CONCLUSION.

The exile history of the Pan Africanist Congress (1960 – 1990) is a complex subject. Hence, this study does not pretend to have comprehended all the aspects involved. Besides the wide scope of the topic and the complexity of issues involved, other difficulties emanated from the sources used. These are explained in chapter one. Published works that have been used, all suffer the limitations of contemporary chronicles. They inevitably bear, the marks of self-justification, are partial in their sympathies, or deal with only a portion of the overall picture. Some of the articles referred to are, by definition, journalism and obviously fall short on the depth of historical analysis. There is a mass of archival material that has been consulted throughout. Occasionally, the material tends to be imprecise on dates and points of detail, apart from its uneven spread across the exile period. Hence, in as many instances as possible, a cross-corroboration exercise against oral evidence has been made.

The gathering of oral evidence has not been without problems. As indicated in chapter one, since oral evidence depends on memories to derive its narrative of the past, memories fade and are therefore unreliable as a source of historical evidence. As Andre` Brink commented, “memory, which is always and per definition selective, comprises not only acts of recovery but also processes of suppression”. ¹ To minimize the problem, oral information has been corroborated against and supplemented with written records. The silences, which both sources display, particularly on the sequence of events, could only be filled through imaginings of history and understanding of context. In this instance one partially concurs with Robin Cobb who argued that, “the task of the historian, especially if he is a specialist of social history, is much akin to that of a novelist. There must be an element of guesswork. It is like attempting to sound the inaudible and to penetrate the secrets of the human heart”. ²

The study represents the first attempt to deal with this subject in a comprehensive manner. It certainly has gaps, which will be pointed out, in the later sections as instances, which justify further research in this subject. Before the gaps are identified, it will be useful to reflect on the questions, which formed the basis for the study and assess the degree to which they have been resolved.

The study has sought to examine the following issues:

1. How did the PAC re-establish itself as an organisation in exile? How does one characterise the formative years in exile in terms of the nature of intra-PAC relations, the forces or factors that determined and conditioned these relationships.

2. Intra-PAC relations during the various leadership phases up to 1990 when the organisation was un-banned. Factors, which determined and conditioned these relationships during the whole period under review.

3. Comparative analysis of intra-PAC relations with other liberation movements in Southern Africa.

4. The nature of living conditions in the PAC camps.

5. The military strategy of the PAC, how it evolved and the nature of the relationship between the army and political leadership in the PAC.

6. Develop a theoretical framework about the exile phenomenon by examining how the exile experience impacted on the functioning of liberation movements.

In relation to the first question, this research has demonstrated that the formation of the PAC as a liberation movement was a long-drawn out process. The first stage, referred to in the research was the formative period between the years 1960 to 1962 and 1962 to 1964. The pre-1962 period was characterised by a loose inchoate organisation. The majority of PAC leaders who constituted the first Executive Committee, were either in detention inside South African prisons or were serving jail sentences ranging from one to three years due to their role in the anti-pass demonstrations of 21 March 1960. The few PAC Executive Committee members who managed to escape were scattered in various
parts of Africa, Europe and America. In other words the PAC had no recognisable or active political existence outside South Africa until August 1962 when the first PAC Executive Committee was formalised under the leadership of P.K. Leballo. From the very outset, the establishment of the PAC as a functioning structure was characterised by disunity. This stemmed from the lack of consultation and the tendency to treat the organization as though it were a personal possession, especially by Leballo, the acting President of the PAC. Leballo took decisions, which ultimately had an impact on the entire organization, either alone or with a few handpicked members of the National Executive. This resulted in the formation of cliques at leadership level. Of course the cliques were not as well-defined as one would anticipate. PAC leaders changed allegiances and cliques purely on the basis of expediency and opportunity. Elias Ntloedibe was considered, for instance, part of the dominant Leballo faction, but in 1979, just before Leballo was deposed on the 1st of May, Ntloedibe had already changed tune and was identifying with the Vusumzi Make faction which was to take power after Leballo. The ability to read the balance of power and immediately fall on the correct side of its tilt seems to have been an important attribute for survival in the PAC during the period of exile. People belonged to the same faction for as long as it was still viable to do so. Given this scenario, intra-PAC relations during the formative years were turbulent, unpredictable and informed by opportunities for survival both materially and politically. These relations were not conditioned by the will of those on whose behalf the struggle was fought, let alone the rank and file membership of the PAC.

