



The Western Super-Powers and the Liberation Struggle in Africa: The Politics of Imperialism, Domination and Resistance, 1948-1980s

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Abstract

Controlling South Africa during the Cold War era was geostrategic to the Western super powers because of its 1,900-mile coastline with harbours at Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Walvis Bay (a seaport in the then South West Africa, now Namibia). Being the southernmost country on the African continent, South Africa abuts on both the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans and its fascist leaders vociferously pledged to 'defend the free world from the communist threat' during the Cold War era. Thus, apartheid South Africa played a vital role in the global strategy of imperialism led by Western super powers such as the United States of America and United Kingdom to make the Indian Ocean area a region for their dominance and total control. South Africa was thus regarded as a 'second Gibraltar' or 'gatekeeper' to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. This article is about imperial interventions in the African continent spearheaded by Western super powers, and the pivotal role of apartheid South Africa in this regard. It also discusses the actions of African countries whose leaders acted in solidarity with the apartheid regime which had divisive foreign policy. But those African leaders who acted in solidarity with the racist South African government represented a minority group vigorously opposed by a majority of Organisation of African Unity member states and the African National Congress (ANC).

Résumé

Le contrôle de l'Afrique du Sud durant l'ère de la Guerre Froide était d'une importance géostratégique pour les supers puissances occidentales à cause de son littoral de 1.900 miles, de ses ports situés à Durban, à l'est de Londres, au Port Elizabeth, à la Ville du Cap et à la Baie de Walvis (un port maritime en Afrique du Sud Ouest de l'époque, devenu maintenant la Namibie). Etant le pays le plus au sud du continent africain, l'Afrique du Sud est contiguë à la fois aux océans Indien et Atlantique, et ses leaders fascistes se sont engagés

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bruyamment à « défendre le monde libre de la menace communiste » durant l'ère de la Guerre Froide. Ainsi, l'Afrique du Sud sous l'apartheid a joué un rôle vital dans la stratégie globale de l'impérialisme conduite par les superpuissances occidentales telles que les Etats Unis d'Amérique (EU) et le Royaume Uni (RU) pour rendre la zone de l'Océan Indien une région sous leur domination et contrôle total, car ils considéraient l'Afrique du Sud comme « un second Gibraltar » ou une « porte de garde » vers l'Océan Indien et l'Océan Atlantique. Ce document concerne les interventions impériales survenues sur le continent Africain et qui étaient le fer de lance des superpuissances Occidentales. Aussi, il a trait au rôle central de l'Afrique du Sud dans la période de l'apartheid. Il évoque aussi les actions des pays et des leaders Africains qui ont agi en solidarité avec le régime d'apartheid dont la politique étrangère était basée sur la division. Mais ces leaders africains qui agissaient en solidarité avec le gouvernement raciste sud africain constituaient un groupe minoritaire qui était vigoureusement contrecarré par la majorité des états membres de l'Organisation de l'unité africaine et le Congrès National Africain (ANC).

Introduction

This article is based on 'top secret' documents which have recently been declassified and are housed in the South African Military Intelligence Archives. It is also based on the ANC Archives which are located at the University of Fort Hare, which historians could only access after the democratic dispensation in South Africa. Both archives compiled by former 'enemies' are very important in defining the geopolitics of knowledge about the politics of colonial domination, imperialism and anti-colonial resistance in Africa as a continent. They are also very central in promoting and consolidating empirical research connected to our immediate past (history) and the political economy of Africa.

One of the primary documents from the Military Intelligence archives is a paper authored in 1949 by the London based Joint Planning Staff under the command of the UK's army chief of staff. It identified the Soviet Union (an ally during the Second World War) as the only country which might threaten the interests of the Western super-powers in Africa as a continent to the extent that it would be necessary to go to war. This assertion was also repeated in a paper on "The World Situation and its Defence Aspect", tabled by the UK government at a conference of prime ministers on supposed threats posed by the Soviet Union. Immediately after the end of the Second World War, and fearing the spread of communism as an ideology, the United Kingdom, United States and the Union of South Africa held elaborate discussions in pursuit of a regional defence strategy of Africa. It is important to note that this era actually marked the beginnings of the Cold War and liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) were criticised for supposed links with communist Russia. Such criticism stemmed from a Cold War, zero-

sum perspective reflecting fears harboured by Western governments, thus anti-communist sentiments were expressed in a series of documents on defence strategy in Africa.

Both submissions claimed that the fundamental aim of Soviet leaders was to impose communism on all parts of the world. Suggesting a possible solution, the document on 'The World Situation and its Defence Aspect' asserted that 'it should clearly be the aim of all non-communist countries throughout the world to concert measures to counter the communist threat both in peace and war' (DD, MV/EF, Vol. 1, 22 March 1949:1). The authors further argued that provided the interests of the Western super-powers were not prejudiced, the primary aims of the post-Second World War anti-USSR defence policy should be:

To convince the Soviet Union that war is unprofitable by showing that Allies possess powerful forces and resources and are fully prepared not only to fight but also to act offensively from the outset. To this end all interested countries should collaborate in organising the necessary forces, in building up effective defences and in working out the necessary plans ... To take all possible action short of war, not only to arrest the further spread of Communism, but also to weaken the hold of Russia on countries she now dominates (Ibid:2).

The Western powers' concept of war against the USSR was based on the premise that they should first destroy the will and ability of the Soviet Union to fight. These countries, led by the US and the UK, were conscious of the fact that the USSR held vast military resources, including satellite nations, so vast that they could not be matched. As a result, they identified three ways of containing the military threat posed by the USSR and how this could be achieved:

- By destroying the enemy on land. To do this would mean fighting Russia under conditions favourable to her, where she has great numerical superiority and where she will fight best.
- By blockade. Russia, will however, shortly be self-sufficient in all essentials.
- By direct air attack on Russia. This is the only feasible means of achieving our aim (Ibid).

The Western allies rationalised that it was vital to defeat a possible onslaught from the USSR, if a military war commenced, on strategic areas and economic well-being. These areas were identified as the African continent and the Middle East as regions blessed with abundant mineral resources. The Western powers' ability to control communication essential for the security and development of strategic bases and military zones in both Africa and the

Middle East was deemed as crucial for any proposed defence strategy. It was also important for the West to have a secure hold on the air bases and sea areas essential for launching air attacks against the USSR and her satellites.

The first joint intervention in colonial wars for strategic resources pursued by Western super-powers in Africa was marked by the South African War ('Anglo-Boer' War) that commenced in 1899. Thomas Reifer argues that on the plane of *haute finance*, the House of Morgan's incorporation of key members of the English establishment ensured Britain's turn to this investment bank to finance hundreds of millions of bond flotations needed for the conquest of South Africa during the 'Boer War'. Hence, the United States' participation in the South African War loans saw the transatlantic migration of financial power from London to New York and the ascendancy of House of Morgan within London based investment banks. This, in turn, helped seal the Anglo-American alliance of the First and Second World Wars, not to mention the investment bank's role as the key intermediary between USA war production, finance and the allies (Reifer 2002:6). Such interests by the Western powers were to be maintained during the reign of terror by the apartheid regime.

Africa's Position in the War Strategy of the Western Allies

As part of the rationale for planning a defensive strategy in Africa, the Western powers were convinced that at the outbreak of war, because strategic resources such as oil were at stake, the USSR would undertake a major land campaign in the Middle East, accessible through North Africa. Therefore, Egypt's security was essential to the allies' war strategy – particularly the land-based defence of the African continent and the Middle East against the probable attack by the Soviet Union army, perceived as harbouring the following aims:

- First and foremost, to capture the Middle East oil;
- To give depth to the defence of Southern Russia;
- To deny (Western) Allies the use of strategic air bases;
- To cut Allied sea and air communications through Egypt and establish a bridgehead for communist penetration into Africa (DD, MV/EF, Vol. 1, 22, March 1949:4).

Practically speaking, it was postulated that such a campaign would be directed against Egypt by the USSR because it was the only African country geographically situated in a strategic position linking the Mediterranean and the Middle East region. In terms of air threat, the only part of Africa which would initially be exposed to a supposed air attacks by the Soviet Union would be Egypt and the southern shores of the Mediterranean. Egypt was

thus identified by the Western powers as one of the three main air bases to be used for mounting air offences that would counteract and undermine attacks by the USSR. Egypt also possessed the necessary manpower, communications network and docking facilities that could provide a base for Western forces defending the strategic airfields and the land approach to the African continent.

This was the first time since the Second World War that Western super-powers mentioned the importance of oil as a strategic mineral resource. Furthermore, the western allies presumed that the Russians would attack Italy and Greece, with the aim of occupying bases from which to block access to the Mediterranean sea route by Western European countries, and thus threaten North Africa. Once established in Egypt, the Russians would be well placed to complete the domination of the whole of North Africa. The hawks driving the Western powers' defence policy reasoned that the rest of Africa would then be largely isolated and the continent's chance of resisting ideological penetration spearheaded by the communists would be negligible. They further argued that Africa was also vulnerable to attacks by USSR submarines and from surface raiders employing either mine-laying or direct attacks on shipping. The threat was, however, likely to increase, particularly from submarine mine-laying, should the enemy overrun the Middle East and Western (Mediterranean) Europe. Hence, their view was that 'should the enemy gain possession of Egypt, the Communist prestige and influence in the rest of Africa would be greatly increased' (Ibid:5). By 1948, the UK was already engaged in co-ordinating both long and short term plans for the defence of Egypt and the North African shore, including taking control of Mediterranean communication by sea. These plans could not be successfully laid without the co-operation of all nations that had a major interest in the defence of Africa.

