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**THE HISTORY AND POLITICS OF LIBERATION ARCHIVES AT  
FORT HARE**

Bavusile (Brown) Maaba

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

University of Cape Town, Faculty of Humanities

Department of Historical Studies

Supervisor: Prof. Chris Saunders

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Carolyn Hamilton

*Declaration*

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that the conclusions herein are my own work. This thesis is submitted for the degree of PhD at the University of Cape Town. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree in any other university.

.....

B. Maaba

### *Dedication*

This PhD thesis is dedicated to my late daughter, Amahle. My daughter died on 12 June 2012 at a tender age of three. She was my inspiration at the time when this thesis was being written. Amahle brought joy into my life and I dearly loved her. She's left a void in our lives and sweet memories of her are etched in my mind.

University of Cape Town

## *Abstract*

Even though there is abundant literature on the South African liberation struggle, no study focuses on the history and politics of the liberation archives. This thesis, the first of its kind on liberation historiography, seeks to put the liberation movements archives housed at the University of Fort Hare in context. The thesis focuses mainly on the 1990s, when the repatriation of struggle material by Fort Hare working hand in glove with the liberation movements, mainly the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), was at its height. The repatriation process was made possible by the unbanning of the liberation movements and then the 'miraculous' transition to democracy in 1994. A national discourse on the liberation archives began to take shape in the early 1990s.

While the central argument in this thesis is that the repatriation of the liberation movements archives to Fort Hare encompassing the ANC, PAC and BCM was a major achievement, providing an example of how historical papers could be repatriated, preserved, catalogued and made accessible to a wider community of scholars and other interested in liberation history, the thesis shows that such the process of repatriation was not without intense challenges, controversies, debates and differences of view. For example, some of the liberation movements which sent their archives to Fort Hare embargoed sensitive materials and so helped shape historical writing about the liberation struggle. The thesis focuses particularly on the ANC archives, to show how disputes and controversies over them developed. There was major contestation over whether they should be housed with the other liberation archives or separately in the Library. Because the ANC became the party of

government in the liberated South Africa, its archives were viewed, inside and outside Fort Hare, as a tool to leverage other resources. The thesis suggests that the manner in which the ANC archives were perceived influenced the heritage landscape in South Africa. Attempts to digitize the ANC material and other struggle records, for example, led to endless debates.

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who played a significant role in the accomplishment of this work.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Prof. Chris Saunders and Prof. Carolyn Hamilton who were both supportive to me throughout while this thesis was being written. The two proved to be unrelenting and thorough supervisors. I would also like to thank Prof. Sean Morrow (Son of Man), Michele Pickover and Gabriele Mohale who played a significant role in shaping my thinking during the research and writing stages of this thesis. Prof. Morrow has been my mentor for many years and I sincerely thank him for nurturing me. Thanks also to Prof. Mbulelo Mzamane, Dr. Nomvuyo Mzamane and Dr. Narissa Ramdhani who, over the years, persuaded me to register for PhD. I would also like to thank the Archives & Public Culture Research Initiative headed by Prof. Hamilton for providing financial support for my research work without which this work would have not been realised. Input by academics and students associated with the Archives & Public Culture Research Initiative has enriched this thesis.

I would also like to thank the University of Fort Hare for allowing me access to their administrative records. The University's staff members including Mzi Xoseka, Ike Maamoe, Vuyani Booi played a meaningful role in helping to identify documents that are relevant for this study. Historical Papers Archive at Wits University must also be thanked for providing

me with office space and access to library books which made it possible for me to research and write this thesis. I also thank all those who were interviewed during the research. They include archivists, archives and university administrators. One of these, Dr. Ike Mabindisa, has become of blessed memory.

Lastly my family. My wife Bulelwa has been very supportive and patient as I worked on this thesis. The loss of our daughter has been the most painful experience for the family but I thank her for being strong during these trying times. To my other children, Iminathi and Kamogetswe: I am grateful to you.