Relations within the PAC took a further down-turn following the disclosure of the plans of Poqo, for which Leballo was blamed. This affected his leadership approach in the sense that the manner in which he was ‘going-it alone’ in the management of PAC affairs, from finance to diplomatic relations and the military, conveys the impression of a very insecure leader. By the time the PAC leadership moved the headquarters to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, Leballo was already the National Executive Committee by himself. His leadership style set a trend for the kind of leadership culture which dominated the PAC after he was deposed.
Factors which determined and conditioned intra-PAC relations during the formative years have been shown to be largely internal and to a limited extent, external. They were largely internal in the sense that the levers of organisational power were still being defined, given the gap created by the absence of Sobukwe. The organisation was in the course of finding a single focus or issue around which to rally and there was competition to define, shape and give content to the point of singularity of organisation. Hence Leballo’s strong assertion of his role as acting President of the PAC. He defined the terrain of the PAC’s internal exile politics, ideologically, diplomatically and in terms of the culture of leadership, despite the many dissenting voices. In these three areas, all the leaders who succeeded him were invariably constrained and could not effect meaningful changes.

The issues about mapping the terrain of the PAC’s internal politics in exile links directly with the second question about intra-PAC relations during the various leadership periods. The styles of leadership in the PAC differed depending on who was the chairman of the organisation during a particular period. Even though the styles differed, there were, however, trends of continuity which outweighed over discontinuities. The dominant trends of continuity were manifested in the self-perpetuation of a highly centralised political authority. This resulted in pervasive disunity during all the leadership periods identified in the study. The membership was not consulted in the election of its leaders. This meant that the rank and file PAC members were excluded from critical political decisions about the future of the organisation. Added to this were material disparities between the leaders and the led. The life-styles and conditions of living of the leaders were radically different from those of the membership, yet the organisation consistently pleaded poverty. There were no organisational standards understood by the membership of the PAC regarding the management of funds and other resources donated to the organisation by the international community. Perceptions of favouritism, sometimes along tribal lines, uninvestigated allegations about internal enemies, all widened the internal rifts between the leadership and the general membership of the organisation. The leadership of the PAC, even during Nyathi Pokela’s term of office, was not transparent in a manner that restored membership confidence in the leadership. The PAC consultative
conference which was proposed in order to interrogate issues which caused internal conflict, was postponed by Pokela’s leadership. By the time it was held in 1990 (under Mlambo’s leadership), political circumstances had changed to such an extent that its significance was undermined. In short, during the four leadership periods identified, critical factors which influenced and conditioned intra-PAC relations, were centred around the management of resources, access to positions of power and also ideological lines. The problems relating to these issues appeared almost consistently throughout the exile period. These were basically internal matters which attested to poor organisational strategy, systems and procedures as well as policies.

External factors were also significant in shaping intra-PAC relations during all the leadership periods but the extent of their contribution is made less overt or even thwarted to a certain extent, by the perpetual self-consumption by internal disunity which characterized the PAC exile existence. The external factors related, first and foremost to the very nature of the exile environment. It offered both opportunities and threats, as discussed in chapter 2. The material benefits the exile environment provided to the PAC were largely limited to the leadership and the few PAC members who happened to be within the corporate circles of the revolutionary aristocracy, either through kinship relations or were descendants of well-known families in the history of the struggle for liberation in South Africa. As one informant argued trying to convince the researcher “you would have lived a good life in exile because Comrade Gerald Kondlo, the first Commander of the APLA forces was your uncle. You would have received good scholarships and never without money”. The main point one seeks to advance in this regard is that the material benefits of the exile environment did not reach down to the ordinary PAC members who had no political connections, well-known surnames in the liberation struggle or even belong to the respected or dominant ethnic group. In other words, material resources donated to the PAC engendered corruption and favouritism within the organisation.