To consolidate their war strategy, the Western super-powers concluded that one of the main support areas needed for the anti-USSR war economy would be southern Africa, the area in which the Union of South Africa, a British dominion at the time, was a key country. Their argument was based on the fact that most important sources of mineral resources in southern Africa (outside the Union itself) were located in the Belgian Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Southern and Northern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe and Zambia). Raw materials from these colonies included uranium, platinum, copper, cobalt, gold, chrome, vanadium and manganese. The Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique were also areas of importance because the Belgian Congo and the two Rhodesias were dependent upon their ports and rail communication for economic access to the sea. But it was also particularly significant to note that satisfactory communication infrastructure between the Rhodesias and the East African territories was lacking.

Southern Africa – South Africa in particular – was referred to by the Western super-powers as the ‘Persian Gulf of minerals’, hence acknowledging their interest in this region as early as the South African War that commenced in 1899. Minerals formed the cornerstone of the US foreign policy on Africa and the West was reliant upon these reserves for supplies of many minerals of strategic importance. For example, the US was particularly dependent upon South Africa for reserves of chromium, manganese, vanadium and the platinum group metals. During the 1980s, South Africa possessed 66.4 per cent of the world’s reserve of chromium, a mineral that was vital for the US in the manufacture of automobile and computer components. Chromium is also used in the production of stainless steel and in the chemical industry. There is no substitute for manganese in the manufacture of wrought steel, and the platinum group metals, of which South Africa had about 73.2 per cent of the world’s reserves, are vital for many industrial applications (Davies 2007:57; Coker 1990; Bowman 1990; Rich 1990).

To secure a constant supply of these mineral resources, a conference on defence strategy in Africa was proposed in the post-war era. It was convened jointly by the British and South Africans and was held in Nairobi in 1951. The correspondence between the UK’s Minister of Defence, E. Shinwell, and the Union of South Africa’s Minister of Defence, J.E. Erasmus, on plans for this conference, is illuminating. The content of the 5 July 1950 (top secret) letter from Shinwell to his counterpart in South Africa highlights the machinations of the masterminds behind the defence strategy in Africa. Emphasising the strategic importance of the Middle East and South Africa, Minister Shinwell wrote:

I was very glad to receive your letter of 15th June, regarding South African participation in the defence of Africa arising from the review which the Union Cabinet has been making of this question. I need hardly say how pleased my colleagues and I are to hear that the Union Government will, in the event of war, be prepared to recommend to Parliament that the Union Forces should participate on and in the defence of the African continent. I entirely agree with your suggestion that the extent of such participation and the question of equipment should be discussed as soon as possible at a conference. I shall, of course, be most happy to take part myself in such a conference, when matters of policy are under discussion. Since you were good enough to ask that I should suggest a venue for the meeting, I should like to propose that it should be in London in the first half of September. This date would give us the time to examine the problem thoroughly. It would be useful if you could let us have in advance of the meeting, details of the equipment you would require, both in the Middle East, and in the Union, so that we could be in a position at the conference to give you firm ideas as to our ability to provide it ... The Chiefs of Staff have recently completed an up-to-date review of

global strategy and I am asking the High Commissioner to hand a copy to you, in the hope that this will form a useful background for our [pre-conference] talks (DD, MV/EF, Vol. 1, Shinwell to Erasmus, 5 July 1950).

The Nairobi conference was attended by military representatives from the Union of South Africa, UK, Portugal, Belgium, France and Italy. The South African delegation was led by the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Defence and included the army's Chief of General Staff; the Secretary for External Affairs; the Secretary for Defence; the General Manager of the Railways; the Commissioner of Customs; the Director of Meteorological Services; and high ranking officers of the Union Defence Force. The British delegation included departmental heads and was led by the Minister of Civil Aviation. The principal aim of the conference, as stated in the invitation, was to secure agreement in principle of crucial facilities to be made available to relevant African countries in the event of war with the Soviet Union over the mineral resources of southern Africa, or over any other emergency that might arise. This would include the location of troops and supplies along the lines of communication between the South of Africa and the Middle East (Suez Canal) which were expected to be kept at the highest level of efficiency (DD, MV/EF, Vol. 1, 22 March 1949:3, Vol. 2, 20-31 August 1951). The geographic scope of the conference included representatives from the following areas: Angola, Belgian Congo, Ethiopia, French Equatorial Africa, French Somaliland, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Somalia, Somaliland Protectorate, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Sudan, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar. The representative from Ethiopia was accompanied by an advisor from the US.

It was emphasised during the conference that South Africa was expected to play a strategic role for the anti-USSR camp. This included:

- Co-operation in the development of resources by the Union and territories of South Africa;
- Co-operation by the southern African industries with the Allied war economy;
- Storage facilities for strategic reserves for the Middle East in peace time;
- Re-fitting and docking facilities;
- Training and transit facilities for personnel;
- Base facilities for maritime aircraft (DD, MV/EF, Vol. 2, 20-31 August 1951).

In short, the Western powers expected South Africa to assist in the regional defence of the African continent in the following ways:

- firstly, to play a part as the keystone of the main support area of southern Africa;
- secondly, to contribute so far as other commitments allowed, to forces required to defend
- the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean; and
- lastly, to assist in controlling sea communications in African waters.

The control of sea communication in the Mediterranean sea route and in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans was of crucial importance to the Western powers who – together with South Africa – concurred that the principal factor to be considered when deciding the extent of the support area in southern Africa was the geographical region which included the Belgian Congo (DRC), Northern Rhodesia (Malawi), Nyasaland (Malawi), Mozambique and all other territories to the south. The allies also hoped to secure the route via the Mediterranean Sea. But should this be cut off by the USSR, the Middle East campaign would rely on the Cape sea route. This route would also be used by all commercial shipping vessels between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans that were not needed to support the military defence of Egypt and the Middle East.

The defence strategy document contended that, as was the case during the Second World War years, the UK would rely extensively on the docking and refitting facilities at Simon's Town, Durban and Cape Town in South Africa. When aircraft carriers were to be used against the USSR, there would be a requirement for accommodation and training of disembarked air carrier groups. Hospitals and transit centres in South Africa earmarked for the allies' anti-USSR personnel would also be 'valuable, particularly should the Mediterranean Sea route be closed to the allies' (DD, MV/EF, Vol. 1, 22 March 1949:7). Confirming that the US was part of the information loop and a valuable strategic partner in formulating the defence strategy of the Western allies, on the 15 June 1950, Erasmus, South Africa's Minister of Defence, authored a letter addressed to Louis Johnson, the US Secretary for Defence. He articulated the following views on the perceived 'communist threat':

During my visit to Washington in August of last year, I informed you of the Government view towards communism, that is, the Government is prepared to support the (Western) Powers opposed to communism. Because of the possibility of an unsatisfactory internal situation developing in the Union [the ANC's Defiance Campaign], I explained to you that the Government had, however, not found itself able to commit itself in principle to Union Forces serving outside the Union. Communism might prove to be a serious danger in South Africa with its large non-European population and if an international conflict should arise, our Forces might be needed to maintain

order and to ensure the security of the Union in the first place. It was at the same time decided by the Government that should the position regarding the security of the Union be satisfactory, the question of sending Union Forces outside the Union would be considered in the light of the circumstances prevailing. Recently the position generally was reviewed and my Government has now decided that it will, in the event of war against communism, be prepared to recommend to Parliament that Union Forces should participate on and in the defence of the African continent. I have also advised Mr Shinwell, the British Minister of Defence in this sense and in view of the importance of the matter and our previous discussion, feel that you should know of this development (DD, MV/EF, Vol. 1, Erasmus to Johnson, 15 June 1950).

To consolidate their position in Africa, the UK initiated defence negotiations with the government of Egypt during the early 1950s. They had hoped to reach an agreement over the Suez Canal base and modalities defining an evacuation formula. Additionally, the UK also intended to sponsor a programme of military and economic assistance to Egypt, to be funded by both the US and the UK; and to secure the participation of Egypt in the proposed Middle East Defence Organisation (MEDO), an international, but regionally based defence organisation. Issues related to the formation of MEDO were discussed for the first time at the meeting of commonwealth defence ministers in June 1951. The UK's main objectives were, firstly, to gain the support of Turkey because of its strategic geographical position, and secondly, to secure the participation of the US as one of the principal actors. The following countries were expected to participate in MEDO: UK, US, France, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and South Africa. It was proposed that such an organisation could be established by general agreement of the various states taking part, and need not be the subject of a formal treaty. The proposed functions of MEDO were to provide a centre of co-operative effort for defence purposes, and furthermore:

- to draw plans for the defence of the Middle East;
- to plan for, and provide the Middle East states with assistance in the form of training and advice;
- to co-ordinate requests by Middle East states for arms and equipment;
- to make plans for the operations in war of all forces allocated for the defence of the area in conjunction with the adjoining NATO commands in the Mediterranean and Asia Minor;
- to reduce deficiencies in the organisation and capacity for the defence of the area, with particular emphasis on the need to ensure that the

Middle East states are made increasingly capable of themselves contributing to the defence of the area.

It was proposed that the management structure of MEDO would comprise a Military Representatives Committee (MRC) and Planning Group (PG). The chairpersonship of the MRC would rotate among the participating Western super-powers and would be responsible for the general direction of the PG; it would meet twice a year or more often if required. The PG would represent an integrated structure composed of officers supplied by the participating super-powers under a British chairperson, and would be divided into appropriate sections to handle, for example, operations, plans, intelligence, administration, logistics and liaison with non-participating Middle East states (DD, Memo, encl. to MEDO, Paper No. 2, June 1951).

