

# Publicising the African National Congress: *The Anti-Apartheid News*

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*Harnessing international support for the struggle against apartheid was a major aspect of international solidarity work, and publicising the atrocities of apartheid and the role of the liberation movements in combating apartheid was therefore a campaign priority. The British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) emphasised informing the British public about developments in South Africa as one of its core functions. In this article one aspect of this activity – namely the AAM's own publication: The Anti-Apartheid News – is analysed. A survey of the paper illustrates how the AAM used it to inform the British public about both apartheid and the African National Congress's (ANC) history and ideology. Through the newspaper the AAM was able to increase international solidarity with and support for the ANC. The article argues that the AAM therefore played a pivotal role in popularising the ANC and helping to establish its reputation internationally as the authentic representative of the people of South Africa.*

Keywords:

British Anti-Apartheid

African National Congress

Media

International Solidarity

Apartheid

Soweto Uprising

## 1. Introduction

The AAM was formed in 1960 in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre. Its July 1962 constitution outlined the organisation's three major aims and objectives, namely to inform the public on apartheid; to campaign to end apartheid; and 'to co-operate with and support South African organisations campaigning against apartheid'.<sup>1</sup> The AAM's goal was to change British government attitudes, inform public opinion and organise various boycotts. The AAM campaigned for the isolation of South Africa, through sanctions and cultural, academic, diplomatic and sports boycotts.<sup>2</sup> The AAM focused on Britain while the liberation movements concentrated on the struggle in South Africa.<sup>3</sup>

One facet of AAM work that is often overlooked is the third element of its constitution that involved moral and organisational support for the South African liberation movements. This facet of AAM work gave much needed moral support to the exiled liberation movements, and in particular to those that re-formed in London. However, whilst the AAM's constitution made no

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<sup>1</sup> Rhodes House Library, Oxford (hereafter MSS) British Anti-Apartheid Movement Archive (AAM) 2313: Constitution of the AAM: 24 July 1962.

<sup>2</sup> Details on sport boycott: R. Nixon, 'Apartheid on the Run: The SA Sport's boycott' *Transition*, 58 (1992), 68-88; B. Murray, 'Politics and Cricket: The D'Olivier Affair of 1968' *Journal of Southern African Studies (JSAS)*, 27 (2001), 667- 684; D. Booth, 'Hitting Apartheid for a Six? The Politics of the SA Sports Boycott' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38 (2003), 477- 493.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with F. Ginwala, 13 January 2005 (telephone).

specific mention of which movement it would support, and it offered various liberation movements official observer status on AAM committees, in practice the AAM overwhelmingly supported the African National Congress (ANC).<sup>4</sup> The relationship between the AAM and the ANC dated back to the formation of the AAM's predecessor, the Boycott Movement, in 1959, and both the Boycott Movement and early AAM included ANC supporters, such as Tennyson Makiwane, Vella Pillay and Kader Asmal, in their committees.<sup>5</sup> April 1960 witnessed the banning of the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) inside South Africa. Initially the two movements came together with others to form the South African United Front (SAUF) in exile and the AAM offered support and assistance to the SAUF. The SAUF was however unstable and dissolved in 1962, leaving the ANC, PAC and others to operate separately.<sup>6</sup> The support of the AAM remained of great importance to exiled movements, but the AAM did not remain neutral. This article illustrates how the AAM promoted the ANC over other liberation movements as the most representative liberation movement for South Africa and as the legitimate leader of the struggle against apartheid. The AAM employed various strategies aimed at changing the ANC's image internationally. The *Anti-Apartheid News* was one such strategy.

There were various reasons for the AAM's preference for the ANC over alternative bodies such as the PAC and Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Among these were the AAM's and ANC's close relations with Communist organisations (and thus a shared ideology), the superior organisation of the ANC in exile (especially in the later period), and the critique the AAM received from the PAC.<sup>7</sup> This criticism began as early as 1965 when the PAC sent a memo to the AAM complaining about the AAM's 'non-partisan nature'.<sup>8</sup> The AAM was particularly upset by the wider circulation of the memo and public attacks on the AAM. While this article focuses on the extent of coverage of the ANC in the *Anti-Apartheid News*, a comparative study of the coverage of other movements highlights the prominence of the ANC in the publication. Even coverage of the Soweto Uprising failed to give voice to alternative ideologies.<sup>9</sup>

International recognition gave the ANC access to world leaders and bodies, such as the United Nations (UN), and to international funds. The ANC was aware that without legitimacy it could not survive exile. As early as February 1962, when Nelson Mandela represented the ANC at the Pan African Freedom Movement conference in Addis Ababa, the importance of external recognition was emphasised and Mandela expressed concerns about Africa's preference for the PAC's ideology.<sup>10</sup> This was reinforced when both organisations were recognised by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which influenced the UN to recognise and give observer status to both movements in 1973. In the same year the General Assembly judged that the South

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<sup>4</sup> MSSAAM 2313: Constitution of the AAM: 24 July 1962 amended 11 September 1971.

<sup>5</sup> For further information on the early AAM see R. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid. A history of the Movement in Britain* (London: Merlin, 2005), 8-14, 21-22.

<sup>6</sup> MSSAAM 973: South African United Front: various: Discussion documents.

<sup>7</sup> MSSAAM968: PAC, 1962-1980: 28 June 1965 memo; Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, 23-29, 57; G.L. Klein, 'The Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in Britain and Support for the African National Congress (ANC), 1976-1990', (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2007), Chapter 6; interview with H. Kleinschmidt, 12 October 2004.

<sup>8</sup> MSSAAM968: PAC, 1962-1980: 28 June 1965 memo.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; MSSAAM 968: PAC, 1962-1980: AAM draft reply; Mayibuye Centre Archive of the University of the Western Cape (hereafter Mayibuye Centre): R. September (MCH70) London Committee: letter 11/7/1965, press statement and circular October 1965; *Anti-Apartheid News*, July/August 1976.

<sup>10</sup> N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London: Abacus, 1994), 342-369.

African regime had no right to represent South Africans - a major diplomatic victory for the liberation movements.<sup>11</sup> The ANC, however, increasingly emphasised the need for the West to recognise it as the sole liberation movement.

Scott Thomas argued that 'by the mid-1960s the ANC's physical survival as a viable political movement was in doubt' and that support for the ANC mainly came from 'a small, dedicated band of anti-apartheid activists in Western countries'. He explained that the ANC's re-emergence was dependent on exile activities and foreign relations and that an important aspect of the ANC's foreign policy was to obtain exclusive recognition as the legitimate South African liberation movement.<sup>12</sup> This view was supported by ANC President, Oliver Tambo, who stressed that the main functions of the ANC's External Missions were to strengthen diplomatic relations, spread information, raise funds and mobilise government support. The London ANC office was an important international information centre and played a central role in harnessing international support. The Mission was aware that mobilisation for a political cause (namely the anti-apartheid struggle) was not the same as support for a political movement (namely the ANC).<sup>13</sup> The ANC also emphasised the importance of international solidarity at numerous AAM events. In January 1988 Francis Meli said 'Solidarity is vital for us because we do not regard international solidarity as an external factor but as one of the weapons against the enemy' and that recognition of the ANC as South Africa's legitimate representative was key to effective solidarity.<sup>14</sup> The ANC and AAM were acutely aware of the international dimension in the struggle and the AAM knew that it needed to increase support for the struggle and for the ANC.