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Secondly, external factors in the form of mounting military attacks from the South African government in the 1980’s contributed to the development of a commandist authority and stiff disciplinary code within the PAC. This development was orchestrated by the belief that the exile environment had become increasingly militarised and dangerous. The unguided application of the disciplinary code and authority resulted in situations which approximated to an abuse of human rights of PAC members in the camps in Tanzania. This added to dissatisfaction with conditions of life inside the camps. The appalling state of living conditions in these camps was discussed in chapter 5.

External support for the leadership of the PAC, especially from the Tanzanian government and the Organisation of African Unity meant that there was no neutral forum where the PAC leadership could be made to give account in times when the general membership was completely dissatisfied. This was demonstrated in chapter 4. J.D. Nyaose, for instance, a senior member of the PAC’s Central Committee and president of FOFATUSA appealed for intervention from the OAU’s Africa Liberation Committee concerning his expulsion from the PAC. The OAU referred the matter back to P.K. Leballo, the very person who sanctioned Nyaose’s expulsion. Ordinary PAC members who were both unfairly treated and excluded from important decision-making processes had no other forum beyond the PAC’s Central Committee to appeal to in order to get their views heard. This is one of the reasons why Leballo’s Chairmanship lasted for such a long time despite internal dissatisfaction with his style of leadership. In other words, external support was used as another form of political control by the leadership of the PAC throughout the exile period. In 1979, Vusumzi Make, for instance, appealed to the host country’s troops to suppress a rebellion by the APLA cadres loyal to the deposed predecessor, P.K. Leballo, hence the self-perpetuation of a highly centralised leadership style within the PAC. A complex combination of both internal and external factors accounted for the state the PAC found itself in during the long exile period.

In relation to the third question indicated above, the research has also done a comparative analysis of intra-PAC relations with other liberation movements in Southern Africa. There are similar factors relating to internal divisions and external factors which
conditioned or influenced the internal relations. The SWAPO of Namibia, ANC of South Africa and ZANU of Zimbabwe experienced similar pitfalls during their exile periods. The details of the periods of crises were discussed in chapter 2 and also in chapter 5. The differences between these organisations and the PAC lay in the manner in which the leadership collectively dealt with internal problems and crises. In these organisations there seem to have been unquestioned acceptance by the majority of the membership of the established leadership and its chosen priorities. In the case of SWAPO, which like the PAC, had serious moments of crisis, Sam Nujoma, the President of the organisation had assumed the “informal, honorific sobriquet, ‘the Old Man’ and woe betide any ‘youngster’ who sought to undermine this order of things with any novel notions of accountability or the like”. ¹⁴ This attested to the fact that the leadership structures in these organisations were authoritarian and therefore submitted to internally. Intervention by the host countries was sought by the leadership itself. It never came as a surprising imposition from outside. This was not the situation in the case of the PAC where the leadership was itself divided on the basis of mutual mistrust and political blackmail.

The issue about living conditions in the PAC camps has already been covered in the paragraphs above. The other question raised was about the nature of the PAC’s military strategy and the relationship between the army and the political leadership. The research has shown that during the formative period (1960-1967) the PAC hardly had a clearly defined strategy. The conceptions of who the enemy was were also divergent and contradictory. After 1967, Leballo formalised the military strategy of the organisation, even though it was not clearly understood by the majority of the members. From 1968 to 1978, the time of the expulsion of the APLA High Command led by T.M. Ntantala, there seemed to have been bi-polarity of opinions about strategy. The division was mainly between Ntantala and Leballo. The source of the schism was part ideological and part power related. The members of the army tended to see themselves as distinctly separate from the civilian members of the PAC and were loyal to their military leaders and less dependant on the political leadership. Hence Leballo’s attempt to win the support of the younger generation of militants to his side and also the 1977 attempt to topple the

¹⁴ C. Leys and J.S. Saul: The Two Edged Sword, p. 43.
Military High Command. He wanted to solve the problem of divided loyalties with the PAC. His approach unfortunately rattled the Tanzanian government hence he was eventually deposed in 1979 with the connivance of Tanzanian authorities. Unity between the army and the political leadership remained a problem until the unbanning of the PAC in 1990. The root of the problem was that PAC military leaders, unlike the situation in the ANC, were not prominent political leaders. As a result political leadership could not control military leadership without exerting strains on internal organisational relationships.