The UK had to reach formal agreements with the Egyptian government to realise the functionality of some of the proposals on defence strategy in Africa. In March 1950, the Egyptians and the British began re-negotiating the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty that granted the British the right to station their forces along the Suez Canal and was due to expire in 1956. It had to be re-negotiated because the Egyptian people were clamouring for it to be abrogated because they wanted the British to leave immediately. In response, the UK, US and France passed a tripartite declaration in May 1950, placing an embargo on the shipment of arms to the Middle East and opposing the use of force to alter state borders. The negotiations dragged on and the British showed no willingness to evacuate their bases along the Suez Canal. Finally, on 1 October 1951, the Wafd government led by Mustapha Nahas unilaterally terminated the 1936 treaty. This not only cancelled the legal basis for the British presence in Egypt, it also ended the agreement in terms of which Egypt and Britain co-governed Sudan. Egypt promptly claimed exclusive sovereignty over its southern neighbour. Of course, the British counterclaimed that this was an unacceptable, illegal and unilateral act. Behind the British attitude was the Cold War, because the Western powers were preoccupied with defending the Middle East and North Africa against the threat posed by the Soviet Union (Aburish 2004:chapter 2). Throughout these bilateral discussions between Egypt and the UK, and through official channels, the apartheid regime was kept up to date concerning the internal situation in North Africa. A letter marked 'top secret', dated 8 January 1953, from A.M. Hamilton, the political secretary at South Africa House in London, addressed to the secretary for External Affairs and General C.L. du Toit, the chief of General Staff in Pretoria, read:

I accompanied Brigadier de Waal, who is on his way to Washington, to a talk yesterday with Mr Pritchard, the Assistant Under-Secretary at the

Commonwealth Relations Office concerned with foreign affairs. Our main topic of conversation was naturally the progress of defence arrangements in the Middle East ... They were however coming to understand that they must take some responsibility if things go badly and if the defence of the Middle East is seriously prejudiced by failure to come to terms with Egypt. While the United Kingdom seems to be fairly confident now about obtaining effective American support on the defence question, Mr Pritchard admitted that there could be no progress in this regard until the hurdle of the Sudan had been overcome. This was entirely a United Kingdom responsibility ... Brigadier de Waal asked Mr Pritchard about the new naval commands which have been set up in the Mediterranean. Mr Pritchard said that there was no geographical division between the Commands of Lord Mountbatten and Admiral Carney and that the new system might seem rather like two men trying to carpet a room at the same moment. This however was the best that could be hoped for and indeed one would have to rely on the two Commanders taking care not to fall over each other. Lord Mountbatten in particular had dealt tactfully with a similar problem in his South-East Asia Command in the war (DD, Hamilton to du Toit, 8 January 1953).

Gamal Abdel Nasser, a colonel in the Egyptian army, assumed power in 1952, and later became the embodiment of the historical confrontation between the Arabs and the Western super-powers and, thus, the proposed formation of MEDO was scuttled. Political subjugation and economic straits of the Egyptian people compelled them to aspire for a better material life and one of the most cherished objectives of the Egyptian government for its economic development was the construction of a new high dam above Aswan. But the refusal of the UK and US governments to give the promised economic aid for the construction of the dam provoked Nasser's government into nationalising the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956. This was done so that the revenue of the canal could be diverted towards financing the Aswan Dam Project. This far-reaching decision was condemned by the Western super-powers; according to them, this would lead to unfettered control by a single power. The whole issue was further complicated when the USSR financed the construction of the dam. Using evocative language, the Western super-powers voiced the opinion that they would not yield on the principle that the international waterway should be left at the 'mercy', the 'caprice', the 'spleen', or the 'hatreds' of one power or one man. They suspected that President Nasser's intention was to deprive them of their economic and political interests in the Middle East and this was why they wanted him to abandon his plan. Otherwise, they contended, that as Western super-powers, they would be free to take such measures as they thought necessary. So vehement was their opposition to the position adopted by the government of Egypt that the representatives of France and the UK informed the UN Security Council on

12 September 1956 that Egypt's action to end international control of the Suez Canal might endanger the free and open passage of shipping and that if the situation were allowed to fester it would constitute a danger to peace and security. On the other hand, speaking at the UN, the Arab countries extended their full support to Nasser for his 'strong step' to safeguard Egypt's interests. The Suez Canal itself was considered by countries outside the sphere of Western influence as an integral part of Egypt and its nationalisation marked the beginning of the end for imperialistic exploitation (Sharma 1969; Aburish 2004).

Moreover, the traditional struggle between Jews and Arabs; the conflict between Israel and Arab states in general, and that between Egypt and Israel in particular, were apparent during heated ideologically inspired debates at the UN. Additional factors that hastened the holding of negotiations between France and the UK were many. They included the British blind spot against President Nasser who had opposed the Baghdad Pact which was designed to fortify an Arab-Turkish-Iranian bloc against the Soviet Union in order to control the oil resources of the Middle East; strong French opposition to Nasser for aiding and abetting Arab nationalism in Algeria; and the British-French plans to overthrow Nasser, considered a dangerous political ally of the Soviet Union against the Western super-powers. In due course, these factors led to the intervention of France and the UK in the war which broke out between Israel and Egypt on 29 October 1956 (Sharma 1969:49). Fearing the intervention of the Soviet Union, events in North Africa led to the ever-alert Western super-powers consolidating their relationship with the apartheid regime in order to claim control of the southern African region.

The Western Super-Powers' Surveillance of 'Kommunisme-Afrika', 1949-1954

The apartheid regime's Department of Defence, through its military intelligence section kept bulky files on 'communism and subversive activities' in southern Africa. Most of the reports were authored by security liaison officers based in various African countries and were formally addressed to the chief of the General Staff in the army and the national commissioner of Police who in turn forwarded them to their counterparts in the UK. These files were shared with relevant government departments in South Africa, such as External Affairs (later renamed Foreign Affairs), Justice and Labour. On 20 October 1949, the secretary for Labour wrote a secret inter-departmental letter addressed to Lieutenant-General Len Beyers, the then Chief of General Staff, in which he confirmed the fact that the Minister of Labour had officially instructed the Department of Labour to assemble and record information on

communist-inspired activities in trade unions based on the African continent and elsewhere, with specific reference to:

- the activities of individual South African communists, trade unionists and trade unions, and ‘fellow travellers’;
- the position of communism in key industries and international trade union bodies;
- the overall position regarding methods adopted by communists to infiltrate and influence trade unions, including technique and tactics; and
- contact between overseas trade unions and individuals, and South African trade unions and trade unionists (DMI, KG/GPW/7/5/1, Vol. 1, SAM/2377/G, 30 June 1950).

Senior officers in the Department of Labour, including divisional inspectors, were expected to transmit to the head office any relevant data which might come their way concerning radical African trade unions in South Africa. But these same officials were also instructed not to usurp the functions of the security police. They were informed that the Secretary for External Affairs and the Commissioner of Police had agreed to co-operate and furnish relevant information gleaned by their departments, both locally and from other countries. Overseas based South African representatives, including those in Kenya, were also officially requested to monitor the situation and submit intelligence reports on trade union activities in the UK, African states (including colonies), Greece, France, US, Australia, Egypt, Belgium, Germany, Canada, Italy, Holland and Scandinavia (Ibid). The July-October 1951 country reviews by the responsible agents of surveillance in southern Africa provide us with examples of these intelligence reports:

The Union of South Africa: On the 30th August 1951, the Communist newspaper, the *Guardian* published a cable message of greeting from Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the Gold Coast leader, to Dr Y.M. Dadoo, the well known South African Communist ... it is learned from a delicate source that the ANC Youth League has recently attempted to influence the Southern Rhodesia African Congress in Salisbury. An interesting and well written document on the ‘Statement of Policy’ of the ANC Youth League has recently been distributed by E.S. Nkomo, the Secretary of its Cape branch, which is under the chairmanship of G. Mbekeni [Mbeki?] (DMI, KG/GPW/7/5/1, Vol. 1, SAM/2377/G/114).

Regarding Mozambique, as an example, these reports postulated

that communism was not a threat there. The Europeans (about 40,000) were well to do and were not attracted by Communism. The Coloured People

(mix race) and 'assimilated' natives seemed to be generally contented with their lot, and the majority of Africans were perceived to be too backward and too disciplined to be affected. The Portuguese native policy was to admit their coloured community to Portuguese citizenship and to extend the same hope to those Africans who can qualify to become assimilated by education; only about 2,000 have taken the trouble to do so, a minute number compared with the rest of the African population. A low grade network of Communist cells existed in Moçambique which included Europeans, Coloured Persons and 'assimilated' natives. Most of them were in Lourenco Marques (Maputo) and tended to be set up in transportation services. Each cell numbered about five persons and they were mostly known to the police and were arrested as soon as the international situation deteriorates; their potentialities for sabotage were limited. The cells faced an uphill struggle and met with little success among the native population, for the penalties for spreading Communism, possessing subversive literature or instigating strikes were very severe (Ibid).

The Mau Mau rebellion against white rule in Kenya provided insurmountable challenges for officials in the UK and South Africa who, at some stage, believed that it was inspired by communists. The challenge posed by the Mau Mau is captured in a flurry of secret documents exchanged by senior army and security authorities in South Africa and the UK and in most cases authored by colonial officials based in Kenya. A secret report compiled in 1952 by a British agent during the state of emergency in Kenya stated:

Due to the great difficulties in obtaining adequate intelligence of MAU-MAU, the initial counter-measures consisted of waiting until a crime had been committed and then assembling forces for locating and arresting the culprits. This necessary negative policy together with the inevitable delays in mounting operations allowed MAU-MAU to gain the initiative ... The Chief of the Imperial General Staff [General Sir John Harding] during his visit to Kenya in February 1953 ordered new and vigorous measures to be taken to go after and stamp out the MAU-MAU movement. Additional troops and equipment as necessary will be supplied from the United Kingdom resources immediately. Despite the leeway to be made up and the difficulties of the operations, there is at last a sense of co-operation between the European farmers and the government forces which will produce real results (DMI, KG/GPW/7/5/1, Vol. 1, 'Emergency in Kenya').

