of the "constructive engagement" strategy with the Pretoria regime and a more "globalist" approach to Africa, stressing the priority of contrasting and containing "Soviet penetration". The mix of so-called reforms of the apartheid system introduced by President Botha, harsh repression of black protest against and boycotts of the same reforms in the townships, as well as the military and economic destabilisation of the region combined with "appeasement" moves by the white regime (i.e. the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique and the Lusaka Accord with Angola in 1984), amplified the cruciality of the "South African question", while at the same time feeding a political debate among scholars and policy makers in Europe and in Italy about the significance of the reforms and the resulting strategies to adopt towards South Africa in order to promote change.

Up to 1985-1986, that is, up to the declaration of the states of emergency in South Africa, European and Italian options focused mainly on the priority of giving support to the FLS confronted by Pretoria's aggression and to the SADCC cooperation efforts. This was pursued primarily through the commitment of development aid to the region and the tightening of relations between the EEC and the countries of the area (in the mid-1980s both Mozambique and Angola entered the EEC-ACP Lomé Convention).[17] But increasingly the attention started to shift to the connection between regional issues (Namibia's independence included) and the evolution of the domestic situation in South Africa. This shift is visible in one resolution adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the EEC-ACP and later approved by the Italian Chamber of Deputies on 21 September 1984.[18] The Resolution pointed to four major actions:

[17] For more details on EEC policy in this period, see Ercolessi. *Conflitti*, pp. 87-124. See also M. Holland. *The European Community and South Africa. European Political Cooperation under Strain.* London: Pinter, 1988.

[18] Camera dei Deputati. *Risoluzione sui risultati della missione di inchiesta negli stati colpiti dalle conseguenze degli atti di aggressione commessi dal Sudafrica e sulla situazione in Africa australe*, Risoluzione dell'Assemblea Consultiva ACP-CEE, approvata dalla Camera dei Deputati in data 21 settembre 1984.

- to increase aid to the FLS as well as to the SADCC;
- to strengthen and increase the effectiveness of pressures on Pretoria with the goal of dismantling apartheid; in particular it called on the EEC and its member countries to dissuade private corporations from investing in South Africa;
- to condemn internal repression and to call for the liberation of the leaders of black organisations;
- to support the negotiations for Namibian independence on the basis of UN Resolution 435 and of the Lusaka agreement between the Luanda government and South Africa and to call for the end of Pretoria's intervention in Angola in order to create the conditions for the withdrawal of foreign troops (read: Cuban troops) from the area

As already noted, the Resolution was adopted by the Italian parliament but neither in Europe nor in Italy was it translated into concrete and effective measures against apartheid. Steps in such a direction still had to wait a couple of years and were definitely taken in response to the pressure of the deteriorating political situation and hardening repression in South Africa under the two states of emergency, and the emergence of a vibrant grass-roots anti-apartheid movement in Europe. In Italy, a Coordinamento Nazionale contro l'Apartheid in Sudafrica (National Coordinating Committee against Apartheid) was established in January 1985. Among its members were all the main political parties (both in government and the opposition); trade union confederations; the League of Cooperatives; the League of Local Government; NGOs and cultural and non-profit associations.

The decision in July 1985 to impose a state of emergency in parts of South Africa drastically reduced the space for meaningful dialogue and negotiations between the international community and the Pretoria regime. The traditional European posture of compromise, which tried to combine the tightening of the EC code of conduct for private companies and moderate, veiled threats of adopting punitive measures in the absence of steps towards change, clearly showed all its limits. At the same time, the EEC was paralysed by the need to find a balance and an internal compromise with the stubborn anti-sanctions position of the British government under Margaret Thatcher, supported by the Reagan administration.

In such a context, it is not surprising that the European mission to Pretoria (30 August–1 September 1985) of the so-called troika, of which the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs was part together with his colleagues

from Luxemburg and the Netherlands, ended in failure, highlighted by the refusal of the UDF to meet the delegation in order to express its dissatisfaction with European policy towards South Africa.

It is not worth dwelling further on EEC policy toward South Africa in this period but from the few official Italian government declarations it is clear that Rome tended to position itself in a middle ground, between the calls for punitive actions and the staunch British opposition to sanctions. Perhaps more important, Italy was reluctant to take significant initiatives (that she could have taken on a unilateral basis as other European and Western countries in fact did). In other words, Italy tended to follow rather than lead the European consensus which became a useful shield against domestic critiques and pressures but which at the same time embodied the prevalent prudent and ambiguous position characteristic of the Italian government of the time and of its Minister of Foreign Affairs, Giulio Andreotti.

During 1985 there were some attempts from the ranks of the opposition in parliament to call on the government to adopt a more active role against apartheid. Perhaps the most important initiative was the parliamentary motion, tabled by some MPs of the Independent Left in March,[19] which condemned the new South African constitution and the militarisation of the territory by the South African Defence Force. However, while it reiterated the call to enforce the UN embargo on arms and military materials and technology to South Africa, the motion did not ask for further actions regarding trade or investment.

At the international level a major shift occurred in 1986, following a new cycle of repression in South Africa and the adoption by the US Congress – overriding the presidential veto – of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act[20] which included a package of economic sanctions against South Africa. On 15 September the Foreign Ministers of the EEC adopted a Declaration on South Africa[21] which included punitive economic measures against Pretoria, the most important of which were the ban on new investments and a stop to the imports of iron, steel and Krugerrands from South Africa. The Declaration left the issue of coal imports unsettled: the European Foreign

[19] Camera dei Deputati, *Mozione (primi firmatari: Codrignani, Masina, Rodotà)*, IX Legislatura, Discussioni, Seduta del 20 marzo 1985, *Atti Parlamentari*.

[20] A. Thomson. "A More Effective Constructive Engagement: US Policy towards South Africa after the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986". *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 39, 3, 2012, pp. 371-389.

[21] *EC Bulletin*, 9, 1986.

Ministers were not able to reach agreement on the issue.[22] As a result, the impact on EEC–South Africa trade was limited, especially if one considers that the restrictions on imports of iron, steel and Krugerrands amounted to less than four per cent of the total imports from South Africa.[23]

Italy aligned to the European consensus reached in Brussels in mid-September and the limited package of sanctions, which impacted on less than one per cent of Italy's total imports from South Africa in 1986, and which mainly consisted of gold (71 per cent), minerals (15 per cent) and coal (11.2 per cent, or 26 per cent of the total EEC import of coal from South Africa).[24] The question of coal, and more generally of the limited potential impact of the measures adopted by the EEC, was raised by some communist MPs in October 1986 both in the Senate and at a higher level in the Chamber of Deputies, with a motion signed by some of the top leaders of the PCI: Alessandro Natta (at the time General Secretary of the party), Giorgio Napolitano (Italy's President from 2006 to 2015), Giancarlo Pajetta and Antonio Rubbi, all influential foreign policy makers both in parliament and in the party.[25] The motion, besides asking for an enlargement of the range and scope of punitive measures, called on the government to establish contacts with South African opposition forces, in particular with the ANC, in order to promote «the processes of change in the country».

Against such demands and the growing pressure from the anti-apartheid movement, the reply in the Senate[26] by the Foreign Affairs Undersecretary, Mario Raffaelli, allows us to summarise the main points of the Italian government's position at the time: after having stressed its condemnation of the apartheid regime and of the state of emergency and having reiterated the

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[22] M. Holland. "Disinvestment, Sanctions, and the European Community's Code of Conduct in South Africa". *African Affairs*, 88, 353, October 1989, pp. 529-547.

[23] Commission of the European Community. *Developments in Trade with South Africa*. Sec. 87/1575, October 1987.

[24] *Ibid.*; B. Simons. *Relazione a nome della commissione per le relazioni economiche esterne sull'attuazione delle misure di embargo contro la Repubblica sudafricana da parte degli stati membri della Comunità*. Pe 113.358/A, Luxemburg, October 1989.

[25] *Interrogazione dei Senatori Fanti, Pieralli, Pasquini — Al Ministro degli affari esteri.* Senato della Repubblica, IX legislatura, Terza Commissione Permanente (Affari Esteri), 32° Resoconto Stenografico, Seduta di mercoledì 1° ottobre 1986*;* Camera dei Deputati, *Mozione (primi firmatari Natta, Napolitano, Pajetta, Rubbi)*. IX Legislatura, Atti Parlamentari, Discussioni, Resoconto Stenografico, Seduta pomeridiana dell'8 ottobre 1986, pp. 46304-46305.

[26] Senato della Repubblica, IX legislatura, Terza Commissione Permanente (Affari Esteri), 1° ottobre 1986.

call for the liberation of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, as well as the lifting of the ban on «the ANC, the PAC [Pan Africanist Congress] and other political forces opposed to the inhuman practices of apartheid», Raffaelli argued that the measures adopted in September 1986 should be considered in conjunction with the "positive actions" meant to support the black population that were the victims of the apartheid system and to give assistance to the FLS and SADCC countries. As far as the exclusion of coal from the package of sanctions was concerned, the undersecretary maintained that this was due to the disagreement of some governments (read: UK), but that Italy would be in favour of including coal. Despite such official statement, the Italian government never took any unilateral decision to stop importing coal from South Africa.

Regarding the goals of European and Italian policy towards South Africa, Raffaelli stressed the need to act «jointly» in order to produce «a major impact of pressure and persuasion on the Pretoria government», at the same time taking into account the «need to limit the negative consequences of the adopted measures on the black population» and on neighbouring countries.

It was therefore necessary to opt for a double-track strategy, combining pressure (in the form of economic sanctions) and dialogue with the Pretoria regime, while implementing the positive measures in favour of civil society (trade unions, Churches, civics, and so on) and the development and stabilisation of the region as a whole.

The ambiguities of this position were criticised by the left opposition in parliament and the anti-apartheid movement in society, which was finally, by 1989, able to collect enough signatures to propose a Popular Initiative Bill to harden the stance on sanctions against South Africa. The bill was never discussed in parliament and became more and more irrelevant as events started to unfold in South Africa after February 1990.

Conclusion

In fact, the opposition in parliament was not able to change the government's stance on South Africa in any meaningful way, in part because there was a significant degree of bipartisan consensus on some of the main tenets of Italian policy towards southern Africa (primarily the link between the domestic South African situation and the regional environment, the priority given to the relationship with the FLS and the SADCC, and the pressure and dialogue mix to be adopted with Pretoria). Up to the late 1980s,

differences between government and opposition were more on the degree of pressure to apply, than on the understanding of the situation or the substance of actions to be taken. On the other hand, compared to northern European countries and the US, the Italian anti-apartheid movement was relatively weak, able to engage institutions and political and social forces to some extent, but not strong enough to mobilise civil society outside the framework of a complex pattern of relationships with the same institutions and political parties it wanted to influence.

Notwithstanding pressures coming from parliament and grass-roots mobilisation, the Italian government's policy toward South Africa and southern Africa was not radically challenged in the 1980s or early 1990s. Still, in February 1989, during an official visit of the then President of the Republic, Francesco Cossiga, and of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Giulio Andreotti, to Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the minister argued that the Italian government's decision not to ban imports of coal from South Africa was taken in view of the potential negative impact on black South Africans.[27] The ambivalence of the Italian position was visible also in the choice of the interlocutors among black political forces. It is true that in January 1989 Oliver Tambo made an official visit to Italy and met the Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti; it is also true that Italian aid for many years funded ANC programmes in exile, mainly in Tanzania, as well as supporting black organisations in South Africa (for example through trade union partnerships) and social programmes (in health, training, and education). But such funds were apparently addressed also to local government structures established within the framework of the "reforms of apartheid". To cite another instance, in 1988 the government Report on Development Cooperation reported on a project under way in the field of health in Buthelezi's KwaZulu "homeland". The same Buthelezi met with Andreotti and for a few years during the transition leading up to the 1994 democratic elections, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and its leader appeared to be the privileged partners of the DC, the main party in government.[28]

Despite a degree of ambiguity, Italy's policy towards southern Africa and South Africa retained a remarkable degree of consistency during the decade and the early 1990s. It was a policy based on a few goals, first and foremost

[27] The statement was given at a press conference reported by the Italian newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*, 10 February 1989.

[28] It may be of some interest to note that at the time the IFP was often depicted in the Italian conservative press (both independent and partisan) as a "moderate liberal" party as opposed to a "radical socialist" ANC.

the priority given to the development and stability of the region and the completion of the decolonisation process through dialogue and negotiation. In this respect, it took some distance from the prevailing position of the Reagan administration, not only regarding the socialist regimes of Angola and Mozambique but also on the policy of linkage in Namibia. In 1988 the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Raffaelli argued in a conference that the presence of Cuban troops in Angola was "legitimate" as opposed to an "illegitimate" South African military intervention and occupation.[29]

Italian activism played out mainly on the terrain of development aid in the region, while trying to exercise a quiet, behind-the-scene diplomacy both on conflicts (acting for instance as a facilitator between South Africa and the US, on one side, and the MPLA government in Angola, on the other) and on apartheid. It was a policy built on a number of balancing acts: between a national strategy and membership in the Atlantic Alliance and friendship with the US; between national interests and standing and the European consensus; between the pragmatism of the government, the development of a new foreign policy approach by an Italian Communist Party which had already broken away from the Soviet Union in 1982, and more radical instances from civil society; and between economic interests, norms and values.

In the short run, thanks to the long-standing solidarity links with the liberation movements and development aid to the FLS, Italy was able to play a significant political role in the region, in particular in the peace process in Mozambique, where it was instrumental in reaching the agreement between Frelimo and Renamo and then in successfully managing the transition to multiparty elections under the supervision of the Italian UN Special Representative Aldo Ajello. In the longer term, however, the capital Italy accumulated in the region has been almost entirely spoilt. Today, Italy appears to be a rather marginal political actor in southern Africa and even in Mozambique. It is difficult to assess how much of this is the result of in-built weaknesses of the old activist African policy of the 1970s and 1980s or whether it is indicative of a deeper crisis that has narrowed down the foreign policy horizons of the country. Further in-depth research on both periods is needed in order to throw light on the discomforting trajectory of post-Fascist Italy in sub-Saharan Africa.

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[29] Mario Raffaelli's address to the "Second National Conference on Development Cooperation of the Italian Communist Party", Rome, 11-12 February 1988. The written text is in Partito Comunista Italiano. *Per una svolta nelle politiche di cooperazione con i paesi in via di sviluppo*. Roma: Edizioni Associate, 1988.

CHAPTER 3
The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Italy: Processes, Mechanisms and Heritage

CRISTIANA FIAMINGO

During the 1990s in Italy, there was an almost inexorable transformation of the anti-apartheid movements: while activists were trying to channel their energies into new purposes, many associations' offices closed and their documentation centres and archives were dismembered. So, a partial or total destruction of valuable archives took place, along with the progressive disappearance of anti-apartheid activists and their memories: a disaster from a historical point of view. This happened in spite of the important role the anti-apartheid movement (AAM) played in a country that has not dealt with its colonial past in Africa, apart from analyses by restricted circles of scholars. In those offices and documentation centres, in fact, many activists gained a knowledge of "otherness". They challenged the hegemonic context of a deeply politically divided Italian society through a network of shared knowledge, common purposes and power relations which nurtured an international consciousness and a transnational activism within the country. In addition, in the collective consciousness, they once again tied Italy to the African continent which had been substantially abandoned after the "colonial failure": a historical legacy obscured in the national school curriculum (although it was the subject of a few academic courses in Political Sciences), and a political legacy relegated to the realm of secret diplomacy. Still now, as a consequence of such a "memory drift",[1] a consistent part of Italian

[1] Ugo Fabietti, an Italian anthropologist, aware that memory and oblivion are selective processes by which identity is modelled, names «memory drifts […] not a mere 'memory loss', but the process by which the loss is determined». U. Fabietti, "Memoria e oblio nell'incontro tra culture". *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*. 42, 3, 2001, p. 407 (my translation).

society suffers from the deceptive myth of the "affable colonialism" of "Italians: good people".[2]

Once apartheid was over, by reorganising capacities, targets and alliances, and through the circulation of ideas and funds, many civil society members in Italy tried to continue working, albeit to new purposes, in the global civil society that had undoubtedly been forged by the international anti-apartheid movement.[3]

I painfully witnessed how, after the London initiative "The Anti-Apartheid Movement: 40 Years in Perspective" (South Africa House, 25-26 June 1999) – where I was the only Italian to answer to the call, representing the Amilcar Cabral Centre of Bologna[4] – while historical studies centres and former international anti-apartheid organisations were together planning the large project of collecting, cataloguing and digitalising preserved materials, in Italy we were unable to create an efficient national centre aimed at identifying and collecting those materials, not even in cases of emergency. No Italian NGOs, in fact, have been able to replace the Idoc (International Documentation and Communication Centre, in Rome) archives, which played a leading role in collecting and disseminating information about the apartheid regime. This archive was split into classified material, which was sent to the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in the Netherlands,[5] and grey literature, whose African section was given to me in 2001. While Idoc disappeared but was able to "recycle" its documents, many other associations, surviving documentation centres, party archives, and private collections inherited from militants and extra-parliamentary activists, have destroyed the anti-apartheid files in their archives to accommodate new international urgencies. An incredible historical heritage of resources documenting the methods of public sensitisation and mobilisation that had built awareness in Italy about what was happening in a culturally distant

[2] For the notion "Italians: good people" see A. Del Boca. *Italiani brava gente?* Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2005.

[3] Such a concept is explained as «a political space in which a diversity of political cultures interact and intersect» by H. Thörn. *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society*. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, p. 205.

[4] The Bologna municipal library's Amilcar Cabral Centre collects material about the municipality's participation in anti-apartheid actions. See http://www.centrocabral.com, accessed 31 October 2013.

[5] The Netherlands Institute on Southern Africa (NiZA), now ActionAid Nederland, handed over its archive to the International Institute of Social History in March 2008. The transfer process was completed by November 2013.

region, isolated by its regime and international embargoes, has literally been thrown away.

If Italy did not respond her own memory quest, South Africa answered it with its South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) project. This important initiative commissioned and published a contribution of mine, "Italy: 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime, and its Internal Opposition", in the *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* series,[6] as part of a volume dedicated to the international solidarity movement. It is a tiny contribution to a very complex task; because of my age, I personally witnessed some of these events, but this chapter of national history deserves a much bigger and more systematic programme of interviewing, data-collection and archiving of materials, all over Italy.

The cultural and political context of the Italian anti-apartheid struggle

There is no doubt that local administrations in Italy are incapable of «producing memory […] hence, Italy does not have a proper memory culture».[7] We can still see the bitter fruits of the obliterated colonial memory, mentioned earlier, in the recent reactionary political attitudes and racist popular reactions to immigration or to the appointment of the first black woman minister as minister of integration,[8] in spite of the suffering Italian migrants endured in a past which is not so long gone. In the Italian case, the public dimension of the memory-oblivion process is also deeply conditioned by the political-ideological inflections and eventual political appropriations of major historical themes and social battles, beyond the everyday elements of state formation. This is part of the hegemonic attitude historically sustained by the Italian people, before the post-hegemonic era we are living in at present.[9] Going back as far as I can remember, Italians have made

[6] C. Fiamingo. "Italy: 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime, and its Internal Opposition", in SADET (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa. Vol. 3, International Solidarity*, part 1. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2008, pp. 691–703.

[7] Personal notes, Giancarla Codrignani's home, Bologna, 12 August 2003. Codrignani used to be a member of the extra-parliamentary left active in the Italian anti-apartheid struggle.

[8] Cécile Kashetu Kyenge, the first black minister in Italy, was Minister of Integration in the coalition government led by Enrico Letta (Democratic Party) from April 2013 to February 2014.

[9] «We live in cynical, posthegemonic times. […] Social order is secured through habit and affect: through folding the constituent power of the multitude back on itself to produce the

choices and taken action in a context of dichotomous ideological belongings. Apart from the consensus accorded by the dominated for the maintenance of domination by the state and its social and economic elites, in the Gramscian interpretation, they used to share «a common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination».[10]

The reshaping or oblivion of the Italian memory is a process of loss driven by hegemony: a consequence of Italy's incapacity to cope with the political responsibilities of the Italian right wing, which was in power from the time of the country's unification to the end World War II. Such oblivion has been endorsed by the Italian establishment, especially in executive power positions, and determined Italy's attitude in foreign policy.[11] The historical loss implied by the "voluntary" surrender of the important legacy of the Italian anti-apartheid movement, can be interpreted as a post-hegemonic "memory drift".

The Italian struggle against apartheid was both multifaceted and controversial. Initially, Italian activists encountered many difficulties in persuading institutions to adopt policies in favour of the targets of the international anti-apartheid movement, and their capacity to raise grass-roots mobilisation was hampered by the politics of memory in its hegemonic context.

At the beginning, Italian political involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle was limited to left-wing activists, and, as will become evident later on, it did not specifically target South Africa but rather, aimed at sustaining liberation movements worldwide. In this sense, Italy, through a transnational

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illusion of transcendence and sovereignty». J. Beasley-Murray. *Posthegemony, Political Theory and Latin America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. ix.

[10] W. Roseberry. "Hegemony and the Language of Contention". In G.M. Joseph and D. Nugent (eds). *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994, pp. 360–361. The Italian political ideological dichotomy between left (sinistra) and right (destra) wings is well described in N. Bobbio. *Destra e sinistra: ragioni e significati di una distinzione politica*. Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2004 [1994]; A. Santambrogio. *Destra e sinistra: un'analisi sociologica*. Roma; Bari: Laterza, 2000; and G. Carocci. *Destra e sinistra nella storia d'Italia.* Roma; Bari: Laterza, 2002.

[11] For a telling, but not exhaustive, summary see K. Kirby. *Fascist Legacy*. UK, 1989. This film documentary about Italy's involvement in war crimes during World War II, bought by the Italian state broadcaster RAI, was never shown on Italian public television networks.

target, adopted a transnational activism entering a global civil society.[12] Italy's late involvement in the process was also caused by the challenges of the deep internal political divisions, progressively exacerbated by the long season of the "years of lead" (anni di piombo),[13] which, in the same period, severely hampered the participation of the movements in the international «construction of an imagined community of solidarity activists».[14] Nonetheless, the attitude of Italian youths towards the evolution of imperialism after the colonial era influenced the Italian academy in the 1980s. This manifested in the division of the Afro-Asiatic university chairs into separate African and Asian research and teaching sectors, and in a growing critical attitude towards the colonial past, although this was insufficient to influence appropriate rewriting of the history textbooks for schools.

The AAM in Europe coincided – in a certain sense – with the West's exit from the era of colonial imperialism; Italian involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle thus meant a sort of catharsis by which Italy could join officially the post-colonial era without passing through the decolonisation process. The AAM's absence from the political culture of the Italian youth nowadays is weakening both a self-confident civic consciousness and the capacity of opposition from below to sustain movements for global justice. From a historical-political point of view, this forgetting relates to the lack of internal legitimacy of a national, coordinated anti-apartheid movement in Italy, only partially recognised by the ANC and on behalf of other anti-apartheid movements worldwide.[15] This is evident in the official website of the ANC, and in the very limited, decontextualised evidence of anti-apartheid activities in Italy in the ambitious Aluka project,[16] or in the website of the IISH of Amsterdam,[17] although the struggle against apartheid is

[12] Thörn. *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 29 ff.; and G.W. Seidman. "Adjusting the Lens: What do Globalisation, Transnationalism, and the Anti-Apartheid Movement Mean for Social Movement Theory?". In J. Guidry, M. Kennedy and M. Zald (eds). *Globalisations and Social Movements: Culture, Power and the Transnational Public Sphere*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. 339–357.

[13] See C. Fiamingo, "Movimenti anti-Apartheid in Italia dalla genesi alla proclamazione del 1978 anno internazionale della lotta contro l'Apartheid. Documenti (e memoria) a rischio". *Trimestre Storia-Politica-Società*, 37, 13–14, 2004, p. 382.

[14] Thörn. *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 193.

[15] See Fiamingo. "Movimenti anti-Apartheid in Italia", pp. 375–380.

[16] See http://www.aluka.org/page/about/historyMission.jsp, accessed 30 October 2013.

[17] At the time of writing, the ActionAid Nederland (ex-NiZA) offices were being taken, along with the Shipping Research Bureau (SRB) archives, which covered the commercial

strongly rooted in the memory of many Italian and southern African activists.[18]

As a matter of fact, this oblivion permits the "double agenda", which Italy has always maintained with regard to both the colonial and the apartheid phenomena as well as many other international issues, to remain uncontested. In fact, while the formal condemnation of apartheid by the highest state organs (in compliance with UN resolutions) remains on record, Italian institutions did little to implement that position in practice, except during the final phase of the apartheid regime.

Lack of funds or space, or the supposed achievement of the original objective, should not be sufficient cause to neglect the analysis of the history of the Italian AAM: apartheid is a system of privilege protection and is not limited to certain geographical areas or a particular political-economic status, but can take on different forms of existence and – as the Marikana tragedy reminds us – certain methods of domination can also return in the places where they were apparently defeated.

boycott against South Africa, to the IISH of Amsterdam. See http://socialhistory.org/en/about, accessed 3 November 2014. According to Richard Hengeveld, the director of the SRB, Italy is mentioned in those archives for contacts with organisations involved in the international boycott and other campaigns such as the Shell campaign and the involvement of Almare di Navigazione tankers in breaking the oil embargo. This archive also holds the correspondence with the Italian UN representative, Italian port authorities, as well as material on coal imports, and trade union contacts. Richard Hengeveld to Cristiana Fiamingo, e-mail, 7 November 2013.

[18] The papers of the Italian mission of the ANC are at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. However, the official website of the ANC (http://www.anc.org.za, accessed 3 November 2014) does not specifically mention the Italian mobilisation against apartheid and in E.S. Reddy's section there is only one document on Italy, denouncing the country's breaking of the arms embargo (http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=6866, accessed 3 November 2014). The Italian AAM also does not feature in the list published by the Nelson Mandela Foundation on its website (http://www.nelsonmandela.org/aama/aama_organisations, accessed 3 November 2014). Some archival material relating to Italy has been digitised and made available online as part of the Aluka project (see http://www.aluka.org/action/doSearch?searchText=italy&submit=Search&sa=xst&sa=xhr&sa=4, accessed 3 November 2014) and in the IISH project but these do not attest to the existence of a coordinated Italian anti-apartheid movement.

The AAM: beyond anti-racist consciencism

The history of the Italian AAM is a complex story of processes that have produced the education, consciencism (quoting Kwame Nkrumah), aggregation and consolidation of a civil society.

Italy became aware of the reality of apartheid late, compared to other countries that had major historical political, economic and cultural ties with South Africa.[19] Italy did not meet the three-step model of the anti-apartheid movement's history – as identified by the UN[20] and accepted by the SADET volume on international solidarity, in spite of its sensitivity to the specific political and cultural characteristics of each country. The various Western anti-apartheid movements did not have substantially dissimilar agendas: they moved from a tepid moderatism, to a proactive attitude, according to the timing, intensity, quality and depth of impact on the social tissue of their countries. The evolution of an anti-apartheid consciousness in Italy can be traced through a first phase (1960s-1977), in which a few sympathetic and courageous individuals adopted certain campaigns from abroad to weaken Italy's economic interests in Pretoria, contrasting with the little concern shown by the Italian government and general public during this early stage

[19] The Italian presence in South Africa is not massive but has been constant. See R. Buranello. "Between Fact and Fiction: Italian Immigration to South Africa". *Altreitalie*, 2009, pp. 23–44. Historical data about Italian immigration to South Africa can be gleaned from L. Favero and G. Tassello. "Cent'anni di emigrazione italiana, 1876–1976". In G. Rosori (ed.). *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana, 1876–1976*. Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1978; G. Sani. *Storia degli italiani in Sud Africa, 1489–1989.* Edenvale: Zonderwater Block, 1989; and from "Italiani nel mondo- diaspora italiana in cifre", http://web.archive.org/web/20080227022729/ or http://www.migranti.torino.it/Documenti%20%20PDF/italianial%20ster05.pdf, accessed 9 December 2014. It is estimated that from some 210 Italian immigrants established in the Cape Colony in 1890, the Italian community grew to 15,257 in 1951. In the 1990s there was a sudden drop in the Italian immigration rate and by 2013 it reached 34,304 Italian citizens and some 39,000 South African citizens of Italian origin. For these and recent data see the website of AIRE (Anagrafe Italiani Residenti all'Estero, Registry of Italians Resident Abroad), http://infoaire.interno.it/statistiche2012/consolatofasceeta.htm, and the annual statistics of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: http://www.esteri.it/MAE/pubblicazioni/AnnuarioStatistico/Annuariostatistico2014.pdf, both accessed 3 November 2014).

[20] The development of international anti-apartheid opposition roughly followed the three phases of the apartheid era recognised by the UN: the moderate one (1946–1966), the assertive (1967–1989) and the ending phase (1990–1994). See UN Department of Public Information. *The United Nations and Apartheid 1948–1994*. New York: UN, 1994; and A.C. Leiss (ed.). *Apartheid and United Nations Collective Measures: An Analysis*. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1965.

of the anti-apartheid international debate; a second phase (1978-1989), in which relations with the southern African liberation movements and the ANC were institutionalised, while actions among ideologically different stakeholders were coordinated; and a final phase (1990-1994), in which collective action was converted or dismantled. Alongside this saga, the Italian double agenda resulted in a provisional adhesion to UN decisions by governmental institutions, but in no actual political or economic decisions until the late 1980s, when they were affected by the increasing international campaigns targeting the South African economic sectors in which Italy was directly involved.[21]

At the time, the Pretoria regime was gradually entrenching its "total strategy", based on internal repression and regional destabilisation, and desperately needed economic partners in order to survive the international embargo. Italy and other Western countries supported the racist Pretoria regime with the objective of maintaining control over the resources of southern Africa, benefiting from the exploitation of its black workforce at low cost. Hence, long before Mamdani's acknowledgement of the category of "beneficiaries" of the apartheid regime,[22] political activists across the world chose to identify with the struggle for national liberation of the black majority in South Africa – rather than becoming silent beneficiaries of apartheid.

Nonetheless, the Italian government, throughout the Cold War era, became a beneficiary of the Pretoria regime, supporting the investment made by Italian enterprises in South Africa and assisting them in spreading a distorted image of the South African government as the only one that could ensure a stable future against the prospect of a "communist" African continent. As a consequence, Italian exports to South Africa doubled between 1966 and 1971, reinforced by the opening of the Alitalia air terminal in Johannesburg, by the establishment of many branches of Italian credit banks in South Africa, and by Olivetti's winning a contract to provide the South African Postal Services with a new telecommunications network, while many other important Italian firms won contracts to provide South Africa with infrastructure construction services and security/military

[21] For the Italian political framework, see Maria Cristina Ercolessi in this volume.

[22] Mamdani recognises the relationship between beneficiaries and victims as key to the injustice of apartheid. See M. Mamdani. "Reconciliation without Justice". Book review. *South African Review of Books*, 46, 1996, http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/sarb/X0045_Mamdani.html, accessed 15 November 2014.

goods.[23] In the Craxi era (early 1980s) – as the presence in South Africa of Romano Prodi, representative of the IRI group (Institute for Industrial Reconstruction) confirms[24] – Italy strengthened the apartheid regime through economic support and, as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), through providing military technologies and weapons, and sharing strategic information.

Fostered by the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s guidelines to workers' unions, a collective Italian awareness of the tragedy of apartheid emerged, gradually, from the 1970s on.[25] The way for shifting from interest, to engagement/commitment and to action was paved along two main directions: the consolidation of relations with the liberation movements to guarantee both material support and broader political action based on the experiences of previous Italian solidarity activism with Algeria and Vietnam, and the organisation of high-profile national solidarity conferences. Activists in Reggio Emilia, Milan, Bologna and Rome initially focused on the anti-colonial liberation organisations in the Portuguese territories in Africa, while consolidating strong relationships with liberation movements such as the MPLA, the PAIGC and Frelimo, whose headquarters were in Algiers. In the city of Reggio Emilia, which was led by the Italian Communist Party, PCI, and was committed to international issues,[26] two medical doctors, Silvio Pampiglione and Giuseppe Soncini, fostered strong links between the local medical authorities and the medical programmes of Frelimo in Tanzania and

[23] See Fiamingo. "Italy: 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime", pp. 696–701; and Sani. *Storia degli Italiani in Sud Africa*, p. 305.

[24] Sani, *Storia degli Italiani in Sud Africa*, p. 310.

[25] In 1963 the ILO banned South Africa from some of its trade committees because of its racist policy. In June 1964 the International Labour Conference adopted the Declaration concerning the Policy of Apartheid of the Republic of South Africa, along with the ILO Programme for the Elimination of Apartheid in Labour Matters, condemning South Africa's apartheid policy as «detrimental to international peace and security». The appeal to these documents during the "International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid", held in Geneva in June 1973, attended by many Italian delegates of the major workers' union associations, was influential. See Fiamingo. "Movimenti anti-Apartheid in Italia", pp. 386–387; and Fondazione Lelio Basso, Rome, Gruppo sull'Apartheid – Dipartimento degli Affari politici e del Consiglio di Sicurezza, "I sindacati contro l'apartheid", December 1975, pp. 60–61.

[26] For Reggio Emilia's involvement in the liberation struggles in southern Africa see the exhibition *Reggio-Africa: 1970–2012. Storia di un'amicizia*, http://www.istoreco.re.it/default.asp?page=1645,ITA, accessed 3 November 2014.

the liberated areas of Mozambique, links which were also forged with PAIGC and MPLA later on.[27]

The "International Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Portuguese Colonies", held in Rome from 27 to 29 June 1970, represents the first public event that involved different political powers in Italy and changed cultural attitudes towards Africa. It was organised by the PCI, as its first official involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle. The committee responsible for the national promotion of the conference involved Italian local authorities, trade unions and civil society organisations as well as parliamentary groups of non-left political parties. Amongst the 300 delegates of the liberation movements from Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, there were also some ANC leaders, who had an important opportunity to share up-to-date information about the apartheid regime.[28] At the end of a weekly general audience on 1 July, Pope Paul VI (Montini) received Agostinho Neto of the MPLA, Marcelino dos Santos of Frelimo and Amilcar Cabral of the PAIGC. The Portuguese government perceived the meeting as a humiliation and recalled its ambassador from the Vatican. A few days later Vatican Radio stated: «Pacification, or liberation by force of arms – according to which side one takes – is a source of misery and death […]. May Angola, Guinea and Mozambique at last achieve peace in Justice».[29] This plea resonated as the first invitation to the Italian Christian communities to cooperate in order to accomplish such an aim.

In the meantime, the MOLISV was founded in Milan in 1971. It was one of the most active and committed organisations in mobilising an anti-apartheid consciousness in Italy. Its solidarity action was focused on the oppressed people of Africa and Latin America, mobilising public opinion through conferences, photographic exhibitions and cineforums. MOLISV created a network amongst various active centres at both regional and national level, while campaigning for the liberation of South African political prisoners in

[27] A new section of the archives in the Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società contemporanea in provincia di Reggio Emilia (Istoreco) contains all the Reggio-Africa documentary heritage formerly preserved by the municipality and the private archives of the protagonists of the history of Reggio Emilia's support of African liberation movements.

[28] C.M. Lanzafame and C. Podaliri. *La stagione della solidarietà sanitaria a Reggio Emilia: Mozambico 1963–77*. Torino: L'Harmattan Italia, 2004, p. 35.

[29] "Dispute with Vatican after Pope's Reception of Rebel Leaders from Portuguese Africa. Rebels: 'Solidarity Conference' in Rome. Continued Guerrilla Activities in African Provinces". *Keesing's Record of World Events* (formerly *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*), Volume XVII, August 1970, Portugal, p. 24147, http://www.stanford.edu/group/tomzgroup/pmwiki/uploads/1385-1970-08-KS-a-RRW.pdf, accessed 3 November 2014.

1973. When MOLISV moved to Rome, it also supported the Namibian Swapo: a commitment spurred by the UN International Year against Apartheid in 1978.[30] It contributed substantially to the formation of the Coordinamento Nazionale contro l'Apartheid in Sudafrica (National Coordinating Committee against Apartheid in South Africa) in 1985.

The municipality of Reggio Emilia took the initiative in the second "National Conference of Solidarity against Colonialism and Imperialism for Freedom and Independence of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola" (Conferenza nazionale di solidarietà contro il colonialismo e l'imperialismo per la libertà e l'indipendenza della Guinea Bissau, del Mozambico e dell'Angola) (24-25 March 1973). Democratic and progressive forces in Reggio Emilia contributed to its promotion, while the presence of Anthony Mongalo (alias John M'Galo, for security reasons) as representative of the ANC, legitimated its political value. From that moment on the PCI took a leading role in solidarity actions, also supporting anti-apartheid campaigns after the establishment of an ANC office in Italy in 1971, where first Anthony Mongalo and later Thami Sindelo and Benny Nato acted as ANC representatives. Those circumstances produced the meaningful involvement of progressive forces such as the Italian Socialist Party, PSI, independent leftists and progressive Christian groups, both Protestant and Catholic.

However impressive these initiatives were, the task of increasing public awareness on the issue of apartheid was in the hands of ordinary individuals and poorly organised associations who operated locally by involving a limited number of networks within Italian society. The sources of the information material for their campaigns came from South African exiles, other solidarity movements in Western countries, and the World Council of Churches in Geneva.[31]

The apparent apathy of the broader public received a knock in the late 1970s thanks to a few small publishing houses that were established in order to translate texts used to expose the presence of colonised societies in the world, and thanks to left-wing media and trade union publications that gradually granted space to articles on the freedom struggles in southern Africa. While a limited intellectual spectrum of Italian society was being informed via periodicals such as *Rinascita*, *Problemi del socialismo*, *Calendario del Popolo* or *Relazioni Internazionali,* public opinion at large was affected by an endemic lack of reliable information and analyses. This

[30] See Fiamingo. "Movimenti anti-Apartheid in Italia", pp. 383–386.
[31] *Ibid*., pp. 380–383.

situation was reversed by activists who duplicated and distributed documents and audiovisual material – including a series of portable photographic exhibitions – addressed to the general public and mass institutions such as churches and schools.[32] Numerous research and documentation centres interested in international issues were established in Italy,[33] with the purpose of gathering and producing documents on the anti-apartheid struggle worldwide. They became sites for academic debates which would not have found a space in the universities if not for the initiative of individual militant professors, able to influence the birth of a new stream of academic research, detached from speculation on the Italian colonial period.

When compared with other countries in Europe, student action against apartheid in Italian universities seems to have been uneven and sporadic, but it is undeniable that most of the militants in local anti-apartheid organisations were young university students.

The first successful coordinated actions were related to the sports boycott. The commitment of trade unions to sports organisations of various political alignments played a fundamental role and ensured success on many occasions, starting with the exclusion of the South African women's tennis team from the Federation Cup in May 1974. It followed an appeal to MOLISV by the International Campaign against Racism in Sports (Icaris).[34] The South African softball team was also excluded from the Women's World Softball Tournament in the summer of 1974.[35] In the same year, the tour of the South African rugby team was cancelled. These successful outcomes helped to shape similar actions all over Italy.