Generation gaps within the PAC army itself (e.g. the Poqo group (1960s), the post-1976 group and the post-1986 group) and the different military traditions emanating from the various areas where APLA members received training was another factor which resulted in the lack of unity in military strategic thinking within the PAC. Besides that the PAC had not established a system of monitoring military strategy implementation. As a result the military strategy of the PAC was only good on paper but never found its way into concrete application. This was because of the lack of leadership. The leadership of the organisation was embroiled in political squabbles within itself and as a result lost strategic focus. Pokela’s attempts to remodel the PAC, was concerned more about the restructuring of operations than long-term strategy.

Lastly, the research attempted in chapter 2, to develop a theoretical framework of exile experience. Even though the framework will require further elaboration, it clearly showed how existing research conceptualised the notion of ‘exile’ and related experience. It demonstrated that despite the discrete discursive domains which characterised the exile experience of liberation movements, there were, however, common threads which make it possible for the researcher today to typify exile experience, even though not in an all comprehensive manner. These included the sets of advantages or opportunities as well as the problems or difficulties the environment provided. The manner in which liberation movements dealt with these issues was constitutive of exile experience. The chapter has also delved into issues about the political economy of Frontline States, BLS states, i.e. Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland and the role of the OAU. The conclusion made was
that these countries, because of their economic dependency on South Africa, which varied from one country to the other, were not a safe haven for liberation movements. South Africa’s forward defence strategy which entailed cross border raids on countries suspected of harbouring the ANC and PAC guerrillas, complicated the exile environment even further. This had an impact on how the liberation movements operated. A pervasive sense of insecurity influenced leadership styles hence the development of commandist and stiff codes, especially in the military camps. In as much as the liberation movements were a product of their own internal dynamic, they were also a product of the exile environment in which they operated.

The research has shown, irrespective of the scholarly angle from which the exile history of the PAC is approached, thorough analysis of sources point to the fact that the organisation lacked in strategy, organisation, ‘praxis’ and leadership. Hence, it was vulnerable to OAU and Tanzanian government interference. These issues are explained below.

There was no entrenched organisation-wide system for consultation adhered to when electing the chairman of the PAC. This also attests to the absence of succession planning within the organisation. Hence in all the leadership periods identified the issue of consultation, framed as ‘the leadership should derive a mandate from the membership’ crops up frequently. The decision to elect a chairman was restricted to a few ‘elites’ within the Central Committee of the PAC. Yet it was expected that the chairman should be supported by all PAC members. This explains why the PAC had persistent internal conflicts and disagreements over the structures, systems and processes to be followed by the organisation.

The attitude of the OAU Liberation Committee and the Tanzanian government, couched in their tendency to assume that the leader is always right, was also fundamental to the crisis in the PAC. It took the OAU and the Tanzanian government seventeen years to decide that P.K. Leballo was at the centre of the problems the PAC experienced and that
he had to go in order to find a solution. The Tanzanian government supported him and blocked all internal PAC efforts to remove him.

Some of the problems within the organisation were minor and could have been solved amicably. These include misunderstandings due to poor communication, gossip, misinformation about the performance of heads of departments and associations among members of the PAC from the same regions in South Africa. These bred negative perceptions and resulted in conflicts which separated the leaders from the lead and also divided the Central Committee within itself. The situation occurred because the organisation lacked the means through which its members could differ without destroying the wider possibilities for constructive dialogue and communication. For those at the bottom of the hierarchy, there was no organisational mechanism through which they could talk truth to power. With these frustrations, there was the likelihood that frustration would be vent on one another. There were of course serious grounds for dissatisfaction, as demonstrated particularly in chapter 4 of the thesis, the resolution of which could have threatened positions of power within the organisation.

The PAC did not have a leadership and management excellence model to inform and direct its leadership and management practices. Hence the organisation had no benchmark of sound leadership and management practices which was adhered to throughout the PAC’s exile period. Most importantly the organisation’s conceptions of the South African revolution were theoretical and divorced from reality. Hence the notion of praxis and its significance within a liberation movement is invoked. Praxis is about transition from theory to reality in a way that leaves intact their intimate unity.\(^5\) This is one of the areas where the PAC experienced problems. The organisation could hardly discern the dynamics of the liberation struggle in South Africa beyond the ideological spectacles framed by the particular social and historical conditions of the early 1960s. Hence it can be concluded that one of the problems of the PAC was a problem of praxis. The attitude towards praxis entails a consciousness of practical fact. This was absent in the PAC during the exile period.