As for international organisations, The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was constantly monitored, particularly after a resolution on Africa was adopted by its Executive Council. The resolution placed special emphasis on activities in colonial Africa and what it defined as dependent countries, with particular reference to intensifying assistance to trade union organisations in Africa, Asia, the Near and Middle East. This was to be done by broadening the scope of WFTU liaison officers which also entailed promoting the

recruitment of the oppressed masses into trade unions. In their report, South African intelligence officers therefore argued that it was a wise precaution to examine activities of the WFTU towards Central Africa in rather more detailed terms than usual (DMI, KG/GPW/7/5/1, Vol. 1, SAM/2377/1/G/39).

These concerns led to a plethora of reports on international trade unionism compiled by the agents of surveillance that, as an example, recorded:

Lawrence Katilungu (General President) and Simon Kaluwa (General Secretary) of the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers' Union (NRAMWU) left for England by air on 10th November 1951. Before they left, they telegraphed their expected date of arrival to Desmond Buckle, A. Horner and Basil Davidson. It is reported that Buckle intended to take them to the General Council meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Berlin on 15th November. It is not yet known whether they went (DMI, KG/GPW/7/5/1, Vol. 1, SAM/2377/1/G/114).

In apartheid South Africa, the security police and intelligence officers kept a tight surveillance net, including personal details, over the members of the Communist Party of South Africa and its network, as shown in the following report (originally written in Afrikaans, and translated here) on John Gathercole and Hilda Watts (who later married Rusty Bernstein):

John GATHERCOLE met Hilda WATTS in London in 1936. Hilda Watts is a committed communist who is already 'listed' by the Liquidator under the Suppression of Communism Act. GATHERCOLE was married at the time to a Miss A.N. Dalton, but he had left her and they were not living together. He then moved in with Hilda WATTS, who was known at the time as Hilda Schwartz, and her sister, who was a schoolteacher. Hilda later changed her name from Schwartz to Watts because she felt that the former sounded too Jewish or German. In time, John GATHERCOLE came to be known as Jack WATTS because he went around with Hilda Watts and her sister. At the time, he was a member of the Communist Party in Hendon, London, and served on both the Organising and Propaganda Committees of the party. He lived with the Watts sisters until 1937 when he and Hilda WATTS came to South Africa ... John GATHERCOLE became a member of the Communist Party in Johannesburg and served on its regional management under the name Jack Watts; in fact he was widely known as Jack Watts. At the time, he worked at Polliacks Ltd. He and Hilda WATTS lived together as man and wife until 1938, when Hilda WATTS returned to England. They were never married because GATHERCOLE had not yet divorced his first wife. GATHERCOLE remained a member of the Communist Party until 1942 when he decided of his own volition to leave the party (DMI, KG/GPW/7/5/1, Vol. 1, Report of the Commissioner SAP, 20 March 1953).¹

The evolving internal situation in South Africa that included the insurgent African workers alarmed the majority of white South Africans. By deliberately, albeit misleadingly, labelling this rising class under the umbrella term 'communist', the apartheid regime could more readily justify and legitimise its policy of repression, both to its own supporters and Western powers, specifically the United States. The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 was carefully tailored to fit the bill. Ostensibly, its main purpose was to declare the Communist Party of South Africa an unlawful organisation, and make it a punishable offence to defend or advocate 'the doctrine of Marxian socialism' or any related doctrine (Lerumo 1987; Bonner 1993). The apartheid regime's security agents also infiltrated organisations that opposed the regime as the minutes of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement's national committee meeting (at the disposal of the South African security police) confirm.² This particular meeting took place on Wednesday 19 May 1965, in Committee Room No. 5, House of Commons, London, at 19h00. According to the record, those who attended the meeting included, among others, David Ennals, MP; Tom Kellock, QC; Abdul Minty; Lord Brockway; Vella Pillay; Bishop Ambrose Reeves; Josef Dadoo; M. Nkoana; S. Bunting; A.B. Ngcobo; Clifford Parsons; J. Symonds and T. O'Dowd. (DD, MV-B, Vol. 2, sect. 216, AAM meeting).

As was usual during the late 1940s and 1950s, various lists of political activists and others (for example the academic, John Marcum, whose activities within the Pan Africanist Congress are noted) were compiled by the intelligence officers and security police during the 1960s. The September 1965 secret report listed the following names:

- Kitching, Sydney: South African communist and member of AAM's Trade Union Committee;
- Kotane, Moses: South African communist, appointed in 1963 as president of the African National Congress in Dar es Salaam;
- Kunene, Raymond: South African communist, member of the Executive Committee of the AAM, member of the Movement for Colonial Freedom and chief representative of the AAM in LONDON for Europe and SOUTH AMERICA;
- Lang, John: director of the Defence and Aid Fund; member of the AAM and the Joint Committee for the High Commission Territories; member of the African Resistance Movement;
- Leballo, Potlako: acting president of the Pan Africanist Congress and is planning the violent overthrow of the government of the RSA;
- Levy, Leon: South African communist, employed fulltime by the AAM and known as a good organiser;

- Mahomo, Nana: has studied guerrilla warfare in Algeria and is suspected of being in the service of the US Secret Service (CIA) while actively involved as a member of the PAC;
- Marcum, John: one of the most important PAC links in the US; responsible for MAHOMO's reputation in prominent government circles in America (DD, MV-B, Vol. 2, sect. 216, 'Report: Political Attack on RSA').

Names such as these were forwarded to US security personnel and, as a result, most political activists were labelled as 'terrorists' by successive US governments and needed special permission to enter the US. They included Rholihlahla Nelson Mandela and other prominent members of the liberation movements whose names were taken off this list as recently as 2008.

South Africa's Relations with the US after the Second World War: Implications for the Liberation Struggle

The South African apartheid government consistently attempted to rationalise its policies with the argument that the primary threat facing the country had nothing to do with racism, discrimination, undemocratic political, economic and social conditions in South Africa but came instead from an external source – foreign aggression in the form of 'international communism'. The aim of this argument was twofold. First, it legitimised the actions of the most brutal and oppressive regime. Second, the apartheid regime attempted, in the most simplistic form, to reduce every issue into a global East versus West context and Cold War parlance. Statements such as the apartheid regime being the world's bastion of 'Christian civilisation'; that it was defending the world against 'rampart communism', were common, and were often reflected in official documents. For example, the 1982 White Paper on Defence reinforced this view by arguing that 'the establishment of Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique as Marxist satellites has completed the link between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and this leaves the Republic of South Africa as the last stronghold of the West in Africa'.

The US maintained an ambiguous position towards the apartheid regime during the period immediately after the Second World War. Some officials of the US government were against the regime's racist policies because of its ideological desire to secure African support for its Cold War policies in the United Nations and elsewhere. There were also signs of the hardening of US policy during the course of 1965. This was in preparation for the outcome of the South West Africa (Namibia) case before the International Court of Justice and also in expectation of the Security Council debate that had arisen from the examination by the Committee of Experts on the feasibility of sanctions

against the apartheid regime. On the issue of Namibia, the US government had already made it abundantly clear that it would uphold any judgment rendered by the court. Then too, something that had to be taken into account was the fact that the US contingency planning made provision for the eventual use of force by the US in support of any decision by the Security Council calling for the implementation of an International Court judgment. Highlighting the ambiguous position, the US was also the strongest single opponent of the policy of applying full economic sanction against South Africa and of using military force, if necessary, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This was because Namibia was regarded by the US as being in a different category.

To maintain its ambivalent position towards the apartheid regime, the US refused a visa to General R.C. Hiemstra, general chief of staff of the South African Defence Force to pay a routine inspection visit to the office of the military attaché located in the South African Embassy in Washington. This contrasted starkly with the full facilities made available for visits to South Africa by various officers of the American armed forces, including one particular visit in May 1962 by the deputy chief of staff of Intelligence (US Army), who undertook a routine visit to US Army attaché posts in Africa. This visit to various African countries was a direct parallel with the proposed visit to the US by Hiemstra (DD, MV-B, Vol. 2, sect. 216, 1-3).

During the 1960s, the US consistently opposed attempts by other countries to exclude South Africa from scientific and technical agencies. By virtue of the agreement establishing the missile tracking station at Grootfontein in South West Africa (Namibia), US aircraft and senior personnel enjoyed extensive facilities, which in the event of major difficulties arising between South Africa and the US would have provided extremely valuable intelligence and other material. The Americans also requested additional missile tracking facilities at Walvis Bay and this request was approved in principle by John Vorster, the South African prime minister. In addition, the Pentagon offered naval and air force courses to their South African counterparts. In terms of space research, the Hartbeeshoek station near Pretoria played a vital role in US space research, but the decision to build an additional station in Spain, on roughly the same longitude as the South African station, meant that the Hartbeeshoek research station could no longer be used by the apartheid regime as a bargaining tool. South Africa's Hartbeeshoek research station gave the apartheid regime outstanding prestige in the field of space research. This was of immense importance to South African technology in the field of advanced electronics. Over 100 white South African personnel received what was described as 'a major free advanced technical education' in a research field of supreme value to the apartheid regime in the event of war or similar

national emergency. The pool of electronically based knowledge systems (including computers) and experience developed at the research station exceeded what was made available to the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the Defence Force and the Post Office combined (Ibid: 8).