[32] International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF). *Sud Africa: il principio della fine è cominciato*. Milano: Edizioni del Maquis 1986; portable photographic exhibition, translated into Italian.

[33] That is, Idoc, Ipalmo, the Lelio Basso Foundation, the Amilcar Cabral Documentation Centre in Rome and its namesake created on the initiative of the Bologna Municipal Council, the CeSPI-Study Centre for International Problems, and the Confederal Labour Chamber in Milan.

[34] MOLISV-Centro di Documentazione A. Cabral (Rome), INSMLI, folder Sudafrica_1 ex-Cespi MI, 'Federation Cup' Manifestazione Internazionale femminile di tennis, organizzata in Italia con la presenza della squadra bianca razzista del Sudafrica, Roma, 31 May 1974. It is worth noting that this document is part of the donation by Architect Enrico Dodi, on behalf of the MOLISV-Milano Archive, to the Centro Studi Problemi Internazionali – CeSPI (Sesto San Giovanni, Milan) that in 2012 in turn handed the archive to the Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia (INSMLI).

[35] MOLISV-Centro di Documentazione A. Cabral (Rome), INSMLI, folder Sudafrica_1 ex-Cespi MI, "Comunicato", Roma, 28 June 1974.

The involvement of the workers' unions

The Italian workers' union confederations, CGIL-CISL-UIL, [36] were involved in anti-apartheid activities since the "International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid" held in Geneva on 15-16 June 1973, which invited workers in schools and factories to spread information and implement campaigns in support of the programme against apartheid adopted by the ILO. A meeting held in Rome was attended by the representative of the main South African trade union federation, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu), Secretary-General John Gaetsewe and the ANC representative, Thami Sindelo. As a result, on 30 August 1976 the Rome-Fiumicino Airports Workers' Committee (CdA) urged all Rome airport employees not to provide any assistance to the South African Airways flight scheduled to land on 2 September 1976.[37] The trade union confederation of airport workers, FULAT (Federazione Unitaria Lavoratori Aero-Trasporti), sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, the President of the Chamber of Deputies and the President of the Senate urging them to formally condemn the apartheid regime. [38] As a result, Thami Sindelo subsequently met with the members of the CdA, FULAT and Alitalia.[39]

In 1977 CGIL-CISL-UIL requested the main Italian companies operating in South Africa to fully apply the ILO conventions and to recognise the right of African workers to form trade union associations in their factories.[40] In the same year, the Italian Postal and Telecommunications Service employees refused to forward telephone calls and telegrams from South Africa on 25 October, a boycott that should also be remembered for its international repercussions. The trade unions and professional associations supported the campaign launched by the ANC in October 1977, which called for the

[36] Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori, and Unione Italiana del Lavoro.

[37] INSMLI- South Africa, Esecutivo C.d.A. degli aeroporti romani Fco, "Comunicato ai lavoratori", Fiumicino, 30 August 1976.

[38] INSMLI- South Africa, C.d.A. FULAT, telegram, Rome, 3 September 1976 (INSMLI-South Africa).

[39] INSMLI- South Africa, AVSI, "L'impegno della Federazione CGIL-CISL-UIL a sostegno della lotta del popolo sudafricano", Rome, 5 June 1976.

[40] Fondazione Lelio Basso, Rome, Federazione CGIL-CISL-UIL, Letter to the provincial secretariats of CGIL-CISL-UIL and to the National Professional Federations CGIL-CISL-UIL on the solidarity with the fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa, Rome, 17 January 1977.

release of political prisoners, especially the "Pretoria Twelve". On 10 December 1977, international Human Rights Day,[41] the CGIL-CISL-UIL federation, in response to a request from the ANC, invited all regional, provincial and professional federations to send telegrams to the UN Centre against Apartheid to press for resolutions at the UN that were binding on the Italian and other governments.[42] Whereas in the late 1970s Italian trade unions focused on the withdrawal of foreign capital from South Africa and promoted debate on labour market and workers' rights,[43] in the 1980s their activities focused more on observing the international embargoes against South Africa.

The Italian AAM after the International Year against Apartheid

Italy answered the call coming from the UN Special Committee against Apartheid on 21 March 1978, the 18th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, on which the Day against Racial Discrimination and the International Year against Apartheid were launched.[44] The twinning between the ANC and the municipality of Reggio Emilia had been strengthened in 1977, when the President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, signed the Solidarity Pact. A National Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa was also established.[45] The occasion of the renewal of the Pact, in 1978, was celebrated through the Italian edition of the ANC's official publication *Sechaba*; this was a direct outcome of the collaboration between the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and the official representatives of the

[41] Archivio della Camera Confederale del Lavoro, ANC, "La Repressione in Sudafrica", Rome, 27 October 1977.

[42] Archivio della Camera Confederale del Lavoro, Federazione CGIL-CISL-UIL, Letter to the Regional and Provincial Secretariats of CGIL-CISL-UIL, to the National Professional Federations CGIL-CISL-UIL, to the National Unitary Professional Regional and Provincial Federations for an urgent initiative toward South Africa, Rome, 3 November 1977.

[43] Fondazione Lelio Basso, Rome, Gruppo sull'Apartheid, Dipartimento degli Affari Politici e del Consiglio di Sicurezza, "I sindacati contro l'apartheid", December 1975, pp. 60–61.

[44] "Mobilitare l'opinione pubblica mondiale". *Sechaba*, Italian edition, 2 October 1978, p. 71.

[45] Assessorato alla Programmazione, al personale e alle pubbliche relazioni e rapporti internazionali Amministrazione comunale di Reggio Emilia (ed.). "Patto di solidarietà tra Reggio Emilia e l'African National Congress contro l'apartheid per la libertà e l'indipendenza del Sud Africa". *Il Comune: rassegna di vita municipale e cittadina*, 1977, p. 75.

ANC in Italy, Anthony Mongalo and Thami Sindelo.[46] In the week of 5-12 June 1978, trade union federations all over Italy organised a "Solidarity week with the peoples fighting in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia for the total elimination of the racial discrimination regime", to promote awareness amongst Italian workers of the impact of apartheid on the entire southern African region.

A "National Conference of Solidarity for the Independence and Sovereignty of the Peoples of Southern Africa against Colonialism, Racism and Apartheid" was organised again in Reggio Emilia on 8 and 9 November 1978, supported by the main political parties, with the intention of strengthening Italian workers' commitment to the fight against apartheid. The ANC's Oliver Tambo, the president of Swapo, Sam Nujoma, and Robert Mugabe and Josiah Chinamano from the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe also attended the conference and were met by the President of the Republic, Sandro Pertini, and Pope John Paul II.[47] A final document was released, appealing to the Italian government to comply with the resolutions of the UN General Assembly on the arms embargo, and with the European Community's code of conduct, according to which European enterprises investing in South Africa should limit the exploitation of cheap black labour as recommended by the Sullivan code of conduct.

Councillor Giuseppe Soncini helped organise the collection of material aid destined for the Italian solidarity ship,[48] which set sail from Genoa on 19 May 1980, carrying goods that were delivered to the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana, and Zambia.

The second "National Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa", held in the Italian parliament in Rome from 26 to 28 February 1982, was organised by national political parties and trade union confederations in order to launch the international campaign calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and for the second Italian solidarity ship. The National Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa, together with other national and local associations, was able to collect

[46] For a selection of digitised Italian *Sechaba* editions see: http://www.comune.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/DocumentID/EA692E01ED25314CC1257A8B0032BCBF?opendocument, accessed 3 November 2014.

[47] "Conferenza nazionale di solidarietà con i popoli dell'Africa australe". *Sechaba*, Italian edition, 3 March 1979, pp. 88–89.

[48] G. Soncini. "Unire gli sforzi e coordinare la raccolta per un efficace aiuto ai movimenti di liberazione". *Sechaba*. Italian edition. 1 June 1978, pp. 80–81; and "Cronaca ed iniziative". *Sechaba*, Italian edition, 1 June 1978, pp. 85–86.

millions of signatures all over Italy endorsing the "National petition for freeing the political detainees in the South African regime's prisons".

The "Coordinamento"

In the 1980s Italian institutional participation in the anti-apartheid movement grew enormously: the multi-party Italian section of the Association of West-European Parliamentarians for Action against Apartheid (AWEPAA) had more than 2,000 members. Between 1985 and 1986 the following measures were adopted by European countries: an arms embargo, the suspension of oil exports, the suspension of all cultural and sporting exchanges, a boycott of new investments, financial aid to the victims of apartheid and aid to the SADCC countries, which were the victims of South Africa's war of destabilisation.

Even though the Vatican Council II condemned all forms of discrimination through the encyclical "Nostra Aetate" as early as 1965,[49] not many Christian organisations were committed to fighting apartheid. With the exception of individual involvement, strong participation of Catholic and inter-denominational circles did not emerge until the 1980s. The prayer groups outside the South African Embassy had a remarkable impact in 1985 and two requiem masses in honour of the "victims of victims", were celebrated by the group Blessed Are Those Who Build Peace (Beati i costruttori di pace) at the Arena in Verona in 1985 and 1986. Within the international framework pushing for stronger and more effective actions, the need for systematic coordination was starting to rise.

In January 1985 the Coordinamento Nazionale contro l'Apartheid in Sudafrica (National Coordinating Committee against Apartheid in South Africa, also known as the "Coordinamento") was formed by a network of organisations and opened an office in a room in the MOLISV headquarters in Rome.[50] Linked to other European anti-apartheid movements through the

[49] Idoc was founded by Heinz Hunke after that encyclical, in 1965.

[50] The first to adhere to the "Coordinamento" were political parties (Democrazia Cristiana, Partito Comunista Italiano, Partito Socialista Italiano, Partito Social Democratico Italiano, Democrazia Proletaria, Partito Liberale Italiano, Partito Radicale Italiano, and Partito Anarchico Italiano), followed by the main Italian trade unions (CGIL-CISL-UIL), the Cooperatives' League, the Local Autonomies League, ARCI (Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana), the International League for the People' Rights, several NGOs (MOLISV, Centro Internazionale CROCEVIA, Associazione per il volontariato TERRA NUOVA, Centro di Informazione ed Educazione allo Sviluppo-CIES, Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei

Liaison Group of the National Anti-Apartheid Movements, the "Coordinamento" became the focal point of anti-apartheid support activities for the ANC representative in Italy.[51] *Sechaba* and the new periodical of the "Coordinamento", *Conto alla Rovescia*, were the official publications to inform people about anti-apartheid campaigns as directed by the liberation movements. The terrain was becoming fertile for launching and coordinating a systematic series of campaigns in different sectors.[52]

Since its first campaign, "Christmas against apartheid and racism for a New Year of peace" in December 1985, the "Coordinamento" would promote annual solidarity weeks to publicise the boycott of South African goods, to encourage bank disinvestments, to call for the release of Nelson Mandela, and to lobby for his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.[53]

As mentioned before, the activists in the Italian AAM came from diverse backgrounds: some had a left-wing political and trade unionist background and others belonged to religious circles. By 1985 several Christian groups joined the "Coordinamento", including Pax Christi and a number of small Protestant churches.[54] Only in 1987, when in the encyclical "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis" John Paul II encouraged the world to fight against «discrimination of every type, especially the exceptionally odious form based on difference of race», did Italian Christian groups feel encouraged to officially support the anti-apartheid struggle, which was granted by the (Roman Catholic) Italian Episcopal Conference and its Justitia et Pax Commission.[55] From that moment on, the Catholics' participation in the "Coordinamento" became

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Paesi Emergenti-COSPE), FGCI (Federazione Giovani Comunisti Italiani), ACLI (Associazioni Cristiane dei Lavoratori Italiani), Pax Christi, the Centro Interconfessionale per la Pace, the Movimento Federalista Europeo, the Comitato di Solidarietà Popolare, the movement Cristiani per la Pace, Idoc, the Collettivo Edili Montesacro, the Collettivo Studentesco Romano and the Comunità di Sant'Egidio. See A. Rubbi. *Il Sudafrica di Nelson Mandela.* Milano: Teti Ed. 1998, p. 98.

[51] "Quale futuro per il movimento anti-apartheid?". *Conto alla Rovescia*, VII, 10–11, November–December 1993, p. 23.

[52] Also, the metalworkers union, FIOM-CGIL, published a special issue of its journal, "NoApartheid", *Meta*, 3, 5, May 1987, collecting news about the boycotts, not only promoted by workers' unions, but also by organisations of different origin.

[53] "Campagna per il Premio Nobel per la Pace a Nelson Mandela, simbolo della lotta contro il razzismo da 25 anni detenuto in Sud Africa". Roma: MAIS, 1987; and "Le adesioni più significative fin qui pervenute all'appello per il Nobel a Nelson Mandela". Roma: MAIS, [n.d.], p. 2.

[54] "Il Sudafrica e le chiese protestanti in Italia". Roma: MAIS, [n.d.].

[55] G. Novelli. "I cattolici italiani e l'apartheid". *Nigrizia*, 106, 4, 1988, p. 35.

stronger, adopting specific campaigns, especially those against arms deliveries and bank loans.

Italian boycott campaigns

In spite of the extraordinary efforts and energy spent by civil society, the success of the Italian anti-apartheid campaigns was limited, especially when implying the direct intervention of the Italian government.[56] The support of Italian business was backed by full diplomatic relations between Italy and South Africa, although neither country had military attachés assigned to their embassies. In compliance with the European Community (EC) framework, from 1987, Italy agreed to «freeze official contacts and international agreements on sports and other sectors»: the South African Immigration Offices in Italy closed down and contacts in cultural and scientific fields were discouraged.

In the late 1960s Italy became the sixth largest supplier of consumer products and capital goods to South Africa,[57] while importing raw materials and agricultural products. [58] In the beginning, imports without any trademarks made it difficult to boycott South African goods. In spite of the international and local pressure on the Italian government to adopt restrictive measures in trade, other than gold, in the late 1980s, even the 1989 Italian Popular Initiative Bill to establish economic sanctions against South Africa, supported by 50,000 signatures, was ignored and the Italian government limited its restrictions to the minimal EC trade sanctions of 1986.[59] The

[56] See Fiamingo. "Italy: 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime", pp. 696–702. I would like to thank Sietse Bosgra (NiZA) for sharing some of the documents mentioned here and Heinz Hunke and Gabriela Fabbiani (ex-Idoc) who gave me the important archive of grey literature they gathered on the matter which supports many of the reactions testified here.

[57] See Sani. *Storia degli italiani in Sud Africa*, p. 305.

[58] For a list of the main Italian exporters see "Rapporto sulle relazioni commerciali tra Italia e Sudafrica". Translated from the Bulletin of the Information and Tourism Office of the Republic of Zambia. February 1971 (CeSPI).

[59] See Coordinamento Nazionale per la lotta contro l'Apartheid in Sudafrica. "Legge di iniziativa popolare per le sanzioni al regime dell'apartheid in Sudafrica presentata alla Camera dei deputati il 10/10/1989". Prospetto con suddivisione delle firme raccolte dal 10 aprile al 10 ottobre 1989, per città di provenienza. http://www.bennynato-onlus.org/biblioteca/node/8140, accessed 9 December 2014. The EC sanctions stopped new investments, exports, imports (iron, steel products, and Krugerrands). J. Kreutz. *Hard*

Popular Initiative Bill against Apartheid, which was one of the most important campaigns organised by the "Coordinamento", was approved and published in the Official Gazette on 10 March 1989, n. 58.

Coal was South Africa's second most important export to Italy, after gold, two thirds of which was destined for the Italian state-owned electricity company, Enel (Ente Nazionale per l'Energia Elettrica). Italian trade unions tried to block South African coal imports. In 1961 and 1965 dockworkers in Genoa refused to unload coal from South African ships. Despite a parliamentary inquiry into the reduction of coal imports in 1988, in 1989 the state companies Enel and Agip-Carbone (Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli) signed important new contracts with South African coal-exporters.[60]

Italy was also a supplier of oil to South Africa, in spite of formal restrictions on the export of oil and oil products: local unions of dockworkers in the ports of Genoa and Livorno organised public demonstrations to expose the final destination of oil tankers. The Italian government was aware of these violations of the non-mandatory, worldwide embargo, but condoned them. Only in 1988, when the Shipping Research Bureau (SRB) exposed the involvement of the state-owned shipping company, Almare di Navigazione, in illegal oil shipments to South Africa, and the UN oil embargo-monitoring group asked the Italian government to intervene, did the government ask Almare to change its policy, and the firm reacted accordingly.

A memorable story was the vigorous campaigns against Olivetti. During a visit to the Olivetti factory in Italy by a South African delegation in 1986, the FIM-CISL and FIOM-CGIL, the metalworkers' unions of the two trade union federations respectively, denounced all forms of collaboration with the Pretoria government, and called for the Sullivan code to be applied in the Olivetti subsidiaries in South Africa.[61] The boycott of Olivetti products had started in the Netherlands at the beginning of 1988 and was extended to all European countries, and included the involvement of Italian public institutions. An appeal for the withdrawal of Olivetti from South Africa was signed by the "Coordinamento", the Association for Peace, Pax Christi, FIM-CISL and FIOM-CGIL in 1988. Although Olivetti remained in South

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Measures by a Soft Power? Sanctions Policy of the European Union 1981–2004. Bonn International Centre for Conversion, Paper 45. Bonn: BICC, 2005, p. 24.

[60] A. De Leo. *Carbone Sudafricano: ENEL e AGIP violano le sanzioni*. Rome: MAIS, [n.d.], p. 3.

[61] More than 50 Olivetti units were established in South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana. See "Rapporto sulle Relazioni Commerciali tra Italia e Sudafrica".

Africa until the end of the apartheid regime,[62] it seems that after the boycott the company at least complied with the guidelines of the EC code of conduct.[63]

The campaigns to limit arms supply, gold imports and the banks' boycott bear witness to the incredible efforts that Italian civil society put into the boycotts that are described below.

Arms

The first (non-mandatory) UN resolution on the arms embargo against South Africa was voted in 1963. By 1965 Italy had already deserved many rebukes by the UN for being both a producer and a supplier of weapons and logistics to the Pretoria regime, even though the Italian government denied any involvement.[64] In 1967 Italy was singled out in a resolution by the UN Commission for Human Rights.[65] The Italian involvement in arms production in South Africa dates back to 1967: from a first delivery of the components for 300 Italian ground attack MB326 aircraft to be assembled in South Africa, Italy transferred, in two years, 70 per cent of its production process to South Africa.[66] This operation followed the reduction of arms delivery from both the UK and the US as a result of their endorsement of the arms embargo. By 1975, *The Yearbook of the Italian Institute of Foreign Affairs* could report that «[s]econd to France, Italy is South Africa's largest arms supplier, thereby breaking a precise embargo by the United Nations».[67]

Italian aircraft were sold and licences were granted to Pretoria for local production as «well suited for counter-insurgency operations».[68] The

[62] *Southscan*, 1 February 1989.

[63] Comitato Nazionale Anti-Apartheid, Associazione per la Pace, FIOM-CGIL, FIM-CISL (eds). "Via dal Sudafrica: campagna per il ritiro dell'Olivetti dal Sudafrica". Supplement to *Varieventuali*, 6, 1989.

[64] A.S. Minty. "La Connection Tricolore". *Nigrizia*, 103, 7/8, July 1985, p. 10.

[65] UN, E/CN.4/RES/2(XXIII), Document 47, Resolution adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 6 March 1967.

[66] *Guardian*, 30 March 1973. Two years later, Atlas Corporation, near Johannesburg, completed deliveries to the South African Air Force (SAAF) of the first series of these jet fighters AFP, 15 April 1975.

[67] *Corriere della Sera*, 24 March 1975.

[68] A.S. Minty. "Apartheid's Threat to World Peace". Paper presented to the "World Conference for Action against Apartheid", Lagos, August 1977, quoted in United Nations Centre against Apartheid, Notes and Documents, Conf. 7, Nov. 1977 in http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF.DOCUMENT.nuun1977_3

partnership between the Italian arms industry and South Africa continued unabated even after the approval of the 1977 mandatory arms embargo and the ANC's exposure of Italy's direct implication in the repression of the resistance to apartheid.[69] The Italian government firmly denied all charges. Italy also helped the apartheid state to channel arms from other countries that did observe the embargo (the US and Switzerland included).[70] In August 1969, artillery units reached South Africa through the port of Genoa.[71]

Until 1990, in the absence of specific laws regulating the export of arms, Italian – mainly Catholic – organisations, as mentioned above, stepped forward and engaged with this issue by organising conferences.[72] Catholic magazines such as *Missione Oggi* and *Nigrizia* extensively denounced and exposed the details of Italian exports of weapons to South Africa. In January 1989 the Radical Party presented a detailed report to Cabinet on the Italian arms deliveries to South Africa from 1979 to 1985,[73] and in July 1990, a law regulating the authorisation of the export of arms was passed. The apartheid regime was practically on its deathbed by that time.[74]

Gold

In the 1980s Italy became the largest importer of gold and the first European importer of coal from South Africa, the major South African export market in Europe and its second trade customer in the world after Japan. This helped the apartheid regime, especially in its last years of rule.

9, accessed 30 October 2013. See Fiamingo. "Italy: 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime", pp. 696–697.

[69] See A.S. Minty. "What have South Africa's Traditional Suppliers of Arms Done to Abide by the Mandatory Arms Embargo against Apartheid South Africa?". Document presented to the workshop "South Africa's Military Build-up and Nuclear Plans, London", 30 May 1978, quoted in United Nations Centre against Apartheid, Notes and Documents, No. 26/78, September 1978.

[70] See Fiamingo. "Italy: 'Beneficiary' of the Apartheid Regime", p. 698.

[71] P. Hug. "Aligning with the Apartheid Government against Communism: Military, Armaments Industry and Nuclear Relations between Switzerland and South Africa 1948–1994", s. 6, http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/nfp/nfp42p/nfp42p_hug-e.pdf, accessed 3 November 2014.

[72] Amongst them: the Committee against the Merchants of Death (Comitato contro i Mercanti di Morte), directed by Pax Christi, Mani Tese, Movimento Laici America Latina (Mlal), Acli and Missione Oggi. See: Movimento Cattolico Internazionale per la Pace (ed.). *L'industria militare in Italia*. Ivrea, [n.d.].

[73] *Southscan*, 1 February 1989.

[74] Laws for a strict control of the export of weapons from Italy were proposed in five years by the MPs Accame, Di Vagno, Magnani Noya, Codrignani, Dilani and Fracanzani.

Gold, silver and platinum supplies to Italy's large jewellery industry made up about 70 per cent of this trade, and no less than 95 per cent of the gold used by Italian jewellery manufacturers originated from South Africa.[75]

Italian anti-apartheid organisations and the main trade union federation started mobilising on the issue of gold in 1988, by inviting a mission of the World Gold Commission to Italy so that it could suggest guidelines to reduce and end such trade.[76] During the Annual Gold Fair, meetings were organised with representatives from the main jewellery district of Vicenza, gold workers' unions representatives, the national Banca d'Italia, the official State Statistical Institute ISTAT, the Group of Anti-Apartheid Bank Employees in Rome, the CGIL Trade Council of Vicenza, local anti-apartheid representatives and owners of jewellery manufacturers in the province. The Banca Nazionale del Lavoro was also contacted as the most important official gold supplier to the Vicenza artisans.[77] Six amongst the 1,000 Italian banks that purchased gold from Swiss banks, which used to channel South African gold into the European market, were authorised by the government to trade gold, hence they became the target of the Commission.[78] The most important promoter of South African gold in Italy was the large Milanese branch of the International Gold Corporation Ltd (Intergold), which was controlled by the South African Chamber of Mines and which had become the World Gold Council in 1987. The Commission revealed that this organisation was dominated by South African corporate interests. The strict sanctions adopted by the US brought pressure to bear on the Italian gold market, since Italian jewellery exports were the main means through which non-monetary gold had been reaching the US.[79] The Commission also participated in the conference, Gold Trade between Italy and South Africa, organised in 1989 by the anti-apartheid associations and

[75] *Southscan*, 22 September 1989.

[76] The World Gold Commission was set up in London in 1988 under the patronage of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, to investigate strategies to reduce gold exports from South Africa. The Commission published *The Italian Jewellery Industry: Apartheid's Biggest Customer, a Report of the World Gold Commission.* London, November 1988.

[77] Benny Nato Centre, P. Robbins. "La World Gold Commission combatte l'apartheid". Intervento del Presidente della WGC, Lugano, 23 June 1989.

[78] "Visita esplorativa in Italia della Commissione Mondiale dell'Oro", Rome: MAIS, [n.d.].

[79] World Gold Commission, statement of P. Robbins to the conference "Il Commercio dell'Oro tra Italia e Sudafrica", Vicenza, January 1989. In 1988 Italian sales of manufactured gold to the US amounted to more than $1 billion.

the trade union confederations in Vicenza.[80] The Italian jewellery producers promised that they would consider buying gold from countries other than South Africa. But, as no official sanctions were in place, this pressure failed to change their behaviour.

Banks

One of the most challenging anti-apartheid campaigns was the one that targeted the Italian banking sector. In 1985 Eva Militz's report, published by the World Council of Churches, provided documentary evidence of the loans granted by Italian banks to South African institutions such as Escom (electricity), SATS (transport), the Johannesburg municipality and the mail and telecommunications departments.[81] Not only did some of these banks use public capital, but all of them supported Italian subsidiaries in South Africa: an involvement hardly traceable and denied by the banks.

In January 1987, implementing the EC sanctions, the Italian government approved a law which suspended its protection to Italian companies for their exports to South Africa, as well as their investments in South Africa.[82] Italian companies in South Africa were prohibited from opening new branches or expanding their activities there, and long-term loans for more than five years were also forbidden. As this law proved inadequate to address the issue of bank loans, a new targeted campaign against bank loans and investments in South Africa was launched in the late 1980s. The Rome-based Interdenominational Centre for Peace (Centro Interconfessionale per la Pace) published a summary in Italian of the above-mentioned Eva Militz's report, in the Catholic publications *Nigrizia* and *Missione Oggi*.[83] Through *Nigrizia*, the Comboni Fathers called on the Italian banks to stop all their financial dealings with South Africa. This call was supported by 3,000 bank

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[80] "Gli imprenditori: per noi fa lo stesso". *Il Giornale di Vicenza*, 19 September 1984; "L'oro di Pretoria in vetrina a Vicenza". *Il Manifesto*, 16 February 1990; G. Smussi. "Apartheid d'oro". *Nigrizia*, 3 March 1989, p. 11.

[81] E. Militz. *Bank Loans to South Africa, Mid-1982 to End 1984*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1985.

[82] Strong pressures came also from the Italian Left extra-Parliamentary group, on the basis of a workshop held by the same in Rome on the 28 November 1986: "Africa australe fra sanzioni e cooperazione", and the statements gathered there by scholars such as Anna Maria Gentili (University of Bologna), Harold Wolpe (University of Essex), and Gary Littlejohn (University of Bradford).

[83] V. Curatola (ed.). *Le banche dell'apartheid: campagna sul disinvestimento bancario dal Sudafrica*. Roma: Coordinamento Nazionale contro l'Apartheid, 1988, p. 26.

employees through a petition.[84] An anti-apartheid banking committee was formed and the "National Conference on Italian Banking Disinvestment from South Africa" (27-29 May 1988) was organised in cooperation with the trade unions CGIL-CISL-UIL and Rome's provincial administration. Account holders such as church bodies, political organisations, companies and individuals sent letters to selected target banks requesting them to explain their involvement in South African investments: unsatisfactory answers implied the closure of their bank accounts. As a result, the Istituto San Paolo limited its transactions with South Africa;[85] the Banca del Lavoro closed its offices in South Africa and the Banco di Roma divested. Furthermore, the banks announced that they would stop their financial support to Olivetti and Enel.[86]

The Italian AAM in the post-apartheid era

The release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 had controversial effects in Italy, as the enthusiasm that followed it overwhelmed concern for the social tensions from which South Africa was still suffering, and which would have deserved the continued attention of the "Coordinamento". I witnessed the early dissolution of the Anti-Apartheid Committee in Bologna in 1992, as a "good omen" for a new era in South Africa, during the symposium held at the Bologna City Council, "South Africa: Processes of Political and Constitutional Change" (1-3 April 1992), which praised the work being done by Codesa. The Association for a Democratic South Africa (ASD), which represented Italy in the European Network for Information and Action on Southern Africa (ENIASA), was established at the request of South African civil society to assist with the shift in the type of solidarity that would be needed in the region following the election of the new democratic government. But faced with the dramatic challenges of the South African nation-building process, ASD ran short of energy after a few months.

As I stated in my introduction, every organisation had to rethink itself, with severe consequences for their legacy to Italian society. Some of them, following Nelson Mandela's appeal to the international community to support the democratic process, engaged in decentralised cooperation with

[84] *The Star*, 15 December 1988.
[85] *Ibid.*
[86] Curatola (ed.). *Le banche dell'apartheid*.

South African communities.[87] Hence they were committed to solidarity campaigns promoting the return of exiles and the training of black people in the scientific, professional and political fields. One of these programmes was promoted by the Movimento per l'Autosviluppo Internazionale nella Solidarietà (MAIS, Movement for International Self-Development Based on Solidarity) in Rome from 1992 to support the children of South African exiles who had returned to their country.[88] Over 700 citizens took part in a distance adoption programme launched by the Benny Nato Italian Centre for Documentation on South Africa (Centro Italiano di Documentazione sul Sudafrica) in Rome in 2001. The Centre is named after Benny Nato, the ANC representative during the period between 1985 and 1992, who actively contributed to the development of anti-racist awareness in Italy. The Benny Nato Centre took on the responsibility of preserving and promoting the heritage of the "Coordinamento", and in 2004 opened an exhibition in Rome focusing on apartheid and the Italian engagement against it: *Il Sudafrica e il Contributo Italiano alla Lotta all'Apartheid* (South Africa and the Italian Contribution to the Anti-Apartheid Struggle).[89] The historical link between Italy and the people of southern Africa has recently been renewed by the 2012 Reggio Africa exhibition[90] and the Naples conference that gave rise to this book and whose outputs will hopefully be the basis of future research about the social and political solidarity movements that cooperated in the recent past with such determination, commitment, energy and passion.

[87] H. Hunke. "Europa – l'Europa dei governi e l'Europa dei movimenti di solidarietà e la sfida dello sviluppo dell'Africa australe". *Africa del Sud in rete*, 8 June 1997.

[88] See http://www.bennynato-onlus.org/sezioni.php?titolo=mostra, accessed 10 December 2014.

[89] The exhibition shows only a small but meaningful part of the materials testifying the activities of Italian civil society against apartheid.

[90] See http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/pes.nsf/web/Rggfrc?opendocument, accessed 30 October 2013.

PART II

The ANC in South Africa and Africa: Memories, Histories and Narratives

CHAPTER 4
Forgetting and Remembering: Whose Struggle History Counts?

NOOR NIEFTAGODIEN

In 2012 the ANC celebrated its centenary and understandably emphasised its status as the oldest liberation movement on the continent. But the keenly anticipated centennial programme proved disappointing at multiple levels. As far as celebrations of historic milestones are concerned, the ANC delivered a rather subdued party, notwithstanding the fanfare that accompanied the 8 January mega-event in Mangaung. For the rest of the year, the main programme comprised a carefully choreographed series of monthly lectures by the current president of the ANC (and of the country), Jacob Zuma, focused on the historic contributions of former presidents of the organisation. Aiming to prove Zuma's place in an impressive lineage of African political leaders, the authors of the programme undoubtedly had an eye on the ANC's congress in December 2012.

The year-long celebration also continued to espouse the ruling party's now well-rehearsed rendition of a dominant narrative in which the history of the ANC is presented as *the* history of the liberation struggle. This version of liberation history has been reinforced by a strong tradition of institutional histories[1] and by the proliferation of struggle biographies.[2] Although both

[1] F. Meli. *South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC*. London: J. Currey, 1989; E. Feit. *South Africa: The Dynamics of the African National Congress.* London: Oxford University Press, 1962; M. Benson. *The African Patriots; The Story of the African National Congress of South Africa*. London: Faber & Faber, 1963; P. Walshe. *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952.* London: C. Hurst, 1970; B. Turok. *The ANC and the Turn to Armed Struggle, 1950-1970*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2010; D. McKinley. *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Biography*. London: Pluto Press, 1997; SADET (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa.* Volumes

bodies of work have contributed enormously to illuminating aspects of the evolution of resistance politics, coupled with invaluable insights into the life of political organisations, they tend to produce rather narrow historical perspectives, mainly from the vantage point of the dominant political party. Nationalist historiography projects liberation movements that assume power as the embodiment of the aspirations of "the nation", and history is thus mobilised to produce linear narratives – the road from origins to power. The construction of "patriotic history" occludes those pasts that do not correspond with this hegemonic narrative.[3] It is also a history that prioritises formal or party politics, centralises the role of male leaders and promotes a teleology premised on the idea of the inevitability of the ANC ascending to power.

Initially, the recovery of ANC history was perceived as one component of a broader project to uncover a wide range of hidden histories, mainly of the black majority, which had been deliberately marginalised and suppressed under white minority rule. Recovering memories of the liberation struggle has of course been a key objective in this endeavour. Current secretary general of the ANC, Gwede Mantashe, alluded to this theme in his message to the inaugural celebration in Mangaung:

> As we mark the hundred years we must remember. We remember so that we do not forget the path our forebears travelled to this present moment. Their memory, the memory of their struggles, pain, resilience, and heroic words and deeds must remain indelible in us and

1-6. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004; Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2011-2013; S. Dubow. *The African National Congress*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2000.

[2] N. Mandela. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela.* Randburg: Macdonald Purnell, 1994; A. Sampson. *Mandela: The Authorised Biography*. London: Harper Collins, 1999; T. Lodge. *Mandela: A Critical Life.* London: Oxford University Press, 2006; H. Hughes. *First President: A Life of John Dube, Founding President of the ANC*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2011; M. Gevisser. *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2007; R. Kasrils. *Armed and Dangerous: From Undercover Struggle to Freedom*. 4th ed. Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2013; S. Clingman. *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner Revolutionary*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1998; P. O'Malley. *Shades of Difference: Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa*. London: Viking, 2007; R. Bernstein. *Memory against Forgetting*. London: Viking, 1999.

[3] See, for example, T. Ranger. "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History, and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 2, 2004, pp. 215-234; and C. Saunders. "History and the Armed Struggle: From Anti-colonial Propaganda to 'Patriotic History'?". In H. Melber (ed.). *Transitions in Namibia: Which Changes for Whom?*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2007, pp. 13-28.

> in those who shall follow. It has often been said that every nation is the sum total of its memory through which its present is shaped and its future envisioned. Memory is our weapon.[4]

Here Mantashe echoed a recurring feature of struggle biographies written over the past two decades, namely, their invocation of Milan Kundera's evocative line from *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. «The struggle of man against power», Kundera famously wrote, «is the struggle of memory against forgetting».[5] At the time, he was reflecting on the momentous global events of the late 1960s and early 1970s (the assassination of Allende in Chile; violent struggles in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Palestine; the Paris uprising, and of course, the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia). These were profoundly important historical episodes, which could be expected to engender strong and lasting memories. Instead, Kundera lamented, a process of forgetting had ensued, which he ascribed to two factors. First, the intensity of and rapidity with which these events unfolded were so overwhelming that people simply struggled to remember what had transpired in each case. Second and far more importantly, the powerful sought to erase from public memory those whose presence and actions might be construed as a challenge to their hegemony. Forgetting is thus as important as the mobilisation of particular versions of history or memory for the maintenance of power. In fact, the exercise of remembering and promoting selected histories has engendered forgetting.

The production of liberation histories, especially since the advent of democracy, contains an intriguing paradox. During apartheid the project of producing alternative histories (or people's histories) was self-consciously allied to the emancipation struggle. Creating counter-historical narratives, through the recovery of suppressed memories, involved taking a stand against power. Post-apartheid struggle histories, especially biographies, gestured appropriately to this counter-hegemonic tradition but, ironically, increasingly became tied to new political agendas such as nation-building, reconciliation and affirming the ANC's key role in the struggle. As a new dominant historical narrative evolved – the history of the ANC as *the*

[4] G. Mantashe, 'Message from the Secretary General', Statement, 8 January 2012, http://www.anc.org/centenary/show.php?id=8772, accessed 3 July 2013.

[5] Bernstein. *Memory against Forgetting*; B. Naidoo. *Death of an Idealist: In Search of Neil Aggett*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2012; D. Mattera. *Memory is the Weapon*. Grant Park: African Perspective Publishers, 2009 (rev. ed.).

authentic history of the struggle – its agenda increasingly turned to the justification and preservation of current regimes of power.

This chapter is principally concerned with two overarching and related questions: what resistance histories have been forgotten, and why? It would be a facile exercise to point to the innumerable gaps in existing struggle historiography, and that is not the purpose of the argument. Here the focus is purposely on only three crucial dimensions of resistance history: the role of independent left-wing movements in key episodes of bus boycotts; squatter movements and other struggles for rights to the city, and the role of women's struggles from the late 1920s to the early 1950s. Attention is drawn to local leaders, usually women, who mostly disappeared from official histories. These struggles occurred in localities, mainly in urban areas, which were transformed from spaces of control to spaces of contention. I suggest that these histories of resistance have been "forgotten" because they represent a challenge to dominant struggle narratives. Finally, the chapter suggests that the new counter-hegemonic movements that have arisen since the late 1990s (social movements, rebellions of the poor and more recently, trade unions) have an important role to play in producing contemporary counter-narratives of the history of resistance, following the traditions of the people's history movement of the 1980s.

Azikwelwa – We will not ride!

Dan Mokonyane's death in November 2010 passed without comment in South Africa, with only one published obituary, written by a young admirer, appearing in the British newspaper, *The Guardian*.[6] The absence of any acknowledgement in South Africa of Mokonyane's passing was hardly surprising, considering that his name does not appear in the usual roll call of leaders of political resistance. Yet in 1957, Mokonyane and his comrades from the Movement for a Democracy of Content (MDC) played a leading role in the famous Alexandra bus boycott, which marked a high point in the mass struggles of the 1950s and catapulted the township to the centre of resistance against apartheid.[7] He went into exile in 1960, at the same time as

[6] D. Louw. "Dan Mokonyane Obituary". *The Guardian*, 28 November 2010.

[7] P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien. *Alexandra: A History*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008, pp. 143-148; and D. Mokonyane. *Lessons of Azikwelwa*. London: Estate of Dan Mokonyane, 2011.

many of his political peers, and continued being involved in left-wing politics late into his life. Throughout this time he remained critical of the dominant anti-apartheid political parties and resolutely refused to join them in exile. Consequently, he was forgotten and written out of the history of arguably the most significant period of struggle against apartheid prior to the 1980s.