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The nature of the conflict in the PAC will remain perennially debatable because its ramifications cast the scope of research in an ever-widening mode. The fact that there was not merely one but several levels of strained relationships within the PAC during this period makes the research question rather inchoate and complex. The sheer length of the conflict, in months and years, with huge “dramatis personae” constantly appearing and disappearing and with the multiple levels of strained relationships often out of phase with each other, present a canvass of daunting size. In spite of the periodisation adopted in the research and the sequence portrayed about the way in which the internal relationships manifested themselves, there is still no obvious single focus or climax. The relationships, at the level of political leadership, and also the management of the finances and the relationship between the army and the political leadership are all crucial to the generation of conflict, but cannot be posited as the beginning and the end of it all. There is perhaps another level of finer detail which might have escaped the analysis provided in this research and which future research will be able to uncover. Therefore, one research thesis on this subject can never suffice.

There are obviously research questions emanating from this study or areas which need further research. They include the following:

The patterns of migration into exile, for instance, have not been examined in this research. This is a very important area to illuminate the reconstitution of the PAC and the conflict which ensued especially during the formative years in exile. As Fikeni argues, “the exile environment and the nature of departure” into exile, “combine to produce the totality of outlook that define an exile”. Closely linked to the patterns of migration are the trends of re-settlement in exile. The two were very critical in the generation of conflict within the PAC. These issues are discussed in the research (in chapters 3 and 4) but have not been singled out for detailed analysis. The research mentions three waves of departures into exile, hence the three generations of PAC exiles, the 1960s group, the

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7 S. Fikeni: “Exile and Return”, p. 3.
post-1976 group and the post 1984-1986 group. The patterns of migration or forms of flight into exile and how the exiles resettled outside South Africa is very important in the study of the generation of conflict within the PAC. These factors influenced behaviour in the exile situation. They also shed light on incidents leading to the departure, social backgrounds, political inclinations, expectations, age and even sex.

What makes the question about patterns of migration and trends of resettlement particularly interesting for further research is that in the case of the PAC, the three major conflicts which occurred seemed to tally with the periods of the waves of migration into exile. During the 1960’s, the period of the first wave of migration into exile, the organization experienced a major internal conflict in 1967 hence the summoning of a Unity conference in Moshi, Tanzania. Again in 1977, after the second wave of departures which followed the 1976 Soweto uprisings, the PAC had serious internal conflicts which resulted in the Arusha conference in 1978. Lastly, in 1989 the internal ideological war in the PAC saw the birth of the Sobukwe Forum. Therefore, a study of the patterns of migration and trends of resettlement could reveal more on the root causes of the internal conflict in the PAC during the exile period.

The second area not covered in the research relates to the PAC and international relations. This area includes an analysis of the propaganda images of the PAC projected by its leadership internationally, and the impact that it had on the diplomatic profile of the organisation during the exile period. In this research, international support for the PAC and its relations with China, Libya, the OAU, the UN, Frontline States and international support groups in Europe, England, America and Australia, is only covered to outline the exile context and the kind of support the PAC received. It has not thoroughly interrogated specific patterns and strategies the organisation employed to engaged with the international community. The forms of pressure generated by the kind of relations established have not been defined and elaborated.

Lastly, the issue about the alliances the exile PAC established with other liberation movements in Southern Africa has been covered only as it relates to the generation of
conflict within the PAC. The broad foundations and principles underlying the choice of allies has not been examined. Whether the choice of particular allies contributed to internal conflicts has also not been assessed. The role of the allies in helping the PAC puts its ‘house’ in order has also not been dealt with.

What this attests to is that there are other contributing elements to the internal conflict which have been omitted because they could not be squeezed into the relatively tight confines of themes identified in this research. Hence future research on this subject will be useful to uncover and analyse such issues. This research has only removed the veneer of a much deeper, wider and complex research question.