In terms of development in nuclear based technology and armaments, the apartheid regime took a decision to purchase a nuclear reactor of American design for Pelindaba nuclear station situated in Pretoria. This decision made South Africa completely dependent on the US with respect to nuclear fuel and related research on nuclear technology. The US was by far the most advanced country in terms of atomic energy research, and the facilities which the apartheid regime's scientists enjoyed for both contact and training in the US were invaluable to the development of nuclear research – including nuclear power projects – in South Africa. This dependence was successfully exploited by the US State Department to pressure South Africa to accept the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Thereafter, there were no difficulties with the United States Atomic Energy Commission on any aspect of atomic energy cooperation. The US Commission supported apartheid South Africa to the hilt, resulting in a reciprocal aid package offered by South Africa to the US when rich uranium was in a very short supply internationally (Ibid:9).

A memorandum dated 4 January 1951 about a meeting between Dr Dönges, the apartheid regime's Minister of the Interior, and Gordon Dean, the chairperson of the US Atomic Energy Commission, set out the structure and functions of the Combined Policy Committee and the Combined Development Agency in the field of international cooperation in atomic energy matters. It also mentioned the extent to which the US Atomic Energy Commission was prepared to extend a privileged position to the Union of South Africa. Present during the discussions were J.C. Johnson, J. Volpe and J. Hall, who represented US interests. Johnson was one of three US representatives who had conducted discussions in South Africa during October-November 1950 together with delegates from the UK and US Atomic Energy Boards. At the meeting, he referred to the agreement which had been reached between the US Atomic Energy Board and the Combined Development Agency on the sale of South Africa's uranium. He said that the US officials were pleased with the manner in which negotiations had taken place and were satisfied with the agreement reached. Johnson also referred to the plant that would be built in the Union (probably Pelindaba) and a brief discussion followed on security and screening of staff, as well as the price to be paid by the US for the uranium (DFA, PM137/6).

By 1942, research into the possibility of producing an atomic weapon before the end of the Second World War had reached a point which justified

diverting the huge resources in labour (professional and skilled), materials and effort that were necessary to bring the project to fruition. By agreement between President Roosevelt of the US and Churchill, the British Prime Minister, plans for the manufacture of atomic weapons in the UK were shelved because of fears of infiltration by the Nazis, and the whole effort was thus concentrated in the North American continent. There were five main components in this project:

- various research programmes in the US carried out mainly by land grant universities and colleges;
- a research programme at Chalk River, near Ottawa in Canada;
- a gaseous diffusion plant at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, for the production of U235 (plutonium);
- production piles at Hanford, Washington, for producing quantities of plutonium;
- a weapons establishment at Los Alamos, New Mexico, for manufacturing the fissionable material (U235) into atomic weapons. A British team assisted the Americans at Los Alamos (Ibid).

In 1943, in order to coordinate their joint work on the nuclear programme, the US, Britain and Canada established the Combined Policy Committee (CPC). These countries cooperated in the production of atomic weapons and shared a great deal of secret information. Their policies and exchange of ideas were regulated by the CPC, which also provided a means of consultation on general policy issues arising out of their partnership. Under the guardianship of the CPC, they established the Combined Development Agency (CDA), which had the sole function of procuring the raw materials required for the atomic energy programme. A major function of the CPC was to safeguard the secret information held jointly by the US, Britain and Canada as a result of wartime sensitivities; and to arrange the allocation of raw materials procured by the CDA (Ibid).

During the Second World War, the CDA entered into a contract with the Belgian supplier of uranium from the Congo and, from time to time, had joint contracts with various research groups, with the objective of developing answers to problems of extracting uranium in a feasible and economic manner, such as from gold tailings in South Africa. The work done at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Chemical Research Laboratory was based on a CDA contract with these institutions. The Canadian role in the agency was not based on that of a supplier of uranium but on its membership in the CPC. The Canadian ore was sold to the US Atomic Energy Commission through a bi-lateral contract between the Canadian and US governments.

Five countries were identified as significant sources of uranium to be purchased by the CPC. These countries were the US, Canada, Belgian Congo, Portugal and South Africa. The CDA undertook the procurement of uranium from the last three of these significant sources which were outside the territory of the CPC countries. In Portugal, the UK, acting as the agent for the CDA, purchased certain mines by agreement with the Portuguese government, and were permitted to mine and export a certain tonnage of uranium per annum. The Belgian Congo provided the predominant supply of uranium for both the US and UK. In view of the fact that it would be a substantial supplier of uranium to the US and UK, the Combined Policy Committee proposed a special relationship with South Africa, comparable to the relationship with the Belgian government which controlled the Congo as a colony. The suggested relationship with South Africa, implemented after the war, proposed:

- Assistance in placing selected (white) South African students in advanced courses and research on nuclear studies in American and British universities;
- Facilitation of access, on a priority basis, to US and British declassified information on atomic energy;
- Visits by selected (white) South African scientists and engineers to unclassified work being carried out under the auspices of the Atomic Energy Commission and the British Ministry of Supply;
- Assistance to South Africa in obtaining certain equipment and materials needed for research in the scientific field related to atomic energy;
- Close participation as agreed upon from time to time in the mutual exchange of technical information on the exploration, mining, processing and extraction of radioactive ores;
- Provision of information, as might be necessary in the development and design of low-power research reactors, if such research tools were desired;
- In summary, the US and UK would do for South Africa whatever was being done and would be done in the future for the Belgians in this field (Ibid).

In 1953, when Lewis Strauss replaced Dean as the chairperson of the US Atomic Energy Commission, he addressed the American Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities on the importance of maintaining a strong nuclear programme. He was adamant that nuclear weapons were crucial for the national defence of the US and was of the view that the Atomic Energy Commission had to sustain a vigorous atomic energy programme. Therefore

by using expertise available at various land grant universities he believed that the US had to retain its lead in quantity, diversity and power of atomic weapons. This, he said, was because:

Too many of us failed to understand the nature of international communism and the threat it posed to the free nations. Only a few foresaw the difficulties ahead and their advice was to a large degree, unheralded. And now, clear to all, the spectre of totalitarianism which we hoped was buried and in a dishonored grave, again menaces the world. We have no choice but to face our times as they are and not as we would like them to be (Ibid).

As the Cold War intensified, vast quantities of South African uranium were being used to arm nuclear weapons produced by the US and the UK and it became apparent that Pretoria was proving a loyal ally of the Western super-powers. A great deal went on at places like Pelindaba and Valindaba – both were nuclear facilities only a short distance from Pretoria – and at various installations in the Cape (including the Koeberg reactor) where South Africa had developed several prototypes of an advanced missile delivery system for more compact versions of the atom bomb. It was therefore not surprising that apartheid South Africa was a founder member of the IAEA set up in 1957, and became one of the states to draft its statute. The apartheid regime's international status as the most advanced nuclear power on the African continent granted it a permanent seat on the IAEA's board of governors.³ In 1958, the Atomic Energy Board (AEB) of South Africa established the first nuclear research programme that included research on a power reactor concept appropriate to South Africa. At its head was Abraham Roux who had a doctorate in mechanical engineering from the University of the Witwatersrand. He became the chairperson of the AEB in 1967 (Venter 2008: chapter 2).

By the early 1960s the apartheid regime had made the decision to build an atom bomb and other nuclear weapons. The targets were, for obvious reasons, Tanzania, Zambia and Angola – countries that provided bases and offices to both the ANC and PAC. In August 1968, after the Wankie and Sipolilo military campaigns waged by the ANC's MK and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army, General Hiemstra told a gathering in Stellenbosch that 'terrorist attacks on Rhodesia could gradually develop into full scale war', and he doubted 'if Russia would supply nuclear arms to Zambia for use against South Africa' (*The Star*, 10 August 1968). In Parliament, P.W. Botha, the Minister of Defence, issued a warning that the apartheid regime regarded 'facilitating terrorism as an act of provocation, and that any country that incited terrorism and guerrilla warfare must realise that provocation can lead to hard retaliation in the interests of self respect and peace'. Although Botha mentioned no countries by name, he was obviously referring particularly

to Zambia and Tanzania. He asserted that the danger facing South Africa was greater than ever before because 'the communists want to pocket South Africa and use it against the free world' (*Rand Daily Mail*, 2 and 4 April 1968). It was only after South Africa gained independence in 1994 that the world discovered that it had built six atom bombs as part of its defence strategy against the liberation movements (Venter 2008; Albright 1994; Marder and Oberdorfer 1977; Purkitt and Burgess 2005; Hounam and McQuillan 1995; Purkitt 1995). However, through the agency of sympathisers such as Dieter Gerhardt and Renfrew Christie, the ANC and its allies were to some extent informed about certain aspects of the apartheid regime's nuclear weapons programme.

From the outset, the ANC took an uncompromising stand on the whole issue of apartheid South Africa's nuclear capability, declaring that the regime intended to use it for purposes of war. A variety of other voices were added later. In 1979 Leslie Harriman, Nigerian ambassador to the UN, protested by accusing the British government of collaboration in South African nuclear projects. Later, a retired nuclear engineer named J. Vogt wrote a letter to the South African Minister of Mines and Energy, questioning the secrecy surrounding activities in the Koeberg plant, since, he claimed, there were no secrets about nuclear power plants if their sole intention was to produce energy. When a representative of the conservationist organisation, Friends of the Earth, visited Koeberg in July 1981, he maintained that the 'tenuous political situation' in South Africa made the use of nuclear energy 'inherently risky' (*Sechaba*, February 1983:20).