In this paper the way in which the AAM publicised the ANC through the *Anti-Apartheid News* is analysed. I show how the AAM portrayed the ANC's history, ideology, support base and activity inside the country and how the AAM emphasised the ANC over other liberation movements such as the PAC and Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). I argue that, by highlighting the ANC, the AAM succeeded in making the liberation movement better known and in increasing support for its actions. The paper starts with a brief outline of the history of the *Anti-Apartheid News*. This is followed by sections analysing the newspapers depiction of the ANC's history, ideology, support base, and activity. In most cases themes are intertwined as newspaper articles dealt with multiple topics.

## 2. The *Anti-Apartheid News*

The AAM aimed to work closely with the British media in increasing coverage of South African events. It succeeded in establishing relationships with journalists and newspapers, but still found it difficult to encourage in depth coverage of South African events, especially when there were no major incidents in South Africa or when reporting was suppressed by South African government regulations. For this reason, the AAM established its own publication, the *Anti-*

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<sup>11</sup> N. M. Stultz, 'Evolution of the UN Anti-Apartheid Regime' *Human Rights Quarterly* 13 (1991), 18-19.

<sup>12</sup> S. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation* (London: Taurus, 1996), xi-3.

<sup>13</sup> M. Israel, *SA Political Exile in the UK* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 170-171; G.W. Shepherd, *Anti-apartheid. Transnational Conflict and Western Policy in the Liberation of South Africa* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977), 12-26; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC and the World' in South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, 1960-1970* (Cape Town: Struik, 2004), 555.

<sup>14</sup> Mayibuye Centre: Wolfie Kodesh papers (MCH88) Box 3: 6.1.8: Speeches by ANC leaders: Francis Meli, London, January 1988; Mayibuye Centre: MCH88 Box 1: 6.1.4.3: Other Conferences: United Action for People's Power, 9 January 1988, UK.

*Apartheid News*, through which it was able to report and comment on South African developments and provide information that was contrary to South African government propaganda. While the *Anti-Apartheid News* never reached the broader British public and had little impact on journalists and mainstream newspapers, the paper helped form the ideas of anti-apartheid activists and played a role in directing international anti-apartheid activity.

Production of the *Anti-Apartheid News* began in January 1965 with ten issues per annum, which later increased to eleven. The timing was important as it coincided with a trough in general reporting on South Africa. The AAM believed that the newspaper could air its views and politics, but also hoped to influence general perceptions of Africa which made people sympathetic towards apartheid.<sup>15</sup> Initially the *Anti-Apartheid News* was edited by Rosalynde Ainslie and contained articles by professional journalists, area specialists, and volunteer contributors. For instance, Brian Bunting, a prominent South African Communist Party (SACP) member and foreign correspondent for the British Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Staff (TASS) Union, provided articles for the *Anti-Apartheid News*.<sup>16</sup> The newspaper initially expressed independent views and encouraged some debate. For instance, the December 1966 issue included an article on divisive politics in the left, which was then debated in 'Exile Politics' in the 'Letters' section of the February 1967 edition.<sup>17</sup> The inclusion of letters and feedback reflects space for debate. The AAM printed 5000 copies of the first edition and found over the next few years that, while sales fluctuated, an average of 7000 copies could be sold monthly. Of these, 1500 were individual subscriptions. The cost of the paper increased gradually over the years, from six pence (6d) in the late-1960s, to 10p in the 1970s and 20p in the 1980s. The paper was mainly sold throughout the UK, but was also distributed to other international anti-apartheid groups, such as those in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, and world bodies concerned with racism such as the United National Special Committee Against Apartheid. In this way AAM ideas and campaigns came to have wider impact. The *Anti-Apartheid News* was not financially profitable until the 1980s, but the AAM felt it was a useful campaigning tool which was sufficiently important to continue publication.<sup>18</sup>

The AAM tried various strategies to increase *Anti-Apartheid News* sales and reduce costs. In 1967-1968 coverage of Southern Africa was expanded and relations were established with other British groups concerned with the region so as to increase the interest in the paper and cover issues affecting different groupings. The AAM also tested a new strategy of pull out fact sheets and posters on South African issues and increased coverage of British racial issues, but the aim of 10000 subscriptions was not reached.<sup>19</sup> However, the AAM continued to be focused on southern Africa and the Executive deemed it unwise to focus too much on issues affecting black British people.<sup>20</sup> The problem of trying to involve black British members while only focusing on southern Africa remained an issue throughout the AAM's history, and affected AAM membership negatively. Under Margaret Thatcher racism in Britain worsened, and black people

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<sup>15</sup> Mayibuye Centre: Bernstein interview with A. Minty, 163-190.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with B. Bunting, 5 November 2004 (telephone).

<sup>17</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*, December 1966 & February 1967.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with C. Gurney, 23 November 2005; MSSAAM 13: Annual Report October 1965; MSSAAM 2187: *Anti-Apartheid News* Editorial Board 1976-1987: Annual Report, 1985-1986; V. Pillay autobiography, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/pillay-v.htm>, accessed 12 April 2007.

<sup>19</sup> MSSAAM 13: Annual Report, September 1967.

<sup>20</sup> MSSAAM13: Annual Report, October 1967-July 1968.

were more likely to be unemployed, were paid lower wages, and were more likely to be searched by police.<sup>21</sup> Even in the 1970s when there were more black South Africans in the UK few were either involved in the AAM or attended AAM meetings.<sup>22</sup> The issue was discussed, and in 1986 the *Anti-Apartheid News* reported on the AAM's standpoint expressed through an AGM Resolution. It stated that while the AAM was against all racism and promoted anti-racist policies it had a 'distinctive role' to focus on southern Africa. It hoped members would involve themselves in other British anti-racist organisations.<sup>23</sup>

By the end of the 1960s *Anti-Apartheid News* subscriptions had increased to 8000, mainly due to increased AAM membership. Greater production costs meant the paper remained a financial burden, although the exact loss was hard to ascertain because subscription was tied to membership and it was unclear what percentage of membership fees should be directed towards the *Anti-Apartheid News*.<sup>24</sup> In 1969 Christabel Gurney took over from Anne Darnborough as editor. Gurney edited the paper for the next ten years, after which she remained active in the AAM National Committee. During this period the paper developed a more uniform AAM perspective as a growing number of articles were written by Gurney and others in the AAM office, although journalists, ANC members and other parties were encouraged to contribute. These articles appeared in the paper unsigned, as were articles constructed from AAM statements or press cuttings. The AAM experienced some problems accessing information from South Africa in this period as it found that fewer people with knowledge of the underground were entering the UK. Interviews with people just out of prison were useful but provided little information on wider developments. Gurney recalled regular meetings with MP Naicker, the Director of Publicity and editor of the ANC publication *Sechaba*, which also included Rusty Bernstein and Brian Bunting on the editorial board. She also received updates from David and Sue Rabkin, underground ANC operatives in South Africa. The AAM recognised the need to portray a good knowledge of developments and editorial meetings provided information and ideas although they were often not well attended.<sup>25</sup>

Another important source of information in London was the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF). Research was the most visible part of IDAF's work which focused on producing objective and factual research for the UN, embassies, NGOs, and journalists. IDAF published books and produced television documentaries, although these were sometimes deemed too radical to be broadcast. While IDAF carried out research it recognised the AAM as the main organisation for public campaigning and for what it considered 'informed propaganda'.<sup>26</sup> The two organisations therefore shared information and ideas.