The bus boycott represented a trial of strength between the bus companies, supported by the state, and a community too poor to afford fare hikes. Albert Luthuli, president-general of the ANC at the time, captured the importance of the boycott thus:

> The thing which startled and dismayed the whites, except for those who were heart and soul with the boycotters, was that Alexandra applied a *total* boycott. The unanimity with which the people declared their refusal to surrender to exploitation any longer made a tremendous impact. Walking twenty miles and more each day, they chose to suffer rather than to be a party to decreasing the amount of food they could give to their children. (Emphasis in original)[8]

At the end of 1956, Putco (Public Utility Transport Corporation, the bus company responsible for transporting African workers across the city to and from their workplaces) requested a bus fare hike of one penny. Previous attempts by the company to increase fares were rejected by the authorities, who feared such a move might trigger massive protests similar to the struggles of the early 1940s. Now, however, a combination of factors persuaded the authorities to accede to Putco's demand. In addition to a squeeze on the company's profit margins, which prompted the request for a hike in fares, the authorities also calculated that the decline in popular protests after the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955 and the subsequent arrest of the top leadership of the Congress Movement would limit the prospects of resistance. But the fare increase came at a time when African wages had stagnated and threatened to push many residents into deeper poverty. Once the increase was announced, the community responded immediately and emphatically: the fare increase was denounced and a bus boycott was launched.

In the first week of January 1957 several public meetings took place to discuss the boycott, some occurring spontaneously and others convened by

[8] A. Luthuli. *Let My People Go.* Cape Town and Johannesburg: Tafelberg and Mafube, 2006 [1962], p. 168.

existing local organisations. Following in the tradition established in the 1940s, a township-wide coordinating structure was established to lead the boycott. The Alexandra People's Transport Committee (APTC) comprised formations prominent in local politics and representing varied constituencies, namely, the Standholders' Association, the ANC, the conservative National-Minded Bloc, the Workers' League, the MDC and an Africanist faction of the ANC.[9] There has been some dispute about when and how the APTC was formed and which organisation led the struggle.[10] What is clear, however, is that at the beginning of the campaign a high degree of cooperation existed between these different groups. The membership of the committee also reflected a left-wing plurality that was emblematic of Alexandra's politics. Since at least the early 1940s, the influence of socialist organisations had been a regular feature of township struggles.

When the campaign was inaugurated, the dominant ANC faction and its allies had a majority on the committee but over time, they were eclipsed by Josiah Madzunya (the leading figure of the Africanist bloc) and Dan Mokonyane (the local leader of the MDC). Regarded as a maverick by some, Madzunya was a charismatic and militant activist, who enjoyed widespread support in Alexandra. He was also a well-known figure in Johannesburg's radical political circles and in the late 1950s played a central role in the formation of the PAC, during which he unsuccessfully challenged Robert Sobukwe for the presidency of the new party. After the anti-pass campaigns of the early 1960s and the anti-removal struggles in Alexandra, the state deported him to Venda, where he lived and died in political obscurity. The MDC was allied to an international socialist organisation of the same name, comprising adherents of Trotskyism. Vincent Swart, a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, was the leading figure of the MDC in South Africa and recruited a group of young intellectuals from Alexandra into the organisation, including Dan Mokonyane, Lawrence Mayisela, Ethan Mayisela, Gilbert Nhlapo, Simon Noge and Arthur Magerman. It was from their ranks that the radical wing of the bus boycott was drawn. Noge has insisted, perhaps with some exaggeration, that the MDC «singlehandedly handled the boycott».[11]

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[9] T. Lodge. *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983, pp. 158-171.

[10] Mokonyane. *Lessons of Azikwelwa*, pp. 37-41; Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Alexandra*, pp. 143-148.

[11] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Alexandra*, p. 146.

Madzunya and Mokonyane became chairman and secretary, respectively, of the APTC and were generally regarded as the authentic leaders of the bus boycott.[12] By contrast, the ANC's influence in the movement continued to decline, which led Luthuli to offer the following assessment of his party's involvement:

> The boycott was essentially a movement of the common people. The African National Congress had no part in organising it. There were, of course, Congress members living in the township, and as residents they took part in the boycott. It might be tempting to claim credit for so successful an effort. In this case, however, Congress can go no further than to claim that it helped to create a climate of resistance in which such action could take place.[13]

As the boycott intensified and the state's efforts to crush it increased, tensions and divisions within the ranks of the committee began to appear. This became especially pronounced at the end of February, when Putco issued an ultimatum and the government declared the boycott a direct challenge to its authority. In response, members of the moderate faction in the APTC began to explore a negotiated solution that would effectively endorse Putco's proposal of a short-term subsidy.[14] Their efforts were supported by the ANC, the Johannesburg City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Liberal Party and Bishop Reeves of Johannesburg.[15] Only the radical leaders of the APTC rejected the compromise proposal.

However, when the spokesperson of the moderate faction, Mahlangu (a representative of the Standholders' Association), presented the proposal to a mass meeting attended by about 12,000 residents at Number Three Square, he was roundly jeered and forced off stage. According to Mokonyane, the gathering enthusiastically endorsed his and Madzunya's stance and decided to continue the boycott.[16] Luthuli maintained that it was tactically wise to terminate the boycott but acknowledged that a «few self-styled African leaders and a certain white missionary» had arrogated to themselves the authority to negotiate a deal to end the boycott. This latter group had no

[12] Mokonyane. *Lessons of Azikwelwa*, p. 53.

[13] Luthuli. *Let My People Go*, pp. 170-171.

[14] On 28 February the Chamber of Commerce proposed to set up a fund of £25,000 to finance a scheme whereby commuters could claim back one shilling. This was a short-term solution that was intended to last for only a few months.

[15] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Alexandra*, pp. 146-148.

[16] Mokonyane. *Azikwelwa*, pp. 54-55.

mandate for this course of action and effectively betrayed the boycotters.[17] The moderates had clearly misread the mood of Alexandrans and were swayed by official society's anxieties to end the struggle. Instead, the unity and determination of the residents ensured that their demands were met, a resounding victory for the people of Alexandra, which Mokonyane claimed was the only mass campaign of the 1950s to completely have won its original demand.[18]

The bus boycott highlighted the capacity of the black urban working class to mobilise struggles against an increasingly intransigent and coercive state. That this was achieved with limited support from the main political organisations was testimony to the efforts of local organisations and the spontaneous mass support for the boycott action, which was sustained over many weeks. Local organisations, from different ideological persuasions and with varying degrees of support, drove the campaign. Left-wingers invariably were the most committed and tended to shape the strategies and tactics of the struggle. But the success of the boycott pivoted on popular participation: regular mass meetings were held in the public squares where leaders of the APTC reported and received their mandates. It was here that strategies and tactics were debated, responses to state repression were devised and, above all, solidarity was maintained. Considering the arduous walk to and from work, as well as consistent harassment by the state, the degree of solidarity achieved in this struggle was remarkable and was inspired by the memory of similar struggles during World War II.

The Alexandra bus boycotts of the early 1940s were probably even more significant in terms of their radicalising effect on black resistance politics, and arguably constituted the most significant moment of African popular resistance during the War. Bus boycotts signalled a very important shift in the character of urban struggles waged, and reflected the determination by a growing number of African urban dwellers to struggle for a decent life in the cities. [19] From the late 1930s, private bus companies which ferried Alexandra's commuters to and from Johannesburg attempted to hike bus fares but failed as passengers simply threatened to embark on boycotts. However, in October 1942 fares were increased by one penny, which represented a major additional burden on a population who spent on average

[17] Luthuli. *Let My People Go*, pp. 172-173.
[18] Mokonyane. *Azikwelwa*, p. 18.
[19] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Alexandra*, p. 67.

nearly one-fifth of their income on transport.[20] Not surprisingly the increase was rejected, but after nearly a year of investigation by an official commission and attempts to negotiate a compromise solution, the companies unilaterally imposed the increase. This provoked an immediate response as 10,000 commuters marched in a two-mile column from Alexandra to the centre of Johannesburg, in a powerful display of the community's unity and determination to resist the fare hike. The bus companies were forced to retreat but in November 1944 another one-penny fare increase was instituted by bus owners, which was again met by a mass public meeting where it was decided to launch another boycott. For nearly two months, thousands of commuters daily walked to and from Johannesburg and other workplaces. Each time the message was clear: Alexandrans were united in their rejection of a bus fare hike.

A combination of novel repertoires of struggle – the bus boycott, the mass march, stayaways and regular mass meetings in public squares – created unprecedented solidarity and signalled a radicalisation in the struggles of the rapidly growing urban-based black working class against attacks on their already precarious livelihoods. Moreover, the Alexandra bus boycott was emblematic of struggles in black urban localities across the country, at the heart of which was the demand by the emerging black working class for the right to the city.[21] These movements challenged the ideology of segregation according to which urban areas were deemed white spaces where Africans could claim neither permanent presence nor basic rights. It was a view at odds with reality as massive urbanisation from the late 1930s onwards completely transformed the demographic composition of urban areas. Between 1936 and 1946, the number of Africans in urban areas increased from 1,141,642 to 1,794,212 – a jump of 50 per cent.[22] In fact, the 1940s witnessed an explosion of local struggles by the rapidly growing black working class, characterised by demands for a decent living in urban areas.

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[20] *Ibid*. p. 70.

[21] N. Nieftagodien. "Popular Movements, Contentious Spaces and the ANC". In A. Lissoni, J. Soske, N. Erlank, N. Nieftagodien and O. Badsha (eds). *One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories Today*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press and SAHO, 2012, pp. 138-139.

[22] R. Fine and D. Davis. *Beyond Apartheid*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991, pp. 14, 156.

Challenging urban segregation

Faced by an influx of black people into the urban areas, a proliferation of inner city slums and a sharp increase in militant struggles in the aftermath of World War I, the state moved deliberately to implement a strategy of segregation, the principal aim of which was to bring the emerging black urban working class under control. The transformation of urban spaces produced by the mining boom and subsequent industrial development was especially pronounced on the Witwatersrand, with Johannesburg at its epicentre. Until World War I, the number of black people in urban areas and living outside the mining compounds was relatively small.[23] Thereafter, however, steady increases were registered, resulting in overcrowding in most residential areas occupied by the black population, namely, urban slums, freehold locations and backyards.

In response, the state promulgated the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, which empowered municipalities to establish new locations to allow for better control over black workers. This piece of legislation was arguably the first nationally coordinated plan designed to reconfigure urban areas by eliminating uncontrolled slums and replacing them with better-controlled municipal locations. Within a year, the Springs Municipality demolished the old shanty settlement and relocated its black residents to the new municipal location of Payneville. In Johannesburg, the growing demand for housing and the desire to eliminate slums led the government to establish Orlando Township, which would later, in the early 1930s, constitute an important suburb of Soweto.[24] With the promulgation of the Slums Act in 1934, the government acquired the legislative muscle to act decisively against urban slums, resulting in thousands of African families being evicted from areas in and around the city centre. For example, in the late 1930s approximately 7,000 African residents of Prospect Township, located on the south-eastern outskirts of the Johannesburg CBD (Central Business District), were removed and offered accommodation in Orlando.[25] Similar processes of removals and the establishment of locations unfolded in other towns.

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[23] P. Maylam. "The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid in South Africa". *African Affairs*, 89, 354, 1990, pp. 59-60.

[24] P. Bonner and L. Segal. *Soweto: A History*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1998, p. 17.

[25] K. Beavon. *Johannesburg: The Making and Shaping of the City*. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2004, p. 115.

«The location», Robinson has argued, «was employed as a means of governing non-disciplined, non-consenting population who proved difficult to observe and to record, making the implementation of specific policies an insurmountable task».[26] Segregation and control were the principal, mutually reinforcing objectives behind the creation of the new locations. Administrative apparatuses were created to enforce pass laws, to monitor political activities, to implement local taxes and generate local sources of income (lodgers' fees, beerhalls, and so on) and to police everyday life. The state's ability to maintain urban centres as domains of white privilege and power depended in large measure on the effectiveness of its influx control policies, that is, to restrict the permanent presence of Africans in cities, and on its ability to maintain dominance over the locations.

Until the late 1930s, the state succeeded in keeping a relatively stable balance between the urban black population and local labour requirements but this was disrupted by the explosive growth of the secondary economy and the concomitant surge in demand for labour. Municipalities increasingly concentrated on meeting the labour requirements of their local industries, often at the expense of influx control. Almost inevitably this crucial plank in the system of control (based on a combination of influx control, segregation and a battery of coercive laws) came under severe strain, becoming effectively dysfunctional in numerous municipalities. The diminution, and often breakdown, of state control occurred at multiple levels: influx control was habitually flouted, urban segregation was increasingly transgressed and a host of location regulations aimed at controlling inhabitants was brazenly and regularly violated.

The sharp decline in political resistance during the 1930s may have given the impression of success to the aforementioned system of segregation although, as various scholars have explained, the moribund state of black organisations was perhaps mainly a product of internal weaknesses and divisions, rather than a product of state policies.[27] Nonetheless, the relative quiescence of this decade proved to be an interregnum between two periods of intense popular struggle. By the mid-1940s the system of urban segregation was in crisis, caused by a combination of structural transformation (massive industrial development and unprecedented levels of urbanisation) and the explosion of popular struggles in locations. Across the

[26] J. Robinson. "The Geopolitics of South African Cities: States, Citizens, Territory". *Political Geography*, 16, 5, 1997, p. 366.

[27] Lodge. *Black Politics*, pp. 9-11.

country, black locations (municipal as well as other residential areas) were transformed into contentious spaces, posing the most serious and sustained challenge to the system of segregation. It was overwhelmingly driven by a movement from below, which was mostly spontaneous but often gave birth to a range of locally based protest organisations.

Dubow's description of the 1940s as «a turbulent period in the history of South Africa»[28] could not be more appropriate as the black working class living in various locations engaged in numerous struggles to claim a right to the city.[29] They fought against passes and deportation to the rural areas to assert their right to be in the city; they fought for houses, water and electricity in order to gain access to the most basic resources; they fought for higher wages and lower bus fares to improve their livelihoods in the urban areas and they fought against municipal authoritarianism which deliberately marginalised and suppressed their voices in the administration and politics of the locations.

Massive urbanisation and the state's failure to provide housing created a politically volatile situation in the poor black areas of towns and cities. Previous housing programmes necessitated by the state's slum removal programme had come to a halt by the early 1940s: at the height of the influx of African workers to the cities in 1944 the state did not build any houses for Africans,[30] causing a severe national housing crisis that was most concentrated on the Witwatersrand. The number of African families living without accommodation outside locations more than doubled between 1936 and 1951, from 86,000 to 176,000. In 1947 it was estimated that more than 150,000 family houses and 106,877 units for single male workers were required in the urban areas.[31] Pervasive overcrowding across the country's urban landscape reflected a serious failure of the state's urban policy and represented a ticking time bomb.

This much was evident in Johannesburg's newest location, Orlando, which was regaled as a "model township" and as representing the future of urban residential segregation.[32] Established in the early 1930s, the area

[28] S. Dubow. "Introduction: South Africa's 1940s". In S. Dubow and A. Jeeves (eds). *South Africa's 1940s: Worlds of Possibilities*. Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005, p. 1.

[29] Nieftagodien. "Popular Movements", pp. 138-139.

[30] Beavon. *Johannesburg*, p. 123.

[31] D. Hindson. *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987, p. 56.

[32] N. Nieftagodien and S. Gaule. *Orlando West: An Oral History*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011, p. 6.

quickly became sought after by Johannesburg's growing African urban population, despite its being about 13 kilometres from the city centre. In 1936 the population of the township was estimated at just over 12,000[33] and the official housing waiting list three years later was reportedly a modest 143, suggesting that overcrowding was not yet a major problem. But official figures invariably underestimated the actual population in black areas and especially failed to account for the growth in the number of tenants and sub-tenants. One figure suggests that the population of Orlando in 1939 was probably about 35,000.[34] Whatever the precise size of the population in Orlando on the eve of the War, the scale of the housing crisis exploded over the subsequent few years. Thus by 1941 the official housing waiting list had increased to 4,500 and by the end of the War to 16,000,[35] while the number of sub-tenants alone in the early 1940s stood at about 8,000.

A similar picture emerged in locations across the Witwatersrand. When Payneville location in Springs was established in the 1920s, it was intended to accommodate a maximum of 8,000 residents. In the early 1930s the area had a relatively modest population of 5,441,[36] giving the impression that influx control was succeeding. However, before the end of the decade that figure had nearly doubled to 10,000 and by 1952, the official population of the location stood at 33,000 – a staggering increase of 600 per cent.[37] In the neighbouring Brakpan Location 10,000 inhabitants were squeezed into a space built for 6,000. Dukathole, the African location attached to Germiston, was already bursting at the seams in the early 1940s, with 18,000 people crammed into an area similar in size to Brakpan Location.[38]

As slum clearance picked up pace in the early 1930s, many of the residents of these areas chose to relocate to freehold locations because of their relative freedom from strict municipal control. Consequently, the populations of these residential spaces grew even more sharply than those of the municipal locations. For example, Sophiatown's population rose significantly in the early 1930s to reach a figure of 16,668 in 1937 and by 1950, nearly 40,000

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[33] Bonner and Segal. *Soweto*, p. 18.

[34] Beavon. *Johannesburg*, p. 122.

[35] Bonner and Segal. *Soweto*, p. 19.

[36] D. Gilfoyle. *An Urban Crisis: The Town Council, Industry and the Black Working Class in Springs*. Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983, p. 21.

[37] Central Archives Depot, Pretoria (CAD), MSP 1/3/5/1/39, Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee of 4 July 1957.

[38] P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien. *Kathorus: A History*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 2001, pp. 5-8.

people lived there.[39] Alexandra experienced even more robust expansion: in 1939 its population was already estimated at around 35,000 and two years later, officials conceded there were between 40,000 and 45,000 people living in 4,376 buildings. What this meant was that an average of nearly 100 people lived on one stand, making it easily one of the most populous and congested locations in the country.

Poor living conditions were ubiquitous and generated deep and widespread discontent, resulting in organised mobilisation for housing. For example, in the early 1940s lodgers living in Dukathole organised themselves against the exploitation of standholders in an early sign of the impending political struggles around housing shortages. Local political activist, Raphael Palime, organised a Lodgers' Association to lobby the government to peg or reduce rents.[40] Residents of Payneville also found the overcrowding intolerable and demanded action from the authorities throughout the 1940s. In early 1950, matters reached breaking point as activists called for an immediate response to the housing crisis. At one such meeting held in March, fifty people decided to march into town to demand houses. By the time they reached the police station on the edge of the town their numbers had swelled to about 1,000,[41] reflecting the urgency of the housing crisis. In the context of increasing militancy the council moved hastily to establish an "emergency camp" to alleviate the overcrowding in Payneville.[42]

However, the most far-reaching consequence of the housing crisis emanated from the eruption of squatter movements that forced the dire housing situation faced by urban Africans onto the national agenda, prompting the authorities to deal decisively with the matter. Nationally, tens of thousands of new immigrants were unable to find accommodation (or chose not to live) in existing locations and established informal and often illegal settlements, ranging from individual shacks to relatively large groups, in peri-urban areas. Almost every town in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) experienced squatting. According to Bonner, «close to 100,000 people lived on the urban outskirts by the later stages of World War II, which probably grew rather than diminished up to 1950». [43] Durban also experienced a

[39] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Alexandra*, pp. 60-61.

[40] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Kathorus*, pp. 28-29.

[41] *Springs and Brakpan Advertiser*, 31 March 1950.

[42] CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/25, Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee, Annual report of the manager of the Non-European Affairs Department, July 1950.

[43] P. Bonner. "The Politics of Black Squatter Movements on the Rand, 1944-1952". *Radical History Review*, 46, 7, 1990, p. 92.

proliferation in its squatter population: in 1946 thousands of homeless Africans lived in approximately 5,000 shacks. In 1949 a third of the 90,000 registered African male workers did not have formal accommodation.[44] In Cape Town, in 1950, an estimated 25,000 African men and a further 5,000 African families were living in about 30 squatter camps dotted around the peninsula.[45] Collectively, the illegal occupation of various urban spaces reflected the failure of the state to contain urban Africans in designated and controlled spaces. The explosion of squatting was largely a spontaneous response to unbearable overcrowding and the dire lack of housing. Nonetheless, there were also a number of organised squatter movements that posed a direct and sometimes carefully orchestrated challenge to the authorities.

The most well-known of these squatter movements occurred in Orlando, under the leadership of the charismatic James Mpanza whose slogan – "Housing and Shelter for All" – became a rallying call for thousands of tenants and sub-tenants desperate for proper housing. On 20 March 1944, he led a group of sub-tenants to occupy an empty space on the periphery of Orlando East. There they erected 250 shacks, which act of defiance immediately attracted huge support: the number of families joining this squatter movement increased by 300 a day and within weeks there were 4,000 shacks in the area. Desperate to stave off any further squatting and determined to wrest the initiative from Mpanza's Sofasonke movement, the Johannesburg Council established a temporary camp comprising the most basic accommodation structures of 9m², made of breeze blocks, asbestos roofs, and without chimneys or windows. Mpanza refused to move until the authorities guaranteed to provide permanent housing to the people, but the authorities moved swiftly to remove squatters to the new settlement. By October 1945, Mpanza's "Shantytown" had been demolished and 20,000 people were accommodated in the new settlement.[46]

State intervention tended to be reactive and ad hoc, and proved wholly inadequate as a response to the housing crisis in the area. Consequently, in January 1946, Mpanza led a second movement of squatters to occupy the

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[44] P. Maylam. "The 'Black Belt': African Squatters in Durban 1935-1950". *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 17, 3, 1983, pp. 414-417.

[45] K. Kondlo. *Miserable Hovels and Shanties on Waterlogged Wasteland: Political Economy of Peri-urban Squatting around Greater Cape Town, circa 1945-1960*. MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993, p. 100.

[46] A. Stadler. "'Birds in the Cornfield', Squatter Movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 6, 1, 1979, p. 97.

incomplete houses in Orlando West. At the same time similar squatter movements sprang up in close proximity to the "Shantytown" in Pimville (led by Abel Ntoi), and Orlando East (led by Oriel Monongoaha), so that by the end of 1946 the number of squatters in the area numbered nearly 30,000.[47] Inspired by these developments, various local leaders from Alexandra, Evaton and Benoni also embarked on land occupations. In Alexandra, the local leader of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), Schreiner Baduza, organised a land invasion by tenants of plots in Lombardy East. Within days, 400 squatters occupied 50 acres of land. When these were demolished, Baduza led the squatters to occupy Number Three Square in Alexandra. Thereafter, they trekked all the way across town and erected between 600 and 800 shelters on a piece of vacant ground in Orlando, close to the Tobruk squatter camp in Pimville. At its height, Baduza's camp had 2,000 residents compared to the 25,000 who lived at Tobruk.

On the East Rand (Ekurhuleni), the most important squatter movement took place in the intensely overcrowded and highly combustible Benoni Old Location, and was led by Harry Mabuya whom the authorities described simultaneously as «essentially an opportunist» and, in a grudging admiration of his achievements, as the «uncrowned king of the location» in the late 1940s.[48] In 1945 Mabuya led lodgers from the Asiatic Section and location to establish a squatter camp, known as Tent Town, which quickly grew to more than one hundred families. Efforts by the Benoni Town Council to establish an alternative "legal" tent town failed, attracting only fifty-seven people, whereas the "illegal" Tent Town rapidly mushroomed and at its height, was 4,000 residents strong.[49] Even more troubling to the authorities was their complete absence of control in the "illegal" camp. Mabuya had in fact established his own system of local governance in Tent Town, which included rent collection, keeping the camp clean and controlling its political life. It represented a rival source of authority and administration, effectively narrowing the scope of the municipality's control over the black population.

In May 1948 the council seemed finally to regain the initiative when it established the new Wattville Emergency Camp, to which the squatters from both Tent Towns were removed. However, it was abundantly clear that the underlying problems of homelessness and overcrowding had not been

[47] Bonner and Segal. *Soweto*, pp. 25-27.

[48] D. Humphriss. *Benoni – Son of my Sorrow: The Social, Political and Economic History of a South African Gold Mining Town*. Benoni: Benoni Town Council, 1968, p. 113.

[49] P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien, *Ekurhuleni: The Making of an Urban Region*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012, p. 71.

overcome; this was further evidenced by the fact that the number of lodgers in Benoni Old Location continued to register steep increases. More than 5,000 people were crammed into the Asiatic Section alone, resulting in the decision, by a few African families in June 1950, to establish a squatter camp at Apex. Confronted by official inertia, as had been the case five years before the council was paralysed by the tactics of local leaders, who were determined to force the authorities to provide housing for the black residents of the town, homeless families flocked to the Apex squatter camp and within weeks the number of people living there had soared to over 5,000. By the time Daveyton was established a few years later, the population of Apex squatter camp stood at a massive 23,225.[50]

Squatter movements of this period left an indelible mark on urban politics. They demonstrated how direct action by poor black people could force the authorities to respond to their demands. By and large these movements were overwhelmingly spontaneous and often ephemeral. However, in some noteworthy instances they were organised and led by intrepid individuals, who tended to have a degree of support among the ranks of the tenants and sub-tenants, but were generally disconnected from formal political organisations. A signal achievement of these movements was the high degree of solidarity created among its members even as they lived in appalling conditions and faced the constant threat of removals. Crucially, the very presence of squatters on such a large scale rendered the state's objective of controlled urbanisation ineffective. It was forced to acknowledge the permanent presence of Africans in urban areas, which was reflected in the provision of housing from the late 1940s onwards. As with the bus boycott, the squatter movements generated their own repertoires of struggle, in this case principally the weapon of occupation of municipal land, which the local authorities could not ignore. It is a tactic that was emulated in the 1980s, to great effect. Sub-tenants, lodgers and especially women, were the main participants in these struggles, demonstrating unequivocally their determination to have rights in the city.

Women in struggle

A salient feature of the bus boycotts, the housing struggles and squatter movements was the absolutely central role played by women. In many instances, women constituted the majority of participants and often assumed

[50] *Ibid*., pp. 68-71.

leadership roles in various formations that emerged during these local struggles. This is explicable, firstly, by the growing presence of African women in urban areas. Between the mid-1930s and mid-1940s the number of African women in towns and cities nearly doubled, from about 350,000 to 650,000.[51] Secondly, African women had limited access to employment, forcing them into the precarious informal sector for livelihood purposes. Women (especially single women) were disproportionately affected by the lack of housing because municipal houses were only for married couples and families, and were registered in the names of men. Consequently, women tended to make up a greater percentage of squatters and sub-tenants. Thirdly, their survival strategies were deemed illegal by the authorities, which placed them in constant conflict with law enforcement agencies. It was not surprising, therefore, that women were in the forefront of popular resistance.

Women were key actors in the Alexandra bus boycott: Lillian Tshabalala was arguably the leading female member of the Emergency Transport Action Committee (Etac), which led the campaign. Although her presence on the committee has been acknowledged, little has been recorded about the crucial role that the women's organisations she represented played in the boycott. Tshabalala's activism transcended the boundaries of Alexandra and was also not confined to the specificities of the bus boycott. For example, she was also a prominent figure in a network of left-wing activists comprising independent socialists and local members of the CPSA, who in September 1943 launched the African Democratic Party (ADP) in response to the perceived lethargy of the established political parties, particularly the ANC, in the context of mounting popular struggles.[52]

Moreover, Tshabalala's activism and intellectual contribution to women's politics preceded her involvement in Alexandra's bus boycotts. She studied and lived in the USA between 1912 and 1930, working as a teacher and attending to the welfare of the African-American community in Connecticut. On her return to South Africa, Tshabalala became a founder and leading thinker of the Daughters of Africa, which established a national network of women activists.[53] Healy-Clancy attributes the success of this organisation to Tshabalala's political and intellectual talents:

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[51] R. Fine and D. Davis. *Beyond Apartheid: Labour and Liberation in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991, pp. 14 and 156.

[52] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Alexandra*, p. 71.

[53] M. Healy-Clancy. "Women and the Problem of Family in Early African Nationalist History and Historiography". *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 3, 2012, pp. 450-471.

> Tshabalala's capacious conception of the spaces of African women's politics enabled the Daughters of Africa to build a wide national tent – under which members of local groups found space to think their way out of segregationist South Africa and to articulate a new model of African identity that enabled fundamental resilience, as well as moments of recognisable resistance.[54]

By the time she settled in Alexandra in 1940, Tshabalala was already a leader of an established organisation that operated autonomously from the formal male-controlled political movements. She set about launching a local chapter of Daughters of Africa in the township, which brought her into contact with Josie Mpama,[55] a key figure in the CPSA and one of the leaders of the successful struggle against lodgers' fees in Potchefstroom in 1929 to 1930.[56] Tshabalala was also involved in the African Women's Brigade, which contemporary activist Miriam Basner described as consisting of «formidable churchwomen and beer brewers who made themselves responsible for the township's solidarity and good order – especially among the faint-hearted or riotously disposed men».[57] It is important to note that women participated in the bus boycott not only as individual supporters but also through their own organisations, which were among the most effective constituencies in terms of engendering unity and solidarity.

Local struggles often produced different types of independent locally based movements, in which women were able to play more prominent roles than in the established political parties. Sometimes, as was the case in Germiston's Dukathole Location, women established their own organisation to wage struggles against lodgers' fees. The Great Depression placed enormous strain on the standard of living of poor black communities: income levels declined, inflation increased and poverty levels soared. Under the circumstances, the Germiston Municipality's decision, in the early 1930s, to impose a two-shilling lodgers' fee on the residents of Dukathole sparked outrage and a campaign to oppose the measure was launched by existing organisations. However, women of the location quickly expressed their disappointment with the ineffectual campaign led by men and launched the

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 469.

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 465-70.

[56] R. Edgar. *The Making of an African Communist: Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana and the Communist Party of South Africa, 1927-1939*. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2005, pp. 5-13.

[57] B. Hirson. *Yours for the Union: Class and Community Struggles in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1990, pp. 139 and 144.

Women's League of Justice (WLJ). Initiated by Sofia Koerkop and other members of the local Wives' Association, the new movement grew rapidly and within months claimed a membership of between 1,000 and 2,000. Few, if any, of the formal political organisations could claim this level of support. At its height, the WLJ played the leading role in challenging the authority of the local administration and in June 1933 led a march of more than 1,000 mostly women to the town council.[58]

The campaign in Dukathole was indicative of processes across the East Rand region, which arguably became «the prime site of women's struggle for equal rights and better lives in South Africa».[59] A perennial source of contention between the authorities and African women was the former's determination to root out domestic beer brewing. For example, in Payneville the struggle over control of beer brewing dominated local political struggles for most of the 1940s. The municipality's decision to erect a beerhall in order to monopolise this lucrative source of income, coupled with an intensification of raids against domestic brewers, caused an escalation in tensions between the state and women. Initially these struggles were spearheaded by the African Protection League, whose leader was the indefatigable Dinah Maile. Her rise to prominence in struggles throughout the 1940s brought her into the orbit of left-wing politics and eventually into the ranks of the CPSA.[60]

The key struggle in this protracted dispute occurred in 1945 when the women of the location organised a boycott of the beerhall. On 8 July of that year, the CPSA called a public meeting where Maile's defiant speech and support for domestic brewing received «rapturous» applause.[61] Over the following two weeks the location was a hive of protest activities: demonstrations, marches and meetings took place regularly as the pressure to close the beerhall mounted.[62] On 22 July, matters reached a bloody climax, when two thousand women demonstrated in front of the beerhall to prevent men from entering. The police violently dispersed the demonstrators, triggering a riot that quickly engulfed the whole location.[63] The main

[58] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Ekurhuleni*, p. 47.

[59] *Ibid*., p. 41.

[60] *Ibid*., pp. 84-86.

[61] CAD, Department of Native Affairs Files (NTS) 7676, 110/322, Report of the Springs Police District Commandant, 1945.

[62] CAD, NTS 7676, 110/322, Report of the Springs Police District Commandant, 1945.

[63] CAD, NTS 7676, 110/322, Report of the Non-European Affairs Manager on the Disturbances in Payneville, 22 July 1945.

demand of the protestors – for the closure of the beerhall – was not accepted. As a result, protests continued throughout the 1940s, albeit on a smaller scale. In 1949 the Residents' Protest Committee was formed to campaign against the «indirect method of taxation» represented by the beerhall but once again failed to convince the local authority to compromise on the matter.[64] At the same time the authorities were also unable to stop domestic brewing, which continued unabated. The rising militancy of the residents, especially women, made it far more difficult for the authorities to impose their restrictions. The struggle in Payneville highlighted quite dramatically that women had to wage a struggle on two fronts: against the white municipal authorities and against the men of the location, many of whom deliberately undermined the call for a boycott of the beerhall.

Bradford has provided a compelling account and analysis of African women's protests in 1929 against beerhalls and for the legalisation of domestic beer brewing in several towns in Natal's countryside.[65] As was the case in Payneville in the 1940s, the opening of beerhalls was followed by the state's relentless campaign against beer brewing, resulting in the arrest of scores of women and the confiscation of thousands of litres of beer.[66] A bloody climax was reached in the campaign in Durban in June 1929 when 2,000 white residents confronted black demonstrators who were led by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). According to Bradford, a prominent figure in the ensuing battle was Ma-Dhlamini, who was described as «[t]he woman in the man who stood before the forces … in military attire».[67] It is a narrative that challenges the view that militant confrontations with white authority was the exclusive domain of radical men (especially youth) and that women at best performed auxiliary roles in this contestation. In so doing, it potentially unsettles what Kros (following Unterhalter), has described as «the overbearing narrative of 'heroic masculinity'».[68]

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[64] CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/28, Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Affairs Committee "Protest against the Proposal to Use Profits from the Sale of Kaffir Beer for Housing Funds", 1949.

[65] H. Bradford. "'We are now the men': Women's Beer Protests in the Natal Countryside, 1929". In B. Bozzoli (ed.). *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987, pp. 292-323.

[66] *Ibid*., pp. 293-294.

[67] *Ibid*., p. 297.

[68] C. Kros. "Lives in the Making: The Possibilities and Impossibilities of Autobiography with Reference to the Case of Amina Cachalia". *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 2, 2012, p. 253; E. Unterhalter. "The Work of the Nation: Heroic Masculinity in South African

Bradford's study lifted the veil on an important episode in the history of resistance politics, in which women were the principal protagonists, thereby contributing to efforts by feminists and other scholars to challenge existing biases in struggle historiography, which have tended to valorise the role of men. This male-centric hegemonic approach has variously been challenged by feminist scholars who have produced accounts of resistance that demonstrated the salience of women's involvement in the broad resistance against apartheid. Despite the paucity of references on the politics of black women in official archives, this body of research uncovered rich histories of individuals, women's social groups, episodes of struggle (at local and national levels) and a range of political activities, all of which contributed to the complex constitution of "the struggle".[69] These accounts and analyses were in part a response to the relative absence of women in dominant narratives of the struggle. Walker explained that the histories of formal organisations, invariably led by men, predominated because the voices of women, especially of black women, were largely missing. «Women simply disappear from our view of the past», she suggested, because of their marginalisation in official records.[70]

However, it did far more than simply insert women in existing narratives. In fact, feminist scholars mounted a strident critique of the representations of women's struggles in the existing literature, which tended to confine women to specific roles in the existing and predominant political organisations and the formal campaigns led by them. In this respect, they were deemed as auxiliaries and as Hassim has observed, «for most of the twentieth century, women were second-class members of the ANC» and efforts to re-articulate the role of women was halted by the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960. Nonetheless, «[t]he role of the Women's Section from the time the ANC went into exile in the 1960s had been primarily to act as the movement's social worker».[71] In similar vein, Bradford argued that the

Autobiographical Writing of the Anti-apartheid Struggle". *European Journal of Development Research*, 12, 2, 2000, pp. 157-178.

[69] For example, S. Hassim. "Nationalism, Feminism and Autonomy: The ANC in Exile and the Question of Women". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 3, 2004, pp. 433-456; C. Walker (ed.). *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1990; H. Bradford. "We are now the men"; C. Walker. *Women and Resistance*; J. Wells. *We Now Demand! The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1993.

[70] C. Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview". In Walker. *Women and Gender*, pp. 2-3.

[71] Hassim. "Nationalism, Feminism and Autonomy", pp. 434-435.

dominant literature relegated «female beer protests … to the sphere of the 'backward-looking' resistance by conservative, non-feminist women defending 'traditional' rights». It is an approach characterised by the denial of the «feminist impulses» in these struggles, reflecting a failure to focus attention on predominantly female spheres, such as the family and home, which are sites of «women's most intimate insubordination». In order properly to comprehend women's struggles, analysts need to transcend the conventional analytical straitjackets of nationalism and class, and acknowledge the importance of patriarchy.[72] Bradford and Walker insisted that the personal sphere (including the family) is profoundly political, and the struggles in these spaces are constitutive of broader resistance politics.

Debates about women's struggles flourished in the late 1980s and early 1990s, generating crucial new insights into liberation histories. However, the production of new narratives of liberation from the mid-1990s often seemed oblivious to this literature and, notwithstanding ritual acknowledgements of the role of women, reverted to conventional and outdated modes of inserting women in struggle histories. Recently, Healy-Clancy bemoaned the persistence of focusing on formal political organisations, which «valorises women's presence in the spaces where they were in fact least common – the halls of the male-led ANC».[73] In this approach, she argues, «[p]rominent women make appearances as colleagues and kin» of powerful men. Largely absent in these studies are women's groups, the family and various non-institutional structures that were far more central to women's politics than the political parties.

Thozama April's recent work has also problematised the way in which a leading figure, Charlotte Maxeke, has been recovered and inserted into the history of the ANC. According to April, Maxeke was transformed «into the symbolic mother of the nation» after her death and especially when the ANC was in exile. In this process her life story became synonymous with the ANC, even though the Congress movement was not her only interest.[74] Her critique of "struggle biography" posits that the role of women has been cast in «predetermined terms as an effect of the generosity of male figures».[75] The emphasis on the male-led nationalist movement leads to a neglect, among others, of Maxeke as an intellectual and feminist. So while Maxeke is

[72] Bradford. "We are now the men", p. 293.

[73] Healy-Clancy. "Women and the Problem of Family", p. 455.

[74] T. April. "Charlotte Maxeke: A Celebrated and Neglected Figure in History". In Lissoni, Soske, Erlank, Nieftagodien and Badsha. *One Hundred Years of the ANC*, p. 106.

[75] *Ibid*., p. 97.

widely celebrated as a leader of the ANC (and of the Women's League in particular), «the nationalist narratives of the struggle do not engage in a meaningful dialogue with Maxeke's ideas about, for instance, gender inequality, 'native womanhood', justice, education, health and employment».[76] A history that accurately analyses the varied and complex role of women's resistance would not only unsettle existing historical narratives, but also pose a challenge to the continuation of male-dominated politics.