With the liberation movements' policies on consolidating their international struggle against the apartheid regime enmeshed in the Cold War, the Western super-powers could not afford to lose apartheid South Africa to communist powers (see Shubin 2008; and Weiyun and Sujiang 2008). Though the 'war' scenarios and defence strategies discussed in the first section of this article were formulated during 1949 and 1950, they were still relevant in Vorster's and P.W. Botha's time, particularly so because the Soviet Union and Cuba were involved in the war in Angola; those early plans certainly influenced the constructive engagement doctrine that defined US foreign policy in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. It was obvious to the ANC that Ronald Reagan's policy made the US an ally of the apartheid regime (UFH, O.R. Tambo Papers, A17.1.4, Box 17, 1). The roots of this pro-apartheid position go back to the policies of both Henry Kissinger and Chester Crocker. In the 1969 US government document officially known as 'National Security Study Memorandum 39', Kissinger insisted that in South Africa:

the whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them. There is no hope for the black to gain the political rights they seek through violence ... We can, through selective relaxation of our stance towards the white regimes [in southern Africa], encourage some modification of their current racial and colonial policies (El-Khawas and Cohen 1976).

The military revolution in Portugal in April 1974 set off a chain of events leading to the independence of Angola and Mozambique under Marxist leadership. This increased pressure on white ruled apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia, leading to various meetings between Kissinger and John Vorster, South Africa's prime minister, the first of which took place in Bavaria, Germany in June 1976. It was obvious during these meetings that the US could not try to force the apartheid regime to change and at the same time expect it to help to settle issues in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South West Africa (Namibia). In October 1977, the US supported the UN Resolution banning arms sales to South Africa; a unilateral arms embargo had been imposed in 1964, but the US had vetoed economic sanctions. The Carter administration also banned the sale of non-military supplies to the South African police and armed forces and leading American banks were encouraged to halt loans to the South African government. However, no pressure was put on the more than 300 American corporations doing business in South Africa. Indeed, the Carter administration's attitude towards business in South Africa did not change from that of the previous administration: the motto was: 'the US neither encourages nor discourages investment in South Africa'. The ambivalence in this statement neatly sums up the contradictions inherent in US policy towards the apartheid regime ('Globalism or Regionalism?', *Adelphi Papers*, No. 154, 979-1980).

Under the Reagan administration in the 1980s, US policy on southern Africa was characterised by an unashamed growing alliance with South Africa. Events that took place in 1981 speak for themselves:

- A 20-year ban on military contact with South Africa was lifted, permitting five South African military intelligence officers to meet the National Security Council and Pentagon officials and Jeane Kirkpatrick, the US ambassador to the UN;
- The US offered to train South Africa's Coast Guard and increase the number of military attaches each country maintained in the other;
- The US and Britain vetoed four UN resolutions calling for sanctions against South Africa because of its illegal occupation of Namibia;

- The US declared that South Africa's invasion of Angola should be seen in full context, citing the presence of Cuban troops in Angola, and cast the sole veto during the UN debate to condemn South Africa;
- The Reagan administration asked congress to repeal the Clark Amendment prohibiting covert CIA action in Angola, a frontline state South Africa was attempting to destabilise;
- The US proposed cutting all contributions to the UN Trust Fund for South Africa, a major source of legal aid to South African political prisoners and humanitarian assistance to South African refugees ('Reagan Ties ...', *The Star*, 11 May 1982).

The Reagan administration's consolidation of ties with the apartheid regime was linked to its pro-apartheid foreign policy on southern Africa. For instance, in June 1980, addressing the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Africa, Crocker, at the time the director of African Studies at Georgetown Centre for Strategic and International Studies, argued during the sub-committee hearing on US policy towards South Africa:

We [the United States] have important interests there [in South Africa] that relate to our global concerns, our economic health and our military flexibility, which we would not want to see lost during this transition, this process of political change in South Africa (UFH, O.R. Tambo Papers, A17.1.4, Box 17, 3; see also Crocker 1980, 1981; Crocker et al., 1981; Jackson 1981).

Crocker's submissions were not surprising as he had authored, during the early 1980s, a journal article in *Foreign Affairs*, and other publications, in which for the first time he articulated the basic tenets of his constructive engagement theory. In these articles he argued that constructive engagement was the only basis for Western credibility in southern Africa. He believed that there could be no presumed communist right to exploit and militarise regional tension, particularly in southern Africa where important Western economic, resource and strategic resources were exposed (Crocker 1980; Crocker et al., 1981).

As argued earlier, another strategic consideration in the US policy towards South Africa was the country's geographical importance. In testimony to Congress in 1980, Crocker stated: 'To me there is no debate, that the security of the Cape route is by far the most important Western interest in the African region'. Davies (2007) pointed out that, by 1979, the US was the world's largest oil consumer (about 19 million barrels a day). Every month, about 2,300 ships, including 600 oil tankers, used the Cape route, making it the main access route to the West for oil tankers coming from the Persian Gulf. The Suez Canal was too narrow for ultra large crude-oil carriers, levied higher

tolls and was unreliable due to instability in the region. Approximately 65 percent of Western Europe's oil imports were transported via the Cape route. South Africa was the only country on the east African coast with the necessary economic infrastructure, military potential, ports, airports and dry docks to support Western defence in the area. These factors were enough to convince many in the Reagan administration that protection of the Cape route, and prevention of its falling into the hands of the USSR, was vital enough to warrant the support of the pro-West government in Pretoria. Crocker himself pointed out: 'It is clearly more than a convenience that South Africa's excellent port and air facilities should not be in the hands of potential adversary' (Davies 2007:58; see also Crocker 1980, 1981; Crocker et al., 1981).

In 1981, Crocker, Mario Greznes and Robert Herderson, rehashing most of the late 1940s and 1950s arguments, co-authored an article in which they stated that in military and strategic terms, the Cape route, an import conduit for the majority of Western imports of petroleum and non-fuel minerals, was not vulnerable to imminent disruption in any credibly foreseeable peacetime scenario. In fact, they expressed the view that because of the struggles for national liberation in southern Africa, the potential threat to Western oil and mineral supplies was greater on land than on sea. However, there were two worrisome contingencies, and these were important ones. First, at a time of general war or even limited conflict that could break out elsewhere, the supplies remained vital. It was clearly more than a mere convenience that South Africa's excellent port and air facilities were not in the hands of a potential adversary, the USSR, at such a time. They argued that the Soviet Union was unlikely to begin a war by disrupting Western shipping, because they believed there were far more convenient places from which the USSR might seek to disrupt oil traffic. But they were of the view that the USSR would have major advantages once war occurred if political forces hostile to the West were in control of South Africa. This concern was applicable both to a wartime scenario in Europe and a large scale Middle East conflict in which the Western super-powers were involved. For these reasons, the authors suggested that it was clearly not in the US interest that change in South Africa should lead towards a government that was dependent for its existence and survival on Soviet military power, as was the case in Angola. In such a case, the very presence of Soviet forces at Africa's sensitive southern tip would constitute a powerful basis for intimidation of the Western nations (Crocker et al. 1981:12). To counter the 'communist threat' and publicly confirm the strategic importance of southern Africa, in 1981 Crocker affirmed arguments articulated earlier in the late 1940s and 1950s (Crocker 1981:7).

Concerning the existing relationship between the ANC and the SACP, sub-section 102 (b) (4) of the US Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 proclaimed that the US would encourage the ANC to 're-examine their ties to the South African Communist Party'. Anti-ANC conservatives, such as Senators Danton and Helms, harped on this section of the Act. They painted the ANC 'red', an agent of Soviet expansionism. The complex relationship between the ANC, USSR and the SACP was explained in simplistic terms and the ANC's relationship with the Soviet Union was characterised as a threat to the US. Hence, a section of the Helms amendment stated that the US president should have a written report that would determine 'the extent to which Communists have infiltrated' anti-apartheid groups and 'set their policies'. The study released by the State Department in January 1987 spoke of the ANC being 'deeply beholden to the SACP and the Soviet Union' and that the SACP would maintain influence in the ANC. The report elaborated that the SACP was 'only one element' within the ANC and that 'Moscow has learned that it will be no easy task to gain ascendancy in such a diverse organisation such as the ANC' (US Dept State 1987:1, 4 and 10).

The ANC's Ideological Struggle against the Western Super-powers and Pro-dialogue African Countries⁴

O. R. Tambo's critique of US policy towards South Africa was articulated while addressing the Council of Foreign Relations in New York on 8 November 1982 and in other interviews he held. His 1982 lecture was titled 'The African National Congress, the United States and the Future of South Africa'. The ANC's president rationalised that it seemed that, between the ANC and the Republican Party controlling the US government, there was agreement on only two points – that the apartheid system was unjust, and that change in South Africa was necessary. The ANC's perception of what was unjust about the apartheid system, what change was necessary, how much change should be brought about and to what end, differed radically from the perception of the US. It was clear, said Tambo, that Reagan's policy on South Africa made it an ally of the apartheid regime (UFH, O. R. Tambo Papers, A17.1.4, Box 17:1).

The US administration had no other logical option – in the complexity of South African politics, it had to find the forces that could initiate, direct and control the process of gradual change. For Tambo, the question was: In what way, in the eyes of the US administration, did P. W. Botha qualify for this role? The answer was that P. W. Botha was perceived by the Reagan administration as a reformer. Crocker assured the House Sub-Committee on Africa in 1982 that there was a noticeable change in the 'climate and

atmosphere' of Afrikaner politics, which in his view had changed for the better. He argued that this was discernable in Botha's speeches to his party caucus and in the Afrikaners he used as his advisers. In the eyes of US policy makers on Africa, Botha was the one in power and thus had the means to initiate and control the process of change. Thus, from the hard-nosed point of view of the US government, P. W. Botha was the person to deal with rather than more attractive liberal-reformist elements who were outside the corridors of power (UFH, O. R. Tambo Papers, A17.1.4, Box 17).