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<sup>21</sup> T. Manwaring & N. Sigler, *Breaking the Nation. A Guide to Thatcher's Britain* (London: Pluto Press & New Socialist, 1985), 142-148.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with D. Hemson, 11 November 2004 (telephone).

<sup>23</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*, May 1986.

<sup>24</sup> Interview Gurney; MSSAAM 13: Annual Report, September 1969-August 1970.

<sup>25</sup> MSSAAM 2187: *Anti-Apartheid News* Editorial Board 1976-1987: minutes of various meetings; Interview Gurney.

<sup>26</sup> Liberation Archive of the University of Fort Hare (hereafter Liberation Archive): Tambo Papers: Series C: Special Topics: Box 76: C4.25.4 & C4.25.5 IDAF: SA Information Service July-December 1973; Luthuli House Archive of the ANC, Johannesburg (hereafter Luthuli House Archive) ANC/UK/Ireland Mission: AAM Series IV: Discussion Documents, Box 10, Folder 4, IDAF; Interview with S. Naidoo, 25 November 2004; D. Herbstein, *White Lies. Canon Collins and the Secret War Against Apartheid* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2004), 193-196.

Throughout the 1970s *Anti-Apartheid News* sales remained fairly constant despite increased interest in South Africa. Readership, however, extended beyond the number sold because organisational members, such as trade unions, distributed the papers to branches. This was also a means of supporting the AAM by subsidising the paper. In 1971 the newspaper was extended from eight to twelve pages to increase space for AAM campaign material.<sup>27</sup> The following year, interviews and advertisements increased, which brought in extra revenue. Advertisements were mainly placed by other British charity organisations, trade unions and publishers of books on topics of interest. By the middle of the decade, the number of international subscribers had grown, mainly with people from Australia, Canada and Africa.<sup>28</sup> This suggests a growing concern with apartheid worldwide, especially in the wake of increased action in South Africa. However, international sales never reached the level the AAM hoped for.<sup>29</sup> International subscriptions also point to the importance of the AAM as a source of information on apartheid, not just inside the United Kingdom.

The AAM continued to try and extend readership, although distribution at approximately 8000 was significant for a paper of its nature considering that in the last decade circulation figures for the *Morning Star* have stood at between 10000 and 25000.<sup>30</sup> Gurney commented at an editorial meeting that the '*Anti-Apartheid News* was the main propaganda vehicle of the AAM and that its role was to explain AAM policy and implement AAM strategy'. She suggested the newspaper present and argue AAM policy more effectively and reported on an ANC suggestion that the AAM monitor events and news in South Africa more closely. She added that the '*Anti-Apartheid News* was unique as an international source of information on Southern Africa and could extend its coverage'.<sup>31</sup> This highlights the fact that the *Anti-Apartheid News* aimed at publicising AAM policy and not only reporting on South African developments.

It was only in the 1980s that circulation increased considerably, as did membership of the AAM. This probably stemmed from increased and enduring unrest inside South Africa, which raised public awareness. British readers also probably sought alternative information as they became aware of South African government propaganda which manipulated and restricted reporting. Various articles highlighting the situation were published in the British press, and both *The Independent* and *Star* carried stories on press censorship after Zwelakhe Sisulu, Walter Sisulu's journalist son, was arrested. Amnesty also ran a campaign supporting him.<sup>32</sup> Coverage of South Africa in the general press also increased in this period. In November 1985 a Gallup Poll found that 14% of those questioned followed events in the press on South Africa 'very closely' a further 42% 'fairly closely' while another 42% did not followed these events closely.<sup>33</sup> A

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<sup>27</sup> MSSAAM 13: Annual Report, September 1970-August 1971; Interview Gurney.

<sup>28</sup> MSSAAM 13: Annual Report, 1971-1972 & 1972-1973.

<sup>29</sup> Interview Gurney.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.magazinesabout.co.uk/magazines/view/Morning+Star>, accessed 24 February 2011;

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/4361137.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/4361137.stm), accessed 24 February 2011;

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/aug/03/olympicsandthedia.pressandpublishing>, accessed 24 February 2011.

<sup>31</sup> MSS AAM 2187: *Anti-Apartheid News* Editorial Board 1976-1987: Meeting 11 February 1976.

<sup>32</sup> MSSAAM 986: Press Censorship, articles.

<sup>33</sup> MSS AAM 2241: Opinion Polls.

following of over 50% suggests that the general public was concerned with the situation in South Africa.

By the mid-1980s the AAM assessed that the paper was its main means of publicising the struggle to both the wider British population and its members, although circulation was still largely restricted to members. After Gurney stepped down as editor the AAM advertised the position to employ somebody with experience. Pat Wheeler took over for a trial period, until Margaret Ling stepped in. Circulation of the *Anti-Apartheid News* peaked in 1988 when the paper really reached the broader public for the first time. In October 30000 copies were printed: 20000 for members, 5000 ordered and 5000 for general distribution.<sup>34</sup> The year also saw unsurpassed membership numbers. Both developments were largely a result of the AAM's very successful campaign centred on Nelson Mandela's eightieth birthday.<sup>35</sup>

However, the fact that *Anti-Apartheid News* readership was almost exclusively confined to AAM members suggests that the paper was not reaching the general public at a time when this was crucial. The reason was probably that people were not willing to purchase a publication that dealt exclusively with southern Africa when they did not have a particular interest in the region. The paper also gave a one-sided view of the situation, excluding alternative analyses and discussions on a wide-range of developments in South Africa. In this sense the paper could itself be seen as propaganda. The AAM viewed the paper as countering South African government propaganda and thus, understandably, gave voice to the liberation movements and anti-apartheid arguments. However, AAM policy and viewpoints guided coverage.

The language style of the paper, especially from the 1970s, may also have influenced readership. It used the language of the left, a rather inaccessible writing style of the sort found in publications like the communist daily, the *Morning Star*. This change in style was never discussed but just evolved, reflecting AAM politics. It is possible that the paper would have been more effective had it given space to a wider range of issues, views and styles and if it had encouraged debate. This was raised at the 1980 AGM where AAM members were questioned on their view of the newspaper. People commented that the *Anti-Apartheid News* needed to air controversies, mention who was writing the articles, discuss trade union debates, and have a less uniform style. Members also commented that the paper was hard to sell to outsiders.<sup>36</sup> Gurney explained that while some social movements accept more loosely related publications, for the AAM the *Anti-Apartheid News* was there to express its views and policies. The AAM asked members to place copies in local libraries, pay to have them placed on newsstands, or sell them in the streets. Later the AAM tried to place the newspaper in local and high street shops, but this was not successful probably due to the language and singular focus of the paper which meant it had a small market.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Luthuli House Archive: ANC/UK/Ireland Mission: AAM Series VI: Reports, Box 14, Folder 1, Briefing Note, 1988; H. Thorn, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), chapter 4.