Conclusion: new movements, new memories

The popular insurgent protests that have swept across the country for more than a decade arguably constitute the most significant form of contentious politics produced in the post-apartheid era. Between 2004 and 2005, at the height of President Thabo Mbeki's rule, there were nearly 6,000 reported incidents of protests.[77] Since then the official annual average of urban protests has increased to approximately 8,000 – one of the highest rates of protest in the world[78] – with causes ranging from locality-based "service delivery protests" to national campaigns for access to proper education and anti-retroviral medicine, as well as against the privatisation and commodification of basic amenities such as water and electricity. These struggles have given birth to a new generation of protest organisations and movements, including the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM), Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC), Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), Coalition against Xenophobia (CAX), the Landless People's Movement (LPM), the Democratic Left Front (DLF) and new independent trade unions. Many more local organisations (crisis committees, concerned residents' groups, civics and demarcation committees, for example) have been created in poor communities across the country. Squatter camps, informal settlements, inner-

[76] *Ibid.*

[77] R. Pithouse. "A Politics of the Poor: Shackdwellers' Struggles in Durban". *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 43, 2008, p. 75; P. Alexander. "Rebellion of the Poor: South Africa's Service Delivery Protests – A Preliminary Analysis". *Review of African Political Economy*, 37, 2010, pp. 25-40.

[78] P. Bond, A. Desai and T. Ngwane. "Uneven and Combined Marxism within South Africa's Urban Social Movements: Transcending Precarity in Community, Labour and Environmental Struggles". *Amandla!*, 22 June 2012.

city slums, apartheid townships and post-apartheid RDP housing complexes have been the primary places in which these contentious movements have arisen. The emergence of an independent and explicitly socialist trade union movement from the fracturing of Cosatu and the struggles on the mines have added an important worker base to these movements. Collectively they have challenged in various ways the dominant ideologies and practices of the state.

But they are mostly bereft of history and memory. Where references to previous epochs of struggle occur, it is mainly confined to the 1980s, in part because that moment constituted the final surge against apartheid and many activists in new movements were directly involved in those struggles. Prior resistance movements have disappeared from the horizons of activists and scholars of popular insurgent movements. This is unfortunate because, as this paper has attempted to argue, there are large swathes of struggle history that hold profoundly important lessons for contemporary struggles against power. The above-mentioned movements employ many of the repertoires of struggle first developed by local insurgencies in the first half of the twentieth century. Socialist ideas, attempts to develop democratic accountability, the emergence of numerous (often autonomous) local movements and, importantly, the centrality of women, are some of the common features in these struggles. So too are many of the demands: for decent housing and land, rights in the city, against police harassment, against high prices and so forth. One could argue, in conclusion, that new movements have a responsibility to recover the memories of these struggles to unsettle and challenge existing dominant, nationalist narratives. As in the 1980s, such a project has the potential to enthuse and empower emerging movements. In so doing, memory/history could be reclaimed as a weapon against power.

CHAPTER 5
The Botswana Connection: The Re-invigoration of Confrontational Politics in Thembisa[1] Township, 1979-1990

TSHEPO MOLOI

In the 1980s, the struggle against the apartheid state in South Africa intensified significantly. Immediately after the Vaal Triangle uprising, which erupted on 3 September 1984, an upsurge of resistance was visible in most urban townships. [2] Several scholars and political commentators have attributed this to the role played by civic organisations/associations (or civics) in mobilising their communities, initially against the community councils, and later against town councils, established through the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982, because they were either increasing rent and service charges or unable to provide social services, and/or they displayed corrupt tendencies.[3]

For Thula Simpson, a historian, it was the youth,[4] acting independently of any particular political organisation, that were at the forefront of the

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[1] Officially, the name of this township is spelt Tembisa but the correct spelling in isiZulu is Thembisa. Many thanks to my interviewees who availed themselves to be interviewed. I would also like to thank Barry Gilder and Arianna Lissoni for reading and making insightful comments on the draft chapter.

[2] M. Marks and P. McKenzie. "Militarised Youth: Political Pawns or Social Agents?". In J. Cock and P. McKenzie (eds). *From Defence to Development: Redirecting Military Resources in South Africa*. Claremont: David Philip, 1998, p. 223.

[3] See, for example, J. Seekings. *Quiescence and the Transition to Confrontation: South African Townships, 1978-1984*. PhD thesis, Nuffield College, University of Oxford, 1990.

[4] During the period under review, the term "youth", according to Seekings, «was political rather than a sociological or demographic construction». What this meant is that age was not necessarily a determining factor for one to be considered as "youth". Nelson Mandela, at the age of 70, was perceived by some activists as being part of the "youth" since political activism was a measurement of one's "youth". In addition, the category of "youth" included secondary and high school students, tertiary students, young workers and the unemployed.

township struggles. He ascribes this to the absence of the ANC within the country. He contends that this incapacitated the «ANC from being able to guide and influence the political events inside the country».[5] Thus, according to him, the ANC was largely a spectator when the youth forced almost all the councillors in black townships throughout the country to resign.[6]

There are many and various reasons why the youth played a major role in the resistance struggle. For Jeremy Seekings, this was simply because there were very large numbers of young people and they had more time at their disposal than their employed elders.[7] In an interview with Tommy Makau, a former member of the Maokeng Youth Congress, in Kroonstad, in the northern part of the Free State province, he reasoned that it was because the youth had nothing to lose. For Makau the youth differed from the adults who, because of family commitments and plans for the future, were reluctant to actively participate in (or to be in the forefront of) the struggle for liberation.[8]

It is, however, not my intention to dispute the pivotal role played by the youth and civics in the liberation struggle in South Africa, particularly in the 1980s. In this chapter I seek to demonstrate that there was a relationship between the ANC, through its Regional Politico-Military Councils (RPMCs) based in the different Forward Areas (Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mozambique, Lesotho and London), and political activists in some of the townships inside the country. Thembisa Township provides a clear example of such a relationship. Using oral interviews conducted with former political activists who were active in the 1980s in Thembisa, I contend that in

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See J. Seekings. *Heroes or Villains?: Youth Politics in the 1980s.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1993; S. Johnson. "'Soldiers of Luthuli': Youth in the Politics of Resistance in South Africa". In S. Johnson (ed.). *No Turning Back.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, pp. 94-152; K. Naidoo. "The Politics of Youth Resistance in the 1980s: The Dilemma of a Differentiated Durban". *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 18, 1, 1992, pp. 143-165.

[5] T. Simpson. "'Umkhonto we Sizwe, We are Waiting for You': The ANC and the Township Uprising, September 1984 – September 1985". *South African Historical Journal*, 61, 1, 2009, p. 169.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

[7] J. Seekings. "Political Mobilisation in the Black Townships of the Transvaal". In P. Frankel, N. Pines and M. Swilling (eds). *State, Resistance and Change in South Africa.* London: Croom Helm, 1988, p. 218.

[8] T. Moloi. *Black Politics in Kroonstad: Political Mobilisation, Protests, Local Government, and Generational Struggles, 1976-1995*. PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2012, p. 269.

Thembisa confrontational politics were re-invigorated and influenced by the Botswana-based ANC.

When civics in other townships mobilised residents to confront town councillors for proposing to, or actually increasing rent and service charges, as for example was the case in Tumahole, Parys, in July 1984, and in the Vaal Triangle townships in September of the same year, Thembisa remained tranquil and restrained. This was because of the Thembisa Civic Association's *modus operandi*. The latter preferred to use legal means to challenge the local authorities. Because of this the majority of the residents' interest in civic politics, which in many townships served as the route to national politics for political activists, remained low.

In this chapter I will demonstrate that, after a connection was created by Robert Serote, initially with his cousin Mongane Wally Serote, who, between 1980 and 1983, was one of the leading figures in the ANC's Senior Organ in Botswana, and later with Thabang Makwetla, who, in 1985, was chairing the RPMC in Botswana, ANC underground units were established in Thembisa in 1985. Members of these units attempted to radicalise the conservative Thembisa Civic Association (TCA). When this failed, they helped to establish the militant Thembisa Residents Association (TRA) in 1986, which immediately called for a rent boycott. Furthermore, to stimulate the residents' interest in confrontational politics, an underground unit that was responsible for hand-grenade assaults, attacked and forced the local councillors to resign; the other underground units helped to establish the street, sectional and area committees. These were instrumental in the politicisation of the community of Thembisa.

Thembisa Township

The East Rand township of Thembisa, meaning "Promise" in isiZulu, is located 15 kilometres north of Kempton Park and about 25 kilometres from Johannesburg. The township was established in 1957 as a "model" township, firstly, to resettle employees of various municipalities close to the township. These municipalities included Kempton Park, Edenvale, Modderfontein, Clayville, Verwoerdburg, Bedfordview and Germiston. Secondly, the government also hoped that Thembisa would provide a solution to the problem of growing squatter (informal) settlements around the Edenvale and Kempton Park municipalities. And finally, the township was also seen as a solution to the problem of overcrowding and the shortage of housing in

Alexandra Township, which were believed to be contributing factors to the escalating crime rate as well as the general instability in that township.[9] Because of the constant streaming of people into Thembisa from different places, the township's population increased rapidly. In 1957, for example, about 200 families were resettled in Thembisa. However, by 1969 the township's population was estimated to be about 66,214.[10] Seven years later, it was estimated that Thembisa's population was about 139,000, followed by Katlehong, also an East Rand township, with 114,000.[11] Harry Mashabela, a journalist and author, noted that the local black authority estimated the number of people living in Thembisa in 1987 to be 200,000.[12] And yet the then Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Chris Heunis, put the township's population in the same year at over 300,000.[13]

If these estimates are to be accepted, they confirm that Thembisa had a huge population in comparison with other East Rand townships at that stage. This undoubtedly incapacitated the local authorities in the township. They could not provide the basic social services needed by the residents and also failed to develop the township. Describing the conditions in the township in 1970, Robert Serote, who relocated from Alexandra to Thembisa in that year, had this to say:

> During this period there were no [electric] lights and there was the bucket system. When it was Sunday during the day, say at one o'clock, the buckets were taken out and you didn't know whether to close the door, because when you did that it was hot inside the house and when you left the door open it smelt bad. And we didn't have [water] taps in the yard, meaning that between the yards there was a passage and they had installed the taps there. So, four houses were sharing one tap. As time went on we installed a tap inside our yard

[9] For a detailed account of the history of Alexandra Township, see for example, P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien. *Alexandra: A History.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008.

[10] University of the Witwatersrand, Historical and Literary Papers, A1934/C12.2 "Tembisa", April 1969.

[11] A. Brooks and J. Brickhill. *Whirlwind before the Storm: The Origins and Development of the Uprising in Soweto and the Rest of South Africa from June to December 1976.* London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1980, p. 176.

[12] H. Mashabela. *Townships of the PWV.* Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1988, p. 153

[13] N.G. Siyotula. *The Tembisa Rent Boycott.* Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989, p. 19.

> and others did the same. But you'd find that most of the time they were not working.[14]

The situation deteriorated in the 1980s after the Thembisa Town Council (TTC) had taken over the administration of the township from the East Rand Administration Board (Erab). For instance, by 1986 5,000 families were on the housing waiting list and only 10 per cent of the roads were tarred (most of the main roads were in need of serious repair).[15] Lack of housing, according to Seekings, was one of the key factors in political mobilisation in the then Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV, today part of the Gauteng Province) region.[16] In order to discourage black people from living permanently in the urban areas, like the Witwatersrand (or the Rand), the National Party government stopped building houses in the townships towards the end of the 1960s. It diverted funds and more houses were built in the homelands. In some of the townships, such as Daveyton, in the East Rand, people responded by establishing informal settlements. In Thembisa, during the TCA's era, the homeless members of the community remained tranquil and pinned their hopes on the civic to help them. But that was not to be. This should not, however, be construed to suggest that the residents of Thembisa were not aggrieved by the appalling conditions they were forced to live under. They were.

In 1981 the residents of Thembisa established the Residents Action Committee (RAC) which, although it was short-lived, attempted to engage in confrontational opposition against the council. After learning of the Thembisa Community Council's intention to increase rent the RAC, together with the local branch of the Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement (later Inkatha Freedom Party) and the local branch of the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo), opposed the rent increase proposed by the community council. The latter wanted to hike rent by R5 to about R23, to finance development, including the installation of a sewerage system in the areas still using buckets.[17] The RAC called on the residents to boycott the increase and demanded that the leading councillors resign. The hostel dwellers followed by rioting, and the council chairperson's house was attacked.[18] It is

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[14] Interview with Robert Serote by Tshepo Moloi for the South African History Archive (SAHA), Umfuyaneni section, Thembisa, 11 February 2011.

[15] Siyotula. *The Tembisa Rent Boycott*, p. 17.

[16] Seekings. "Political Mobilisation", p. 201.

[17] Siyotula .*The Tembisa Rent Boycott*, p. 161.

[18] *Ibid.*

not possible to demonstrate the level of support these actions enjoyed in the community. However, it is safe to surmise that they were beginning to have a conscientising effect within the community. It was for this reason that the state responded heavy-handedly. It detained a number of residents, including several middle-aged women who were active during these protests.[19] This, however, did not deter some of the members of the community. Anti-rent demonstration marches and public meetings continued. However, after a partial work stayaway, members of the RAC, the Azapo branch and its national executive were detained.[20] There is no evidence to suggest that this attempt to embark on confrontational politics in Thembisa continued. In 1983 the TCA was formed. Its pacifying role, under the leadership of Goba Ndlovu, stifled the promise of confrontational politics in Thembisa.

When the TTC was voted into office in 1984, just like other town councils across the country, it was given a range of powers, particularly those concerning the allocation of business licences and housing. However, it did not receive any financial support from the government to administer and develop the township. In accordance with the Riekert Commission's recommendations, the Black Local Authorities (BLAs) had to bear the full financial responsibility for township administration and development.[21] Worse, the BLAs' town councils, unlike the local authorities before them, such as the white councils and the administration boards, could not generate revenue from levies contributed by other municipalities or the sale of sorghum beer and liquor profits. This financial support was no longer available. For example, in the case of Thembisa, the Germiston City Council (GCC), which was initially given the responsibility to administer Thembisa after its establishment, generated its revenue from levies contributed to the Thembisa Revenue Account by the seven municipalities mentioned above. The GCC also derived its revenue from the sale of sorghum beer and from rental and service charges and miscellaneous fines.[22] Because of the various sources of funding available to the GCC, at this stage rent was affordable to the residents of Thembisa. For example, Shile, one of the first residents of Thembisa, remembered that after moving into his house in 1959 he was paying «something like £2.50s for rent».[23] And Thandi Swakamisa recalled

[19] *Ibid*., p. 162.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Seekings. *Quiescence*, p. 58.
[22] Siyotula. *The Tembisa Rent Boycott*, pp. 12-13.
[23] *Sowetan*, 7 February 1983. South Africa began to use rands only after 1961. £2.50s was equivalent to R5.

that when she arrived in Thembisa in 1972, rent charges were R6.25 per month.[24] Admittedly, at this stage this amount might have been a bit steep for some of the residents, particularly those who were employed as low-skilled labourers. They earned a pittance compared to the skilled labourers.[25] But the residents seem to have accepted the stipulated rent charges because the local authorities did not hike rent and service charges constantly, as was the case after the introduction of the community and town councils. Just as during the GCC's tenure, the Erab, which took over the administration of Thembisa in 1973, continued to derive revenue from the employers' levies, sorghum beer and liquor profits, in addition to rent and service charges. Thus the Erab was under no pressure to raise rent and service charges to achieve its administrative objectives.

Even though the GCC and Erab were able to accrue funding from the various sources both, particularly the Erab, failed to develop the township. Instead, the Erab channelled a large part of the revenue accumulated for the Thembisa Revenue Account into promoting the development of the homelands.[26] This was in line with the government's policy of influx control. Thus when the TTC assumed its administration role, it found an undeveloped township. Worse, it took over after the government had privatised the liquor and beer outlets which belonged to the Erab.[27] Due to lack of available sources for funding, the TTC was forced to increase rent and service charges to accrue funding for the administration and development of the township. It turned out that this was ill-timed: the oil price increase in the mid-1970s had seriously negative effects on the country's economy. South Africa experienced «sharply declining investments, price inflation, rising unemployment, high interest rates, balance of payment difficulties, and a falling exchange».[28] Consequently, a

[24] Interview with Thandi Swakamisa by Tshepo Moloi, SADET Oral History Project, Thembisa, 23 July 2004.

[25] In the early 1970s, an African employed as a low-skilled labourer earned as little as R9 per week and a skilled labourer R12. See for example P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien. *Kathorus: A History.* Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 2001.

[26] See for example, E. Unterhalter. *Forced Removal: The Division, Segregation and Control of the People of South Africa.* London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1987, p. 78

[27] The Riekert Commission of Inquiry abolished the employers' levies. See T. Moloi. *Youth Politics: The Political Role of AZANYU in the Struggle for Liberation: The Case of AZANYU Thembisa Branch, 1980s to 1996*. MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2005, p. 37.

[28] Seekings. *Quiescence*, p. 78.

significant number of African workers lost their jobs and those who were fortunate to remain employed were forced to take a salary cut. Alex Boraine points out that «by the end of 1983 total unemployment in the country [...] was in the region of two million, or about 25 per cent of the labour force».[29] Without doubt, this situation severely affected the residents of Thembisa, the majority of whom were employed in the East Rand's industrial hub.[30] Those who lost their jobs were forced to find other ways to make ends meet. In the 1980s many of the residents of Thembisa established taverns where they sold liquor.[31]

In spite of these trying times faced by the majority of the residents of Thembisa, in the short space of seven months, between December 1984 and July 1985, the TTC hiked rent twice: by R4 and R11, respectively, arguing that these hikes were necessary to facilitate payment for the master plan intended to electrify the township. Worse, in between these increments, the TTC also levied a R4 increase on charges for water and electricity.[32] The TCA failed to mobilise the residents to confront the council. Instead, it took the legal route to challenge the council.[33] This tactic, as will be shown below, won the TCA temporary victories, but constrained it from building local support.

As noted already, the TCA was launched in 1983 to fill the vacuum left by the RAC and the other groups which had opposed rent increases during the tenure of the community council. It was «going to be the mouthpiece of the people in Thembisa in respect of the many complaints that are there, and it would meet and talk with the administration and council».[34] Initially, the TCA attempted to mobilise the community against the unpopular decisions

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[29] A. Boraine. *Mamelodi: From Parks to People's Power: A Survey of Community Organisations in South Africa, 1979-1986*. BA Honours dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1987, p. 21.

[30] P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien, *Ekurhuleni: The Making of an Urban Region*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012, p. 119. According to Beavon, cited by Bonner and Nieftagodien, 83 per cent of the 181 factories which relocated from Johannesburg set up their new plants in Ekurhuleni, especially in the industrial areas of Kempton Park, Germiston and Alberton.

[31] Interview with Pauline Masombuka by Nonhlanhla Ngwenya for SAHA, Endulwini section, Thembisa, 9 December 2010.

[32] Siyotula. *The Tembisa Rent Boycott*, p. 35.

[33] The Soweto Civic Association (SCA), launched in 1979 to protest rent increases in Soweto, also used legal means to challenge and oppose the Soweto Town Council. See Seekings. *Quiescence*, pp. 153-154.

[34] *Ibid.*

taken by the TTC. According to Siyotula, «when the TTC seemed set to implement the service charge increases, TCA organised a 1,000 signature petition which was widely supported by Hospital View Residents Committee, Thembisa branch of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), Moya Youth Movement, and Jiyane Residents Committee».[35] The petition was forwarded to the TTC «for consideration and possible settlement».[36] After stalling, the residents decided to bypass the TTC and forwarded the petition directly to the Minister of Cooperation and Development, Piet Koornhof. Finally, a meeting was held between the TCA, the TTC and the Minister. But these parties failed to reach consensus. The TCA and TTC remained deadlocked in their original positions: the TCA opposing the increase and the TTC intending to implement it. It was at this point that the TCA changed tactic and used legal methods to challenge the council, avoiding confrontational methods.[37]

In 1984, for example, the court ruled in favour of the TCA that the R4 levy was invalid on the grounds that the TTC had failed to comply with the correct legal procedures for implementing a rent or service-charge increase. For instance, the court discovered that the TTC had published its notice of intent to increase the levy in newspapers such as *Die Vaderland* and the *Beeld* – Afrikaans newspapers – when most residents in Thembisa read the *Sowetan* and *The Star,* English newspapers. This proved to be a victory for the TCA – albeit temporarily. After rectifying this oversight, the council implemented the hike in December 1985.[38]

Buoyed by this, some of the councillors in the TTC began to flex their muscles. This was evident when it was reported in the local newspaper that bachelors were denied houses in the township.[39] For instance, Councillor Rose Thulare suggested that a widow, whose policeman husband had died, should either be moved from her four-roomed house into a two-roomed house, or be given the choice to buy her own house elsewhere, as she was an illegal in Thembisa.[40] The same councillor, again, demanded that an employee working

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[35] Siyotula. *The Tembisa Rent Boycott*, p. 33.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] In 1985 the TCA was still against confrontational politics. In March 1985, Mr P.M. Mathebula, the spokesperson of the TCA, was reported to have severely criticised people who had distributed a pamphlet in the name of the TCA, calling for the boycott of buses (due to price hikes) and suggesting that the residents should not pay rent. *The Star,* 6 March 1985.

[38] Siyotula. *The Tembisa Rent Boycott,* p. 35.

[39] *Ibid.,* p. 26.

[40] *Ibid.,* pp. 26-27.

for a 3M company (formerly known as the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company), an electronic manufacturing company in Germiston, should not be given a house in Thembisa but must apply for a house in Katlehong because he worked for a Germiston-based company.[41] For some local political activists, such behaviour corrupted councillors. Lazarus Mawela claims that the houses which were denied the so-called illegals in Thembisa were subsequently taken over by the councillors. He explains:

> Mr [Lucas] Mothiba, the former mayor […] of course he did gain personally […] Remember in those days when a husband passed away then the wife could not own the house. And the four-roomed house was taken away from her. Somebody else was allocated that four-roomed house. So, he owned lots of those four-roomed houses. He got land and built shops.[42]

This perception about the councillors was shared by many of the residents in Thembisa, as this complaint by a resident of Thembisa shows: «On checking what was happening […] and not seeing any improvement in the township, I became aware of the people in charge of the township progressing in life, in fact becoming business owners».[43]

When the council was challenged by members of the opposition group within the council and by some of the members of the community regarding such misconduct, but not by the TCA, the more radical members of the TCA began to lose faith in the leadership of Goba Ndlovu, the chairman of the TCA. Greg Malebo, one of the radical members within the TCA, recalls that they wanted to replace Ndlovu with another member, hoping that this member would be more amenable to radical ideas. He explains, «Then there was Ntate [Mr] Seeta […] And we were actually trying to topple Goba Ndlovu so that we can put Seeta to be our chairperson, because Goba had problems. So there were serious contestations […]».[44]

It was against this background (caused by the perceived non-militant and non-confrontational stance adopted by the TCA's leadership) that some of

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[42] Interview with Lazarus Mawela by Tshepo Moloi, for SAHA, Umfuyaneng section, Thembisa, 30 October 2011.

[43] Quoted in Seekings. *Quiescence*, p. 82.

[44] Interview with Greg Malebo by Tshepo Moloi, for SAHA, Hospital View, Thembisa, 20 October 2011.

the members of the ANC underground units in Thembisa decided to infiltrate the TCA, with the intention to radicalise it. The emergence of the ANC underground units in Thembisa can be traced back to 1979. In that year, Robert Serote had a dream. In this dream his friends had all disappeared. He explains:

> I had a dream and in my dream I was looking for my friends but they were not there – all of them – and I thought what am I going to do and it hit me that because they were not here, then I'm skipping [fleeing] the country … I skipped the country, jumped fences. And when I got there they were all there in a camp. And I asked them why they are here? They said that they knew that I was going to come and that was the end of my dream.[45]

Serote, who was born in 1942, joined the PAC in Alexandra in 1961. When the PAC was banned in South Africa on 8 April 1960 and forced into exile in Basotholand (today's Lesotho), Serote was summoned to Basotholand to receive instructions from the leader of the PAC there, Potlako Leballo.[46] This meeting did not happen. After his cousin, Jeff Makubire, also a member of the PAC in Alexandra, had been detained, Serote decided to flee Alexandra and went to hide in Rustenburg.[47]

Robert Serote narrated his dream to Wally Serote's younger brother, Thabo, who was on his way to Gaborone to visit Wally – at the time, Wally was in Botswana.[48] Wally instructed Thabo to tell Robert to contact him and «stop dreaming about these things because he [referring to Robert] really wants to fight. So he must come here to join us».[49] In 1980 Robert Serote made his first trip to Botswana to meet with Wally. He recalls that in his meeting with Wally, the latter remained cautious and parted with information scantily. Perhaps at this stage Wally did not fully trust Robert and was trying to weigh his commitment. It was in that year that the ANC's Senior Organs (SOs) were introduced in the Forward Areas. «Each SO consisted of a Political Command, a Military Command, and a Department

[45] Interview with Robert Serote.

[46] For a detailed history of the PAC in Basotholand, see for example A. Lissoni. "The PAC in Basutoland, c. 1962-1965". *South African Historical Journal*, 62, 1, 2010, pp. 54-77.

[47] Interview with Robert Serote.

[48] Wally Serote had moved to Gaborone at the end of 1978. There he joined the ANC after being impressed by people such as Cassius Maake, an MK cadre. See D. Wylie. *Art and Revolution: The Life and Death of Thami Mnyele*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2008, p. 111.

[49] Interview with Robert Serote.

of [National] Intelligence and Security (NAT) structure», writes Houston.[50] The SOs were established after the leadership of the ANC had realised that the military and political structures of the movement operated as separate entities. Mac Maharaj observed, «You had an MK unit entering South Africa with a political commissar, but he has no relationship with the underground.»[51] Thus the SOs were established to improve coordination between military and political structures. In 1980 the Botswana SO included Billy Masethla, Keith Mokoape, Dan Tloome, Marius and Jenny Schoon, Patrick Fitzgerald, Wally Serote, Thabang Makwetla and Hassan Ebrahim.[52]

After their meeting, Wally suggested that Robert should return to Thembisa and keep him informed about developments. Interestingly, in 1980 Robert Serote was not the only activist from Thembisa who was visiting Botswana to meet with members of the ANC. Lazarus Mawela was another activist. Mawela, unlike Robert Serote, was instructed to operate aboveground. He remembers that in one of his visits Thami Mnyele instructed him to return to South Africa to prepare for the formation of the UDF and to establish trade unions to mobilise workers. Mnyele had lived in Thembisa in the 1970s and was a leading figure in the Black Consciousness Movement there. In 1979 he fled the country to Botswana, where he joined the ANC.[53] According to Greg Houston, «the Botswana machinery had been told 'a good six or nine months before' the launch of the UDF that the ANC was going to start a 'mass internal democratic movement'».[54] Indeed, the ANC had started to discuss the possibility of forming, according to Howard Barrell, «the broad front comprising popular organisations inside South Africa operating legally and semi-legally».[55] Although it was not clear when this broad front might be formed, the idea had been presented to the activists, who started preparing for this. For this reason Mawela heeded Mnyele's instruction and became involved in the civic movement and joined the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union.[56]

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[50] G. Houston. "The ANC's Internal Underground Political Work in the 1980s". In SADET (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 4*. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010, p. 137.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*; ANC. "Second Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission", Part 2.

[53] See Wylie. *Art and Revolution.*

[54] Houston. "The ANC's Internal Underground", p. 172.

[55] Quoted in J. Seekings. *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991*. Cape Town: David Philip, 2000, p. 34.

[56] Interview with Mawela.

Four years passed after Robert Serote's first trip to Botswana before the ANC's internal underground structures could be established in Thembisa. In May 1983 the ANC was restructured. The Politico-Military Council (PMC) replaced the Revolutionary Council «with the express intention of improving the coordination of political and military activities».[57] Similarly, the SOs were replaced by the RPMCs to service specific regions in South Africa. In 1984 a Coordinating Committee was established in Botswana, consisting of representatives from military and political structures. The following year it was replaced by the RPMC. Thabang Makwetla's appointment as the chair of the RPMC in Botswana helped to fast track Robert Serote's political plans. Although Wally Serote was no longer in direct contact with his cousin Robert, he was still in Botswana and involved in the RPMC. He became the political representative in that structure.[58] It was at this stage that ANC's internal underground units were established in Thembisa.

Robert Serote began to work closely with Thabang Makwetla in Botswana. He claims to have identified five people and taken them to Botswana where they were trained by Makwetla. He explains: «I was now operating with people who understood the political situation. I had taken them to meet Makwetla. He trained them over the weekend. And he told them that now they were members of MK».[59] In reality, Serote and the five people that he had recruited did not belong to MK structures, but Makwetla might have told them that they were now members of MK to motivate and inspire them to be diligent in their underground work. The underground units were led by Robert's wife «Francinah, Thabo "Guy" Monanyedi, Thabo [Serote], Steven, David Letselebe and Robert Serote, who went by the name "George". Each person was instructed to form their own unit. David Letselebe became responsible for propaganda, Steven for intelligence, Francinah for communication, and Guy Monanyedi became part of the hand-grenade squad».[60] Robert became the overall commander.

In line with the strategic shift made by the ANC in 1980 and in 1983, by 1985 a number of ANC units had been established inside the country. However, these operated differently. Some focused only on military activities. For instance, in the East Rand in 1986, Viva Makwena, a local

[57] Houston. "The ANC's Internal Underground", p. 176.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

[59] Interview with Robert Serote.

[60] *Ibid*. The hand-grenade squads began training in Botswana in 1983. See Wylie. *Art and Revolution*, p. 196; for further details on the hand-grenade squads (or suicide squads) see for example, Simpson. "Umkhonto we Sizwe".

activist, was recruited by MK and instructed to form an underground unit. Makwena's unit focused its attention solely on military operations and not on direct mass mobilisation in Katlehong.[61] Some of the units directly linked with the ANC in Botswana operated, for example, in the West Rand[62] and others in Vryburg in the then Western Transvaal (today's North West province).[63]

In Thembisa, the underground units combined the underground and aboveground work. Kwatipa Maobane's unit is a good example. After being recruited by Robert Serote, Maobane was instructed to form an underground unit. His unit included Peter Botopela and Vusi Mngomezulu. According to Maobane, his unit was responsible for activities which included identifying sell-outs in the township, attending community meetings to gather information on the situation in the township, and distributing propaganda materials.[64] Most importantly, members of this unit, especially Maobane, were responsible for politicising and recruiting some of the residents in the township. To cover his activities, Maobane joined local football teams. He explains:

> We'd also target certain groups like soccer teams. You see, I'm not good in soccer. I can talk about it but I'm not good in playing it. But I used to play for some of the popular teams in the township. My main aim in joining them was to recruit. And my presence in these teams was felt. I remember there was a team at Umfuyaneni called Hotspurs, and we were supposed to go and play a game but I changed the management's decision and suggested that we should go and support a protest in the township. It happened that management agreed with me. So we lost points.[65]

Maobane's political role caused confusion among activists in the township. He remembers that some of the local activists began to question his commitment to the struggle, because he would participate in the

[61] Bonner and Nieftagodien. *Ekurhuleni*, pp. 173-174.

[62] Interview with Zipphorah Lenkwe by Tshepo Moloi, for SADET Oral History Project, Kagiso extension 2, 10 December 2008.

[63] Wylie. *Art and Revolution*, p. 182.

[64] Interview with Kwatipa Maobane by Tshepo Moloi, Norkem Park, Kempton Park, 9 December 2012.

[65] *Ibid.*

aboveground activities and then he would disappear. This earned him the nickname *Vela Tjobela* (The one who appears and disappears).[66]

At this stage it seems more and more people were beginning to develop an interest in politics, particularly those related to civic matters in the township. This must have prompted Robert Serote and his comrades to strategise the downfall of Ndlovu and his associates in the TCA. Robert Serote remembers that 10 members of the TCA who opposed Ndlovu grouped themselves into an organising committee. «Some of these members included [Lazarus] Mawela, [Greg] Malebo, Difa Thulare, and Masemola», recalls Serote.[67] Serote claims that after recruiting some of Ndlovu's associates in the TCA and after holding several meetings to strategise, the committee finally agreed to call a community meeting where they intended to discredit Ndlovu in front of the community.

In 1985 the meeting was held at Nepo Cinema.[68] However, thorough preparations were made before the meeting. The 10 members of the organising committee printed posters informing the community about the meeting, informed Ndlovu about the meeting, and invited UDF leaders to address the meeting (this was done without the knowledge of Ndlovu), and split up to canvass the support of residents in different sections in the township for a new civic structure. Serote, who was chairing the meeting, set in motion the plan to expose Ndlovu and his followers in the TCA. He explains:

> Here we have the Thembisa Civic Association. We have asked Goba Ndlovu as the chairperson of the organisation to come. But I have just received a message that Goba says he can't come, but he has sent his deputy […]. So now I'm going to request him to tell us what have they as a civic done. At this meeting we had planted our own people […]. For example, David Masina was working for a company in which Goba had requested money to the tune of R13,000. David said he'd raise that issue, because his company informed them about this. So we wanted to know what happened to the money. But in reality we wanted the community to remove him as the chairperson of the civic so that we could come up with a new structure. We then said we'd call this man to explain to us all what they've done and after that we'd discuss the way forward. The community shouted that he must come

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] Interview with Robert Serote.

[68] This meeting was held before the arrest, and finally, the incarceration of Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota and Popo Molefe, the UDF's publicity secretary and secretary, respectively.

> forward. We asked for a song to welcome him to the stage. Someone started a [revolutionary] song and this man stood up. Do you know what he did? He walked out.[69]

Ndlovu's deputy's behaviour cost Ndlovu and his associates in the TCA the little support they still enjoyed within the community. What followed was the launch of the radical and militant Thembisa Residents Association (TRA). The TRA wasted no time. It affiliated with the UDF and called for a rent boycott, making Thembisa the second township after the townships in the Vaal Triangle to embark on a rent boycott.[70]

Gradually, political mobilisation and organisation gained momentum in the township and women, in particular, became active in community matters.[71] The majority of women in Thembisa, especially adults, do not seem to have been actively involved in resistance politics. This was confirmed by Deborah Marakalla, one of the few female activists in Thembisa in the 1980s. She believes that the reluctance by the majority of women to participate in political activities in the township was caused by the societal pressure placed on women about how they should behave. She remembers that, having been brought up in a family following the teachings of the Anglican church, and after having had a child out of wedlock, she was expected to get married, settle down, and not involve herself in politics.[72] It was for this reason that when the politically conscientised women recruited other women, they used simple and apolitical methods. Matilda Mabena explains:

> At that time I was not active in politics. I was a nurse at Baragwanath Hospital. But then I was recruited by a friend, Frieda Shaba, and I started becoming involved. We formed a women's group. Then most women were not interested in politics. They were interested in other things. So we would organise them and call them to a meeting to inform them about the things that might interest them. There was a person from exile, a cadre that was working underground. This cadre had a skill in making candles. So we would say to these women: 'You are all aware that many of us are unemployed and we need to

[69] Interview with Robert Serote. See also interview with Greg Malebo.

[70] Siyotula. *The Tembisa Rent Boycott*, p. 44.

[71] Interview with Thandi Swakamisa by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Thembisa, 23 April 2004.

[72] Interview with Deborah Marakalla and Greg Thulare by Tshepo Moloi, for the SADET Oral History Project, Midrand, 19 November 2004.

> supplement our husbands with many things. So you are invited to a meeting where there would be someone showing us how to make candles'. When the person was busy showing them how to make candles we would indirectly talk politics.[73]

It was not long before the women took up issues affecting them directly. The bucket system was one such issue. Mabena continues:

> There were councillors like [Lucas] Mothiba. In one of our meetings we decided that we have had enough of the bucket system. Our children were getting sick because of this system. We mobilised women and agreed that on such and such a date we would take all the buckets full with night-soil and empty them at Mothiba's store.[74]

In addition, street, sectional and area committees were established in the township and the majority of the residents participated in them. The idea of street committees was copied from the Mandela Plan (or M-Plan) drafted by Nelson Mandela in 1953 in the event that the ANC would be banned.[75] The sectional, area and street committees were used to disseminate information throughout the township about the political developments in the township during the states of emergency.[76] Many of the residents of Thembisa were conscientised through this strategy. One of these is Rebecca Fosi Sibanyoni. After a number of meetings, she was elected into the youth section of the street committee in her residential section. Recalling their role, Sibanyoni had this to say:

> I was elected to be part of the street committee […] but I was part of the youth street committee. You know, when there was a funeral you'd find that some families didn't have anything to bury their loved ones. So we'd go house to house requesting donations. We asked people to donate whatever they could afford. It may be R2. After

[73] Interview with Matilda and Timothy Mabena by Tshepo Moloi for SAHA, Kempton Park, 23 January 2011.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Street, area and sectional committees were established in many townships across the country. When recalling how these were established, activists traced them back to the M-Plan. See for example, M.S. Tetelman. *We Can: Black Politics in Cradock, South Africa, 1948-85*. PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 1997, p. 196.

[76] During the states of emergency the government had prohibited political gatherings.

> collecting donations we added all the monies we've collected and took it to the family where there was a funeral. We tried to assist people.[77]

Through the sectional and street committees, a significant number of residents in Thembisa were drawn into the liberation struggle. The next target for one of Robert Serote's underground units was to attack councillors in order to force them to resign. This task was taken up by the hand-grenade squad, headed by Thabo "Guy" Monanyedi. It was so called because it used hand-grenades to attack. Serote claims that the instruction to form a bombing squad came from Botswana. He explains:

> They said almost anybody knows how to make a petrol bomb. Our task was to introduce the people to the war […] and many of them are prepared to participate in it. We want to introduce hand-grenades now: 'Go and form a unit or take part of your unit; we're launching a Transvaal Suicide Squad. It has to hit seriously'. So I came back and the unit started hitting and they did that on the weekend.[78]

It is possible that Thami Mnyele trained some of the members of the hand-grenade squad in Thembisa to use hand-grenades. Mnyele had received a military crash course in Caxito, Angola. Wylie, Mnyele's biographer, writes: «Thami had begun secretly teaching visitors from South Africa how to use grenades and limpet mines. They returned home and taught others how to remove a pin and how to take security precautions».[79] Kwatipa Maobane, who operated within the country until he left the country in 1986, remembers that he, together with the members of his unit, was given a crash training course on armaments by Robert Serote.[80] In 1985 *The Star* reported a grenade attack on the deputy mayor's house.[81] In the same year in July, another hand-grenade attack was reported.[82] Some of these attacks achieved their intended goal, which was to force the town councillors to resign. A month after his house was attacked with a hand-grenade, Herbert

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[77] Interview with Rebecca Fosi Sibanyoni by Mmatjatji Malabela and Tshepo Moloi, for SAHA, Winnie Mandela, Thembisa, 29 November 2010.