Tambo challenged Crocker's convoluted reasoning which he argued led to the extraordinary position that the US government totally disregarded human rights, such as, for example, the death of Steve Biko and Neil Aggett while in police custody. Equally, the decision by the US government to permit the export of military equipment to the South African security forces was indefensible. How could this be justified as a necessary part of a total package of measures designed to bring about 'progressive' change through constructive engagement with the apartheid regime? Tambo believed that another factor that 'qualified' Botha for US support was that he was virulently anti-communist and anti-Soviet Union, thus necessitating the bizarre accolade showered on him by Reagan. The US president praised the apartheid regime as an ally with whom the United States was united in a struggle against Nazism during the 1940s. This was of course inaccurate on two counts: the apartheid regime only came to power in 1948, and Botha was an unrepentant racist and Nazi supporter. The predication of US foreign policy on the maintenance of an acrimonious relationship with the USSR had of course encouraged the process of mutual attraction between Washington and Pretoria (Ibid). Criticising US foreign policy on Africa, Tambo voiced the opinion that:

US concerns in international affairs should be freedom, social progress, and peace, and it should align itself with all the forces that strive to achieve these goals internationally. The ANC is fighting for the destruction of a violent anti-human regime in our subcontinent, whose history is one of aggression and oppression, not only against indigenous South Africans, but also against neighbouring states. Can the US really be part of international concern, particularly in southern Africa, to strengthen and provoke aggression against those who fight for peace? ... Considerations of 'real politik', 'power politics', or whatever, cannot justify the formation of an alliance with the self-proclaimed heirs of Hitler's Reich (Interview, *Africa Report*, 1981:22, 40; see also Furlong 1991; Bunting 1986).

Tambo's opinion was that the US should make a choice, continue to sup with the devil or join the struggle against the apartheid regime:

What the US should consider, and very carefully, is whether its role in that area [southern Africa] is to get rid of racism as represented by Pretoria, or to sup with the devil [the apartheid regime] in the interests of profit and raw materials. Indeed, the US must accept that the Soviet Union is striving to liquidate the crime of apartheid in keeping with the OAU and UN resolutions and is supporting us in fighting for a southern Africa that will become heaven and a bastion of peace. US access to raw materials in South Africa and indeed to the hearts and minds of our people can never be guaranteed by forming alliances with those who treat our people as animals and wild beasts (Interview, *Africa Report*, 1981:22).

In 1981, Tambo reminded the anti-communist brigade that the official relationship between the ANC and Soviet Union was historical. It dated back to 1927, when a delegation of the ANC, led by its president, Josiah Gumede, visited the Soviet Union and came back convinced of the support that the struggle for national liberation enjoyed from the Soviet government and people (Gumede 1982).⁵ The ANC stood together with the Soviet Union and allied forces in fighting Nazism during the Second World War. True to its history, unlike the Western super-powers, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries stood with the ANC, fighting the apartheid system and its leaders who were direct pawns of Nazi ideology and practice. Tambo confirmed the fact that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), having endorsed the armed struggle waged by the oppressed people of Africa, had made repeated appeals to the socialist countries for assistance. He promised that:

The ANC will continue to work for the unity of the greatest possible number of people at home and abroad for the destruction of the apartheid regime and for the birth of democratic, non-racial, and united South Africa. The greatest possible number will include South African communists and those of other lands, including South African Christians as well as the world Christian community. The greater that number and the firmer the unity among these diverse ideological strands in their opposition to apartheid system, the closer the prospect of our victory becomes (Interview, *Africa Report*, 1981:21; see also Ndlovu 2006).

In its opposition to the Reagan Administration's policy on 'constructive engagement', the ANC was supported by the OAU. The Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU which met at Addis Ababa in June 1963 passed a resolution on South Africa which read:

[The OAU] strongly condemns the Reagan administration for its self-proclaimed alliance with the racist Pretoria regime, the violation of the arms embargo and policy of constructive engagement designed to rehabilitate the apartheid regime and isolate the National Liberation Movement in order to

perpetuate the apartheid system ...[This summit is] convinced that notwithstanding its apparent military might and continued support from the Reagan administration and certain other Western countries, the Pretoria regime's inherent and proven vulnerability to armed struggle guarantees inevitable eradication of the apartheid system and establishment of a non-racial democratic society for all the people of South Africa, regardless of race, colour or creed (*Sechaba*, September 1983:16-17).

In the final analysis, the US perceptibly favoured the apartheid regime whose response to Cold War included a clandestine effort by Vorster to maintain diplomatic relations with African countries. The ANC's defiance of Reagan's policies was at first complicated by strategic moves into Africa pursued by the apartheid regime during the 1970s.⁶ Roger Pfister (2003) argues that the South African military was the principal actor in Pretoria's 'dialogue' with Africa, at least initially (see also Nolutshungu 1975; Wheeler 2005).⁷ As proven by the proceedings of the 1953 Nairobi Conference, the South African military sought to play a continental role alongside the imperial powers in their efforts to curtail the encroachment of the USSR into a continent which they falsely believed they owned. In 1969, the South African defence budget amounted to \$359 million and by 1974, the apartheid regime planned that it would spend \$2.2 billion to strengthen its defence capabilities. *Jeune Afrique* listed that the South African armed forces had 43,800 soldiers, of whom 17,250 were designated as an intervention force and 26,000 served as members of the military intelligence. Besides the regular army, there was a civilian commando numbering 60,000. The South African Defence Force also had an Air Force commando and the racially defined 'Coloured Corps' (*Jeune Afrique* 1970; see also Bunting 1986: chapter 15). In the years 1960-1970, the apartheid regime received huge deliveries of arms from Western super-powers.

Such was the military threat posed by the apartheid regime that in 1969, the OAU Summit of the Heads of States and Governments in East and Central Africa adopted the Lusaka Manifesto, which stated the preference of African countries for non-violent solutions to the problems of white minority rule and apartheid on the subcontinent (Lusaka Manifesto 1969). Although the ANC felt short-changed by the Lusaka Manifesto, the organisation was keenly aware that overt criticism of the entire document would demonstrate a lack of political acumen on its part (Ndlovu 2006). Implementing its policy of 'dialogue', South Africa appeared to be making a breakthrough on the diplomatic front in Africa. On 22 April 1971, Vorster addressed parliament about what he called 'stirrings' on the African continent (*Hansard*, SA Parl. 22 April 1971).

Regardless of the contentious clauses reflected in the Lusaka Manifesto, the large majority of African states considered the apartheid regime and its Rhodesian satellite as adversaries to be fought and brought down by every possible means. They practised and advocated various measures, including support of the liberation movements, economic boycotts and sanctions. But on 4 November 1970, President Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast distanced himself from the OAU position and declared:

As to the unfortunate apartheid problem, Africa will secure no real results by resorting to force; what is required is dialogue ... All our diplomats should go to South Africa; this would change many things down there ... the recent mission of Mr Kaunda in Europe and America is but a fractional approach to the problem; what is needed is a global approach ... Let us acknowledge that in our systematic opposition to all realistic solutions we sometimes lay ourselves open to ridicule ... It is a question of time: we feel sure that with the help of time our positions will in the end be understood (Country Files, Ivory Coast, 1/179/3).⁸

Houphouët-Boigny and President Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, as virulent anti-communists, were receptive to Vorster's policy and spearheaded the 'dialogue club'. By 1971, the pro-dialogue group also included Ghana, Lesotho, Niger, Gabon, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Rwanda, Upper Volta, Togo, and Uganda.⁹ These countries invoked the Lusaka Manifesto to establish contacts with the apartheid regime. Houphouët-Boigny, the chief strategist and spokesperson of the 'dialogue club', at his eagerly awaited conference of 28 April 1971, based his pro-dialogue arguments on three conditions, which he enunciated as follows: 'The first condition is peace within every African country. The second is peace between African countries; the third is peace between African countries and the world'. He added:

I do not know of any person who feels that the white South Africans are not Africans ... To be sure apartheid is being practised in South Africa. All of us strongly condemn this policy ... Apartheid is an internal South African problem. It cannot be abolished through force in the Republic of South Africa ... Before concluding this preliminary statement ... allow me to stress the need for dialogue with South Africa ... Our contact with the whites in South Africa can help gradually to solve the apartheid problem ... In fact, Vorster has promised to receive African leaders on an equal footing. For all those who are motivated by peace in the interest of Africa, it would be an act of faith and courage to reply favourably to the invitation of the South African prime minister (Houphouët-Boigny 1971; Country Files, Ivory Coast 1/179/3).

In response, the elated Vorster authored a letter on 14 May 1971, addressed to Houphouët-Boigny, in which he voiced his approval:

I have read with great interest the reports which have been received in South Africa concerning the conference which you gave to the World Press in Abidjan on 28th April, 1971. I was pleased to learn that you advocated a favourable response to my recent invitation to African leaders to visit South Africa and to enter into dialogue with my Government. I should like to convey to my sincere appreciation for the firm stand you have taken in this respect, which I believe to be an act of wise statesmanship animated by a sincere desire for peace and welfare in Africa. It is my hope that your lead will be followed by other states in Africa. Pursuant to the foregoing I should be happy to invite you formally to visit South Africa at a mutually convenient time. Should this approval be acceptable to you, the date and details could be arranged between us in due course. I of course would be pleased to meet you anywhere, but I am convinced that it is best to meet in South Africa so that you can see personally what conditions are like in my country in view of the many misconceptions which exist (Country Files, Ivory Coast 1/179/3, Vorster to Houphouët-Boigny).