<sup>35</sup> MSSAAM 13: Annual Report, 1985-1986, 1987-1988, 1988-1989; Interview Gurney; Luthuli House Archive: ANC/UK/Ireland Mission: AAM Series II: Campaigns, Box 8, Folder 9, SATIS.

<sup>36</sup> MSSAAM 2187: *Anti-Apartheid News* Editorial Board 1976-1987: Questionnaire October 1980 AGM; MSSAAM 2258: Membership surveys.

<sup>37</sup> Interview Gurney; MSSAAM 1927: Mandela Freedom at Seventy Media & Merchandise; MSSAAM 1929: Mandela Freedom at Seventy Birthday Tribute Concert.

However, despite limited readership, the *Anti-Apartheid News* still played an important role in directing anti-apartheid activity. More importantly, a survey of the paper highlights the viewpoint of the AAM leadership. It therefore provides insight into the ideology underpinning the British AAM and its activities. The focus placed on the ANC throughout the *Anti-Apartheid News* reflects the AAM's clear support for the ANC over support for other South African liberation movements despite claims of neutrality. This is made most clear in Gurney's comment that the '*Anti-Apartheid News* [was] always partly, seen, as a vehicle for projecting the ANC'.<sup>38</sup>

Research into general media coverage of apartheid is also important and demonstrates fluctuations in reporting. The AAM impacted on British media reporting through contact with journalists, letters to newspapers and campaigning.<sup>39</sup> South Africa also influenced reporting through government restrictions on information, propaganda and South African correspondents and journalists.<sup>40</sup> Hyam and Henshaw discuss the British and British press reaction to apartheid since 1948 and also point to fluctuations in opinion and reporting depending on the period and activities in South Africa. According to them, the period immediately after the introduction of apartheid saw almost universal condemnation of the policy and frequent reporting on events in South Africa. However, as relative stability and prosperity was seen in South Africa, especially compared to the rest of newly independent Africa, opinion became more divided. This also coincided with the period when black resistance inside South Africa was at its lowest and when more English speaking South Africans gave support to the National Party. The Soweto Uprising sparked renewed condemnation but, despite intensive internal resistance in the 1980s, British opinion remained divided along political lines.<sup>41</sup> Hyam and Henshaw point out that Margaret Thatcher's government's attitude towards apartheid '...increased the tendency to condemn apartheid as a means of opposing Thatcherism more generally.'<sup>42</sup>

Sanders also researched aspects of these relationships and argued that Thatcher's election in 1979 and Ronald Reagan's in 1980 ended an era of opportunity for international action against South Africa.<sup>43</sup> He analyses the 1970s when the South African government fought a propaganda war against anti-apartheid movements in order to reinforce links with the West. Sanders analysed papers on the left and right and found that coverage was influenced more by individual journalists or editors than by the political position of the paper. This explains the environment in which the AAM was working, where broad-based support across political divisions was achievable in certain instances, especially on humanitarian issues and after activities, such as the Soweto Uprising, in South Africa.

Sanders also analysed the role of pro- and anti-apartheid bodies. He discussed the propaganda group, the South African Foundation, founded in December 1959 in direct response to the

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<sup>38</sup> Interview Gurney.

<sup>39</sup> MSSAAM 2395: Correspondence with journalists: various mainly *Times* and *Guardian*; MSSAAM 2304: General Correspondence with press and media, 1987-1994, National Union of Journalists.

<sup>40</sup> G.Hull, 'South Africa's Propaganda War: A Bibliographic Essay' *African Studies Review*, 22(1979), 79-98.

<sup>41</sup> R. Hyam & P. Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok. Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 307-342

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 331

<sup>43</sup> J. Sanders, *South Africa and the International Media. 1972-1979. A Struggle for Representation* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000).

formation of the Boycott Movement. The apartheid government was clearly concerned with international public opinion and felt that the anti-apartheid group was a threat. Sanders found that ‘the Foundation ... proved itself to be one of the most effective propaganda organizations in the western world.’ He also mentioned the AAM and the *Anti-Apartheid News* ‘... a slightly haphazard publication, providing news, commentary, exposés, extracts from anti-apartheid books, statements by the AAM and the ANC, details on campaigns, and, from the mid-1970s, critiques of the British media’s treatment of South Africa. It was not a predictable newspaper, being, in effect, pragmatic and earnest in equal measure.’<sup>44</sup> However, he comments that placing articles ‘... in the British media was extremely difficult. The only newspaper which regularly found space for anti-apartheid comment was the communist daily, the *Morning Star*.’<sup>45</sup> Sanders’ research illustrated the threat the AAM faced from propaganda and the problems it experienced in accessing the general media on a regular basis. In the light of this, the importance and prominence of its own newspaper is clear. The *Anti-Apartheid News* filled a gap in British reporting – one that the ANC itself could not fill with credibility.

In the 1980s the AAM also played a prominent role in getting South Africa in the general press. Victoria Brittain, journalist for *The Guardian*, recalled her close relationship with the AAM, which contacted her to interview Mohammed Valli from the United Democratic Front (UDF) during a visit to the UK in 1984. Over the years the AAM provided Brittain with information, access to prominent people, and invitations to important conferences on South Africa. The AAM’s impact was thus extended, and Brittain believed the role the AAM played in getting the ANC and South Africa into the press was crucial. In the early 1980s reporting was more limited to either specific events or media on the left, but in the late 1980s it increased across newspapers. By the end of the decade South African government attempts to limit access to information were also widely reported.<sup>46</sup>

### 3. ANC History

AAM support for the ANC was reflected in its coverage of ANC history in the *Anti-Apartheid News*, which was highlighted through different types of articles. By portraying the history of the ANC in a certain light, its importance and credibility were established. In the first place, history was emphasised through focusing on prominent ANC individuals and their role in the struggle. The newspaper ran frequent pieces on ANC leaders involved in the Rivonia Trial, highlighting Mandela and Sisulu. It also conducted interviews with ANC people who visited or were resident in the UK in order to project and publicise the ANC and its policies. Through such articles, the AAM hoped to show that its views were supported by the ANC.<sup>47</sup> Political prisoners, or those involved in prominent events, were depicted in such a way as to highlight ANC history. The Nelson Mandela campaign, which grew into a major AAM priority in the 1980s, was the most successful campaign for an individual which brought the focus towards the ANC as a whole. Secondly, the newspaper covered celebrations which emphasised ANC history, for example the anniversary of the Freedom Charter. When commemorating such occasions the newspaper emphasised the ANC’s aims, ideology and achievements. Finally, the newspaper highlighted the

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>46</sup> MSSAAM986: Press Censorship, articles; Hakan Thorn interview with V. Brittain (5 February 2000); Thorn, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society*, chapter 4.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

ANC's long history and its achievements over many years as the oldest liberation movement in Africa, as discussed below. Through this focus the AAM succeeded in depicting the ANC as the legitimate representative of the South African people and as the leaders of the struggle.