[78] Interview with Robert Serote.

[79] Wylie. *Art and Revolution*, p. 176.

[80] Interview with Maobane.

[81] *The Star*, 26 March 1985. Serote claims that he used the media, particularly the press, to inform his handlers in Botswana about political developments in Thembisa. See interview with Robert Serote.

[82] *The Star*, 2 July 1985.

Mojokoana, the deputy mayor, resigned from his post.[83] This continued to stimulate the residents' interests in politics. Buoyed by these developments, in 1985 Mnyele (and possibly other members of the ANC as well) worked to set up mass mobilisation units within the PWV region, helped recruit cadres, gave them tasks after assessing their political maturity, and taught them why these tasks had to be carried out.[84] At this stage, unlike the other Frontline States, Botswana was still a relatively safe destination for activists wishing to connect with the ANC.[85] In 1984 the Nkomati Accord, signed by the apartheid regime and the government of Mozambique, prohibited the ANC from operating in Mozambique.[86] In the same year, the Swaziland government intensified its mission to flush out ANC members in Swaziland.[87] Lesotho had lived under constant fear of attack from the South African army since the 1982 raid.[88]

The situation changed in Botswana after mid-June 1985. The South African Police and the South African Defence Force strategised a joint operation to attack members of the ANC and MK in Botswana. This they carried out on 14 June 1985, when they raided Gaborone and killed 12 people, including citizens of Botswana. Mnyele perished in that raid.[89] After this raid it became more difficult and dangerous for the members of the ANC and MK to operate from Gaborone.

Barry Gilder, who had been deployed to Botswana as an ANC intelligence operative but reporting directly to Mzwai Piliso, the director of the ANC's Department of National Intelligence and Security (NAT) in Lusaka, was in Gaborone when the raid happened and he remained there

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[83] *Ibid*., 26 March 1985.

[84] Wylie. *Art and Revolution*, p. 182.

[85] *Ibid*., p. 193. Before the raid, Botswana was a hive of cultural activity. Some of the members of the ANC, for example Wally Serote, Barry Gilder and Thami Mnyele, had joined the Medu Art Ensemble to cover their political activities. See Wylie. *Art and Revolution;* B. Gilder. *Songs and Secrets: South Africa from Liberation to Governance.* Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2012.

[86] N. Manghezi. *The Maputo Connection: ANC Life in the World of Frelimo*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009.

[87] See E. Masilela. *Number 43 Trelawney Park: KwaMagogo – Untold Stories of Ordinary People Caught up in the Struggle against Apartheid.* Claremont: David Philip Publishers, 2007.

[88] See P. Naidoo. *Le Rona Re Batho: An Account of the 1982 Maseru Massacre*. Verulam: Phyllis Naidoo, 1992; Z. Mda. *Memoirs of an Outsider: Sometimes There is a Void*. New York: Farra, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

[89] Wylie. *Art and Revolution*, Chapter 7.

subsequent to that (in late 1985 he was appointed to represent ANC's NAT in the Botswana RPMC). Not long after the raid, Gilder writes that «the Batswana nationals became suspicious of South Africans and they were no longer willing to assist the ANC with safe houses and other logistical assistance, and members of the ANC were arrested and deported to Zambia and the Batswana were reporting any suspicious stranger».[90] Worse, Gilder notes, Medu Arts Ensemble closed down, together with the Solidarity News Service (SNS), where Gilder worked as a features editor (again to cover his underground activities).[91] These precarious conditions made it impossible to operate freely in Botswana and the ANC machinery there was forced to operate underground. It facilitated the infiltration of MK cadres from different areas into South Africa.[92]

Back in South Africa, seven days after the raid, responding to the escalating political activities in the country, the government declared a partial state of emergency, affecting 36 magisterial districts across the country, including Thembisa. A number of activists were detained.[93] Feeling that the net was closing in on him, Robert Serote decided to first take his children out to live in exile in Tanzania, where he later joined them in exile in 1986.

The raid in Gaborone had a dampening effect on the operations carried out by underground units in Thembisa. Robert Serote, before fleeing into exile, recalls visiting Botswana several times after the raid but experiencing difficulty meeting with some of his handlers.[94] This did not deter him. Instead of coordinating underground units, he began to help young people to flee into exile. Maobane and Greg Thulare, a leading figure in the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) in Thembisa, were some of young people Serote assisted to flee the country.[95]

In 1986 the government intensified its resolve to crush political activism in the country. It deployed the army in Thembisa and, on 12 June 1986 (four days before the commemoration of the student uprisings which erupted in Soweto on 16 June 1976), declared a national state of emergency. Leading activists in Thembisa and across the country were detained in large numbers. Timothy Mabena, a leading figure in the civics in Thembisa, remembers:

[90] Gilder. *Songs and Secrets,* p. 157.
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] *Ibid.,* p. 163.
[93] Interview with Mawela.
[94] Interview with Robert Serote.
[95] Interview with Maobane.

> From 1986 until 1989 many activists in Thembisa were detained during the State of Emergency. My wife and I were detained on the same day in 1986 at 2 o'clock in morning. Matilda spent a day in detention and I was sent to Modderbee Prison.[96]

In spite of this setback, political activities continued in the township. Underground units continued to attack the properties of councillors and others who were perceived to be collaborators of the South African government.[97] The TRA, together with the Cosatu locals, called for work stayaways. Newspapers reported that people who ignored the stayaway to mark the funeral of unrest victims were sjambokked.[98] These actions forced more councillors to resign. For instance, in August 1986 Rose Thulare and Mr R.P. Mashabela resigned as councillors.[99] Finally, in the same year, Lucas Mothiba, who had been the mayor since 1984, resigned, claiming that «many black people had lost faith in black local authorities because the structures were not of their making».[100] Subsequent to this, Thembisa was placed under an administrator.

Conclusion

Some scholars and political commentators writing about the period of insurrection in the 1980s single out the civics and the "youth" as the sole agencies of townships' confrontational politics. Without doubt, civics and the youth mobilised communities against town councillors' inability to address the issues related to living conditions in the townships and their continued reliance on increasing rent and service charges. The situation in Thembisa Township, however, turned out differently. Lack of basic social service delivery, rent and service-charge increases and corruption amongst councillors did not incite the residents into confrontational opposition, especially after 1983. The TCA failed to mobilise the community of Thembisa. Instead, it used legal means to challenge the TTC's decision to

[96] *Entering Thembisa: An Oral and Photographic Exploration of the Community*. Johannesburg: South African History Archive, 2011, p. 61.
[97] *The Star*, 9 May 1986.
[98] *Ibid.*, 15 May 1986.
[99] *Ibid*., 7 August 1986.
[100] *Entering Thembisa*, p. 61.

hike rents and to deprive some of the residents of accommodation in the township.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that in Thembisa, the re-invigoration of confrontational politics was influenced and shaped by the Botswana-based ANC machinery. This is in contrast to the view that «the uprising which erupted in the 1980s took place independently of the ANC».[101] Following the restructuring of the ANC in 1983, the members of the ANC in Botswana trained local activists from Thembisa, supplied them with weapons and instructed them on how to influence local politics in the township. This was evident when some of the members of underground units in Thembisa began recruiting and politicising members of the community, helping to disband the conservative TCA, and playing an instrumental role in the formation of the militant TRA. The latter embarked on a rent boycott and called for work stayaways in the township. Consequently, political structures, particularly women's structures, were established in the township. And the area, sectional and street committees were formed, which helped to politicise many of the residents of the township. Finally, the underground unit responsible for the hand-grenade attacks in Thembisa attacked the councillors' properties and forced all the councillors to resign from their positions.

[101] Simpson. "Umkhonto we Sizwe", p. 175.

CHAPTER 6
"It Was Nice, but Life Was Difficult": The Experiences of Tanzanian Women after South Africa's Liberation[1]

ARIANNA LISSONI AND MARIA SURIANO

The end of apartheid has opened up new possibilities for research into the history of the liberation struggle, including the exile period.[2] Yet little is known about the everyday lives of South African exiles, their interactions with host communities and the long-term implications of exile in a variety of countries and local settings. The ANC's Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (Somafco), in Mazimbu (near Morogoro, Tanzania), was one of the key sites where everyday relations, including sexual and romantic relations, parenthood and marriages between ANC and MK cadres and Tanzanians, were forged.[3] In the early 1990s, South African exiles were repatriated to

[1] This chapter is based on an article published in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*: A. Lissoni and M. Suriano. "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.

[2] For an overview of the recent historiographical trends, see 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 and O. Badsha (eds). *One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories Today*. Johannesburg: Wits Press and SAHO, 2012, pp. 29-53.

[3] For an account of the social life of Somafco students, see Chapter 8 in S. Morrow, B. Maaba and L. Pulumani. *Education in Exile: SOMAFCO, the African National Congress School in Tanzania, 1978 to 1992.* Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2004. Everyday life in Kongwa camp is analysed in S.M. Ndlovu. "The ANC in Exile, 1960-70". In SADET (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa. Vol. 1, 1960-1970*. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004, pp. 411-478; and C. Wlliams. "Living in Exile: Daily Life and International Relations at SWAPO's Kongwa camp". *Kronos*, 37, 2011, pp. 693-731.

South Africa along with their families under a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) voluntary programme.[4]

Mostly based on interviews conducted in South Africa and in Tanzania, this chapter examines the human implications of the South African presence for the local community of Morogoro post-liberation and after the ANC's homecoming.[5] It first presents the repatriation experience of two Tanzanian women married to South African exiles who had been living in Tanzania since the mid-1960s. After the repatriation process had started, these couples and their children moved to South Africa and settled in Lehurutshe (a rural region close to Zeerust in what is today South Africa's North West Province).[6]

In exile the ANC was able to provide for the welfare needs of its members and their families including housing, education, healthcare and employment, acting in many ways as a surrogate parent and family. However, it proved impossible to reproduce those structures and networks of support after ANC/MK cadres and their families returned to South Africa. They arrived in South Africa with limited resources and few material means of subsistence. Besides the financial hardships and the problems of social integration, their wives faced additional challenges, such as linguistic and cultural adaptation and the hostility of family members and the local

[4] One of the few accounts of the repatriation of ANC exiles is S.M. Ndlovu. "The Return of the ANC 'Exiles' and Other Challenges in the Early 1990s". In SADET (eds). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*. *Vol. 6*, part 1. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2013, pp. 687-721.

[5] Eighteen Tanzanian women (14 in Tanzania and four in South Africa) were interviewed between 2011 and 2013. Interviews were also conducted with 16 Tanzanian men who are former employees of Mazimbu and with four children of Tanzanian women and South African exiles. Interviews were conducted in Kiswahili by Maria Suriano. We would like to acknowledge all interviewees for sharing their stories, Mary Barnabas Papa for sharing her personal archive, and the financial assistance from a Mellon Grant for Younger Scholars for sponsoring Maria Suriano's fieldwork in Tanzania in 2012 and 2013 and from the NRF Chair in Local Histories and Present Realities (University of the Witwatersrand) for sponsoring the research in South Africa.

[6] Lehurutshe was one of South Africa's areas of rural revolt in the late 1950s. It was in the aftermath of this rural rebellion that a *mopato* or age regiment numbering between 50 and 80 boys and young men was sent to neighbouring Botswana in 1963 to1964, where they were recruited into MK. This group of recruits, also known as *mma-guerrilla a nnete* (true guerrillas), became part of the celebrated Luthuli detachment. The husbands of two of the women whose life stories are narrated in this chapter were members of this group. See A. Lissoni. "*Mma-guerrilla a Nnete*: Remembering the Role of the 'True Guerrillas' in South Africa's Liberation Struggle". Unpublished paper.

community. This chapter will show some of the consequences of the dissolution of the ANC's familial and parental support after repatriation.

It will also present the life histories of three Tanzanian women "left behind" – to use a recurring expression among the interviewees – in Morogoro, offering insights into the expectations, frustrations and feelings of abandonment of those women who were unable to accompany their partners or husbands to South Africa. Although their life trajectories differ from those of the women who followed their husbands to South Africa, the withdrawal of the ANC from Tanzania also impacted heavily on their lives.

The five Tanzanian women whose experiences are presented here belong to different generations. The first two were born in the 1940s and the other three were born between the 1960s and 1970s. The former got married to South African men who were part of a generation known as the *mgwenya* (this is what the older MK cadres who had been in exile since the 1960s were called). These men had been stationed at a military camp near Kongwa, in the Dodoma region of Tanzania, since the mid-1960s, with spells in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to undergo military training. After the closing down of Kongwa around 1976, many *mgwenya* were redeployed to the Morogoro area and put to work on the construction of what became the Somafco complex in Mazimbu and later the Dakawa Development Centre.[7]

After the Soweto uprising, a new generation of militants joined the ANC in exile. The encounters between this generation of exiles and Tanzanian women occurred between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, in post-socialist Tanzania and in some instances as South Africa's democratic transition and repatriation were already under way. These relationships seem to have been less long-lasting. The women left behind, whose lives are reconstructed in the second part of this chapter, are wives and partners of exiles who arrived in Morogoro after 1976. This is not to suggest an automatic correlation between the relationships Tanzanian women had with members of the 1976 generation and subsequent male desertion. Some of these relationships may have lasted. However, on the whole, the deeper level

[7] «'Mazimbu' became a generic term that is used loosely in ANC circles to refer to the whole Mazimbu-Dakawa complex, or to Mazimbu alone, or to SOMAFCO». H. Bernstein. *The Rift: The Exile Experiences of South Africans.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1994, p. 98. In the interviews cited in this article, Mazimbu refers to the Somafco complex but not to Dakawa. For an account of the development of Dakawa, see S. Morrow. "Dakawa Development Centre: An African National Congress Settlement in Tanzania, 1982-1992". *African Affairs*, 97, 1998, pp. 497-521.

of integration of the *mgwenya* within Tanzanian society enabled stronger relational bonds.

A new life in South Africa

This section reconstructs the life stories of two Tanzanian women, their expectations of a better life and the personal difficulties and problems of social integration they encountered after they had moved to South Africa with their husbands and children through the voluntary repatriation programme in the early 1990s. Their experiences mirror those of many Tanzanians and possibly those of other women who married South African exiles in other countries.

Shortly after his release from prison in February 1990, Nelson Mandela made a state visit to Tanzania and visited Somafco in March. Mariam Yussuf, known as Kibibi, recalled during an interview:

> When Mandela came, he said all South Africans should go back to South Africa. Yeah, so people kept leaving in batches and we were the last ones left. […] So that South Africans could go to vote for Mandela in South Africa, you see? Because of apartheid in South Africa, they wanted to vote to decide who their president was, you see? Because the previous presidents in South Africa were just imposed on them and not voted for by the people. It was the party that decided because the party decreed that all ANC people together with their wives and children should go to South Africa to vote. Yeah, so whether you wanted or not, you had to go. […] Many South Africans were saying that they would leave later, but they couldn't because the president had decreed and they had to leave.[8]

The repatriation process formally started in November 1991 and was overseen by the UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Repatriation was on a voluntary basis and open to all South African exiles, their spouses, and their dependants. Widows and orphans of South African exiles were also entitled to voluntary repatriation. All returnees were treated as South African citizens. Those wishing to return had to register with and be interviewed by the UNHCR. Their voluntary repatriation application forms would then be sent to the Department of Justice in South

[8] Kibibi (Mariam Yussuf), interview with M. Suriano, New Acropol Hotel, Morogoro, 24 February 2012.

Africa for clearance so that they would not face prosecution for alleged crimes committed before they left South Africa. Lists of names that had been cleared were then posted; once people reported that they were travel-ready, their names would appear on manifests for flights back to South Africa.[9] When applying for repatriation, returnees had to indicate the final destination of their journey in South Africa. In most cases, they indicated the place where their family lived.[10]

Teddy Bernard Sefularo was born in 1959 in Kigurunyembe, near Morogoro. She met Daniel Sefularo (then known by his combat name Michael Madudu) in 1981. He was an MK cadre who had been redeployed to Morogoro from Kongwa. She remembers that Mandela promised to get those who repatriated both houses and allowances.[11] On 22 November 1992, Teddy and Daniel Sefularo and their son Victor (Teddy's son from a previous relationship)[12] arrived in South Africa. Teddy was reluctant to move, but her son eventually convinced her to go. The family was flown to Johannesburg by the UNHCR, which was responsible for overseeing the repatriation process. After spending one night in Johannesburg, they took a *kombi* (a small bus) organised by the ANC to travel to their final destination, the village of Dinokana in Lehurutshe, Daniel's birthplace. Daniel's family knew they were arriving as other comrades from the area had already been repatriated.

In the beginning, everyone celebrated the return of Teddy's husband, who had been absent from home for almost thirty years. Three goats were slaughtered and a homecoming ritual was performed:

> Yoooh! At first they were very excited, that very day we arrived. […] They were so […] engrossed in conversation in Setswana, I could not understand what they were saying. I asked my husband: 'Are they

[9] For more details on repatriation procedures, see University of Fort Hare, National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre, ANC Tanzania papers, Box 9, "Information for South African Refugees and Exiles".

[10] The mammoth task involved in the development and implementation of a repatriation policy and programme of an estimated 40,000 exiles from countries throughout the world is detailed in Ndlovu, "The Return of the ANC 'Exiles'".

[11] Teddy Bernard Sefularo, interview with M. Suriano, Dinokana, 28 April 2011. Teddy and other Tanzanian women adopted their husbands' South African surnames, by which they are known today, only after moving to South Africa.

[12] South African exiles who formed relationships with local women who already had children usually adopted these as their own. By extension these children became part of the ANC family, falling under its protection and care.

> talking about your long absence from home?' He said: 'Yes, they are happy and we are just chatting'.[13]

Teddy's family shared a house with Daniel's extended family for about a year, but relations soon turned sour:

> There was no more understanding each other since we did not contribute [with] any money. My husband was not getting any money, neither was I working. I was forced to seek employment. I had to wash clothes in households to raise at least a hundred rand and buy my husband a packet of cigarettes, buy soap. There was no electricity then. I [would] buy a candle, all with that one hundred rand from washing. […] I didn't even have shoes; I went to Pep Store. I remember buying shoes for 12 shillings [rand] or something like that. I bought there for that little.[14]

Life was so difficult that Teddy's son, Victor, had to leave school and join his father at the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) base in Wallmansthal, where he trained as a soldier. When Daniel Sefularo was demobilised in 1995 he received a payout of about R40,000 for his 30 years of service in MK. With this money, Teddy and Daniel were able to obtain a plot in Dinokana where they built their own house. Thanks to the money that Victor was sending home, they were gradually able to complete the house.

The financial situation of Teddy's family, as those of other families of returnees, began to improve around 1996, when former exiles started to receive pensions. But Daniel Sefularo died in 2002. Teddy's son also passed away a few years later. Today Teddy lives alone in her house in Dinokana, hoping to one day receive a government house that she can sell (unlike the one where she lives, which sits on tribal land) and return to Tanzania to join her siblings.[15]

Roda Mbogo Mokgatlhe was born in Kongwa in 1948 and met her future husband, Solly Mokgatlhe (then known as Maurice Silibogo), in 1972 while he was stationed at Kongwa camp. Maurice was redeployed to Morogoro in 1976, and Roda and their children joined him a few years later to start life as a family. After Dakawa had been established in 1982, Roda and her husband

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[13] Interview with Sefularo. In South Africa "yoh!" is an exclamation used in conversation to emphasise surprise.

[14] *Ibid*. Pep is an international retail company based in South Africa that sells affordable clothing, shoes and baby products.

[15] *Ibid*.

were among those who moved there to help build the new settlement. While they were living at Dakawa Maurice got sick and in 1989 he died. After his death, Roda continued to live in Dakawa, while her four children went to school at Somafco.

Even when Dakawa was handed over to the Tanzanian government, along with Somafco, in 1992, Roda chose to remain in Tanzania. She moved to Morogoro with her two younger children and set up a small business selling food. Her two eldest daughters, Lillian and Sarah, moved to South Africa on their own in 1992, as part of the repatriation programme. They chose to relocate to their father's birthplace because they wanted to know their origins, Roda claims. They stayed in Dinokana with their grandmother and their aunts. Their sister Christina, Roda's third daughter, later joined them. Roda left Tanzania with her last born, Ntibedi, a boy, only in 1996, and only at her daughters' insistence. Before she set off she went to Dar es Salaam to get the necessary travel documents.[16] She took a flight to Johannesburg and then went to Dinokana. The ANC paid for her travel expenses. At first Roda's children were received well and welcomed warmly by their father's family. But Roda was not comfortable at her husband's birthplace:

> It seemed they didn't approve my coming. […] I don't know [why]. I did not like life there at all, I could not cope. In the morning as the day breaks, you don't know what to do. You are a foreigner, you just stay there. Lunchtime comes, people do not eat food, just bread […] two slices of bread. The grandmother, the owner of the house and myself. They buy bread and eat. She [her husband's mother] ate porridge. The children and I each [ate] two slices as lunch.[17]

When Roda arrived in South Africa, she did not have money for school fees and uniforms. She could only pay for some food. At first a relative of Roda's husband took care of her first two children, Sarah and Lillian, who lived in Mafikeng with their aunt. The other two children, Ntibedi and Christina, also lived with their aunt. Roda hoped that her children's aunts would send her son to school. But they were not prepared to pay the fees. Another expectation was that the ANC would help with the admission of Roda's children to school and would pay for their education:

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[16] These included the marriage certificate, the death certificate and a postal address in South Africa.

[17] Roda Mbogo Mokgatlhe, interview with M. Suriano, Dinokana, 28 April 2011.

> The ANC repatriated its people to their homes. […] They were supposed to take care of us there at home, you see. They should have taken care of my children's education. But even Lillian was not assisted through to the end. She had to do people's hair while studying. […] My child [Ntibedi] had been going to school [in Somafco] and was supposed to continue. [Instead] he was unable to get admission.[18]

Teddy's and Roda's oral narratives reflect a generalised experience of hardship, shared by many returnees and their families. Whereas in Tanzania the ANC had provided for the welfare, both material and social, of its members, this protection and care largely dissolved in the new South African context, as returnees were in large measure responsible for their own reintegration into South African society, for finding employment and for supporting their own families.

Since Roda was unhappy at her mother-in-law's house, she started looking for a place of her own. She heard of another Tanzanian woman who had relocated to the village of Gopane with her family. She decided to move there with her daughter Christina, where she rented a room. «I did not have a thing; no cup, no cooking pots, nothing», she recollects. After some time, an acquaintance who was relocating from Gopane to Johannesburg asked her if she wanted to move into his house, and she accepted. This is the place where she still lives. But her financial situation is precarious and she is often homesick, longing to go back to Tanzania one day:

> I hoped that I will get assistance just as they did back there. But it was not to be. That means one had to depend on individual efforts. But as a foreigner, how do you rely on yourself? […] I still sew. My two children have finished school [Sarah has completed standard ten; Christina finished standard eight] but they are yet to get jobs. Lillian completed school. […] Sarah doesn't have a job. […] Often the ANC says they will help our children … but up until now they haven't. Except that when I got an identity document (ID) after taking so long since I came […] You know, with an ID it is slightly better. Then I tracked my husband's benefits […] They gave me some, but not enough to put up a house. I have not managed to build a house with the little money; I still don't own a house. […] I am not happy as at home, where I had people close to me. Here there is none […] My

[18] *Ibid.*

> family and relatives are all back at home, you see. I often feel lonely here.[19]

Today she supports herself and her three grandchildren, who all live with her in Gopane, thanks to a small pension that she began receiving in 2004 and the money she makes from sewing. Yet she struggles, as none of her children has regular employment.

The Tanzanian women who followed their husbands to South Africa also faced a number of cultural challenges. Firstly, they often did not speak the language spoken in the communities they relocated to. Neither Roda nor Teddy, for example, spoke Setswana and Kiswahili remains the main language spoken in their homes today. Their children did not know Setswana either, as at Somafco they were taught in English, while isiZulu was the most commonly spoken South African language in the camps. Women also had to adapt to local customs, such as the practice of fetching wood for cooking instead of using charcoal. Teddy recalls one incident when

> I volunteered to go to the bush and look for wood [in Tanzania they had been used to charcoal]. I was with my sister-in-law. We went to that side of the road, next to the tents. […] When I arrived at the bush I heard people busy with wood. They were saying 'MaVictor [Teddy], what are you doing here?' I said, 'I'm here to fetch some wood.' They helped me and chopped the wood, and they helped me to carry the wood. The wood was very wet and when I carried it, it was very heavy. When I arrived home – it was before my mother-in-law passed away – she said, 'Hey, you did a good job!' But hey, my head was sore![20]

Furthermore, as foreigners, Tanzanian women often experienced hostility from members of their new community who gave them the derogatory labels *makwerekwere*, *magirigamba* or *makongo*. Their experiences are part of a much broader politics of discrimination and exclusion in post-apartheid South Africa, of which xenophobic violence is the most worrying manifestation, and which construes African migrants who work and live in the country as outsiders. While the new South African nation appears to have failed to fully embrace returning exiles and their families, they, by contrast, have remained loyal members of the ANC family. MK veterans, their wives, widows and children living in villages across Lehurutshe meet on a monthly

[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Interview with Sefularo.

basis in the ANC Zeerust branch office. They are part of the MK Military Veterans Association and ANC structures and participate in ANC events and politics from local branch level, to provincial and national levels.

Teddy compares the treatment they received when they came to South Africa with how Tanzanians welcomed exiles from southern African liberation movements:

> From the other side [Tanzania] we had helped them so much [to] gain freedom. Because were it not for our husbands, they would not attain political freedom… That is why even my husband had to exchange harsh words with his mother one day: [he said] 'If you don't like my wife I have come with, I might as well go back [to Tanzania] with her'.[21]

Women "left behind"

For many Tanzanian women it proved impossible to relocate to South Africa with their husbands or partners – for a number of reasons, such as delays in making travel arrangements, insufficient funds for the journey, their family's disagreement, and dissuasion by their men. Some of them remained in Tanzania unwillingly; very few decided to remain after registering for repatriation. In some cases, their partners or husbands died before, during or shortly after repatriation, and contact with the South African side of the family was gradually lost. If in the past their frequent aspiration was to move to South Africa to reunite with their men, it seems that their present desire is to be able to spend part of the year in South Africa and, more importantly, to send their children there: South Africa is imagined by many Tanzanians as a land of considerable socio-economic opportunities.

Mariam Yussuf, alias Kibibi, was born in Morogoro in 1970 and met her husband-to-be in 1982. She was 12 at the time and was studying at Kigurunyembe Secondary School in Morogoro. They lost contact when he went to the Soviet Union for training. When he came back, they met again through Kibibi's sister, who used to work in a sisal company in the Mazimbu area.[22] They became friends, and she began teaching him Swahili. They

[21] *Ibid*.

[22] Morogoro is an important sisal farming region. The land on which the Somafco complex was built was an abandoned sisal estate at the time inhabited by a number of Tanzanians.

started having a love affair, and shortly afterwards she fell pregnant. As a result, she was expelled from school. She was still in form one, whereas he was about 25 years old. Her husband's father, who was also a member of the ANC in exile, found a job as a carpenter in Mazimbu for his son. After their marriage, they first moved into her husband's parental house in Mazimbu, and later were given a home of their own. Their child was born in 1987. Kibibi was employed in the textile factory in Mazimbu. She recalls:

> I used to sew clothes for students who went to Somafco – nursery, primary – making curtains for the new houses that were being constructed. Yeah, even combat gear for the ANC soldiers who were in Angola. We used to make the combat gear ourselves and take it there. We used to cut the material and were taught by a man known as Uncle George Kunene, a German.[23]

In 1989 her husband drowned in a petrol tank, together with a Tanzanian employee of Mazimbu in a tragic accident. Kibibi was then sent to Lusaka, where her husband's family owned a house, to mourn with her mother-in-law. She spent one year there, then went back to Mazimbu.

At the time of the repatriations, she met another South African man, who married her under customary law. She followed him to South Africa together with her first born, who was then attending Standard 6. She also had another child, born in 1992, from her second husband. But her husband deserted her shortly after arriving in South Africa as it turned out he had had a family before going into exile:

> We stayed there for a while and then he ran away and left me at his parents' home. […] The hostility originated from my own husband, you see? Because they received me very well, I […] told them my birthday was on 25 December […] We had a party on Christmas Day which was also my birthday and [they] asked me [to] remove the ring you are wearing from Tanzania, […] 'We will give you our own ring because you are our wife' [they said]. […] So I stayed very well with them but after a week the husband happened to tell something to his mother, because when he came to Tanzania he already had a wife and kids. […] It seems as if he had returned to that woman, he wasn't spending [time] at home, he spent at that woman's place. He stopped coming to his mother's place. […] So I stayed with his parents for a while until his mother started troubling me. […] His parents began

[23] Interview with Kibibi.

> frustrating me, […] saying there was not enough food, that I had cooked bad food, if I washed clothes it was not good enough, she would take her child's clothes and wash them again. Everything I did was bad so I was very miserable, so I told them: 'If you don't like me, give me the fare and I will leave!'[24]

She also went to the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg[25] and was promised a house. Despite her following up on numerous occasions, she did not get anything. At the time, the parents of her late first husband were in Johannesburg, but they were not able to help her financially or with accommodation. In Kibibi's words:

> He [my father-in-law] didn't give any help because [….] he stayed […] in Johannesburg, Soweto. […] When they [exiles] went back to their families, they didn't get a house. […] He came back to his family, but [….] stayed in […] quarters which were very small and overcrowded. So his family began to frustrate him, [and] he looked for [another place]. […] So his wife decided to go back to Zambia, and during the trip they had an accident and she died. He remained in Johannesburg where he […] got another wife, a Tanzanian […] But she later died. […] So after staying in South Africa for a while I decided to leave. I had no husband, nothing and that country at that time was not very liveable.[26]

After four years in South Africa, between 1994 and 1998, she had to return to Tanzania with her second born, Jabili. Being unable to provide for her first born, Richard, she left him in Johannesburg with her first husband's younger sister, who had worked in Mazimbu as an electrician after schooling in Cuba, and was able to send her nephew to a boarding school. He studied up to form six, but refused to study further and his aunt helped him find a job. Kibibi claims that

> the life we lived in Mazimbu and the life I was coming back to were going to be very different. So having a child would have been difficult, I wouldn't have had the money to take him to big schools. So

[24] *Ibid*.

[25] Shell House became the headquarters of the ANC after its unbanning up until 1997, when it relocated to Luthuli House.

[26] Interview with Kibibi.

> I felt that since the lady is his aunt – his father's sister, she was like his father and should take him, stay with him and school him.[27]

The reason why she decided to take her second born – who in 2013 was studying at a college in Singida – back to Tanzania with her is that:

> I could not leave him there because my mother-in-law didn't like the child, and the man [my second husband] himself wanted nothing to do with me, so I came back with him and am taking care of him in Tanzania.[28]

The process of getting the money for the journey back to Tanzania was also difficult:

> Going back was hard work. […] So I had to go to Johannesburg […] and had to look for people to take me […] to the ANC offices […] at Shell House. I spoke to them because some of them I used to work with in Mazimbu, they knew me since I arrived there as a girl, got a husband and a child […], another husband again. They were like family, the ANC, and so they liked me – those ladies who worked in the office. […] So they acquired a passport for me … and for the child. […] He was still young, so they took my passport and put his photo on it. […] [When I] went back to that very ANC office I was told there was money from the UN that had come out and which would be for you and your husband, you see? So I went to collect mine. […] It was like 100,000 Tanzanian shillings. […] I used [it] for fare back to Tanzania. I took a bus and connected from Johannesburg to Zimbabwe, […] to Zambia and from Zambia […] to Tanzania.[29]

When she arrived in Morogoro, she had to face people's questions and expectations about her life and achievements in South Africa. She told them the truth: that life had become tough and she had been forced to ask the ANC for money to be able to come back. Back in Morogoro, she had to stay at her mother's place. She does not have a formal job, so bringing up her child there has been very difficult. She adds,

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[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] *Ibid.* According to the 2014 exchange rate, 100,000 Tanzanian shillings is the equivalent of approximately 47 euros.

> if I look back, my entire life was committed to the ANC – yeah – but there is nothing I got in return, like for instance saying that I thank God because the ANC has taken me to school or taught me something or left me anything. Even my kids say: 'Mother, we were born in the ANC, but what did we gain from it [...]?'[30]

Kibibi makes a living by cooking and selling food in Morogoro. She was only able to return to South Africa to see her first born in 2011, after more than ten years.

"We decided to get our own fare"

Leocardia Gregory was born in 1969 in Mufindi District, near Iringa. She married a South African man who had travelled on foot from South Africa to Tanzania, through Mozambique: «He really suffered», she recollects.[31] He first resided in Dakawa, then he was transferred to Iringa and finally to Mazimbu, where he worked in the electrical department. They met in Morogoro (where Leocardia had moved with her family when she was still at school) in the early 1990s and got married in a civil ceremony in April 1994, the same month in which South Africa held its first democratic elections. They were accommodated in a house in Mazimbu. As repatriations had started by then, most exiles had already gone back to South Africa, although in 1994 some of them («they were about 12 or 15»), responsible for phasing out ANC activities and facilities, were still in the area. Leocardia recalls that in those years support from foreign donors was often delayed, and she had to help her husband out:

> Even Mama Nanso [Khumalo, an ANC member based in Dar es Salaam responsible for distributing provisions and aid] knows that whenever the wages […]were late, I had to get my own money to feed him, for a long time […] I had to borrow from home and elsewhere; my parents and siblings […] would also help him. […] [When the money arrived, my husband] used to buy food and whatever remained he would give me a little. […] They were given aid, food from the United Nations. […] But the last ones left after so much suffering;

[30] *Ibid*.

[31] Leocardia Gregory, interview with M. Suriano, Kihonda Kanisani, Morogoro, 25 February 2012.

> they used to get the food late, so we had to support them. I really used to support him.[32]

Leocardia's husband «was enthusiastic about going home» and returned to South Africa on his own. He wrote letters from South Africa asking her to leave Tanzania. Encouraged by these letters, she tried to organise her journey through the UNHCR, but encountered many obstacles:

> The release of my name [in manifests arranged by UNHCR flight committees] was delayed and every time we went to ask [with a friend from Morogoro, Sikudhani Ramadhani], [our names] were not out yet. […] Every time we went, they took us in circles and in the end we said: '[…] The husband will find someone else.' So we decided to get our own fare.[33]

In order to gather a sufficient amount for the road trip, Leocardia and her friend Sikudhani (whose partner was a South African exile too) had to sell some of their belongings. Only then did they manage to leave Tanzania. Leocardia remained in South Africa between 1994 and approximately 2004, with brief visits home. Her friend Sikudhani, currently in Orange Farm, a township south of Johannesburg, left a child in Morogoro to follow her partner to South Africa. In Johannesburg an acquaintance from Tanzania escorted the two women to the ANC head office at Shell House, in Plein Street. Here Nanso Khumalo, who remembered her from Tanzania, phoned Leocardia's husband in Vereeniging. Leocardia was surprised to find that «when I went there, things were different». Although he welcomed her, when she arrived at his place she found him living with another woman. She was aware that her husband had had a child with a South African woman before going into exile, but they were not married. The person Leocardia found living with him was a different woman. Moreover, the mother of her husband's child soon started to complain about her presence and to cause trouble. When Leocardia spoke to her husband, expressing discontent and her intention to leave, his reaction was:

> 'If you want, you can go to the ANC office to claim your money and if they give [it to] you, you can decide what to do with it […], whether you want to go home or not.' […] So my friend and I […] went back to Mama Nanso […] But I was not given anything. […] Whenever I

[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.*

> went [to see him] he took me in circles. […] Every time I asked for my fare and food, there was nothing I got. […] There was no support. […] People at the ANC office] said: 'Just wait […] when their military money comes out we will give it to you.' […] Will you wait when you have no food?[34]

Leocardia and Sikudhani, who in the meantime had also separated from her partner, moved to Orange Farm where Sikudhani's sister, Sinaila Shabaan, lived. Life was difficult there, but «at least there was food», as Sinaila received financial assistance from the local community of Indian descent, her fellow Muslims. After a while Leocardia met another man, and decided to stay with him «because food was a problem. […] Life had become hard; so if you have another man to help you, that's it». They had a child, born in 1997, but did not get married. Her partner died in 2002. Afterwards she returned to Morogoro, where she lives at her mother's house. She wishes to go back to South Africa mainly to claim compensation, which she feels she is entitled to as a former wife of an ANC member:

> If I ever go back [to South Africa,] I would go to deal with this husband, to find out how things have ended, since all the suffering is because of him. [I would like] to go back […] to ask whether there are any monetary claims, because I was his wife and he caused me to go and stay with another partner and face many problems.[35]

Organising the women "left behind"

Mary Barnabas Papa is the former chairperson of an association founded by the wives of South African exiles who were "left behind" in Morogoro. Born in 1961, Mary met her husband-to-be, John, in Morogoro in 1987. They got married the following year.[36] At the time, she was working in a ceramic factory, but her husband encouraged her to look for employment in Mazimbu, where «there were many job opportunities».[37] As she could type,

[34] Interview with Gregory.

[35] *Ibid*.

[36] Mary Barnabas Papa, interview with M. Suriano, Nunge Street, Morogoro, 24 February 2012. Although in the interview she declared she was born in 1968, her certificate of marriage (Mary Papa, personal collection) indicates that she was 27 in 1988; it is therefore likely that she was born in 1961.

[37] Interview with Papa.

she started working as a secretary in the treasury. The couple had two children. Shortly after their second born had turned six months, her husband was offered a teacher-training scholarship in England. While abroad, he kept promising that after his studies he would return to Tanzania to reunite with his family. But,

> when he finished [studying], he decided to go and see the state South Africa was in, because it was so long – 16 years – since he had [last] been there. He wanted to see if things were okay, and if they were, he promised he would get some money and come for me and the children.[38]

Her husband never returned to Tanzania. John and Mary kept in touch for a while, including when their second child died in 1996. Eventually they stopped all contact. He died in South Africa in the early 2000s.

Active between 2000 and 2006, the *Kikundi cha Wakina-Mama Watelekezwa na Wacomrade wa Afrika ya Kusini (ANC) Mazimbu na Dawaka Morogoro* (Group of Women who Have Been Left Behind by South African Comrades (ANC) in Mazimbu and Dakawa, Morogoro) was made up of twelve members: nine women who had been legally married to ANC men, one who had been a *de facto* partner, while the other two members were daughters of married couples. It produced several documents in Kiswahili and one in English, which states that Tanzanian women were «left behind by their husbands after South Africa got its independence in 1991».[39] The broad aim of this association was to improve «the socio-economic status of women especially their children through self-supporting projects».[40]

In the first few years of the 2000s members of this association wrote to the Tanzanian Regional Commissioner to explain their problems and to request that they be put in contact with the South African government and be granted free access to healthcare, clothes, food, accommodation, and a pension, in return for their long-term service in Mazimbu and Dakawa. Their specific monetary claims as wives of exiles and former employees of the ANC were a gratuity (in Kiswahili *kiinua mgongo*), a basic compensation

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] Papa, personal collection. "List of families linked to South Africans people [sic]", part of "Mama Tereza Modern Nursery School Project Proposal". Interestingly, the document dates South Africa's independence as coinciding with the beginning of the ANC's withdrawal from Tanzania.