Vorster eventually visited the Ivory Coast in 1974 and countries like Liberia and Senegal engaged in secret diplomacy with South Africa. Ghana, Uganda and Mauritius, though amenable to Houphouët-Boigny's proposals, were ambivalent, voicing some contradictory statements about Vorster's 'outward looking policy' (Legum 1972; Nolutshungu 1975; Pfister 2003). The anti-dialogue group – represented by Nigeria, Liberia, Cameroon, Zambia and Tanzania, among other countries – opposed entering into diplomatic, cultural or economic relations with South Africa ('Dialogue ...', *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1971/72; Pfister 2003). The Ghanaian prime minister, Kofi Abrefa Busia supported Houphouët-Boigny's proposals, meaning that he indirectly supported the policies of the apartheid regime which was against majority rule and a non-racial democratic dispensation in South Africa. Addressing his parliament in December 1970, he said dialogue with the apartheid regime was 'neither a declaration of peace nor an acceptance of the status quo, but another weapon in the armoury of the strategy for the elimination of apartheid and the erection of a multi-racial society in South Africa'. His pro-dialogue address also served as a stinging attack on the lack of financial support to the liberation movements (Ndlovu 2006). Busia asserted:

Freedom fighting has so far been the principal weapon accepted and employed by the OAU in the struggle towards this goal [justice and freedom] ... since becoming Prime Minister a number of truths have become evident to me. What has so far been done to train and equip freedom fighters is woefully and hopelessly inadequate for them to wage a successful war against the well-trained and well-armed troops of the South African government. Many of the members of the OAU have neither paid their contributions [to the Liberation Committee] or are heavy in arrears. At the last meeting of the

OAU, I learnt that only six out of 41 members, including Ghana – please note – had so far paid their contribution in full. With regard to Ghana's contribution, I would like to make it known that from 1964, the time of the Nkrumah regime, to 1968, arrears to the tune of 53,875 British pounds, due as contributions from Ghana to the Liberation Committee were accumulated. The outstanding account has now been settled, and we have paid our contribution for the current financial year ... However, if freedom fighting is to be persisted with, a re-appraisal of our attitude to it is called for. It would be necessary for members not only to pay the present contributions regularly, but also to consider seriously whether our clear intention is to arm freedom fighters efficiently and in adequate numbers, to enable them to defeat South Africa ... then the painfully ludicrous effort that has so far been made cannot escape anyone ... what we appear to be doing so far is to send our African brothers to slaughter. I find it difficult as a human being and an African to accept this situation without anxious questioning ... my government is of the view that another weapon which could be effectively used is that of dialogue either with the South African Government itself, or with moderate forces, black and white, within South Africa ... Dialogue and armed pressure are not necessarily incompatible in this strategy. The United States of America and North Vietnam ... talk in Paris in an endeavour to reach solutions to the problems that have led to war, even while their troops are still fighting. What is an obvious assumption in our advocacy for a dialogue is that South Africa should be ready for such a dialogue. This is saying no more than what the Lusaka Manifesto, as endorsed by the United Nations, advocated (Busia 1971).

In February 1971, responding to the pro-dialogue club, Tanzania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement:

There is no doubt, however, that a diplomatic dialogue between the states of free Africa and racist regimes of Southern Africa would, in fact, undermine the cause of liberation – as the South Africans intend that it should. It certainly cannot serve the cause of freedom ... The [real] leaders of the African peoples of South Africa are in South African gaols, the South African government could free those leaders and then talk to them (quoted in Johns 1977).

The ANC endorsed Tanzania's views and argued that Africans did not need emissaries to visit Vorster and beg him to free the African majority in South Africa; the real leaders of the majority such as Nelson Mandela were languishing in various prisons. As discussed in some depth in Ndlovu (2006), the apartheid regime's diplomatic foray into the continent failed because of the ANC's energetic lobbying and diplomatic efforts within the OAU. In this regard, the ANC was supported by Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda, among others. Nyerere's unwavering dedication to the liberation struggle in southern Africa was enunciated in his address to the first OAU Summit of

Heads of State and Government on 24 May 1963. In a moving speech, he pronounced:

At present, not because of any greater dedication to the cause of freedom in Africa, but because of that proximity to non-independent Africa, we are already making a humble contribution to the liberation of Southern Africa, but we are prepared to do more ... I want to assure our gallant brother from Algeria, Prime Minister Ben Bella, that we in Tanganyika are prepared to die a little for the final removal of the humiliation of colonialism from the face of Africa (Nyerere 1963).

Nyerere's words of wisdom influenced the likes of O. R. Tambo who, with his ANC comrades, was also prepared to 'die a little for the final removal of the humiliation of colonialism' in South Africa, whose face was represented by the apartheid regime, ably supported by the Western super-powers.

Conclusion

This article highlights the power of history as an analytical tool for us as Africans to understand the present struggle for mineral resources in the global world, regardless of where these rapacious wars take place – in Iraq, Libya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Sudan or the present battle of wits between super-powers controlling NATO, Russia and China. The international struggle for the control of mineral resources waged by imperialists began in South Africa and as such has a long history marked by Britain's invasion of the then Transvaal Republic during the late nineteenth century. This war was to secure a constant supply of gold and a land mass later annexed to form part of the Union of South Africa in 1910. In the process, many indigenous people were annihilated. But they were not passive as they resisted by establishing liberation movements. The study explains and analyses critical historical factors that led to a multi-polar world after the Second World War. It therefore highlights our present concerns in terms of what is happening in the Middle East and Africa as a continent, particularly the advent of Communist China and a fortified Russia as alternative global players linked to a continuation of resource based wars with Western super-powers. It further anticipates a possible trajectory to a multi-polar world after a period of uni-polarism dominated by the US since the fall of the USSR in the late 1980s.

This study also illuminates the explicit role of ideology as it informs the political economy of Africa – including self inflicted divisions and failure to stage a united front by African countries against domination by external powers and imperialists. Ideology is a difficult concept to define, but as used in this article, it refers to the overall perception one has of what the world, especially the social world, consists of, and how it works. This includes issues

like political, economic and moral views. This definition of ideology is a fairly general one and does not highlight the fact that ideals, ideas, beliefs and representations are models generated by material conditions, which may only emerge in practical response. The importance of history as an ideological weapon hardly needs stressing. The Western super-powers, Houphouët-Boigny, Busia and Oliver Tambo, as president of the ANC, used this weapon in articulating their respective positions on the effects of imperialism in Africa. For example, in opposition to Western super-powers, and through resistance, the ANC acknowledged the importance of the anti-colonial struggle against the apartheid regime and the centrality of a united Africa, through the efforts of the OAU, in its struggle for national liberation in South Africa. On the other hand, the Reagan administration, in its endeavour to implement its policy on imperialism through constructive engagement, suppressed the history of the liberation movements and resistance carried out by the oppressed in South Africa. Furthermore, the US sought to suppress the role of the USSR in the struggle for national liberation in South Africa, a rich and liberating history of resistance which the ANC was proud to acknowledge.

It is also interesting how, because of entrenched ideological positions, the opposing sides – the Reagan administration and the ANC – interpreted P. W. Botha's pro-Nazi position and his misguided activism during the Second World War (Furlong 1991; Bunting 1986). The article also shows why countries such as South Africa and the DRC, because of an abundant supply of raw materials and other resources, will always remain important to imperialist policy makers. It also highlights the importance of the study of political economy and history, particularly the history of dominance and resistance in Africa as a continent.

Notes

1. In his memoirs, Rusty Bernstein remembers the first time he met Jack Watts during the late 1930s and how he later discovered that his real name was Gathercole. He writes, 'Gathercole disappeared from sight soon after. When SACP members were facing "listing" under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, some claimed that the Liquidator's evidence could only have come from him' (Bernstein 1999:26).
2. On the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) see Gurney (2008).
3. The apartheid regime later relinquished this seat as a result of mounting pressure from the international community, as guided by the liberation movements.
4. Some parts of this section forms part of a chapter by Sifiso Ndlovu on 'The African National Congress negotiations'.
5. The Union of South Africa government reacted viciously to the ANC's show of support to communism although the ANC was deeply divided on this issue, with Seme, Champion and other leaders, staunch anti-communists (Ndlovu 2000). On Gumede, Seme and Champion's views on communism see Karis (1986/7).

6. This section is based on S.M. Ndlovu (2006), a chapter on the ANC's international relations in the 1970-1980 period.
7. See also the extensive, rich collection of country files housed in the South African Department of Foreign Affairs Archives, Union Buildings, Pretoria. Each African country has a file dedicated to it and these files contain records of South Africa's relationship with various African countries throughout the twentieth century.
8. In these files there is an unsigned specimen of a top secret loan agreement between the government of the Ivory Coast (the borrower) and the South Africa Reserve Bank of the Republic of South Africa (the lender) of R1 million.
9. See for example, Ivory Coast (President Houphouët-Boigny's Press Conference on Radio Abidjan, 28 April 1971); Lesotho (Prime Minister Chief Leabua Jonathan's statement made before the meeting of OAU Heads of State, June 1971); Ghana (statement by Ghana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, William Ofori-Atta, at Addis Ababa, 20 June 1971); Malawi (report on President H. Kamuzu Banda's visit published in *Africa Research Bulletin*, Political Series, Vol. 8, No. 8, 1971). All these excerpts are available in the *Africa Contemporary Record*, Vol. 4, 1971/72, C 71-77. See also the country files housed at the Department of Foreign Affairs Archives, Union Buildings, South Africa.

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