In February 1972 a double-page feature celebrated 'ANC 60 Years of Struggle'. The article mentioned the likelihood of the ANC being the oldest nation-wide political organisation in Africa, explained how the ANC had survived attempts to destroy it and outlined its history. It discussed the development towards militancy in the 1940s, led by Sisulu, Mandela and Tambo, who, it explained, had become leaders in the 1950s and 1960s. The article also discussed the Congress Movement, mentioned the split with the PAC, and emphasised a new phase in the struggle after the Sharpeville massacre and Rivonia Trial.<sup>48</sup> The article concluded that 'the ANC is still the embodiment of African nationalism which it always was' with ideals of multiracialism or non-racialism. Pictures depicting the ANC and its leaders decorated the page.<sup>49</sup> The article emphasised the ANC as the oldest liberation movement, suggesting this gave it prominence, and highlighted non-racialism and multiracialism, which it equated. Problems which the ANC had faced during its long history were glossed over.

The AAM continued to celebrate ANC anniversaries and in 1982 the seventieth anniversary of its founding was remembered. In January the AAM organised a press conference in the House of Commons where it recalled the movement's status as oldest and most active liberation movement and extended 'warmest greetings' to the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and people of South Africa.<sup>50</sup> The celebrations were followed up with an article in the *Anti-Apartheid News* in March entitled 'South Africa: 1982 Unity in Action'. The double-page spread remembered various aspects of the history of the ANC and of the struggle.<sup>51</sup> The ANC asked that the AAM incorporate the anniversary theme into as many campaigns as possible during the year, suggesting that it realised the importance of emphasising its age.<sup>52</sup> In June the anniversary of the Defiance Campaign was commemorated in 'The Campaign That Inspired the World' which argued that the event, organised by the ANC, made apartheid the responsibility of the UN. The article emphasised the non-violent history of the ANC and reported on greetings for the ANC from all over the world, illustrating its international standing and support base.<sup>53</sup> In November the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations continued when London-based ANC Chief Representative, Ruth Mompati, went on a speaking tour to Scotland, supported by the AAM.<sup>54</sup> The AAM was not alone in honouring ANC anniversaries. In 1982 the UN Special Committee against Apartheid produced a document on the ANC's anniversary where it discussed the 'Year of Unity in Action' and expressed its admiration for the 'heroic defiance of repression' which 'freedom fighters of

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<sup>48</sup> The Congress Movement included the ANC, South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO), South African Indian Congress (SAIC), South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and Congress of Democrats (COD).

<sup>49</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: February 1972.

<sup>50</sup> Luthuli House Archive: ANC/UK/Ireland Mission: AAM Series VII: Statements, Box 16, Folder 1: 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

<sup>51</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: March 1982.

<sup>52</sup> MSSAAM 919: ANC/AAM Meetings: Minutes 3 September 1981.

<sup>53</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: June 1982.

<sup>54</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: November 1982.

the ANC have demonstrated, by their courage and their skill'.<sup>55</sup> This suggests success in attaining a level of international recognition.

Similarly, in 1987 a double-page poster in the *Anti-Apartheid News* reported on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the ANC, with Mandela's picture centrally placed and adverts from other interested groups and trade or student unions congratulating the ANC.<sup>56</sup> The March issue continued the theme with '1912- 1987, 75 Years of the ANC' along the top of each page of the newspaper.<sup>57</sup> Anniversary articles focused on the ideals of the ANC and its status as oldest liberation movement in Africa, while leaders were discussed and their values attached to those of the ANC. However, the changing nature of the ANC over seventy five years was not mentioned. Rather, it portrayed as a monolithic movement which always had mass support and led the liberation struggle, which was not accurate.

It is clear that the *Anti-Apartheid News* played a key role in making the history of the ANC accessible. At a time when the South African government was flooding the media with propaganda about the terrorist nature of the ANC and its own internal reforms, it was necessary for the opposing view to be given media space, allowing for people to make an informed decision on the nature of the ANC. If such details had only been provided by the ANC then the validity of the reports would have been questioned. The solidarity group made it possible for an alternative interpretation of apartheid and the ANC to be aired.

#### **4. ANC Ideology**

The *Anti-Apartheid News* also enlightened readers on ANC ideology and policy. Being a British movement, the AAM knew best what issues to emphasise and how to relate them to the British public.<sup>58</sup> The AAM believed that discussing the ANC's position on violence and armed struggle was necessary in order to dispel fears and increase British support. It emphasised how the ANC only turned to armed struggle after other possible routes had been closed by the apartheid government. It also affirmed that violence was employed responsibly, and that the target of armed struggle was the state and not civilians. The Mandela campaign was an important vehicle for these discussions. The Geneva Conventions and the ANC's support for limited violence were also raised in numerous articles. Another important issue was multiracialism, and the AAM emphasised the fact that the ANC included all races. By highlighting the ANC's ideology, and when necessary contrasting it to that of other liberation movements, the AAM drew in support for the ANC above other groups. However, certain aspects of ANC policy and activities, such as its close relationship with the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) or conditions in the MK camps, were not publicised and other movements, including the PAC and Black Consciousness Movement, were not always depicted fairly.

The history of non-racialism in South Africa has its roots in the early twentieth century.<sup>59</sup> In the 1950s the ANC took on a multiracial character in the Congress Movement – meaning that

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<sup>55</sup> Liberation Archive: Tambo Papers: Series C: Special Topics: Box 84: C4.59.5.2: UN Special Committee 1989-1990.

<sup>56</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: January/February 1987.

<sup>57</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: March 1987.

<sup>58</sup> Interview Hemson.

<sup>59</sup> J. Frederikse, *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racialism in SA* (London: Zed Books, 1990), 3-17.

different organisations for different races worked together but retained their separate identity. The fact that the groups remained separate was important, and in 1959 Ronald Segal asked at an ANC meeting if he could raise a question on Group Areas. He referred to the ANC as a Group Area with different sections for blacks and whites and asked Tambo if he could join the ANC. Tambo replied that he should join the Congress of Democrats (COD) – the organisation for whites.<sup>60</sup> The ANC was therefore multiracial in character rather than non-racial – an important differentiation (considering the PAC's different standpoint) overlooked in AAM campaigns.

The ANC remained exclusively black until the Morogoro Conference in 1969. At the conference ANC members criticised the state of the ANC and MK. Various changes were introduced and Tambo officially became President. A motion was also passed opening ordinary membership of the ANC to all races in exile, while the National Executive Committee remained closed. These changes were not universally popular as some members believed the ANC was becoming too white and communist controlled. The allegation was particularly laid against the London ANC office where some dissatisfied ANC members complained about dominance by minority groups and Tambo's leadership. Tambo met with the so-called 'Gang of Eight', but when no solution was reached they were expelled from the ANC. While Morogoro extended membership to all races, membership of the NEC was only deracialised after the 1985 Kabwe Conference.<sup>61</sup> Despite the fact that non-racialism was contested, the AAM still publicised it so as to avert fears of what would happen after apartheid. The AAM worked closely with the London ANC office, but interestingly the *Anti-Apartheid News* never covered the events surrounding either the Morogoro Conference or the Gang of Eight.<sup>62</sup> This suggests a tendency not to report on the liberation movement's internal politics, and possibly also the desire not to publicise controversial issues.