[40] *Ibid.*

(*kifuta jasho*), and a retirement bonus (*mkono wa kwa heri*).[41] The Regional Commissioner put the association in contact with the then South African High Commissioner in Tanzania, Theresa Solomon.[42] Mary and other members met Theresa Solomon in Mazimbu and were given forms in English to fill in.[43] Mary was tasked with handing out the forms to women and children, located in Morogoro and surroundings, who claimed to have family ties with ANC men. She also became responsible for collecting names of and information about the partners, wives and children of South African exiles in the area and spent considerable time and money (she used her own money to pay for transport) travelling around Morogoro. In 2001 she estimated the presence of 115 children, of whom 109 had remained (the rest having left for South Africa, or living between South Africa and Tanzania), and 63 women (previously 68). Of the 63 women she counted, approximately half were legally married; 33 were *de facto* partners. Since then,

> some [women] have […] died; very few of us are left […] About 40 [women] are left; […] the others have died. Even my secretary [Hilgart D. Mokgotsi] has since died. […] There were over 100 [children], but now [in 2012] there are 96, because others left.[44]

Mary's association

> wanted all women to come together to source for funds from the South African government to be able to start schools here [in Morogoro] – a nursery as well as a tailoring factory, because many women had worked in a factory in Mazimbu and were skilled in sewing, and […] would sew if they got machines; those who were teachers would deal with the day-care as well as the nursery school […] The ambassador [High Commissioner Theresa Solomon] instructed us to do a write-up and take [it] to her […] It ended with her verbal agreement but she did not respond.[45]

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[41] Papa, personal collection. "*Risala Fupi Kutoka kwa Akina-mama Watelekezwa na Macomrade wa Afrika ya Kusini (ANC) Mazimbu na Dakawa Morogoro Kwenda Kwa Balozi Wa Afrika ya Kusini*" (Short Summary from the Women who Have Been Left Behind by South African Comrades (ANC) in Mazimbu and Dakawa, Morogoro, to the South African Ambassador), n.d.

[42] Theresa Solomon was High Commissioner in Tanzania between 2000 and 2004.

[43] Interview with Papa.

[44] *Ibid*.

[45] *Ibid.*

On behalf of the other members, Mary paid a lawyer to write the document in English, and even named the proposed nursery school after the High Commissioner.[46] When Theresa Solomon left Tanzania to take up her next post in Canada, Mary did not manage to establish contact with the new High Commissioner and the association ultimately failed to achieve its goals. In 2004 Mary wrote to and then met with the Tanzanian Regional Commissioner, who promised to assist. She wrote again in 2006 but she did not even get a reply.[47] Frustrated, Mary eventually lost motivation. She sadly admits that she is not even aware of the name of the current South African High Commissioner:

> This [High Commissioner] has made us too lazy to even go for memorials at their graves in December. They used to even send invitation cards, but when I […] took them to the [other] women, they said: 'We are not going; they do not value us.' So that was it.[48]

Mary complains about the poor living conditions of the women and children "left behind". As she puts it, with a blend of bitterness and resignation,

> You find that some children have been left orphans […] They live with serious problems, renting houses with a poor life – no house was left for them. We were used to living in the camp houses, but later the camp was handed over to the Tanzanian government which made it a university [Sokoine University of Agriculture], so the women are just there renting houses, something they were not used to.[49]

[46] Papa, personal collection. "Mama Tereza Modern Nursery School".

[47] Papa, personal collection. "*Mwenyekiti wa Kikundi cha Wakina-Mama Watelekezwa na Macomrade wa Afrika Kusini (ANC), SLP 934, Morogoro, Ofisi ya Mkuu wa Mkoa, SLP 650, Morogoro, 20/09/2006*" ([From the] Chairperson of the Group of Women who Have Been Left Behind by South African Comrades (ANC), PO Box 934, Morogoro, to the Office of the Regional Commissioner, PO Box 650, Morogoro, 20 September 2006).

[48] Interview with Papa. On 16 December every year, MK celebrates the anniversary of its formation in 1961. The date is a public holiday in the new South African calendar, known as the Day of Reconciliation. During apartheid this was the Day of the Vow, or Dingaan's Day, celebrating the Voortrekkers' victory against the Zulu at the battle of Blood River.

[49] *Ibid.*

In a letter to Theresa Solomon dated within the first few years of the 2000s, a group of children wrote that they missed their «fathers' love».[50] Their major demand at the time was:

> We are schooling under difficult circumstances, and request the South African government to educate us. After that we will look for jobs ourselves, make our own money and take care of ourselves in life.[51]

Lack of assistance with the children's education and lack of financial support from the ANC are commonly shared grievances. The decline of the association midway through the first decade of the 2000s seems to epitomise a general disillusionment on the part of the women "left behind".

Conclusion

While the scholarship on South Africa's liberation struggle has predominantly focused on the history of organisations, their leadership and the development of strategy and tactics, this chapter has presented some personal stories that tell us about the profound legacies and human implications of the presence of the ANC in Morogoro, Tanzania, from the perspective of five Tanzanian women – current and former wives or partners of South African exiles. Their stories show that life in exile had numerous unintended, yet far-reaching consequences, involving the most intimate aspects of people's lives.

The role Tanzanians played in the attainment of South African political freedom, something that the women interviewed are acutely aware of, is another theme raised in this essay. Sewing bed sheets and combat uniforms for MK cadres, creating an environment which made exiles feel at home, providing material and emotional assistance in the difficult exile phase, were tasks commonly performed by Tanzanian women.

The end of the exile period and the ANC's homecoming were momentous events in South Africa's history, associated with the end of apartheid and the advent of the new democratic era. Yes these broad

[50] Papa, personal collection. "*Risala kwa Balozi (Mama Theresa)*" (Summary for the Ambassador [Mama Theresa]), n. d.

[51] Interview with Papa. The association highlighted children's financial problems during the early 2000s, when those children "left behind" were described as living like street children (*watoto wa mitaani*). Papa, personal collection. "*Risala Fupi*".

historical shifts had a contradictory impact on the lives of many returning exiles at a personal level. The Tanzanian women whose lives have been discussed here were also affected by these processes, whether they were able to move to South Africa with their husbands and children, stayed in Morogoro or were forced to return to Tanzania after having tried to make a new life in South Africa. Whereas Teddy and Roda often faced socio-economic marginalisation and xenophobic hostility in their new communities, Kibibi, Mary and Leocardia experienced marital abandonment, the desertion of their offspring, loss of jobs and loss of access to a whole set of facilities, and ultimately, disillusionment resulting from the ANC's unfulfilled promises.

The lives of the women presented in this chapter and the challenges and hardships they faced after repatriation reflect the experiences of many others and point to the feelings of loss and abandonment, both material and psychological, that many experienced after liberation in the face of previously shared expectations of a better life.

PART III

South African Literature and Art between Home and Exile

CHAPTER 7
Exile and Writing in Apartheid South Africa

ITALA VIVAN

Exile is an ever-present theme in ancient and in modern myth, legend, history and literature. In pre-modern times, exile was an especially severe punishment since it removed subjects from their proper place and dispatched them to another place, alien to the subjects themselves, their families and social groups. Thus exile has something to do with being constrained to inhabit a place "other" than what is proper to the exiled individual. Exile is then a deprivation of essence through removal to an "improper" place.

Since classical times, exile has given rise to archetypal figures – such as Ulysses – and literary *tropoi*, from Ovid to Shakespeare and beyond. Modernity added a new type of exilic character: the hero, emerging full-blown in the nineteenth century nation-state, who chose self-imposed exile rather than subservience to tyranny.

Our post-modern and globalised world has reshaped the concept of exile and therefore its predicaments, throwing the individual subject into a liquid situation with a horizon of never-ending circulation and movement where the very concept of exile has shifted to a role which is differently relevant.[1] Hence the comparatively scarce attention paid to the phenomenon of exile not only in our contemporaneity, but also in our recent past. If much has been said and written on the conditions of subjects under the regime of apartheid in South Africa, too little consideration has been given to the

[1] Paul Gilroy analyses the fixity of social systems imposed by colonialism and its racialised ethnicity as the starting point for the diaspora of the black Atlantic. P. Gilroy. "Route Work: The Black Atlantic and the Politics of Exile". In I. Chambers, L. Curti (eds). *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 17-29.

macroscopic role that renewed versions of exile and banishment assumed in those fifty years and the marks they left on post-apartheid South Africa.

The category of exile was adopted by the apartheid regime in multiple forms and varieties, modifying classic exile by using a new and peculiar displacement based on the colonial concept of place, whereby indigenous subjects belonged only to a (supposedly, and actually reinvented) tribal system and should not aspire to changing their assigned place. The fixity projected on colonial subjects was assumed to be a continuation of pre-colonial times, and such pretence had its sequel in an unavoidable and *de facto* necessary mobility. This was imposed on the same subjects who were obliged to respond to the requirements of an industrial society, as was the case in late nineteenth and twentieth-century South Africa. Land dispossession, the labour demands of a rapidly industrialising society and colonial taxation created systemic migrancy among the indigenous population and gradually urbanised it in various ways and degrees. This same movement of the African population brought about cultural and linguistic creolisation, and engendered a new modernity. However, the apartheid regime refused to see, or rather to acknowledge, all this and went on pretending. The situation was similar to previous colonial times, in the sense that African subjects belonged to a place somewhere out there, outside history, in a stereotyped bush where there were no nations but rather, tribes, no religions but superstitions, and everything was fixed and static. It was a form of inverted exoticism based on an ethnicisation of the other.

On the basis of such assumptions, the apartheid regime issued laws that compelled Africans to go back to their own "tribe" (enclosed in a reserved space "out there") unless a special permit allowed them to stay elsewhere (in areas classified as "white") in order to work in industry or in the services required by "European" society. The result of such laws was a massive deportation of individuals who were actually exiled to rural areas they did not belong to, plus a principle, based on the creation of artificial "homelands", that entitled the regime to move people around at its will, while depriving African subjects of all citizenship rights. This phenomenon combined with the separation, on a racial basis, of inhabited areas (both rural and urban) and their balkanisation, to create further deportation and exile to unfamiliar places.

These preliminary remarks are relevant to the analysis of the new version of exile created by apartheid, in a system where the concept of place was in the hands of a regime that could easily displace and misplace anyone, simply by enforcing its own new order.

Even before the advent of apartheid in 1948, the young intellectual, Peter Abrahams, left South Africa in 1939 because, as he explained in his splendid autobiography *Tell Freedom*: «I needed, not friends, not gestures, but my manhood. And the need was desperate […]. Also, there was a need to write, to tell freedom, and for this I needed to be personally free».[2] The son of a Coloured mother and an Ethiopian father, Abrahams resented the kind of suffocation he was experiencing in his racialised home country and opted for a greater world where he could grow and act in freedom. His departure turned into a definitive exile (first to England, then to Africa and finally to Jamaica) because the authorities would not grant him a regular passport but only an exit permit. This solution became a fixed pattern often adopted during apartheid for intellectuals and writers who were, or appeared likely to become, active dissenters. It is hardly necessary to say that most of such exiles were black Africans. White writers enjoyed a much higher level of acceptable dissent, and in any case if they wanted to leave they were entitled to have a regular passport and perhaps even more than one: dissent was thus smoothly controlled through privilege and blackmail.

"The fabulous decade" of the 1950s: exile as amputation

The racial laws of "grand apartheid" were issued soon after the Nationalist regime came into power. They hit a society where urban black culture was changing rapidly, partially under American influence, and young men and women were entering journalism and literature on their own terms. The 1950s – «the fabulous decade», in the words of one of its protagonists, Lewis Nkosi[3] – saw the emergence of *Drum*, a Johannesburg-based magazine produced by a handful of young black journalists and intellectuals working for a white editor, Anthony Sampson, and a white owner, Jim Bailey, both in their twenties and just graduated from Oxford. *Drum* developed into a wonderfully written, lively and innovative instrument that became immensely popular not only in the townships, but also among white people. Although centred on the life of black people, *Drum* observed society at large and opened its pages to photography and literature, while keeping an eye on

[2] P. Abrahams. *Tell Freedom*. London: Faber, 1954, p. 311.

[3] L. Nkosi. *Home and Exile*. London: Longman, 1965; I. Vivan. "La generazione di *Drum* e *the fabulous decade* degli anni '50". *Africa e Mediterraneo*, 75, 2, 2011, pp. 31-36; I. Vivan (ed.). *Alf Kumalo, fotografo sudafricano/Alf Kumalo, South African Photographer*. Milano: Leonardo Arte, 1998.

what was going on in the country and offering excellent reportage and full coverage of anti-apartheid movements such as the ANC. Music (especially jazz), theatre, sports and beauty contests were favourite subjects.

The *Drum* journalists formed a compact and active team that included the sophisticated intellectual Can Themba, the prose writer Ezekiel (Es'kia) Mphahlele, the very young Zulu Lewis Nkosi, Henry Nxumalo (the only experienced investigative reporter), the composer and critic Todd Matshikiza (co-author of the famous musical *King Kong*, featuring a young Miriam Makeba in its cast), Arthur Maimane (creator of the Chief, the first black protagonist in African detective fiction), Nat Nakasa, Bloke Modisane, Casey Motsisi, and the German photographer Jurgen Schadeberg who had recently arrived from Germany and taught Alf Kumalo, Peter Magubane and Bob Gosani. Among the external contributors there were also Bessie Head, Nadine Gordimer and Richard Rive. Many of these names would become celebrities, but later on, and most of them elsewhere – in exile.

Drum started in 1951 and by the second half of the 1960s had already been sold and tamed. Its black journalists had left one by one within the first decade, or just after. Henry Nxumalo was murdered in 1957; Bob Gosani died an early death, as did Can Themba; Mphahlele went to Zambia on an exit permit, and Nkosi, Nakasa, Modisane, Maimane and Matshikiza did the same, each with a different destination. Bessie Head, too, went into exile in Botswana after being arrested and much harassed by the police.

It is only when relating the story of those years and listing the dead and exiled black artists that one realises how terrible the history of apartheid has been, and how damaging and destructive it proved to South African culture and society. In those years a whole black elite was wiped away. There they were, a new generation of educated and clever black South Africans who would have changed the history of the country, had they been allowed to go ahead the way they had begun, with spirited and imaginative freedom of thought and action. Instead they were obliged to leave home and take refuge elsewhere – in Africa, Europe and the United States, where some of them committed suicide (like Nat Nakasa) and others had difficulty in enduring the alienation and hardships of prolonged exile, like Head and Modisane.

But Bessie Head, in spite of her tortured life history, became one of the greatest writers from South Africa, with a series of novels and short stories that make her work a pillar of South African literature. She started off with *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968), followed by *Maru* (1971) and the powerful but flawed *A Question of Power* (1973), *Serowe: Village of the Rainwind* (1981) and the posthumously published and very interesting *The*

Cardinals (1993), where she depicts, only thinly veiled, characters from *Drum* in a setting which is clearly District Six. Her strong grasp of the language, the novelty of her themes and the intensity of her intellectual and emotional involvement make her fiction very attractive to readers, even today. Her feminist drive is one more element of modernity and invites careful reflection, set as it is against the backdrop of ethnicity in which she chooses to situate her novels.

Lewis Nkosi developed into a brilliant literary critic and markedly original creative writer – his best work of fiction is arguably the novel *Mating Birds* (1986) – although his wandering life never managed to hide his emotional fragility and the trauma he had to absorb. Richard Rive also became an accomplished prose writer and literary critic and returned to South Africa, while Arthur Maimane remained in Britain and worked as a television scriptwriter, but also published an interesting novel, *Victims* (1976), and an autobiography.

Es'kia Mphahlele wandered from Zambia to Nigeria to Paris, and finally settled at the University of Denver, Colorado, to become perhaps the best established literary critic from Africa, and a novelist. After his wonderful *Down Second Avenue*, published in 1959 just after he went into exile, which narrates his childhood in Marabastad township, Mphahlele continued to write semi-autobiographical fiction, only occasionally original, from *The Wanderers* (1971) to *Afrika My Music: An Autobiography, 1957-1983* (1984). In 1962 he had published an important critique on Africa and black America that became very influential – *The African Image*.

Most of these writers wrote autobiographies, perhaps (and at least partially) out of a need to keep together the fragments of a life that apartheid had smashed with brutal violence, and to recreate scenes and settings from neighbourhoods that had been forcibly destroyed, such as District Six in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg.[4] For some of them, like Can Themba and Casey Motsisi, one has to go back to the pages of *Drum* to find a remarkable volume of work and discover the appeal of a new style of prose writing, brilliant and syncopated – jazzy, as it was dubbed.

The tragedy of that generation of artists – and of the country with it – is that the regime decided to expel them, and after that, to erase their presence and stifle their voices by banning their work in South Africa. Their writings could not be published or circulate in the country, and even in libraries their works were forbidden and not for loan. They were pursued by a board of

[4] R. Rive. '*Buckingham Palace', District Six*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1986.

censors which sometimes ordered the withdrawal of publications, or forbade their sale (even white authors such as Gordimer and Brink were targeted). Their own countrymen, including schoolchildren and young writers, were forbidden to read them and even to mention their names. It was a sort of amputation: the body of the country got rid of its best but unwanted limbs, and threw them away. This amputation was an abrupt and tragic interruption of the cultural continuity that was to become a recurring feature in the literary history of the apartheid period – an immeasurable waste, and a cultural and human crime.

The same destiny befell another great black writer from South Africa, Alex La Guma, the son of a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of South Africa and trade unionist and himself a communist, who produced excellent fiction, all banned and impossible to access in his home country. This procedure of forcible, cruel amputation hit many South Africans who were active in the Communist Party (made illegal in 1950 by the Suppression of Communism Act), but also a number of individuals who were not communist. In the words of Tlhalo Raditlhalo:

> Through the very broad definition of 'communism', the act was used to target any and all forms of independent thought and writing that placed authority in the spotlight. Crucially, this act allowed for a person deemed a threat to the state to be banned, and a banned person could not be quoted, could not have their writings read out in public, and thus was effectively silenced.[5]

La Guma's novels – and especially the early ones, *A Walk in the Night* (1962) and *The Stone Country* (1967) – explored the claustrophobic township life and life in prison, with full-blown characters embodying the predicament of a society whose youth was bound to slide into crime and self-destruction. The author clearly presents the motivation for their deeds within a solid Marxist frame, yet their destinies arouse compassion in the reader.

The literature that developed in that decade was not yet called "protest" or "commitment" writing, as was to happen with the works of later decades, particularly from the 1970s onwards. In fact, it did not constitute an open and outspoken form of protest, and in most cases – even in the works by the highly politicised Alex La Guma – it was not political. The *Drum* writers had a peculiar levity of approach, and the subtle irony pervading their texts

[5] T. Raditlhalo. "Writing in Exile". In D. Attwell and D. Attridge (eds). *The Cambridge History of South African Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 411.

seemed aimed at entertainment, rather than debating fundamentals. Nonetheless, the life they presented and the society they depicted portrayed a country based on oppression and injustice, discrimination and violence, where exploitation was at the root of the system and created an impossible situation for the subaltern classes.

Although not openly political and with no reference to any structured political organisation, the news reports and the photographic reportages in *Drum* were tantamount to ferocious denunciations of inequality, racism and corruption and threw light on the desperate conditions of black people in South Africa. Moreover, *Drum* tried to weave a network of relationships with black America and other countries in Africa, setting up an exchange of literary works and issuing a special edition of the magazine for the rest of Anglophone Africa. It was the first publication written in English by blacks and aimed at a black readership; all previous newspapers and journals for black South Africans were written in an African language, partly in order to ethnicise black culture and keep it within the limits of "tribal" traditions. At the time of apartheid, culture was not expected to unite and connect, but to divide and subjugate.

Lewis Nkosi's harsh judgement in *Tasks and Masks* (1981) apropos protest and commitment in South African literature is a strong statement concerning the history of the country, and a sober foreboding of the many problems that the new South Africa would face many years later.[6]

The Sharpeville massacre and the escalation of repression

The 1960s was the decade when all the African colonies became independent, apart from Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, that had to wait for the 1974 revolution in Portugal. In South Africa, however, the decade saw a sharp escalation in state and police repression, starting with the 1960 Sharpeville massacre and followed by the suppression of the PAC and the ANC, the banning and arrest of scores of political activists and the introduction of draconian laws, among them a ban on multiracial membership of political parties, which compelled the Liberal Party to disband itself in 1968. The 1963-1964 Rivonia Trial, as well as the earlier 1956-1961 Treason Trial, were faithfully reported in *Drum*, with the *Drum* team's pictures

[6] L. Nkosi. *Tasks and Masks. Themes and Styles of South African Literature*. London: Longman, 1981, p. 81.

distributed all over the world, causing waves of reaction against apartheid. But the regime did not relent. On the contrary, it intensified and militarised repression, justifying its line as anti-communist action.

In those years droves of South Africans active in anti-apartheid movements fled the country, while those who remained went underground and developed armed resistance and sabotage tactics. The ANC decided to modify its original policy of non-violent and legal action, and jointly developed with the South African Communist Party (SACP) an armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), whose first leader was Nelson Mandela. The arrest and life imprisonment of the ANC and SACP leadership at the Rivonia Trial marked the crushing of the internal opposition movement, transforming the ANC into an organisation in exile.

Literature gradually became more committed, and black writers shifted towards a more openly political language. Poetry became the main vehicle for politically engaged literature, and would remain so until the end of apartheid. This genre allowed for stronger and shorter statements, and could easily connect to the ancient tradition of epic poetry so very important in southern African languages, thus re-establishing the link with orality that remained a relevant feature of local culture. Moreover, poems could be printed and distributed easily, without going through publishers and booksellers – single sheets of paper, with burning lines exalting the struggle, were easily passed around at public gatherings such as rallies, strikes, demonstrations and even funerals, with little risk of being caught by the police.

During this period, however, several poets left the country. In 1964 Arthur Nortje went to Oxford University, where he committed suicide in 1970, fearing that he might be sent back to South Africa because his passport had expired. Nortje was a fine poet, his death a great loss for the country. His verses were pervaded by an inner melancholy:

> In the towns I've acquired
> arrive the broken guerrilla, gaunt and cautious,
> exit visas in their rifled pockets
> and no more making like Marx
> for the British Museum in the nineteenth century,
> damned: the dark princes, burnt and offered
> to the four winds, to the salt-eyed seas. To their earth
> unreturnable.[7]

[7] A. Nortje, from "Autopsy". In C. Pieterse (ed.). *Seven South African Poets*. London: Heinemann, 1971, p. 117.

One by one, other poets were compelled to leave. Dennis Brutus, poet and sportsman, emigrated in 1966 after a dramatic history of anti-apartheid resistance and consequent banning and imprisonment, culminating on Robben Island where he worked in the stone quarry with Mandela and other political prisoners. Once out of prison and the country, he grew very active in the struggle and led the successful campaign for South Africa's exclusion from the Olympic Games. He published several poetry collections and became, as Lewis Nkosi reminds us, «the first South African poet to acquire a reputation abroad both for his writing and for his opposition to South Africa's race laws. […] Within an arid landscape of violence and hatred, Brutus was also capable of creating oases – more like mirages or 'illusions' – of human warmth and affection».[8]

Keorapetse Willie Kgositsile learned his trade working on the journal the *New Age* edited by Ruth First, who was a major influence in his formative years. He left South Africa in 1960 to study in the United States, where he settled and became a prominent figure in the American literary and cultural world. He immediately felt close to the voices of black America, and in Harlem he found his «emotional placement». His poetry covers a great range of themes, and his criticism has appeared in leading international journals. He returned to South Africa after the end of apartheid, in 1991, and at present lives in Johannesburg where he acts as consultant to the Ministry of Arts and Culture. He looks back at his exilic experience with serene detachment, and while remembering past difficulties and problems, he believes that such an experience can be positive if one is linked to international resistance groups and avoids isolation, developing a degree of cosmopolitanism while remaining African inside. In other words, Kgositsile believes that during apartheid, exile might also be seen as an opportunity for growth and literary refinement in an international context. He told me in an interview that on his return home he felt as if he had been reborn and found himself in a new and different country, because Johannesburg had become another city altogether, from the time he had left it 35 years earlier.[9]

Mazisi Kunene is another poet who faced exile with resilience and immersed himself in the black diaspora in the United States, acquiring a top position in the academic world and becoming professor at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1975. He wrote widely on linguistic issues and, like Ngugi wa Thiong'o, was a supporter of African languages.

[8] Nkosi. *Tasks and Masks*, p. 166.

[9] Interview with K.W. Kgositsile by Itala Vivan, Johannesburg, September 2012.

He composed poetry in isiZulu when still a child, and ended by becoming poet laureate of South Africa. He wrote great epic poems in isiZulu, such as *Emperor Shaka the Great* (1979) and *Anthem of the Decades: A Zulu Epic* (1981), originally written in isiZulu and translated into English by himself.[10]

Kunene was deeply involved in the struggle against apartheid, and an ANC militant and organiser. In 1962 he became ANC representative for Europe and America, and later its finance director. After the demise of apartheid he went back to Durban and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and died there.

A.C. Jordan, educated at the renowned Lovedale College and then at Fort Hare, the university for black people during apartheid, left South Africa on an exit permit in 1960. He went to the United States, and became a member of the University of California and then the University of Wisconsin. He wrote fiction in isiXhosa (*Ingqumbo Yeminyana,* 1940; *Kwezo Mpindo zeTsitsa*, 1975) and collected African folktales. At his departure from South Africa under political pressure he was greeted by the journalists from *Drum* who saluted him as the founding father of African intelligentsia.

The fact that writers like Kunene and Jordan had to leave South Africa in order to be free to cultivate African languages and produce important works in their specialised fields shows how peculiarly oppressive the apartheid system was. It actually prevented black South Africans from emerging as Zulu or Xhosa artists, and on the other hand refused to acknowledge the emerging group from *Drum* who were Anglophone and influenced by American literature and culture. Exile and diaspora were the only solutions for those who were resilient enough for such an enterprise.

In those years two white writers also went into exile after different political experiences: C.J. Driver and Breyten Breytenbach. C.J. (Jonty) Driver was a white poet of English descent. President of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in 1963 and 1964, he was detained under the same ninety-day detention law that led to the imprisonment of Albie Sachs, amongst many others, and at the end of this period left for Britain where he has lived ever since, becoming Master of Wellington College. Like Dennis Brutus in Reagan's America, C.J. Driver became a stateless person, being refused a British passport for a long time. He has

[10] For Mazisi Kunene and other exiled writers, see H. Bernstein. *The Rift: The Exile Experience of South Africans*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1994. The book includes several interviews with writers, of which the original transcripts are held at the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape.

published many collections of poetry and four novels, including the famous *Elegy for a Revolutionary* (1969).

Breyten Breytenbach is an Afrikaner, educated in South Africa, who went to Europe in the 1960s as a young man in search of new experiences. He happened to live through the excitement and turmoil of the 1968 students' movement and became politicised in that context. He joined Okhela, a leftist resistance group in exile aimed at attracting young radicals from South Africa, and was sent to South Africa on a secret mission: he had to blow up the monument to the Afrikaans language in Paarl. Caught by the police, he was convicted of treason and imprisoned from 1975 to 1982. It was during his detention that he started writing poetry. He has published many volumes of verses, a prison memoir (*The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist*, 1984) and a novel, plus literary criticism and various essays. He embodied the romantic and almost anarchical version of the literary resistance, and grew disillusioned with the new South Africa. Breyten Breytenbach now teaches at New York University (NYU) and directs the Gorée Institute, devoted to the history of slavery, in Dakar.

Among those who suffered detainment and police harassment in those years was also the poet and activist Jeremy Cronin. Cronin, a member of the underground SACP, was arrested and charged under the Terrorism and Internal Security Act when he returned from France where he had graduated from the Sorbonne. His detention lasted seven years, from 1976 to 1983, and kept him under very strict surveillance. His first collection of poetry, *Inside*, appeared in 1984, followed by others. Once released, he joined the UDF but eventually had to flee the country. He was in exile first in London, then in Lusaka, where he worked closely with Joe Slovo. A leading figure in the SACP, after the end of apartheid he had a seat on the National Executive Committee of the ANC and has occupied various ministerial positions.

The Soweto season of poetry and the 1970s

The 1953 Bantu Education Act radically reformed the South African school system in spite of a desperate resistance within the country (Mphahlele, himself a teacher, was involved in it). Education became state controlled, and administered by four separate departments on a racially differentiated basis. Black schoolchildren were granted a poor system offering an inferior education, to the point that boycotting school became accepted practice and was encouraged by political organisations such as the

ANC. These generations grew up without knowing their past. They entered a present sprung out of a blank that seemed to come from nowhere, and their responses were deeply different from those of their predecessors. Bad schools produced very few children eager to learn and study, and a climate of general disaffection prevailed.

The situation reached breaking point in 1976, when schoolchildren revolted against a new law enforcing Afrikaans as the language of instruction for all subjects. Afrikaans had become the (innocent) symbol of police harassment and apartheid tyranny and consequently was hated by those whom the apartheid system subjugated. Crowds of schoolchildren demonstrated in the streets of Soweto, where the police shot them, killing and wounding many. A general insurrection followed, in Soweto and all over South Africa, where black townships were set on fire and people would not relent. The 1976 Soweto uprising marked a turning point in the history of South Africa: things were no longer the same after it. Police repression was brutal, supported by the Internal Security Act, and prisons were soon crowded with black youths refusing to give up a struggle which sprang directly from their generation. In his autobiography, Mandela recalls the time when he saw groups of youngsters being taken to prison, showing attitudes of open defiance, resisting regulations and authority. He remarks that there didn't seem to be a common language through which it was possible to communicate with them, as though these young activists had come from another planet. It was at that point, he says, that he and his comrades decided it was time to change step in ANC policy and accelerate the process of change in all possible ways.[11]

Sipho Sepamla's novel *A Ride on the Whirlwind* (1981) is an interesting fictional version of the Soweto uprising as seen through the eyes of a handful of friends for whom the insurrection becomes an adventurous game against the police. Sipho Sepamla and Mongane Wally Serote were the protagonists of an extraordinary season in South African poetry and marked a renewal in themes and styles while linking to the oral roots of South African black traditions. Their political background was in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), which made a great contribution to the renewal of South African literature, among other things. Many of the young people who joined the informal ranks of the BCM and did political work at ground level had to

[11] N.R. Mandela. *Long Walk to Freedom. The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. London: Abacus, 1996.

flee the country and go into exile – among them also Serote, who escaped to London and became active in the ANC ranks there.

The splendid poetry of that time will remain as a great page in South African literary history and a witness to an age of strong ideological beliefs and dramatic events that required prompt decisions at all levels. The centre of things was inside the country, and Soweto became the symbolic heart of that poetry. It was Sepamla who voiced the insurrectional trend of the time in *History-books, Amen!*,[12] and Serote who in a lyric dedicated to Don Mattera, firmly stated his belief in a final victory, in spite of all the suffering:

> it is a dry white season
> dark leaves don't last, their brief lives dry out
> and with a broken heart they dive gently headed for the earth,
> not even bleeding.
> it is a dry white season brother,
> only the trees know the pain as they stand still erect
> dry like steel, their branches dry like wire,
> indeed, it is a dry white season
> but seasons come to pass.[13]

Whether inside or outside the country, the protagonists of the Soweto season of poetry felt a unity with their constituency and expressed widely shared states of mind in a language that was simple and direct, drawn from the language spoken in the urban townships, although brought close to standard English. The poet who really started the movement was Oswald Mtshali, with the resonating rhythms of *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* (1971), soon followed by Serote's *Yakhal'inkomo* (1972), Sepamla's *Hurry Up to It!* (1975) and Mafika Gwala's *Jol'iinkomo* (1977).

There has been an animated debate to assess the relevance of this phase of South African poetry, harshly criticised by white poets such as Stephen Watson and Douglas Livingstone. A matter-of-fact judgement is offered by Lewis Nkosi:

> My complaints with South African literature in the past have had nothing to do with the mere fact that it is protest. How well, and how significantly it utters that protest, has been my main preoccupation.

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[12] S. Sepamla. "History-books Amen!". In *Selected Poems*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1984, p. 123.

[13] M.W. Serote. "For Don M – Banned". In *Tsetlo*, 1974, reprinted in *Selected Poems*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1982, p. 52.

> […] a great deal of the 'masks' and 'kola nut' school of writing which is unhappily pouring out of the presses at an unprecedented rate […] is so frequently applauded by European critics in search of the exotic.[14]

The issue was to be picked up again by Albie Sachs towards the end of apartheid, in his paper, "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom", presented at the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) in 1990 and widely discussed by the press and in ANC sections. In 1986 Njabulo Ndebele contributed to the debate with his seminal essay, "The Rediscovery of the Ordinary".[15]

The latter part of the 1970s, and the whole of the 1980s, saw an ever-growing escalation in systematic repression, while from 1985 onwards the regime declared an almost continuous state of emergency. Many intellectuals and writers ended up in prison for showing a critical attitude towards the government, for being politically active in the resistance against apartheid, or simply for being militant in one of the organisations that had been banned, like the SACP, the ANC and the PAC. Prison was one more means of amputating an unwanted member from the body of society, and the ensuing loss hit both the imprisoned subject and society itself, debilitated by an endless haemorrhage.

Albie Sachs and Ruth First were both targeted by the South African secret services while in exile in Maputo; Sachs survived when a bomb in his car exploded, but was badly maimed, while First died from a parcel bomb mailed to her university address.

Albie Sachs was born into a Jewish family from Lithuania; his father, Solly, was a trade unionist and a member of the SACP, then exiled. He became a lawyer and a political activist focusing particularly on human rights. In 1963 he was imprisoned under the ninety-day detainment law and then his confinement was prolonged under the one hundred and eighty-day law. He related his prison experiences in *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs* (1966), a remarkably successful book which was also turned into a theatre and radio play. After his imprisonment he went into exile in the UK from 1966 to 1975, when he moved to independent Mozambique. In 1988 he was

[14] Nkosi. *Tasks and Masks*, p. 79.

[15] Comments on Sachs's paper and Ndebele's essay can be found in I. Vivan. "Gli scrittori sudafricani nella transizione verso il nuovo". In I. Vivan (ed.). *Il Nuovo Sudafrica dalle strettoie dell'apartheid alle complessità della democrazia*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1996, pp. 333-373; S. Clingman. "Writing the Interregnum: Literature and the Demise of Apartheid". In Attwell and Attridge (eds). *The Cambridge History of South African Literature*, pp. 633-651.

wounded, but underwent a long, slow recovery described in *The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter* (1991). After twenty-four years in exile, Sachs went back to South Africa at the end of apartheid and was instrumental in the creation of the new South Africa. A leading figure in political life, Sachs ended his forensic career as a constitutional justice. His role in South African culture has always been very influential, and his participation in politics active and relevant.

Ruth First is an almost mythical figure in South African history. Likewise from a Jewish family, originally from Latvia, she was a brilliant scholar, an indefatigable political activist and a gifted journalist. She was appointed editor-in-chief of the radical newspaper *The Guardian*, later banned by the government – a position never reached by a woman before her – and editor of its successor, the *New Age*. She married fellow Communist Party member Joe Slovo, and both of them experienced banning and were among the 156 accused at the Treason Trial. She was arrested in 1963 in the aftermath of the Rivonia raid and imprisoned under 90-day detention law; in 1964 she left the country on an exit permit with her daughters and joined her husband in exile in London, where she remained until 1978. She then joined the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, where she was killed by a parcel bomb in 1982. A highly gifted person and a staunch feminist, she had a sharp political mind and a wide knowledge of African politics. Her many books included *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power and the Coup d'État in Africa* (1970), *Libya, the Elusive Revolution* (1970), and *The South African Connection* (1972). She also wrote an interesting memoir, *117 Days* (1965), where she narrates her own psychological and sensorial experiences in solitary confinement.

Another woman writer, Lauretta Ngcobo, was also forced into exile in the 1970s. She came from KwaZulu-Natal and was educated at Fort Hare University. Married to a leading member of the PAC, and herself a PAC member, she escaped to London in 1970 and remained in exile there for twenty-four years, until 1994. A teacher by profession, Ngcobo started to write in exile with the purpose of telling the story of women's involvement in the struggle. Her first novel, *Cross of Gold* (1981), depicts the atmosphere of violence and repression in South Africa, while her second work, *And They Didn't Die* (1990), features a female protagonist engaged in the liberation movements. In 2012 she edited *Prodigal Daughters: Stories of Black South African Women in Exile*, a collection of eighteen pieces on women's exilic experiences. Since returning home to South Africa, Lauretta Ngcobo has been active in local politics under the umbrella of the IFP in KwaZulu-Natal.

Exiles returning home

In spite of the terrible experiences that some of them had to endure, for white exiles life tended to be easier when compared to the hardships suffered by their black counterparts. White South Africans could generally be issued a European passport (although there were exceptions, as we have seen), and could also integrate more easily into European society and be acknowledged and accepted as intellectuals. Black exiles often encountered more racism and could easily be marginalised. Alcohol sometimes became a friend to run to in order to face loneliness and tensions of all kinds. The drinking habits of most of the *Drum* group were already notorious even before they went into exile – Can Themba used to call his meetings at a shebeen in Sophiatown – but after leaving home this trend grew worse and ruined many of them. Yet another influence that pushed writers towards alcohol was the example of the American literary world, where heavy drinking was a constant feature. One should remember, too, that since the Romantic period, alcohol has been a common companion to literary creation.

Exile created inevitable nostalgia and homesickness, a state of mind that proved conducive to creative writing. Imaginative fiction, poetry and autobiographical prose allowed exiles to re-create the home they had lost and thus return there in an imaginary dimension, or to imagine a new world of their own where they could take refuge against adversity. But the details of a lost home grew pale and vague as time went by, and no longer coincided with the real thing left behind a long time ago – a reality that in the meanwhile had inevitably changed. Thus the return home could traumatise the exile and prevent any adjustment to the old setting, which had become newly hostile when compared to the old memories cherished in the exile's mind.

Exiled writers often went back to South Africa only to find out that they could no longer live there: a phenomenon that proved frequent among political exiles too, who felt displaced in the society they had left behind with regret and sorrow a long time ago, but where they felt they no longer belonged. Post-apartheid South African fiction shows many examples of this kind of situation, which often involves or creates *ex novo* generational conflicts and interpersonal tensions. Achmat Dangor's novel *Bitter Fruit* (2001), set in post-apartheid time, has a secondary plot regarding the difficulty of a family of three in adjusting to the reality of a South Africa they had left long before. Nadine Gordimer has also tackled the subject, presenting both unhappy and happy solutions in *None to Accompany Me* (1994) and *No Time Like the Present* (2012).