In contrast, the PAC, while more Africanist in ideology, opened its membership to Africans of any colour and never had different structures for different races. Patrick Duncan was a PAC member and representative to Algeria. However, while members of the South African Liberal Party had sympathy for the PAC, there was concern that despite claims of non-racialism it was racist. In practice, some PAC rhetoric played on anti-white sentiment. The BCM on the other hand took a radical standpoint and discouraged official alliances with white people, who it viewed as part of oppression, but it accepted them as part of South Africa's future.<sup>63</sup> The United Democratic Front (UDF) included people of all races, providing the AAM with a point of reference for non-racialism in the 1980s.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo. Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Claremont: David Philip, 2004), 259.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 326-347; SADET Interview with R. Mompoti (15 August 2001); S. Ellis & T. Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid. The ANC and SACP in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992), 55-65, 149-150; H. Barrell, 'Conscripts To Their Age. ANC Operational Strategy, 1976-1986', (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1993), 78-82; T.G. Karis & G.M. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge. A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990. Volume 5: Nadir and Resurgence, 1964- 1979* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 1997), 34-37, 383-393; Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, 51; A. Tambo (compiler), *Preparing for Power, Oliver Tambo Speaks*, (London: Heinemann Press, 1987), 70-86.

<sup>62</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: February 1974.

<sup>63</sup> C.J. Driver, *Patrick Duncan, South African and Pan-African* (Oxford: James Currey, 1980), 164-167, 176, 220-226; M. Mangena, *On Your Own. Evolution of BC in SA/ Azania* (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1989), 10-43; B. Pogrand, *How Can Man Die Better? The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2006), 99-110.

<sup>64</sup> MSSAAM 976: UDF Reports and Printed Material, Pamphlet 'Call to Whites to Join Us'.

Issues of race were particularly important considering the international context in which the ANC and AAM were operating, especially considering that they were criticising apartheid racism. Many in the West were concerned about the welfare of white South Africans and the implications that black rule would have for them, and therefore sought reassurance that it would be replaced with an ideology incorporating all races. The ANC offered such a solution and publicising this ideology was an important facet of solidarity. One way in which the ANC's view on race was publicised was through celebrating the Freedom Charter.

The Freedom Charter was drawn up at the Kliptown Congress of the People on Freedom Day, 1955. Freedom Day celebrations were held every 26 June after the ANC National Day of Protest and Mourning in 1950 and continued in exile. Celebrations accentuated the ANC and its history. The multiracial Kliptown gathering was organised by the Congress Movement. The Charter states:

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;... The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex.

The Charter also dealt with the economy, human rights, law, education, housing, security and women's rights. It ended 'These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty'.<sup>65</sup>

Although the aims of the Freedom Charter were widely shared, the document was controversial. In 1955 it was adopted by the Congress Movement at Kliptown, but not by the individual organisations. The ANC ratified it in April 1956 after organisational debate and disagreement. It was one of the grievances mentioned by Africanist members when they broke away to form the PAC. The Charter was predominantly written by Rusty Bernstein, a white SACP member. Thus while it claimed to represent the whole population it was in fact drawn up by a small minority.<sup>66</sup> The Freedom Charter was important for the ANC and Congress organisations were referred to as 'Charterist' in contrast to 'Africanists'. The Charter represented ANC principles for a post-apartheid South Africa although it was an expression of ideals rather than a carefully scrutinized document, drawn up after much debate as a 'blueprint for democracy', as it was referred to in the 2005 anniversary celebrations.<sup>67</sup>

In the post-Soweto period the Freedom Charter became increasingly important as new internal organisations, like the BCM and some independent trade unions, did not adopt it. There was, for instance, a clear divide between the Charterist UDF and the Africanist Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO).<sup>68</sup> Adopting the Charter was interpreted as support for the ANC led struggle and the AAM supported the Charterist tradition. The Freedom Charter also gained prominence as internationally people realised that apartheid had to go and wanted to know what to expect of a future South Africa. The ANC offered the Charter as a manifesto of a new South

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<sup>65</sup> 'Freedom Charter special supplement', *Pretoria News*, June 2005.

<sup>66</sup> G. Frankel, *Rivonia's Children. Three Families and the Price of Freedom in SA* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1999), 59-60.

<sup>67</sup> 'Freedom Charter special supplement', *Pretoria News*, June 2005.

<sup>68</sup> MSSAAM 976: UDF Reports, September 1987, pamphlet explaining policy.

Africa, despite the fact that it was not specific regarding policies.<sup>69</sup> It outlined a future where race did not affect rights and human rights were paramount – thus a future acceptable to the West. In the light of these developments, the AAM increased publicity of the Freedom Charter and the *Anti-Apartheid News* represented it as the policy document of the ANC. By giving support to the values of the Charter, above those of contradicting groups, the AAM raised the ANC's profile.

In August 1977 Tambo stated '[s]upport for the ANC is support for a democratic and non-racial South Africa' during his speech at the World Conference for Action Against Apartheid in Lagos. The Conference was organised by the UN in cooperation with the OAU. Tambo discussed the Freedom Charter as representing the true aspirations of the South African people and called for increased political and material support for the ANC, South West African People's Movement (SWAPO) and Patriotic Front.<sup>70</sup> The *Anti-Apartheid News* article reporting the event discussed the Charter as representing the aspirations of the majority of South African, downplaying any internal disagreements. The ANC declared 1980 the Year of the Freedom Charter and asked solidarity movements to focus on the Charter as the only possible programme for change in South Africa.<sup>71</sup> In June the centrefold of the *Anti-Apartheid News* was a reproduction of Charter, decorated with ANC photos. An accompanying article explained that it was drawn up at the 'most representative gathering ever held in the country'.<sup>72</sup> The newspaper therefore celebrated the Freedom Charter, its values and wide acceptance rather than report on the real state of affairs.

In April 1984 the *Anti-Apartheid News* covered 'Fighting for the Freedom Charter', celebrating how the Charter continued to inspire the struggle. It described the Charter as a document written after consultation with the grassroots, not from the ANC top level.<sup>73</sup> The timing of the article was important considering the focus on both the Charter and grassroots support in the aftermath of the formation of the UDF and new insurgency. The UDF however only adopted the Charter in August 1987, although some member organisations never did.<sup>74</sup> Once again the AAM therefore reported the ANC's interpretation of events. In May 1986 the AAM announced 'Forward with the ANC in Year of the Cadre!' and called for an extension of people's power during the thirtieth anniversary of the Freedom Charter. The paper mentioned people affirming the Charter as representative of their deepest aspirations for a new South Africa. It discussed the four pillars of the struggle, emphasised new victories in the struggle, and reaffirmed the Charter's calls for the masses to carry the victories forward.<sup>75</sup> In this article the ANC and MK were firmly linked to internal developments and the ideology of the Freedom Charter, and therefore of the ANC, was raised as fundamental.

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<sup>69</sup> Liberation Archive: Tambo Papers: Series B: Office of the President: Box 45: B8.7.322.2.1B: Dept of International Affairs & External Mission: UK & Ireland, Correspondence: 1985, 1989-1991 & 'The Parliamentarian' 1987-1989.

<sup>70</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: October 1977; ES Reddy, The UN and the Struggle Against Apartheid at <http://www.undp.org.za/docs/apartheid/un-chron.html>, accessed 19 September 2006.

<sup>71</sup> MSSAAM 922: General Correspondence 1961-1989: from ANC International Department.

<sup>72</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: June 1980.

<sup>73</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: May 1984.

<sup>74</sup> I. van Kessel, 'Beyond our wildest dreams.' *The UDF and the Transformation of SA* (Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 16; Interview with R. Suttner, 7 December 2004.