From another viewpoint, the return home of many exiles and political prisoners opened the way to a new wave of writing. Prison diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, political journals and memories, and confessions have been flowing in South Africa since the end of apartheid. This fact certainly reveals not only a need for digging up stories hitherto hidden in order to compose a richer and truer picture of the nation, but also a search for new modes of representation in the climate of transition that has succeeded the long period of the interregnum, as Nadine Gordimer called it in an essay dating back to 1983, quoting Antonio Gramsci *in exergo*: «The old is dying, and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms».[16] The new South Africa shows that in the writers' vision it was also the past, and not only the present, that crumbled and went to pieces – so that this new urge for writing, exploring, digging, recomposing puzzles of memory and events is a complementary element to the dissolution experienced in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Outside South Africa, in the dislocation of exile, writers and intellectuals found a strong support in the network organised by the ANC, who used funds and facilities offered by sponsors to help them publish their works and coordinate their production, while giving access to free cultural journals like *Sechaba* and *Mayibuye*, where individuals could write and continue the literary and artistic debate. This attention to cultural resistance developed only in the last two decades of apartheid and was partly suggested by the intense cultural campaigns and activities put up by the BCM, but also by Cosatu. The BCM, in particular, believed in grass-roots work to make education available and integration possible.

It is, however, true that the ANC external network was used also to filter and control exiles, maintain orthodoxy and exclude unwanted rivals such as PAC followers.

The ANC organised periodic conferences on themes of interest, art festivals, literary gatherings, recitals and translations of literary works, and distributed a great amount of printed materials outside South Africa to provide information on the situation inside the country and in the world at large. At the time, the ANC was creating a wide network of interconnected offices where ANC representatives would take up the role of developing a counterculture to fight against apartheid-government propaganda. Exiled

[16] N. Gordimer. "Living in the Interregnum". In *The Essential Gesture: Writing Politics and Places*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1988, pp. 261-284; Clingman. "Writing the Interregnum", pp. 636 ff.

writers would often assist in this process, as did Mongane Serote and Mandla Langa in the London offices of the ANC.

Writing might well be a way of fighting against death and annihilation, a sublime device to prolong one's own individual story beyond its natural physical end. But it surely is also a way to react against all that which aims at stifling and silencing the human being, at repressing what is most human in us, our reason and our emotions. Thus writing has always become a necessary road to survival for the exile and the runaway, the outcast and the refugee in a distant land, to express wrath and condemnation while working for the reconstruction of a lost world in the artistic imagination. South African writers were no exception. They only were more numerous – a crowd flowing out through many decades – and linked by a common drive: active engagement towards liberating themselves and their country.

Words would be spilled out in pain, as Mongane Serote says in *Prelude*:

> when i take a pen,
> my soul bursts to deface the paper
> pus spills –
> spreads
> deforming a line into a figure that violates my love,
> when i take a pen,
> my crimson heart oozes into the ink,
> dilutes it
> spreads the gem of my life
> makes the words i utter a gasp to the world, –
> my mother, when i dance your eyes won't keep pace
> look into my eyes,
> there, the story of my day is told.[17]

In a dialogue with his pen, the poet voices the wrath and violence inscribed in a long history of dislocation, persecution and exile. All these elements combined to yield an exceptional harvest of literary works in apartheid South Africa that are now part of a common national memory.

[17] M.W. Serote. *Prelude*. In *Tsetlo* (1974), reprinted in *Selected Poems*, p. 45.

CHAPTER 8
"A Model for Knowledge": Some Observations on William Kentridge's *Drawings for Projection*

MARIA DE VIVO

> So drawing is a testing of ideas; a slow-motion version of thought. It does not arrive instantly like a photograph. The uncertain and imprecise way of constructing a drawing is sometimes a model of how to construct meaning. What ends in clarity does not begin that way.
> (William Kentridge, Interview with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, 1999)

Critics generally agree that the South African artist William Kentridge always seeks to question notions of «forms *and* reality» with his works.[1] The works appear to be in a constant state of metamorphosis, reflecting the artist's unceasing exploration of linguistic codes and, at the same time, a «model for knowledge»[2] where their provisional character represents a positive value that contrasts with «a world fixed in time».[3] This chapter examines how this twofold and indivisible approach is expressed in Kentridge's *Drawings for Projection* – the group of ten animated films (probably not yet complete), made between 1989 and 2011, describing the stories of the greedy industrialist Soho Eckstein (his rise and fall), his wife and his arch-enemy Felix Teitlebaum, a fragile man and a dreamer.

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[1] L. Rumma. "Preface". In *Streets of the City. William Kentridge*. Exhibition catalogue. Milan: Electa, 2009, p. 18.

[2] C. Christov-Bakargiev. "Interview". In D. Cameron, C. Christov-Bakargiev and J.M. Coetzee. *William Kentridge*. London: Phaidon, 1999, p. 8.

[3] William Kentridge. "I'm not Me, the Horse is not Mine". Lecture at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 18 March 2009.

In a subtly obstinate fashion, which may also stem from his desire to keep his works within the realm of art,[4] Kentridge has referred to his short films as *Drawings for Projection*.[5] This decision clearly offers an insight into the artist's vision: Kentridge does not regard drawing as a secondary means of an artistic practice spanning several fields – from engravings to shadow theatre, from drawings to animated films, from sculpture to tapestries – reaching completeness in the great installations or productions undertaken for opera houses. Drawing is not just the premise for all his work; it is the very essence, the technical and metaphorical backbone. The sheet of blank paper is the setting for this artistic vision: it is an exhausting and ontologically incomplete process[6] which is carried out with just a few tools (a graphite pencil, a piece of charcoal) and simple, repeated actions (drawing, filming and erasure). Although he has a multi-faceted background and has always been reluctant to be tied to rigid disciplinary labels, drawing arguably offers a unifying theme in his work: it represents the foundations and the ultimate destination.

The first *Drawings for Projection* were the works that brought Kentridge recognition in the art world during the second half of the 1990s,[7] starting out

[4] See R. Krauss. "'The Rock': William Kentridge's *Drawings for Projection*". *October*, 92, Spring 2000, pp. 6 ff.

[5] The animated films, made from 1989 onwards, were presented as a single corpus of works, beginning in 2001 with the retrospective held at the Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Museum in Washington. On this occasion, Kentridge officially defined them as *Drawings for Projection.* See M. Rosenthal. "William Kentridge. A Portrait of the Artist". In *William Kentridge. Five Themes*. Exhibition catalogue. San Francisco: SFMoMA, 2010, p. 40.

[6] See M. Auping. "A 'Stereo' Interview about Drawing with William Kentridge". In *William Kentridge. Five Themes,* p. 228.

[7] It could be argued that the decisive year was 1997 when the artist was invited to the Havana Biennial, the second Johannesburg Biennial (an event set up by Lorna Ferguson in 1995 on the model of *Documenta* in Germany with the aim of putting the South African capital "on the map" of the most important international exhibitions and of Kassel) and the tenth *Documenta*, curated by Catherine David. These exhibitions marked the first steps, within the context of the history of art, to redefine the discipline. For an analysis in Italian of the role of the above-mentioned exhibitions, see the recent study by R. Pinto. *Nuove geografie artistiche. Le mostre al tempo della globalizzazione*. Milan: Postmedia Books, 2012. The 1990s also marked an important moment in terms of the artist's presence and reputation in Italy. William Kentridge was one of the artists who was invited to *Incroci del sud: Affinities – arte contemporanea del Sudafrica*, a fringe event of the 45th Venice Biennial in 1993, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva. As part of the initiative *Projected Artists – Obiettivo: Roma*, held in Rome and curated by Stefania Miscetti in 1995, he exhibited his project *Memory and Geography*, devised in conjunction with the artist Doris Bloom for the first Johannesburg Biennial in 1995. The following year he presented the exhibition *Campo 6, The Spiral Village*

from a position which, for many reasons, was very isolated. Partly as a result of this, they suggest the need for further investigation. They could not be fully understood without closer observation of the original way in which they draw on the history of Western art.

The son of Sir Sidney Kentridge (a famous lawyer and defender of many anti-apartheid activists, among whom Nelson Mandela)[8] and Felicia Geffen, co-founder of the Legal Resources Centre in the 1970s, William Kentridge graduated in Politics and African Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in 1976. It was the same year as the Soweto uprising, when hundreds of young black students, who rose in protest against the impositions of the apartheid government throughout the country, were killed by the police. The path that he has pursued since then – his first exhibition dates back to 1979 – with a series of different but overlapping interests, each one enriching the other,[9] is extremely revealing. Through art and theatre, and «only after considerable self-examination and maturation»,[10]

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in the Galleria Civica in Turin. In 1999 he held his first solo show in Italy in the Lia Rumma Gallery in Naples, devoted to the animated films discussed here; in the same year, he took part in the exhibition at Villa Medici in Rome entitled *La Ville, le Jardin, la Mémoire*, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and in the 48th Venice Biennial curated by Harald Szeeman. Over the last decade, his relationship with Italy, or rather with fragments of Italian history and culture, has blossomed thanks to *Zeno Writing* in 2002, stemming from a re-interpretation of Italo Svevo's novel *The Conscience of Zeno* (1923), and his work on documents and maps of the Kingdom of Naples, chosen as the location to continue his Porter series, leading to the exhibition '*Streets of the city*' *(and other tapestries)* for Capodimonte Museum in 2009. Italian public institutions have continued to devote numerous exhibitions to the artist, the latest of which is entitled *Vertical Thinking*, which opened in November 2012 at the MAXXI Contemporary Art Museum in Rome.

[8] As mentioned by John Gapp in the *Financial Times*, Sir Sidney Kentridge played «a leading role in a number of the most significant political trials in the apartheid era, including the 1977 inquest of Stephen Biko, following his death in custody. He was a member of Nelson Mandela's legal team during Mandela's 27-year imprisonment, and helped erode the legacy of apartheid laws in South Africa». See J. Gapp. "Lunch with FT: Sir Sidney Kentridge". *Financial Times*, 18 January 2013.

[9] From 1975 to 1991, Kentridge was involved in the work of the Junction Avenue Theatre Company; between 1976 and 1978, he learnt and later taught engraving at the Art Foundation in Johannesburg; during the period 1981–1982 he attended courses in theatre and mime at the École Jacques Lecoq in Paris, and combined this, during a temporary suspension of his purely artistic initiatives, with the study of film-making techniques and work as a director of television series and feature films. In 1985 he returned to drawing. His first animated film dates back to 1989 and in 1992 he began working with the Handspring Puppet Company in Johannesburg, which led to the work *Woyzeck on the Highveld*.

[10] Rosenthal. "William Kentridge", p. 36.

Kentridge began to explore the most obscure and dramatic aspects of the recent history of South Africa, in the era of apartheid and after its long-awaited end, obviously addressing the ambiguities linked to his perspective as a privileged white man. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev gives the following analysis of Kentridge:

> He did not want to pursue the fiction of making South Africa look like a 'white' Arcadia, in the manner of the colonial painters of South Africa such as Jacobus Pierneef – yet he could not easily speak for the 'black' either, nor provide a platform or voice for the 'other'. He could only explore a zone of uncertainty and shifting meanings through the portrayal of a 'double-bind' where guilt and expiation express the condition of the privileged.[11]

During the early phases of his artistic career, he was involved in making etchings, as well as taking part in agitprop initiatives with the group of artists associated with the Junction Avenue Theatre. It is no coincidence that printmaking is one of the media used by the artists that Kentridge significantly chose as models (besides the South African activist and artist Dumile Feni[12] and the photographer David Goldblatt): [13] William Hogarth, Francisco Goya and Max Beckmann. So, while both sides of the Atlantic were witnessing a return to neo-expressionist painting, which was generally devoid of political hues, Kentridge was interested, «without resorting to nostalgia»,[14] in Hogarth's satirical work, the *Los desastres de la guerra* by the Spanish artist Goya and «the progressive and socially critical tradition of

[11] C. Christov-Bakargiev. "On Defectibility as a Resource: William Kentridge's Art of Imperfection, Lack and Falling Short". In *William Kentridge*. Exhibition catalogue. Milan: Skira, 2004, p. 32.

[12] With regard to Feni, Kentridge observes: «In South Africa in the 1970s there was quite a strong body of black artists working figuratively in drawing and linocut. I was particularly aware of the artist Dumile Feni. I remembered he stayed at the house of Bill Ainsley, who was my teacher, and I saw his work there. The fantastic large-scale figurative drawings he did before he came to America are astonishingly powerful. Seeing that work was very important for me in being able to see drawing as a legitimate activity, an activity that in its own way is equal to painting, and as a medium that could make a statement about the world, personally and politically». Auping. "A 'Stereo' Interview", p. 232.

[13] David Goldblatt is a South African artist who, like Kentridge, comes from a Jewish family of Lithuanian origin. His photographs «depict people stoically straining to live dignified lives amid a deeply scarred landscape». Rosenthal. "William Kentridge", p. 38.

[14] Christov-Bakargiev. "On Defectibility as a Resource", p. 31.

pre-war Expressionism and figuration»,[15] noticing deeply rooted affinities – not just at a formal level – with his idea of art,[16] despite the vast period of time separating his work from theirs. Kentridge's use of artistic sources also highlights other crucial aspects. According to Okwui Enwezor,

> These sources convey something essential to understanding Kentridge's sympathies as an artist as well as the ethical nature of his art – namely, the way in which the philosophical outlook of early modernists underscores his interests in the contradictions of Enlightenment reason and the violence that accompanied its promulgation in colonial practices. He uses these sources to lay bare for his cosmopolitan viewers the face of apartheid, but also to implicate them in seeing this racist ideology's origins in European political ideologies and romanticism.[17]

However, there is more to it than this. This stance enabled him to question «both the anti-iconic nature of modernist, avant-garde abstract art, as well as the Conceptual legacy».[18] In order to describe the South African situation, Kentridge clearly considered the silence of abstract art to be evasive while at the same time, he regarded the intransitive analytical nature of conceptual art as unsuitable. He had a strong desire to reach out to the world and examine the context despite «the immovable rock of Apartheid».[19] This situation risked imprisoning everything and everyone in a specific role or precise position, as Mark Rosenthal argued,[20] to which art itself – warns

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[15] *Ibid.*

[16] On this point, Rosalind Krauss offers an interesting analysis: «As in Hjelmslev's structuralist system in which both the content and expression of a given sign are each subdivided into form and (material) substance, Kentridge's style of drawing, with its multiple art-historical references – to Max Beckmann, to Grosz, to Daumier, to Goya – belongs to the level of the works' content. The semiologists would call these stylistic decisions 'the form of the content', and indeed they project a set of concerns at the thematic level: the association with a lineage of political draftsmen; a type of strongly black-and-white rendering meant to hook into even earlier forms of popular protest such as wood-cut broadsides or posters». Krauss. "'The Rock'", p. 22.

[17] O. Enwezor. "(Un)Civil Engineering: William Kentridge's Allegorical Landscapes". In *William Kentridge Tapestries*. Exhibition catalogue. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2008, p. 87.

[18] Christov-Bakargiev. "On Defectibility as a Resource", p. 31.

[19] W. Kentridge, in C. Christov-Bakargiev. *William Kentridge*. Exhibition catalogue. Palais des Beaux Art, Bruxelles 1998, p. 75.

[20] According to Rosenthal: «One might argue that the apartheid system effectively imprisoned each South African in a prescribed role: to be living in misery, a victim of

the art historian Rosalind Krauss[21] – would be destined to succumb, under the weight of its own dramatic character, unless new "survival" strategies were employed.

* * *

The artist himself defined the technique he used for his drawings as "stone-age filmmaking", referring to a technique which profoundly and significantly modified the nature of animated films. His films, entitled *Johannesburg, the 2nd Greatest City after Paris* (1989), *Monument* (1990), *Mine* (1990), *Sobriety, Obesity and Growing Old* (1991), *Felix in Exile* (1994), *History of the Main Complaint* (1996), *Weighing ... and Wanting* (1997), *Stereoscope* (1999), *Tide Table* (2003) and *Other Faces* (2011), make his strategy explicit. The technique is explained in the artist's own words:

> the technique I use to make films is very primitive. Traditional animation uses thousands of different drawings filmed in succession […]. My technique begins with a sheet of paper stuck up on the studio wall. Half-way across the room is my camera, usually an old Bolex. A drawing is begun on the paper. I walk across to the camera, shoot one or two frames, walk back to the paper, change the drawing (marginally), walk back to the camera, walk back to the paper, to the camera, and so on. So each sequence, as opposed to each frame of the film, is a single drawing.[22]

Animated films are actual "drawing[s] in process" which do not need to adhere to a storyboard. They involve more than just the normal, evenly arranged editing of frames: they constitute a *work* which acts on form and a code without ever lapsing into the reinvention of media as an end in itself. Using these films, Kentridge reveals the mechanisms involved in creating images and the subsequent uncertainties and afterthoughts. He does this by using a procedure which represents an investigation of the potential generated by the hybridisation of drawing and film, but also a statement about how to interpret the role of the artist and his or her place in this world.

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violence; to be maintaining and perpetuating this state of affairs; to be observing; or to be ignoring the fact of the apartheid». Rosenthal. "William Kentridge", p. 37.

[21] Krauss. "'The Rock'", p. 4.

[22] W. Kentridge. "'Fortuna': Neither Programme nor Chance in the Making of Images (Extract) 1993". In Cameron *et al. William Kentridge*, p. 114.

«This openness to change, and 'un-finiteness' of language»[23] expresses, in Christov-Bakargiev's analysis, «an aesthetic position that is based on a political perspective – a refusal of all authoritarian and authoritative forms of communication embedded in most usages, from advertising to politics».[24]

It is also possible to interpret Kentridge's use of erasure – indeed, the act of erasure itself – as «a metaphor for the loss of historical memory – the amnesia to which injustice, racism and brutality are subjected in society».[25] On the other hand, it is:

> a metaphor for the healthy questioning of the certainties and preconceptions lying behind human relations in what might only appear to be an increasingly interactive and democratic world of the digital age. It questions the notion that any definitive statement is ever possible; it denies the value of complete or binary theories of politics and social relations (or of any finished artwork, for that matter). Kentridge's device of erasure allows the emergence of a palimpsest – a synchronic image that contains its own diachronic denial through a layering of traces of earlier drawings that have been erased.[26]

In this sense, the "model for knowledge" proposed by Kentridge is an autopoietic model which finds within itself the solution to the risk of possible inflexibility.

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Now that it has been outlined in general terms, the analysis can explore the significance of this complexity by examining the fifth film in the saga, *Felix in Exile*, which was made between September 1993 and February 1994, a few months before the general elections that were to mark the official end of apartheid in South Africa.

By temporarily leaving aside the events in the life of the industrialist Soho Eckstein, the central figure in the previous drawings, Kentridge focuses on his rival Felix Teitlebaum who, at the beginning of the film, is shown in an austere hotel room (naked, as he is customarily presented). The intersection of two walls and the empty chair placed beside the wall seem to

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[23] Christov-Bakargiev. "On Defectibility as a Resource", p. 32.
[24] *Ibid*., pp. 32-33.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.*

recall – in "disidentical" fashion – the room used to house the works of Kasimir Malevič in the exhibition *0.10: Last Futurist Exhibition*, held in Petrograd in 1915, which marked the Russian artist's radical shift towards abstraction. The works produced for the exhibition *Black Square on a White Background* is the most famous and most significant in terms of (non) representation and the position it occupies in this rarefied space – reflect the crisis of traditional artistic language and the denial of any possible link with the portrayal of nature, the past and any sort of phenomenological representation. The decision to place Felix and his period of exile in one of the "rooms" *par excellence* of modernist painting takes on a meaning heavily laden with consequences, intimately linked to the issues explored in the film. Kentridge reflects on the impotence that can be hidden in the self-referential nature of the work while he shows us Felix's incapacity (arguably, the impossibility) to feel he is an active part of the outside world.

The drawings contained in a suitcase, which we know were done by Nandi, the female protagonist of the film, gradually fill up the (initially empty) walls of the room (where Malevič's suprematist equipment – which denied any aspect of reality – was to be found in the Russian exhibition), violating the imperviousness of the space and enabling Felix to observe the world. Thanks to Nandi and the instruments she uses (a telescope, a theodolite, both "vehicles of sight"), and to the drawings she creates, Felix emerges from his solitude and detachment, his "bunker mentality".[27] The pictures show images of bleeding bodies, lying face downwards on the ground. The bodies are covered with pages of newspapers which antiphrastically bury and cover up the dramatic nature of the events instead of revealing them. The bodies are hidden by the landscape which swallows them up, refocusing our attention on the main theme of the work, the importance of presenting the lands of East Rand, the mining area in the region surrounding Johannesburg. It is definitely not a mute and indifferent setting, which has been transformed more by man than by natural events. Indeed, Kentridge bases his narrative on the analogy between "landscape and mind":

> Landscape hides its historical past from the eye; similarly, the mind protects its equanimity by forgetting or repressing what it does not wish to remember. Felix … is about the recovery of the past of the

[27] D. Cameron. "A Procession of the Dispossessed". In Cameron *et al*. *William Kentridge*, p. 68.

> South African landscape, about, as Kentridge says, 'erecting a beacon against the process of forgetting'.[28]

A crucial moment in the film is the meeting between Felix and Nandi through a mirror. By shaving (a true act of "erasure", as it is presented in the film), Felix rediscovers the woman and himself. When their eyes meet through the lens of the telescope, a "spatial rupture" is created: water and the landscape invade the stark room. But the film ends with the tragic death of Nandi due to a sniper's bullet and with the realisation that Felix is still unable to feel that he is a part of the context. As Dan Cameron writes:

> not until he allows himself to identify with Nandi, whom he then loses, does he see any of the transpiring events as directly related to his own life. Although this does not mean that Felix is suddenly able to become a contributing member of the impending social transition, it suggests that his ties to the landscape are strong enough to push him to the brink of a radical reconsideration of his place in the world – feelings he no doubt shared with large numbers of his real-life compatriots at the transitional moment.[29]

It has quite often been noted that the events described in the *Drawings*, despite being set in the context of South Africa during apartheid, possess a power that transcends national boundaries and embraces the history and pain of mankind in a universal sense. As *Felix in Exile* demonstrates, this happens because Kentridge, without repression or self-absolution, has completely identified with his own world.

In his introduction to the series of films devoted to Soho and Felix to mark the exhibition held at MoMA in 2010, Kentridge, fully aware of the vastness of his intended scope, wrote:

> The hope [...] is that the succession of images and the connections between them will show not only a way forward for the narrative of the film, not only a revelation of who one is, but also a hint as to how to go forward in the world outside the studio, as if the gradual accretion of marks can somehow lumberingly draw agency into existence.[30]

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[28] J.M. Coetzee. "History of the main complaint". In Cameron *et al*. *William Kentridge*, p. 84.

[29] Cameron. "A Procession of the Dispossessed". In Cameron *et al*. *William Kentridge*, p. 70.

[30] W. Kentridge. "Soho and Felix". In *William Kentridge. Five Themes.* Exhibition catalogue. San Francisco: SFMoMA, 2010, p. 67.

CHAPTER 9
Poems of Struggle and Exile

MAKHOSAZANA XABA

The sample of poems that follows is part of my third collection of poetry that is in progress, with the working title *Journeying: Poems of a Transitional Era.* The collection is divided into two parts: home and exile. I began work on this collection in December 2011 when, for the first time since returning home in 1990 and being part of the transition from apartheid to democracy, working initially as a member of the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) and later in NGOs that pioneered the adoption of many progressive policies on women's health, sexual and reproductive rights, I started a personal process of reflection-through-writing to explore what we had come through as a country, as activists, as communities, as families and personally, as individuals. Two ideas have continued to irk me: firstly, that South Africa's transition was "miraculous" and secondly, that we have become a "rainbow nation" because we avoided a civil war. This has become the grand narrative of the transition that many South Africans I know are proud of and many international players have returned to often – in conversations, in various media forms, and in writings. I strongly disagree. Here is why.

I grew up in a small semi-rural area called Ndaleni, next to the equally small town of Richmond in the midlands of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province. Ndaleni was colonised by Methodist missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century and boasted three schools: the primary school, built in 1936, that I attended for nine years of primary education, a secondary school where my mother, Glenrose Nomvula Mbatha, taught Home Economics and Dressmaking and a teacher training college where my father, Reuben Benjamin Xaba, taught Music and isiZulu language as well as a subject that as a child I used to think had a strangely grand name – School Organisation, often referred to as School Org. I used to ponder on what needed so much organising at a school that a whole subject had to be dedicated to it. At the

teacher training college was an art school for students who wanted to specialise in teaching art.

The practical manifestation of this art wing was all around us. We had the most beautiful schools: outdoor and indoor walls of exquisite mosaics and paintings of various forms, sculptures in strategic positions in the school yards, gardens with sculptures, fountains and evergreen plants and flowers. Even our play swings had sculptures of wild animals around the poles that supported the swings. Visual beauty was everywhere: I used to get "lost" in the drawings on the walls in our chapel. And I had great fun when the student teachers came – for what they called "crit lessons" – to practise their teaching skills on us while being observed by their teachers. Children came from areas close and far: some came from ekuPholeni, eThawulendeni, kwaMagoda, eS'mozomeni and kwaGengeshe; others walked from as far away as Thornville, beyond Richmond, and had to cross the Illovo River to arrive at our school. Ndaleni was *the* school. Our home was a short running distance from school; we could hear the bell ring and still manage to sneak behind the lines at the outdoor morning assembly in the school grounds without a teacher spotting us.

When I went to Pholela High School in Bulwer as a boarder three shocks confronted me: the ugly places and spaces that were the school, the retorts from other children – «Where is Ndaleni and Richmond? They are not even on the map!» – and the snow that fell on that mountain uMahwaqa (part of the uKhahlamba/Drakensberg mountain range).

The Ndaleni schools closed down in 1981 and my mother was transferred to a school in Ashdown Township near uMgungundlovu/Pietermaritzburg. We relocated to a home on Vilakazi Road, across the road from Ashdown Primary School, just as I finished my nurse training at Edendale Hospital. Vilakazi Road is the main connecting road for people from Mpumuza (which is up on a hill) who are headed to Edendale on the other side of uMsunduzi River. The trauma of this latter township life is a story for another telling.

After working for a very short while as a professional nurse and midwife, I decided to go to Ongoye University (also known as the University of Zululand), where my first personal devastation hit in 1983, when Inkatha warriors invaded our campus and hours later students had died. I was a student activist then and three years later I left South Africa to train as a soldier in Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) returning only in June 1990, after the unbanning of the ANC.

When political violence intensified in the mid-1980s and continued even beyond 1994, KZN was the hardest-hit province and within KZN, the midlands suffered the heaviest devastation. In her book *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict*, Anthea Jeffery says:

> Since the early 1980s at least 12,000 people have died in political violence in KwaZulu/Natal. Thousands more have been injured, rendered homeless, cast adrift as refugees. Conflict in the region has left a train of devastation, marked by shattered windows and blackened ruins of empty houses. It has unleashed a savagery and thirsting for revenge which will not easily be countered. It has made parts of the province, in the words of Chris Hani, 'like a wasteland, where people move around like dead souls'.[1]

In her next book, *People's War: New Light on the Struggle for South Africa*, Jeffery revises the figure upwards: «Some 20,500 people were nevertheless killed between 1984 and 1994».[2] When I read these books I was not just reading books of history, I was reading about people I know: friends I went to school with, fetched water with, played with; neighbours and relatives. Even the ones not mentioned by name I recognised and I knew their names because I had heard the stories of how they had died. For instance, this is how the death of my friend and relative (her mother was a Xaba) who played an "elder sister" role to me and was our immediate neighbour to the back of our home, Bongekile Priscilla Zondi, is reported in Jeffery's book: «In Richmond, IFP leader Ndodi Thusi was also killed, together with his wife and child».[3] I screamed at the page: they had names! I knew them! They had names! Why don't you call them by their names? There were many screaming-at-the-page moments when I read both books. While I read my mind's eye would start travelling as I came across mention of all the places that I too had walked. Even Vilakazi Road was no longer just a road but a passage of terror, based on the few stories that my mother and younger brother had told me about how they prepared for many a night of the unknown during those years.

Ndaleni and Ashdown, where I lived, Edendale, where I trained as a nurse and midwife, and Ongoye, where I studied for my degree, are but a few of the numerous places of the KZN midlands terrain that are now associated with violence in the South African imagination. The very names evoke images of war and gore, memories of trauma and pain, of loss and death. Many have asked me «Did you know Sifiso Nkabinde?» (he was assassinated in 1999) and I respond «He was in the same class as my younger sister.» I then watch their eyes turn into big balls. When I visited Ndaleni upon my return from

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[1] A. Jeffery. *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1997, back cover.

[2] A. Jeffery. *People's War: New Light on the Struggle for South Africa*. Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2009, back cover.

[3] Jeffery. *People's War*, p. 281.

exile, I just wept and spent most of the visit walking around like a "dead soul". Needless to say, the beauty I had grown up with, taken for granted and embraced completely, was nowhere to be seen.

Books are being published now that shed new light on the stories of exile, a few of which help demystify even some of my own experiences while in exile. Some questions are answered and others linger on. Some suspicions are confirmed and intensified; others are debunked. The period of transition in the many countries of the ANC's and other liberation movements' exile is complicated and multilayered. Oftentimes the nuances are missed. It will be a very long time before the whole story is told. As general agreement on the shortcomings of the TRC seems to have been reached now; the complex stories lie in wait. I have accepted that some of the stories will never be told. Such is the challenge of political struggles all over the world. Southern Africa and South Africa are no exceptions.

Therefore, when I hear or read about the "miracle" of the South African transition, I ask the questions: miracle, whose miracle? What does that word "miracle" mean? When I read or hear about a civil war that was averted, I say: tell that to the people of KZN and in particular the midlands. Sadly, as is well known, white people in South Africa had feared that the transition would mean a civil war, in which black people killed white people. So when *they* speak about the "miracle" they are referring to the fact that they did not come to live their deepest fears. I am yet to hear a black South African speak of the transitional period as a "miracle". Such is the success of the apartheid regime: white people's miracle is black people's devastation.

This poetry collection presents my revisiting of the South African journey of a heart-searing and bloodstained and dripping transition. Some poems are based on true stories and others are poetic imaginations related to stories I heard, read or witnessed. It is a collection that honours this period, from my perspective as a black woman, an activist and a survivor from the midlands of the KZN province. It honours many women and children who participated actively in the struggle – in recognised activist ways and in "womanly", often unrecognised and "silent" ways – as well as those women and children who were caught up in the deadly drama: women like Bongi (as we called Bongekile for short) and her daughter Lungile, women and children whose names will never be documented and some of whom will be lucky to merit a mere mention in books like Jeffery's. I continue to mourn the people I knew, hoping always that their deaths were not in vain.

It seemed fitting, then, to contribute the poems below. I have used an autobiographical poem, "These Hands", from my first book with the same title, to introduce myself.

These hands

These hands know putrid pus from oozing wounds.
They know the musty feel of varying forms of faecal formations.

They know the warmth of blood gushing from gaping bodily spaces.
They know of mucous, sliding out of orifices.

These hands remember the metallic feel of numerous guns, when the telling click was heard.
They recall the rumbling palm embrace over grenades,
ready for the release of mortal destruction.
These hands will never forget the prickling touch of barbed wire on border fences.
These hands can still feel the roughness of unknown tree leaves
that served as toilet paper in bushes far away.

These hands have felt pulsating hearts over extended abdomens,
they know the depth of vaginas, the opening mouths of wombs,
they know the grasp of minute, minute-old clenched fists.
These hands have squeezed life's juice from painful pounding breasts.
These hands have made love, producing vibrations from receiving lovers.

These hands have pressed buttons, knobs and switches,
they have turned screws and wound clocks, steered wheels and dug holes,
held instruments, implements and ligaments,
moulded monuments, created crafts, healed hearts.

These hands now caress the keyboard, fondle pens that massage papers,
weaning fear, weaving words,
wishing with every fingerprint, that this relationship will last forever.

Who will wash my feet?[4]

Who will wash my feet?
My tears dried before 1990
My thirst is unknown to the world
My hunger is not for food

[4] On 28 August 2006 the apartheid era Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, washed Reverend Frank Chikane's feet in his office as a gesture of apology, which became a highly publicised, high-profile news event. This poem was first published in P. Yaa de Villiers, I. Ferrin-Aguirre, X. Kaiyu (eds). *No Serenity Here: An Anthology of African Poetry in Amharic, English, French, Arabic and Portuguese*. Beijing: World Knowledge Publishers, p. 174.

My wounds are hidden inside
My womb weeps silences
My nipples watch the soil
to safeguard those
who travelled through me
My memories run in my veins
My cracked, dry feet
have never touched a shoe
or the floor of any office
but I also deserve the courtesy
of someone washing my feet

Digging for freedom

This young man says he and his friends refuse to work with us
even though they know we can no longer cope with the digging; day and night.
He and his friends say we must take a stand, refuse to dig graves for people dying all the time
That way we too, would make a statement; about this unnecessary war
of girls and women raped, of children dying in the crossfire while playing,
of families fleeing homes, of brother against brother.
This young man says no freedom can come from so much bloodshed and mayhem.

This young man doesn't know that we are women disguised as men
We started digging graves when men disappeared, fell dead
He doesn't know that when we send him away to sleep at sunset
we start another mission of hiding women and children in these graves
so they can at least get some sleep, suckle their infants in peace
This young man doesn't know that to an army of women gravediggers
freedom is taking an energising nap, on the other side of the hill.

Drumming

People fled their homes,
Took refuge in this forest
Most were young males
freedom beating in their chests
The war followed them in here
where they fought for their lives
Many fell, many fled even farther away
Even the birds disappeared when the war began
To this day, they have not returned
Only the vultures find a reason to visit

I prowl the forest, looking for corpses
My new vocation is drumming for the dead
Families of missing loved ones
listen to the sound of my drum
follow my lead through the forest
Once they have taken the body
I always restart the search in silence
until I find another body, then again,
my hands meet the drum and the beat begins.

After the massacre

After the bodies have been identified, counted and taken away
After the police had come and gone, the neighbours stuck around
Four women walked the familiar path in single file, paraffin lamps in their hands
The stars listened to their now hushed cries, watched them wipe away silent tears
Mechanically they filled their water buckets from the homestead tank
Back in the house, rags and soap from the cupboards, they started cleaning:
first, sweeping shards of glass scattered in every room, then, wiping splashes of blood on walls and broken windows, smeared across the furniture, doors, sometimes even spotting the ceiling.
In the kitchen, they removed pieces of brain tissue splattered in all directions
When they went on their knees to clean the floors
cupping congealed blood in their hands – they told the girls to look away
instructed them to comfort younger children, sing them lullabies until they sleep.
They put in a bowl all the cartridges and bullets they found.
In the bedrooms, they stripped the blood-stained bedcovers and curtains
soaked everything in large zinc tubs for washing the next day.
They went into each room, repositioned everything
until the homestead looked almost exactly as it did before the massacre.
By sunrise the women had restored the homestead.
Bodies, identified, counted and taken away, live with the women, years later.

The river speaks of ashes[5]

I have known corpses
whole and intact
wounded and mutilated.

[5] The poem title and its form were inspired by *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, a poem by Langston Hughes.

I have known ashes
of burnt corpses
bagged, unrecognisable.

I propelled them to the bank
for their relatives to find and claim

I listened when they spoke
I memorised their names:
Champion Galela
Qaqawuli Godolozi
Sipho Hashe

I have known corpses
and I have known ashes
My name is Nxuba, but the arrivals
who never left, renamed me Fish.[6]

About the ambulance

They had us all fooled
about the ambulance
We never imagined
Never suspected
We prayed for the injured
We wept for the dead
While they smiled in victory
as the weapons left the scene
under the cover
of the ambulance

[6] Bodies were reported to have disappeared on 8 May 1985. A TRC confession by Gideon Niewoudt revealed how the three activists were murdered, their corpses burnt, bagged and thrown into the Fish River.

PART IV

Italian Archives and Testimonies

CHAPTER 10
South Africa and Italian Support for the Struggle against Apartheid[1]

VINCENZO CURATOLA AND RAFFAELLA CHIODO KARPINSKY

Italy-South Africa relations during apartheid

During the early years of apartheid there was little knowledge in Italy of the situation in South Africa, mainly because, for historical or colonial reasons, Italy had not entertained any special relations with South Africa. However, the presence of Italian citizens in South Africa – especially after the end of World War II – created conditions for the development of strong economic and trade relations, with Italy soon taking first place as an importer of South African gold and fourth place as an importer of coal.

At government level, whereas Italy condemned apartheid along with the international community and agreed to the sanctions determined by the United Nations, it did nothing to interfere with the economic and trade relations between the two countries. The development of the anti-apartheid movement in Italy and its actions to inform public opinion and exercise pressure on national Parliament, nonetheless made it increasingly difficult for the Italian government to ignore the official diplomatic position which condemned the South African regime.

The end of apartheid did not interrupt relations between representatives of Italian and South African civil and political societies. Significant examples of these relations have been the debate on the Truth and

[1] The first version of this chapter was published as an introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition, *South Africa and the Italian Support in the Struggle against Apartheid*, organised by Benny Nato Onlus in the year of the football World Cup, 2010. See Benny Nato Onlus. *South Africa and the Italian Support in the Struggle against Apartheid*. Roma: Arti Grafiche Agostini, 2010, pp. 16-33.

Reconciliation Commission and the project for the new South African Constitution. To date, several Italian political and economic support initiatives have helped address current South African issues such as the HIV and AIDS pandemic and the country's democratic stabilisation process. It is a history of relations born in the period of Italian support for the struggle against apartheid which remains in the memory of many representatives, especially at local-authority level, and which still represents an important resource for decentralised cooperation initiatives and for the promotion of new policies against racism in Italy.

The anti-apartheid movement in Italy

National and local initiatives against apartheid and in support of the South African opposition movement multiplied in Italy during the 1970s. In the course of the previous decade, a number of important meetings had taken place within the context of the international relations of two Italian political parties, the Italian Communist Party, PCI, and the Italian Socialist Party, PSI.

Of particular note was the solidarity conference with the liberation movements of Portuguese colonies that took place in Rome in 1970, in which representatives of the ANC also participated. The conference was crucially important for the dissemination of information and updated reports on the grass-roots realities of the apartheid regime. The PCI was the main promoter of the conference and immediately involved other parties that had emerged from the Italian post-war constitutional arena. A conference promotion committee was established, which included trade unions, cooperative movements and a number of relevant local-authority representatives, all of whom were inspired by the sense of responsibility and solidarity contained in the principles of "Cities' Diplomacy" launched by the then mayor of Florence, Giorgio La Pira. The city of Reggio Emilia was the first to encourage international responsibility and solidarity by promoting a second solidarity conference in 1973, and an official twinning was signed between the ANC and the Reggio Emilia public administration in 1977.