<sup>75</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: May 1986.

It is evident that the Freedom Charter was highly publicised in the *Anti-Apartheid News*, which is significant considering the changing nature of the struggle in the 1980s. By emphasising the Charter the paper accentuated ANC values and ideology and gave its support to the Charterist standpoint. The Charter was also celebrated during a celebration for South African Freedom Day, 26 June 1980, where Ambrose Reeves, AAM President, discussed it as something positive which both the AAM and ANC supported.<sup>76</sup> Celebrations of Freedom Day annually were another example of AAM support for the ANC and in a 1989 memo to Tambo the AAM mentioned 16-26 June as a period when the AAM would focus on solidarity with the ANC.<sup>77</sup>

### 5. The ANC's internal support base

In order for international organisations to accept the ANC as a movement which represented the aspirations of most South Africans, it was necessary for the ANC to have an internal support base. In the post-1976 environment, when internal divisions in black resistance become better known internationally, it became an AAM priority to emphasise internal support for the ANC.

In 'Students Fight for Freedom Charter' Nkosazana Dlamini was interviewed in 1977 after leaving South Africa. She had been Vice-President of the BCM aligned South African Student's Organisation (SASO) and at the same time a member of the ANC. Dlamini later took up a position in the South African government. SASO was a student union formed by Steve Biko in 1969 after he broke away from the multiracial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS).<sup>78</sup> In the *Anti-Apartheid News* Dlamini explained that despite no formal relationship between the ANC and SASO, some individuals were members of both. She stated that SASO could not go beyond a student movement and was not a liberation movement, like the ANC, that aimed at the seizure of power by armed struggle. Dlamini explained that the organisations had the same basic goals – franchise and redistribution of wealth and 'in essence what the Freedom Charter of the ANC stands for'. She added that, in her opinion, BCM was only about consciousness, and that the youth remained aware that only a national liberation organisation could bring about liberation and that the 'only one which has been doing work in preparation for armed struggle, and which has the support of the people, is the ANC.'<sup>79</sup> A similar interview with Dlamini was published in *Sechaba* where she elaborated on the ideology of SASO, Inkatha and the situation in South Africa.<sup>80</sup>

The article raises important issues. In the first place it portrays the ANC as the true representative of South African people, which was key when alternate anti-apartheid forces were also claiming to represent the South African people. The ANC was aware of the importance of it being recognised as the authentic representative and actively engaged in campaigns depicting it as the sole liberation movement.<sup>81</sup> Secondly, the article introduced developments inside South Africa to *Anti-Apartheid News* readers. However, while mentioning BCM and its basic ideology, the primary focus on the ANC was retained and unity in the struggle was not questioned. The

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<sup>76</sup> Liberation Archive: Tambo Papers: Series C: Special Topics: Box 73, C4.6.4.5: Press Releases.

<sup>77</sup> Luthuli House Archive: ANC/UK/Ireland Mission: AAM Series 1: Correspondence, Box 1, Folder 6, memo to Tambo, 1989.

<sup>78</sup> S. Biko & A. Stubbs, *I Write What I Like*, (Oxford: Heinemann, 1978), 3-7.

<sup>79</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: April 1977.

<sup>80</sup> 'The ANC is the Answer' in *Sechaba* (1977).

<sup>81</sup> S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC's Diplomacy and International Relations' in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, 1970-1980*. (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2006), 631-639.

opposing ideals of the two groups were downplayed and not debated. The *Anti-Apartheid News* gave credibility to this interpretation of BCM by quoting Dlamini, but her views were not shared by all BCM supporters and support for the ANC was a contentious issue. Tsietsi Mashinini, leader of the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) during the Soweto Uprising, and his followers expressed an opposing view and were determined not to join either the ANC or PAC, which they considered inactive. In London there was also tension between BCM supporters and the ANC as some were unhappy with the nature of the London ANC, white dominance, and their treatment on arrival.<sup>82</sup>

The *Anti-Apartheid News* continued the theme in 1978 in an article 'ANC Leads Struggle – Banned Institute'. The article quoted Horst Kleinschmidt of the Christian Institute saying that the Institute was not a liberation movement, and that Christian convictions called people to be part of the struggle led by the ANC. He added that only the ANC could prevent a confrontation based on race, thus downplaying the role of other liberation groups and ideologies. No mention was made of BCM or Biko despite recent events in South Africa. Kleinschmidt commented that Europe and the USA channelled funds to other South African organisations to counter the ANC, suggesting that they were supported by the West rather than by South Africans. This aimed to undermine their legitimacy, but did mention the fact that the ANC also received international funds. The article attests to the ANC's international prominence and its expectation that it should be given sole recognition.

Later in 1978 another interview with Kleinschmidt continued these themes. In 'Christian Institute Leader Tells "Why Christians Should Support the ANC"' Kleinschmidt discussed how numerous Christians felt they could not support the armed struggle or choose one movement. He argued that Christians should make the choice for the ANC as it had international support, support from southern African governments and was in the hearts and minds of the South African people. He explained that young and old saw Mandela, Sisulu and Govan Mbeki as their leaders. He added his personal reasons for supporting the ANC - it was the only movement with a clear non-racial policy and it waged armed struggle responsibly. Kleinschmidt clarified that the BCM was not an alternative and that many of its supporters joined the ANC in exile.<sup>83</sup>

Kleinschmidt's statement that BCM was not a liberation movement correlated with Dlamini's argument, suggesting this was an idea that the AAM wanted to push. However this statement and the view that most students chose the ANC need to be considered more critically. While it is true that most students leaving South Africa after the Soweto Uprising joined the ANC, the reason was not always ideological.<sup>84</sup> BCM's ideology was quite different to that of the ANC and the ANC was not the natural choice. Many did not want to join the ANC, as argued by Mashinini. Mashinini's high profile meant that the ANC tried to persuade him to join the movement, but he refused. He complained that the ANC had lost its focus and criticised it for failing to re-infiltrate the country. He even criticised the ANC publicly, making him unpopular. Mashinini and BCM

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<sup>82</sup> L. Schuster, *A Burning Hunger* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), 113; interview Hemson; H. Bernstein, *The Rift. The Exile Experience* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994) 77-81.

<sup>83</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*: July/ August 1978.

<sup>84</sup> Interview Suttner; A. Sampson, *Mandela. The Authorised Biography* (London: Harper Collins, 1999) 274-278; D. Woods, *Biko*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987) 400-403; Karis & Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge*, 286-295; S.M. Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels. Inside South Africa's Hidden War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 31-5; Schuster, *A Burning Hunger*, 96-164, 215-220.

associates formed the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO), which was launched in Lusaka, Zambia in 1979 by about thirty former SSRC members and Khotso Seatlholo was elected President. Mashinini never played a major role in SAYRCO due to tension between him and other leaders.<sup>85</sup> This was not the only attempt to form an exile organisation and the BCM of Azania (BCMA) was formed in London, but never received support from the AAM.<sup>86</sup> The ANC tried to discredit these exile movements and encouraged everybody to join the ANC and share in the 'collective experience of the people in the struggle'.<sup>87</sup> None of these BCM activities were reported in the *Anti-Apartheid News*, despite their knowledge of the developments, and Mashinini was not mentioned in connection with the Soweto Uprising.

While not everybody turned to the ANC, for many it was either the movement of choice or a pragmatic decision. By 1976 the ANC had achieved organisational dominance, largely as a result of better funding, less infighting and better leadership. Students found the ANC able to welcome them and offer the chance of training or schooling. Once they had joined the ANC, it taught them about its history, ideology and aims and won many over to its viewpoint. The PAC tried to benefit from the 1976 influx and it established a safe-house for fleeing students in Swaziland where they were promised military training and taught about the PAC's history. It, however, lacked the organisation and resources to act on these promises. One of Mashinini's brothers, Mpho, joined the PAC but found them disorganised and later turned to the ANC.<sup>88</sup> Kleinschmidt explained in 2004 that the ANC, with SACP support, was better organised so many ended up in the ANC, even if they differed ideologically and approached the PAC first.<sup>89</sup>

The *Anti-Apartheid News* however reported a different story. It depicted the move to the ANC as ideological and made no attempt to get the view of the BCM and its supporters. Through emphasising the number of people joining the exiled ANC and links between internal movements and the ANC, the AAM portrayed the ANC as the sole movement of choice, both internally and in exile. This gave international organisations reason to support the ANC over other movements.

## 6. ANC Activity

Aside from helping to legitimise the ANC through popularising its history, ideology, and internal support, it was also important for the AAM to show that the ANC was active inside South Africa. In so doing, the AAM covered news that sometimes went unreported in the general press. The ANC commented that South African international press censorship aimed to portray the situation as under control and stabilised and so restricted information on the growth in armed activity after 1977. In the internal press, the threat was not minimised but police control was emphasised.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Schuster, *A Burning Hunger*, 113-164, 215-220.

<sup>86</sup> MSSAAM 964: BCM of SA: *Solidarity*, 1 (2) 2, 1979 & 'Circular on the London office', May 1979.

<sup>87</sup> MSSAAM 947: Miscellaneous ANC Papers: ANC Statement, *Sechaba* June 1973.

<sup>88</sup> Schuster, *A Burning Hunger*, 96-112, 129-160.

<sup>89</sup> Interview Kleinschmidt.

<sup>90</sup> MSSAAM 932: ANC Combatants and POW Status: 'Armed Resistance in SA' by ES Reddy, 1980.

The task of emphasising ANC activity was easier after 1976, and especially in the late 1980s, as internal activity increased dramatically.<sup>91</sup> The fact that action was initiated inside South Africa negated South African government claims that anti-apartheid activity was Soviet controlled. Kleinschmidt explained that publicity not only attracted international support, but also support from inside South Africa. The mythology of the successful MK fighter was essential for internal support, and an area where he believed the PAC failed.<sup>92</sup> As discussed, while the AAM emphasised internal ANC activity, the focus on controlled violence as opposed to the unrestricted violence of the apartheid government was emphasised.

However, while portraying the ANC as active was an important aspect of AAM work throughout the struggle, it was its reporting of the Soweto Uprising that highlighted its focus on the ANC over other liberation forces. The student led Uprising of 1976 was largely a product of Black Consciousness political thinking, although not all students in the uprising had an awareness of BCM. The BCM focused more on ideology than organisation and its relationship with the exiled ANC and PAC was not clearly defined. Some BCM members had links with these movements, while others rejected them. Steve Biko expressed a desire for a united struggle, although he also called for non-violence.<sup>93</sup>

In July/August 1976 the *Anti-Apartheid News* covered the Soweto Uprising in a double page article titled 'Vorster's Police Shoot to Kill'. The article discussed the Soweto Uprising and mentioned the death of Hector Peterson, the first boy to be shot and pictured in the famous Sam Nzima picture. The article referred to the fact that over 1100 students were injured and another 1000 arrested. The spread of the Uprising to other parts of the population and country was noted, as was the fact that support for the uprising came from all segments of society. The paper explained that the Uprising was not against whites, but against the system, and reproduced statements from across the world commenting on and condemning the South African government reaction. On the same page, under the main Soweto headline, was a piece about the ANC:

The ANC underground inside South Africa issued a call to people to hold meetings on June 26, South African Freedom Day, to protest against the police killings and to continue the struggle. In a leaflet distributed immediately after the killings, the ANC said that since Sharpeville the people had learned that peaceful protest was not enough. "We have taken the road of armed struggle under the leadership of the ANC."<sup>94</sup>

The leaflet instructed people to paint slogans in the cities such as 'Revenge our martyrs!'; 'Amandla Ngawethu!'; and 'Free Mandela, Hang Vorster!'. The *Anti-Apartheid News* article focused on the how the ANC reacted to the Soweto Uprising and stepped in to lead the people rather than on the Uprising itself. In "Act Together" – ANC Leader', Duma Nokwe told the readers that people should unite to crush military support for South Africa. He called for mass demonstrations and increased international support for the South African struggle 'led by the ANC and other progressive forces'.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> MSSAAM 945: Miscellaneous ANC Publications: 'Armed struggle Deep Inside SA Intensifies'; T. Lodge & B. Nasson, eds, *All, Here, and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (London: Hurst & Company, 1991), 114, 178.

<sup>92</sup> Interview Kleinschmidt.

<sup>93</sup> Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 148-149.

<sup>94</sup> *Anti-Apartheid News*, July/August 1976.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

The coverage of the Soweto Uprising focused on police brutality, international outcry, and the ANC's reaction. It did not discuss BCM, its ideology or other internal developments. There was no mention of Biko, or of the political ideas of the thousands arrested. The newspaper thus maintained the view of a monolithic ANC led struggle. This type of reporting continued later in the year with the coverage of Biko's murder. The *Anti-Apartheid News* clearly focused on ANC activity and presence inside the country, highlighting the ANC's increasing prominence, underground organisation and popular support.

## **7. Conclusion**

The AAM played an important role in supporting the liberation movements in attaining international recognition by publicising their ideas and the reality of South African apartheid. International concern led to growing support for the liberation movements and increasing criticism of apartheid, which helped the liberation movements survive exile. International condemnation, through the UN and other bodies and through sanctions and isolationist practices, played a role bringing about an end to apartheid. The AAM's close relationship with the UN Special Committee on apartheid and its role as the oldest anti-apartheid solidarity movement in Europe meant that its activities and views had broader impact outside of Britain as it came to inform the international anti-apartheid agenda.

It is however clear, from a survey of the *Anti-Apartheid News*, that it did not have a neutral anti-apartheid position. On the contrary, the AAM supported the ANC over other liberation movements and played a role in popularising and publicising the ANC at the expense of these movements. This was done, for instance, through emphasising the ANC as the oldest liberation movement with the most internal support. ANC ideology was publicised as superior to that of other movements and ANC internal activity was over-emphasised. This helped develop the image of the ANC internationally as the sole representative of the South African people. While the focus on the ANC impacted negatively on other anti-apartheid groupings, it also developed the image of united anti-apartheid forces. This made it easier for international bodies to lend their support to the struggle, with a specific outcome in mind. The AAM's publicity work therefore played an important role in strengthening international condemnation of apartheid and support for change. However, the enduring effect of highlighting a single liberation movement needs to be considered more critically, especially when taking into account post-apartheid developments in South Africa and the perpetuation of a single liberation narrative.

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