From that moment on, Italian local authorities continued to play an important role in solidarity initiatives, leading over the years to the present Decentralised Cooperation Programme, which currently still participates in exchange and support projects with post-apartheid South African local government authorities.

In January 1985, the largest Italian political and trade-union democratic organisations, as well as several representatives of the international solidarity movement, constituted the Coordinamento Nazionale contro l'Apartheid in Sudafrica (National Coordinating Committee against Apartheid). The committee, or "Coordinamento", exercised pressure on the Italian government to introduce actions against the racist segregationist South African regime, and also became the reference point for anti-apartheid groups that were developing all over the country. The "Coordinamento" also supported the activities of the ANC representatives exiled in Italy.

National campaigns were launched, calling for the boycott of South African goods – especially coal and gold; bank disinvestment (a number of Italian banks actually stopped their relations with South Africa); the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Nelson Mandela, as well as his unconditional release from prison, and the implementation of political and economic sanctions against South Africa. In 1989, 50,000 certified signatures were collected to back a popular initiative Bill to establish economic sanctions against South Africa.

The commitment of Italian local authorities, as anticipated, played a major role during this new phase. Over 200 cities, provinces and regions began working on solidarity initiatives to give political support to the South African opposition, and joined the campaigns launched by the "Coordinamento". A number of cities and provincial councils, including Rome, Bologna, Florence, Reggio Emilia and many others, decided to award immediate honorary citizenship to Nelson Mandela. In 1990 these honours were formally handed over to Mandela himself, on the occasion of his first visit to Europe and Italy after his release from prison. The "Coordinamento" was part of and participated in the activities of the liaison group of the national anti-apartheid movements in the EC countries.

The AWEPAA (Association of West-European Parliamentarians for Action against Apartheid) was created in 1984 with over 2,000 members, including many Italian parliamentarians. Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 and the beginning of the negotiations that would lead to the abolition of the segregationist regime triggered initiatives by the Italian "Coordinamento" – and the whole international solidarity movement – in support of the democratic process and for the realisation of the first free democratic elections in South Africa. In 1994 representatives of the "Coordinamento" participated in the first free and democratic elections in South Africa as international observers.

After Mandela's appeal to the international community, many associations began working on solidarity campaigns to promote the repatriation of South

African exiles. In 2001 the Benny Nato Italian Documentation Centre on South Africa (Centro Italiano di Documentazione sul Sudafrica) was created. Its activities, up to 2006, were supported financially by over 700 persons who participated in a distance support programme for South African children.

The Centre is named after Benny Nato, the ANC chief representative in Italy between 1985 and 1991, who significantly contributed to the development of a more widespread anti-racist consciousness in Italy as well as to the implementation of support initiatives for people oppressed by apartheid.

The Benny Nato Centre aims to keep alive the memory of the history of the fight against the South African segregationist regime by archiving the documentary material of the "Coordinamento" and related anti-apartheid groups and through the implementation of cultural and educational activities. It also aims to promote commitment against any form of discrimination in order to avoid the development of new apartheids anywhere in the world.

In 2004, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the end of apartheid-South Africa, the Benny Nato Centre presented an exhibition about Italian engagement in the struggle against apartheid, based on documents from the archives of the former "Coordinamento". The exhibition opened in Rome during the "Italia-Africa" event, an initiative promoted by the then Mayor of Rome, Walter Veltroni, and was also presented in many other Italian cities. An English version of the exhibition was handed over to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg on 22 June 2010, during the FIFA World Cup.

A number of conferences and meetings were organised during the exhibition, focusing on South Africa, its history, apartheid and the vast liberation movement which had raised international public awareness and driven people to take action against the apartheid system, and also underlining the strong sense of solidarity shown by Italian civil society and local government authorities. Multiple forms of solidarity and relations with South Africa are currently underway, developing around various issues linked to the fight against poverty and based on cultural exchanges.

Official and non-official relations

In order to understand the relevance of bilateral relations between South Africa and Italy, it is of some importance to emphasise a few details.

In the mid-1980s, Italy became South Africa's second largest trading customer. Only Japan was buying more South African products. About six-

tenths of this trade consisted of gold. It is important to remember that in the last years of the apartheid regime South Africa was earning 43 per cent of its foreign income from sales of gold and that, at the end of the 1980s, official imports of South African gold into Italy represented 18 per cent of overall South African gold sales.[2] At that time Italy was buying insignificant quantities of gold from countries other than South Africa, with the exception of Switzerland. However, the Italian authorities did not record the origin of the gold imported via this country. On this basis, and according to several sources within the Italian gold industry, it is possible to state that Italy's gold trade with South Africa was likely to have been twice as big as the official import figures indicate.[3] No particular reason can be found to justify these special trade relations between Italy and South Africa. In fact, even if Italy was by far the largest producer of gold jewellery, the output of gold mines from countries other than South Africa could easily have satisfied the entire world's jewellery industry. In addition, Italy's jewellery makers admitted that they would have had no technical difficulties in using non-South African gold. Furthermore, as all pure gold, independent of the country of origin, sells at the same market price, Italian gold jewellers obtained no advantage in terms of price by buying South African gold. All these elements clearly show that only other factors could justify such preference for gold from South Africa. An investigation of background elements was needed in order to better understand Italian imports of gold from South Africa. For this reason the action to mobilise public opinion on the issue of gold, promoted by the "Coordinamento" together with the confederations of trade unions CGIL-CISL-UIL as the most active participants in the movement, was decisive. We know from archives that the World Gold Commission, as stated in its report of 1988, decided to undertake a research programme to determine why Italy continued its massive gold trade with South Africa and by what means this trade could be reduced or ended.

In 1988 a team from the World Gold Commission was invited to Italy by the CGIL trade union confederation, in association with the CISL and UIL confederations. These organisations helped the team to set up meetings with appropriate groups and individuals, to translate relevant papers, and made existing research documentation available as well as providing all other necessary assistance.

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[2] V. Curatola. *Le banche dell'apartheid. Campagna sul disinvestimento bancario dal Sudafrica.* Coordinamento Nazionale contro l'Apartheid in Sudafrica, 1988.

[3] *Ibid.*

Meetings were held with the National Bank of Italy, the official state institute for statistics (ISTAT), the anti-apartheid group of bank workers of Rome, the CGIL trade union, the Council of Vicenza, Vicenza anti-apartheid representatives and representatives of the small- and medium-sized jewellery manufacturers of Vicenza. An unofficial link with the president of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (Italian National Work Bank), which was understood to be one of the most important official financial suppliers of the Vicenza region, was also established for the team.

The town of Vicenza was chosen as the area for the commission to conduct its investigation as the single most important gold jewellery producing centre, not just in Europe but in the entire world. The findings of the World Gold Commission team confirmed the reasons and issues that had motivated the commission's request to carry out the investigation. As already stated, over 90 per cent of all gold imported into Italy at that time came from just two countries: South Africa and Switzerland. In fact, almost all the gold came from South Africa since no gold is mined in Switzerland (although the country does refine moderate quantities of the metal, mainly from scrap), and the Italian authorities did not record the origin of gold imported from Switzerland. However, representatives of the gold workers' unions in Vicenza told the commission that Swiss imports of gold were almost invariably of South African origin. The quantities Italy imported from these two countries amounted to about one hundred metric tons, each with a value, at the end of 1988, of approximately one and half million US dollars. Moreover, the National Bank of Italy did not monitor the movement of gold in and out of the country very closely, except for processing data on trade flows.

In the 1970s South Africa was producing over half the world's gold and controlled the world's only gold distribution organisation, Intergold, which had a large office branch in Milan, whose specific purpose was to sell South African gold in Italy. Given the Italian role in the world's jewellery market and its related economic and trade role in this sector, the need to influence relations between Italy and South Africa, and in general to place pressure on the apartheid regime, was important, and the Italian "Coordinamento" focused specifically on this issue. Even though no sanctions were applied to the gold trade at that stage, as a result of the meetings held between the World Gold Commission team and the three Italian national trade union confederations, Italian jewellery producers began to consider buying gold from countries other than South Africa.

In addition, the international and local pressure of the anti-apartheid movement induced the Italian government to adopt restrictive measures for

other commercial trade in commodities such as oil, arms, computers and other high-tech items. Restrictive measures on the import and export of crude oil from and to South Africa were strictly enforced. In Genoa and Livorno public demonstrations were organised by local unions of dockworkers to denounce the final destination of ships sailing to and from South Africa. Oil exports became subject to authorisation by an ad hoc committee, the Petrol Committee. Authorisation was denied when the ship's destination was South Africa and also when South Africa was indicated as the third country of destination. The UN arms embargo was rigorously enforced and was also applied to sensitive equipment destined for the South African police and armed forces, and to telecommunication and transport equipment used for military purposes. The export of arms and paramilitary goods also became subject to authorisation, which was not granted if the destination was South Africa – this ban was monitored by another special committee. The import of arms from South Africa and military cooperation between Italy and South Africa were also forbidden. All new contracts in the nuclear sector were banned and Italian nuclear exports were submitted to a commission that never granted any licence for South Africa. The "Coordinamento" and the media carried out several investigations that revealed and denounced the non-observance of regulations in respect of Italian nuclear waste, which was being illegally transported to South Africa. Italy also established controls on the export of civilian aircrafts to South Africa.

Restrictive measures were also introduced in the field of investments and financial operations. New investments in South Africa by Italian residents and by firms established in Italy were prohibited from January 1986 on. Specifically, restrictive measures applied to the setting up of new branches or to the extension of subsidiary offices and to the acquisition of shares. Long-term loans were also prohibited if they took the form of trade investment. The prohibition did not apply to investments made to maintain the level of pre-existing commercial activities or to contracts signed before the introduction of the ban. Exceptions were made for investments in the social services, health and education sectors.

As disclosed by the media, a likely violation of the investment ban took place in December 1987. A group of Italian businessmen made funds available for the development of a chipboard factory in Umtata, in the so-called independent "homeland" of Transkei. The chipboard factory was to be a first step towards a larger business venture, going beyond the South African market. In response, new public loans to South Africa were stopped

and support was mobilised from private banks who voluntarily refused credit to Italian firms involved in South Africa. At the end of the 1980s a specific campaign (against new public loans to South Africa) was launched, promoted by the "Coordinamento" together with the trade union confederations. Very important within this context was the Evangelic Churches' request for transparency, after their investigation that documented the indirect financing of Italian firms working in South Africa by Italian banks. The most significant result of this action was that the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro was forced to close its offices in South Africa. This happened immediately after the conference on bank disinvestment which had been organised by the three Italian trade unions CGIL, CISL and UIL together with the "Coordinamento".

Moreover, banks announced they would stop providing financial support to Olivetti and Enel's operations in South Africa. The issue was not an easy one to tackle, as banks did not admit to being involved in economic transactions with South Africa. Only after the campaign promoted by the "Coordinamento" demanding that individuals, churches, political parties, companies and other groups close their accounts with those banks that refused transparency about their investments and transactions, did these banks finally admit their connections with South Africa and discontinue these practices.

A double taxation Italy-South Africa agreement was never ratified until after the end of apartheid. The possibility (through SACE, the Italian export credit insurance agency) of providing a guarantee to Italian firms for medium- and long-term export operations with South Africa was suspended. The South African state was downgraded to "high-risk" level.

Restrictive measures were also introduced in the diplomatic sphere and other non-trade sectors, including sport and culture. Italy and South Africa had full diplomatic relations but no Italian military attaché was accredited to the South African Embassy in Italy and vice versa. Immigration offices in South Africa were closed down and no further cultural or scientific agreements took place between the two countries. Within the EC framework, Italy agreed to freeze official contacts and international agreements in sporting and other sectors. No Italian-South African Chamber of Commerce was recognised. On the other hand, no restrictions on air transport were enforced.

By the end of apartheid, the only Italian trading company present in South Africa, Olivetti SA, strictly complied with the guidelines and directives of the EC code of conduct.

Apartheid, racism: a global struggle

In 1989 the murder of Jerry Masslo, a South African political refugee, in the Campania Region (southern Italy) represented a crucial moment which made manifest the close relations between new, growing forms of racism in Italy and apartheid in South Africa. After this dramatic event several anti-racist public initiatives were organised, especially in Rome and in the region where the murder took place. From that moment on, every anti-apartheid initiative that took place was marked by the contextual fight against all forms of racism and discrimination against migrants.

The experience of the Benny Nato Anti-racist Documentation Centre for Relations with South Africa was, by 2007, consolidated; the Centre was constituted as a non-profit association, since its members considered it very important to keep alive the memory of the struggle against apartheid, in order to contrast more effectively new forms of racism all over the world. In the course of the years since the end of apartheid, the Centre has organised many events and activities. It should be noted that all documentation inherited from the Coordinamento Nazionale contro l'Apartheid in Sudafrica has been catalogued and archived. The Centre's archives became part of the system of the Rome Municipal Network of Libraries, which facilitates access to and the dissemination of important documentation on anti-apartheid activities in Italy, thus providing material useful in facing and fighting the alarming current forms of intolerance and racism.

CHAPTER 11
Ubuntu. Reggio Emilia and South Africa: History of a Friendship

MIRCO CARRATTIERI AND GIANLUCA GRASSI

A long history

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia, a small but wealthy city, was one of the first Italian local authorities historically involved in developing decentralised cooperation with African communities.

The seeds of post-war relations between Reggio and Africa were launched in 1963 in Warsaw, at a conference of the Partisans of Peace. On that occasion, the communist mayor of Reggio, Emilia Renzo Bonazzi, met Amilcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau and Marcelino Dos Santos of Mozambique for the first time, starting a connection that in 1970 brought the first Mozambican delegation, led by Dos Santos and Oscar Monteiro of Frelimo, to Reggio Emilia. This connection was to leave a profound mark on the history of the community of Reggio Emilia, with Giuseppe Soncini in a leading role – first as president of the local hospital "Santa Maria" and then as Councillor for International Relations of the municipality.[1]

Reggio Emilia chose to support the African peoples struggling against colonialism and racial segregation: in March 1973 the "National Conference of Solidarity against Colonialism and Imperialism for Freedom and Independence of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola" was held at the Valli Theatre in the presence of representatives of the liberation movements; Frelimo's President, Samora Machel, was the guest of honour.

In the following years, the Santa Maria Hospital was a hub of solidarity activities: it provided healthcare to many of Frelimo's guerrillas, sent various

[1] P. Borruso. *Il PCI e l'Africa indipendente*. Firenze: Le Monnier, 2009.

health-related aids, and provided on-site training of doctors at the Hospital Central of Cabo Delgado.[2]

After Portugal's transition to democracy and Mozambique's independence, the role of Reggio was officially recognised: a delegation composed of five representatives was invited to then Lourenço Marques to celebrate Mozambique's national independence; and on 2 July 1975, the mayor of Reggio, Renzo Bonazzi, signed a pact of friendship and cultural cooperation with the Mozambican city of Pemba.

Thanks to Soncini's work, a lot of associations and volunteers chose to commit to the cause of the liberation of African people and a Joint Committee for Friendship, Cooperation and Solidarity with Peoples was created under the auspices of the Reggio Emilia Municipality.

Following the independence of Mozambique in 1975, the leaders of Frelimo asked Reggio Emilia to also support the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, in particular the struggle of the ANC against the apartheid regime. On 26 June 1977 the new mayor, Ugo Benassi, and ANC President Oliver Tambo signed a pact of solidarity in the Sala del Tricolore (Tricolour Hall, where the green white and red Italian flag was first adopted in 1797); Mozambican Minister of Information, José Luís Cabaço, also attended the event. So Reggio was the first city in the world to side with the anti-apartheid movement for the creation of a united and democratic South Africa.

In 1978, during the International Year against Apartheid proclaimed by the UN, the Valli Theatre hosted the first "National Conference of Solidarity for the Independence and Sovereignty of the Peoples of Southern Africa against Colonialism, Racism and Apartheid" on 8 and 9 November, which involved the main leaders of the liberation movements: Oliver Tambo of the ANC and Samora Machel of Frelimo, as well as the president of Swapo, Sam Nujoma, the president of the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu) and the co-chairman of the Patriotic Front (PF), Robert Mugabe. After the conference these African leaders were received in Rome by President Sandro Pertini and Pope John Paul II.

From 1978 the Municipality of Reggio Emilia published the Italian language edition of *Sechaba*, the official organ of the ANC. In 1982 it also

[2] C.M. Lanzafame and C. Podaliri. *La stagione della solidarietà sanitaria a Reggio Emilia*. Torino: L'Harmattan Italia, 2004.

published the first book by Nelson Mandela translated into Italian, *La lotta è la mia vita* (The struggle is my life).[3]

During the 1980s, Reggio was one of the main points of reference for all activities in cooperation with the peoples of southern Africa and the liberation movements. The "Committee for friendship", led by Soncini, organised two ships of solidarity to deliver aid to the liberation movements: in 1980 the *Amanda* left for southern Africa from Genoa and in 1984 the *Rea Silvia* left from Livorno. In the same year, the municipality started a project of decentralised cooperation with the city of Pemba as part of the campaign "We are with you", which ended in 1986 with the departure of another ship, the *Cris*, from Ravenna.

In 1985, during the second consultative conference organised by the ANC in Kabwe, Zambia, the town of Reggio Emilia was declared «an established force against the Apartheid regime»[4] (it was the only European city mentioned). Some weeks later, the then Minister of Education in Mozambique, Graça Machel, visited Reggio Emilia for the first time.

The City Council was particularly involved in fighting against the abuses and violence of the South African regime: two streets in Reggio were dedicated to the fighters against apartheid (via Martiri di Soweto: Martyrs of Soweto Street; and via Albert Luthuli). In 1986 Albertina Sisulu and Desmond Tutu were given honorary citizenship of the city.

When the struggle for liberation achieved an international character, Reggio was still in the frontline of all the key initiatives carried out by African liberation movements; in 1989, for example, the Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia (Anpi, Italy's partisans' association) sent a fourth ship of solidarity, the *Europe*, to Mozambique.

After the end of the apartheid, on 27 April 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections. On 10 May, Reggio Emilia was the only Italian city invited to the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president.

In subsequent years, the president of Namibia, Sam Nujoma, visited Reggio Emilia twice on official visits, mindful of the role that the city had played in supporting Swapo. The city also hosted other great personalities from the African continent: Marcelino Dos Santos, Joaquim Chissano,

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[3] N. Mandela. *La lotta è la mia vita.* Reggio Emilia, 1982.

[4] ANC. "Second National Consultative Conference: Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations", 1985, http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=137, accessed 10 November 2014.

Albertina Sisulu, Steven Gawe, and Miriam Makeba (her European manager was Roberto Meglioli, from Reggio).

In 2000 the municipality entrusted its international relations to an agency named Reggio nel Mondo (Reggio in the World), which has continued to promote and coordinate decentralised cooperation projects, awareness-raising initiatives, and international conferences. In 2004 Reggio formalised a twinning agreement with the city of Polokwane, the capital of the South Africa's Limpopo province. Anthony Mongalo, former ANC representative to Italy and later ambassador of the Republic of South Africa in Italy, was among the key people inspiring this link. The collaboration was characterised by the promotion of local businesses and exchanges in the field of agro-industries.

The activities with Mozambique, on the other hand, focused on the development of sport, culture and infrastructure. Every five years, a delegation from Pemba was invited to the Giochi Sportivi Internazionali del Tricolore (International Games of the Tricolour); since 2003 the link between the two cities has been strengthened thanks to interventions in the fields of health and water supply, literacy and cultural development. In addition, cooperatives, associations and private citizens have been supporting the Health Centre Eduardo Mondlane for the prevention of AIDS in Pemba. Exchanges between schools have been activated too, especially between the primary schools IV Novembre in Gavasseto, a suburb of Reggio, and Unidade in Pemba.

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself has recognised the unique role of Reggio Emilia in affirming decentralised cooperation:

> Some Italian local governments, especially small towns, started international cooperation activities already in the sixties of the last century. Mostly they consisted of small interventions of solidarity, supporting the work of associations or Third World missionaries in their territory. The first example of a more structured cooperation was perhaps the one begun in those years by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia in northern Mozambique for the development and regional governance of so-called liberated zones by Frelimo.[5]

[5] Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internationale. *La Cooperazione Decentrata*, January 2010, http://www.cooperazioneallosviluppo.esteri.it/pdgcs/italiano/speciali/decentrata/Storia.htm, accessed 10 November 2014.

The Reggio-Africa Board

On the whole, the commitment of Reggio Emilia towards the people of Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe has led to important institutional agreements, which have been providing a framework for associations, schools, cultural centres, hospitals, churches and individual citizens to develop projects and partnerships with African communities in several fields.

Since 2010, following a number of requests from African embassies in Italy, Reggio nel Mondo has started collecting documents about the city's past relations with Africa, and has tried to create a discussion forum between the various local actors interested in continuing and developing them. This is how the idea of establishing a stable Reggio-Africa Board was born as a tool for discussion and dialogue between local agencies about initiatives concerning Africa. The project has various aims: to recover and collect material about the past; to coordinate and promote new activities on the topic, and to encourage in-depth examination of and elaboration on the idea of community relations.

In the new millennium, the Reggio-African relations are no longer based on the independence struggle, but on the universal affirmation of human rights (health, work, education, sustainability, equal opportunities, services, and so on) at a time when many of these are seriously in question. Moreover, like other European towns, in the last decade Reggio has been experiencing significant migration, resulting in a population increase from 131,000 to 174,000 over the period between 2003 and 2013.[6] The presence of these migrants – mainly coming from northern and western Africa (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Nigeria and Ghana) – has changed the face of the city in important ways, raising social and demographic questions and increasing the need for innovative intercultural action. The transition from a far and "imagined" Africa to a "concrete" Africa that comes and lives in Reggio has been difficult, generating fears and intolerances.

This double relationship with Africa – on the one hand through decentralised cooperation, and through projects with migrant people on the

[6] Reggio Emilia's foreign population is currently 31,800; 11,100 of these foreigners are from Africa. "Popolazione residente straniera per area di provenienza e sesso dal 31 dicembre 1992 al 31 dicembre 2013", http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/PESDocumentID/6B13C68FC1F9D6DAC12577F1002FB91E?opendocument&FROM=Przz, accessed 10 November 2014.

other – has called on the community of Reggio Emilia to interpret its dialogue with Africa from new and different perspectives.

First of all there is a need to extend participation. The idea of a Board is based on the belief that effective action in times of crisis is only possible if you create connections between agencies, associations, communities and private individuals who join forces to support a common project. Reggio's underlying value system (which has always characterised the region and has inspired the emergence of cooperation and social engagement) can provide inspiration and guide a process of economic and ethical development.

Therefore the Board applies the principle of decentralised cooperation to the discussions and reflections on the relationship between Reggio Emilia and Africa, putting partners together with the aim of making the community reflect through the languages of culture. This multilevel awareness strengthens the path of the concerned community through interventions in a variety of areas: historical, artistic, social, ethical and geopolitical.

The Reggio-Africa Board was launched in April 2011 by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Reggio nel Mondo, Boorea, Legacoop, Istoreco (Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società contemporanea in provincia di Reggio Emilia) and Arci Solidarietà. Since then, the labour confederations CGIL and CISL, Centro Missionario Diocesano, Fondazione Mondo Insieme, Europe Direct Emilia Romagna, and the University of Modena and Reggio have joined it. The Board is an open network for all stakeholders who are interested and engaged in Africa, involving old militants as well as new actors. It is therefore proposed as a point of reference, aggregation and amplification.

The constitution of the Board has not only a coordinating function to create synergies between the advocacy and promotion activities developed in Italy, but also carries a clear political message, whose value goes beyond one of global education and solidarity. The territory of Reggio Emilia wants to invest once again in friendship with the people of Africa, to boost cooperation with Africa "outside", but also with the Africa that lives in Reggio. Today, the enhancement of the history of international relations developed to support the independence of African peoples provides an opportunity to reflect and reaffirm the principles that underlie the building of Reggio's own community.

The principles that led Reggio to stand against racism and colonialism in Africa could be recovered to reconstruct a common language of cohesion. By understanding and appreciating a common history, the Board wants to highlight the meaning of solidarity, friendship and international cooperation

that arises not only from the study of leaders on the international scene, but from a genuine will, shared by people struggling for the cause of human dignity.

AREA (Archivio Reggio Emilia-Africa)

The first aim and main activity of the Reggio-Africa Board has been one of collecting and recording, not only because of the circumstances of its inception, but also because of its location. In fact, Reggio Emilia distinguishes itself as a "city of archives" for its experience in collecting documentary material on the contemporary age. In 2002 it launched the revolutionary operation of an Archivist-Territorial Pole, under the management of Istoreco.

The Pole is a public cultural institute that, collecting all the documentation in a single place, gives scholars (individual researchers, schools, institutes and research centres) the most complete sources on the history of the region. It thus promotes itself as a competent reference point for the archiving needs of regional and national authorities. Its assets are based on the documents of the Municipal Historical Archive, but the Pole also offers an appropriate repository for and management of, as regulated by specific conventions, the archives of other public institutions, associations, political and trade union organisations – for over three linear kilometres of paper, which represents an important heritage for the community of Reggio Emilia and the country at large. It is also an essential element in ensuring citizens' rights to information, to access documentation and to ongoing education, through the memory of the democratisation processes that have characterised Italian history throughout the twentieth century, in particular through the participation and achievements of the working classes.

There is also an international dimension to the archive. At its inception, the Reggio-Africa Board suggested the creation of a specific fund to collect and organise all the documentation about relations between Reggio Emilia and Africa, which would also be a base on which to develop new activities promoting permanent local awareness of the region's support for African liberation struggles. These archival items have been searched and treated by volunteers and committed activists, under the coordination of Istoreco's experts. The collection will be the central hub of a documentation network on Africa that will also include the documents preserved in the public municipal Panizzi library, mainly Giuseppe Soncini's and Franco Cigarini's papers.

Giuseppe Soncini, at first acting as president of the local hospital and then as a member of the mayoral committee for international relations in the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, was the main protagonist in the relations between Reggio and southern Africa. His archive, recently transferred to the library by his wife Bruna Ganapini Soncini, includes the original copies of a rich epistolary exchange and a wide variety of items testifying to a number of important national and international cooperation projects.

Franco Cigarini was for many years the official municipal photographer and video reporter. His collection includes approximately 700 items, ranging from the 1950s to the 1980s, with a specific focus on the period 1968–1977. The documentation concerning Africa deserves special mention, particularly the film documentary *Dieci giorni con i guerriglieri del Mozambico libero* (Ten days among the guerrillas of liberated Mozambique) including all processing materials and cuts, and a video about the solidarity ship *Amanda*.

On the whole, this archival project, named AREA (Archivio Reggio Emilia-Africa), aims to preserve and promote the value of the existing documents, by recording them, advocating their digitalisation and especially by popularising them among the public at a local, national and international level. Istoreco has been establishing links with other Italian and European centres and promoting the inclusion of AREA's materials in international databases about the anti-apartheid movement.

Other fields of activity

Besides archival work, the Reggio-Africa Board develops activities in many other fields. With regard to art, it shares and coordinates many initiatives, in collaboration with local associations and important cultural institutions, in order to create new opportunities for cultural exchanges with the full involvement of leading African artists. Among the achievements in this field are the consolidation of relations between the European photography festival of Reggio Emilia, *Fotografia Europea*, and the African photography biennial of Bamako, *Rencontres de Bamako*, as well as the important exhibitions *Fluxus-African Contemporary Art: William Kentridge* (November 2011 – January 2012) and *Eclats d'Afrique* (September-October 2011) at Spazio Gerra. The Board has also organised concerts and ballet shows.

In addition, the Board provides a platform for starting a geopolitical debate on the role of Africa today in the large system of international relations at the global level (both on the diplomatic front, for the resolution

of conflicts, and on the economic front of world trade). An important insight is into the complex process of building the African Union, where many of the political parties that historically were friends of Reggio Emilia participate as eminent representatives. So the Board has been organising meetings with important African figures – for example, the former South African Ambassador to Italy, Thenjiwe Mtintso – and also with Italian intellectuals and politicians, such as Lucio Caracciolo and Lapo Pistelli.

The Board provides a platform for discussion and involvement in African economic development. This working group recognises that the significant heritage of relationships built over the years can be an effective basis for the design of new economic opportunities. It thus aims to promote dialogue with private companies and cooperatives.

Indeed, the Reggio-Africa link is living testimony of how continuity is fundamental to cooperation and of how cooperation is not a single project, not an occasional declaration, not merely a technical intervention, but a rich and complex bond, grown at different levels of the local community, involving many sectors. It is a system of institutional and personal connections that continues and renews itself, which allows Reggio to appreciate the richness and diversity of the African continent, understanding and accompanying its political path. So private companies and trade unions are represented on the Board and they have been establishing links and signing partnerships with their African counterparts.

In the social dimension, the Board continues the commitment of Reggio Emilia to the protection of human rights and multi-ethnic societies. Its work particularly wants young people from Reggio Emilia to focus on the concept of *ubuntu*, comparing it with the region's idea of solidarity and cooperation, identifying similarities and common values. The Board therefore collaborates with local schools and education agencies, promoting lessons and masterclasses.

The ANC centenary

In 2012 Reggio Emilia was the "Italian capital" of the ANC centenary celebrations and also celebrated the 35th anniversary of the ANC–Reggio Emilia solidarity pact. The programme of events was full and interesting, as the list of activities below shows.

On 8 January Professor Cristiana Fiamingo (University of Milan) gave a very engaging lecture about the Italian anti-apartheid movement, focusing on available archives.

On 24 and 25 January Italian students met the South African Anglican priest, Father Michael Lapsley, during a conference on human rights and reconciliation.

On 9 and 10 March South African Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, was in Reggio Emilia to talk about women's rights, education and cooperation.

On 1 May Italian trade unions CGIL-CISL-UIL invited the Second Deputy Secretary of Cosatu, Zingiswa Losi, to attend Labour Day celebrations.

On 9 and 10 October the then Deputy President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, and the then Minister of Public Enterprises, Malusi Gigaba, took part in the celebrations of the 35th year of friendship between Reggio and the ANC by inaugurating the historical exhibition by Istoreco, *Reggio-Africa*.

The Board started publishing the magazine *Kitabu.*[7]

Meanwhile, the second conference on the Reggio Emilia approach to education took place in Johannesburg. This topic seems to be the most important one in the new wave of our relationship.

On 23 October the *Reggio-Africa* exhibition (in English) was inaugurated at Johannesburg City Hall. The delegation from Reggio was hosted by Hip Alliance and participated in several meetings with important authorities. They also attended the "Third International Solidarity Conference" promoted by the ANC.

On 30 October the AREA project was presented at the "International Conference on Liberation Archives" in East London.[8]

On 4 November there was a meeting about economic opportunities with the then Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Elizabeth Thabethe.

On 26 and 27 November the Speaker of the Gauteng Legislature at the time, Lindiwe Maseko, visited Reggio Emilia.

In December two different education projects about human rights, based on the South African experience, were started in Italian schools.

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[7] http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/PESDocumentID/302B38E4879ABE70C1257A8E00307307?opendocument&FROM=rchvRggfrc1, accessed 12 November 2014.

[8] I. Makuyana. "South Africa Writes its History". *New Age*, 8 November 2012, http://www.thenewage.co.za/mobi/Detail.aspx?NewsID=69176&CatID=1007, accessed 12 November 2014.

Reggio Emilia and Oliver Reginald Tambo

The link between Oliver R. Tambo and the city of Reggio Emilia has not only been an official diplomatic relationship, but a deep association, based on personal ties and consolidated by shared values.

In 1977 Tambo signed the historic treaty of friendship in Reggio Emilia between the city and the ANC. The agreement, an early and original manifestation of international solidarity, was quoted by Leslie Harriman, chairman of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid during its 35th meeting on 15 October 1977 and cited in the preface of the bulletin, *Notes and Documents* of the UN Centre against Apartheid.[9]

In 1978 Tambo was in Reggio again to attend the national conference of solidarity organised by the Italian Committee on the occasion of the International Anti-Apartheid Year proclaimed by the UN. On that occasion Tambo also visited the Museo Cervi, an important site of memory of the Italian resistance against Nazi-fascism during the World War II, and he stated that:

> The people of Reggio Emilia have a heroic past of struggle against foreign domination and fascism, for freedom, democracy and social progress. They have made an extraordinary contribution to the victory of Frelimo and the fall of the Portuguese government. The ANC is honoured to embrace the city of Reggio Emilia, its employees, young people and intellectuals, as comrades in the struggle of the people of South Africa, allies in the cause of justice.[10]

A few weeks later, in the first issue of the Italian edition of *Sechaba*, published by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Tambo added:

> We can detect as a positive fact the spread of the cause of the peoples of Southern Africa among the Italian popular masses and their commitment to support democratic parties with concrete initiatives. On this occasion we salute the first anniversary of the treaty of solidarity between the city of Reggio Emilia and the ANC as evidence of the Italy that is fighting against Apartheid.[11]

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[9] Quoted in C. Fiamingo. "Movimenti anti-Apartheid in Italia dalla genesi alla proclamazione del 1978 anno internazionale della lotta contro l'Apartheid". *Trimestre*, 2004, pp. 13-14.

[10] Quoted in *Kitabu*, 2013, p. 2.

[11] *Ibid*.

In 1982, on the occasion of the second "National Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa", held in Rome, Tambo again remembered friends from Reggio Emilia with these words:

> A big river always comes from a small source. The great wave of solidarity with our struggle which now flows in all of Italy has its source in Reggio Emilia. This great wave passes through Reggio Emilia. We came to Rome, we have witnessed the great success of the conference, we have seen how the weight of the conference is all on your shoulders, and we know that you work every day for our cause, carrying out the day-to-day commitment to our struggle for Southern Africa. Time passes but these things are not forgotten … On behalf of myself and Comrade Sam Nujoma and the people that we represent, we express heartfelt thanks, because you feel like real friends, who believe in our struggle and objectives that we want to achieve.[12]

In 1983 the ANC asked the City Council to design the Isitwalandwe medals, the maximum honour awarded by the ANC. They were designed by the Italian sculptor Giuffredi and Tambo became one of its recipients in 1992.

During the 1980s Oliver Tambo directly addressed various messages of congratulations and requests for collaboration to Reggio. As an example, it is worth remembering a 1985 letter to Mayor Ugo Benassi, where Tambo expressed «the strong feelings and the close relationship that binds us to the municipality of Reggio and its brotherly people» and a 1987 one to Mayor Giulio Fantuzzi, in which he spoke of the people of Reggio as «historic and heroic people, of which we appreciate the glorious past in the antifascist struggle and from whom we receive an unconditional and unwavering support».[13]

In 1989 Oliver Tambo went to Reggio Emilia for the last time to meet Mayor Giulio Fantuzzi, a member of the Italian Committee for welcoming Nelson Mandela.

In 1993, at the "ANC International Solidarity Conference" in Johannesburg, Oliver Tambo gave Claudia Casoni, who had been his interpreter on several occasions as well as accompanying Mayor Antonella Spaggiari, an affectionate video message, which was also his final farewell to the city of Reggio Emilia, defined as «exemplarily generous»: «We can

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] Unpublished letters from Oliver Tambo to Ugo Benassi (1985) and Giulio Fantuzzi (1987).

never thank you enough, but we promise that we will never forget you».[14] Tambo died in the same year.

In 2012, during its official visit to South Africa, the delegation from Reggio Emilia, led by then Mayor Graziano Delrio, was in Ekurhuleni to visit the grave of Oliver and Adelaide Tambo; they also met Nomatemba Tambo, their daughter and, at the time of writing, Ambassador of South Africa in Italy.

In 2013, because of this long and deep association, and in order to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Tambo's death, the Reggio-Africa Board decided to dedicate its main activities to Oliver Tambo. On 3 March 2013 Italian students met Nasila Rembe, the Director of the Oliver Tambo Unesco Chair in Human Rights at the University of Fort Hare.

On 27 April Giuseppe Soncini was awarded (posthumously) the Order of the Companions of Oliver Tambo with the following citation: «For his contribution to the liberation movement by forging a Pact of Solidarity between the town of Reggio Emilia in Italy and the ANC. His town served as a haven to many anti-apartheid activists during the difficult times of oppression».[15] The award was received by his wife Bruna Soncini, in Johannesburg.

On 6 June Europe Direct organised an International Summer School on Human Rights dedicated to Oliver Tambo, involving Italian, South African, Romanian and Bulgarian students and teachers. This event was a real opportunity for exchange and debate, during which a lot of new ideas and proposals emerged.

Lastly, twenty years since the passing of Oliver Tambo were celebrated by dedicating a new park in Reggio to him and by publishing a special issue of *Kitabu*, with the translation of a short extract from his biography by Luli Callinicos.

On the whole, Reggio Emilia has shown a strong will to keep the link with Africa alive and feed it with new content, in particular in the fields of history, education and cooperation. But also it has proved to be a linchpin in a network of documentation centres for the realisation of new projects within a permanent European Union framework.

[14] Video message from Oliver Tambo to the city of Reggio Emilia (February 1993).

[15] http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=17334, accessed 15 December 2014.

Contributors

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Vincenzo Curatola holds a degree in Economics from the University of Rome "La Sapienza". He worked in the banking sector from 1969 and has now retired. He was an activist in Catholic groups, community-based

organisations and the peace movement. In the late 1980s, he became the spokesperson of the National Coordinating Committee against Apartheid. He served on the Executive Committee of FISAC-CGIL (the bank workers' trade union) in Lazio. In 1987 he denounced the complicity of Italian banks with South African apartheid in the book *Le banche dell'apartheid*. He is currently the president of the Benny Nato Centre. In 2007 he was elected Coordinator of the Citizens' Committee for Decentralised Cooperation in Rome. He helped establish and is honorary president of MAIS Onlus, an NGO sponsoring international adoption. He is also the president of the Forum Permanente per il Sostegno a Distanza (ForumSaD), the Italian forum of child sponsorship organisations.

Maria De Vivo holds a PhD in Methods and Methodologies of Archaeological and Art-historical Research and Local Systems. She is a temporary lecturer in History of Contemporary Art in the Department of Human and Social Studies at the University of Naples "L'Orientale". She works as consultant at the Carlo Levi Foundation in Rome and collaborates with the *Museo del '900* in Naples. Her research is in the fields of Italian art in the second half of the twentieth century, the art systems of Naples, the history of exhibitions. Recently, she has been researching the "dematerialisation" of the artwork and relational art. Following her collaboration with Lia Rumma Gallery in Naples on the exhibition *William Kentridge. Streets of the City and Other Tapestries* held at the Museum of Capodimonte in 2009, she curated the lecture by the artist, "A Walking Tour of the Studio", at the Basilica San Giovanni Maggiore (Naples) in 2014.

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