University of Cape Town



## *Acronyms*

ACAC	Association for Community Arts Workers Centres
ANC	African National Congress
APDUSA	African People's Democratic Union of South Africa
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
ACARM	Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BAWU	Black Allied and Workers' Union
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BCM(A)	Black Consciousness Movement of Azania
CCS	Centre for Cultural Studies
CMMH	Commission for Museums, Monuments and Heraldry
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COPE	Congress of the People
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COSAW	Congress of South African Writers
DA	Dance Alliance
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DISA	Digital Imaging South Africa
DSA	Democratic Staff Association
FOSACO	Federation of South African Cultural Organisations
GMRRRC	Govan Mbeki Research Resource Centre
IDAF	International Defense and Aid Fund
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party

MAWU	Metal and Allied Workers' Union
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PACT	Performing Arts Council in the Transvaal
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PASMA	Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania
PAWE	Performing Arts Workers Equity
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SAHA	South African History Archive
SAMA	South African Music Alliance
SASA	South African Society of Archivists
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOMAFCO	Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UConn	University of Connecticut
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UDUSA	Union of Democratic University Staff Associations
UMSA	Unity Movement of South Africa
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Unisa	University of South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

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## *Introduction*

### *The focus of the study*

This thesis examines the challenges and processes of developing the liberation archives at the University of Fort Hare. While the liberation of South Africa in the late twentieth century is an intense focus of historiographical interest, this thesis does not attempt to say anything new about the history of the liberation struggle as such, or to survey that complex period, except insofar as the contests over the archives may throw a retrospective and indirect light on that history. It seeks to put the archives of the liberation movements in context, discussing how they were formed, assessing their strengths and limitations, explaining how they have been drawn upon in the writing of the history of the struggle to date and describing and analysing the politics around the liberation archives. As we shall see, the conflict over the African National Congress (ANC) archives indicates that certain struggle material is, at times, elevated above others. While the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) material is important in the context of historical writing, it does not have the currency for leveraging attention and resources as the ANC material.

In this thesis, the archives of the liberation struggle are defined very broadly as official and formally established archives relating to struggle history from 1960. They will be taken to include documentary archival collections within South Africa's borders. Other than Fort Hare, these include the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Historical Papers Archive and the South African History Archive (SAHA) at Wits University. Other than these major collections of liberation material, there are other pockets

of material that shed light on the history of the struggle in South Africa. The Manuscripts and Archives Department at the University of Cape Town (UCT) houses documents that relate to the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), BCM, Black Sash and the Simons Collection. The Department of Archives and Special Collections at the University of South Africa (Unisa) houses material that relates to the BCM such as the records of the South African Student Organisation-Black People's Convention trial of 1976.

This study focuses on the liberation archives at Fort Hare because the repatriation of the liberation movements' archives to this institution was a unique experience that cannot be separated from the euphoria of the early 1990s when South Africa was on the path to democracy. The liberation movements felt that their time in exile had been worthwhile and needed to be recorded. As will be seen, papers from these movements were repatriated to Fort Hare with the intention that struggle history be rewritten. The repatriation experience was fraught with intrigue and conflict and while some might not think of it as an important historical event in its own right, this would be a superficial view and the writer's sojourn at Fort Hare led him to conclude that there is every reason to record and explain it. The archives story forms part of the modern history of Fort Hare, and his interaction with archives stakeholders at Fort Hare gave him a sense that there was more than was immediately apparent in the role of archives at the University.

The terms 'liberation archives', 'liberation movement archives', 'struggle records', 'struggle material' are used interchangeably in this thesis. Different individuals and liberation movements and university officials dealing with archival collections of this nature use the

various terms to describe the material relating to the struggle against apartheid. Correspondence between Fort Hare and the liberation movements at the time of repatriation indicates that the terms were used interchangeably. The writer's observation is that over the years, for reasons difficult to decipher, the term 'liberation movements archives' is now more frequently used than the others. The terms were used, amongst other things, to canonize the collections, giving whatever prestige and material advantages might flow to the holding institution from their custody and positioning it as the authentic inheritor of liberation traditions, particularly that of the ANC. The post apartheid era presented the custodians of struggle records with the opportunity to stress their availability without, as previously, having to consider the response of a hostile regime.

There may be no single definition of liberation material due to its complex nature. In the context of this thesis however, liberation archives are broadly viewed as South Africa's official and formally instituted archives on apartheid resistance. Perhaps beyond this thesis, liberation material should be defined as struggle collections pertaining to apartheid oppression wherever deposited. Such material, like the Fort Hare collection, was generated by liberation movements, related organizations and individuals whose aim was to fight against apartheid. After all, most of the archives where such material is kept, such as UCT's Manuscripts and Archives Department collect material such as that in the Simons Collection believing that it speaks to the struggle against apartheid. The raids by the apartheid state on offices of organizations combating apartheid where some of the material was seized signified the importance of such material.

Other liberation material is held by institutions outside the borders of South Africa. For instance, the Michigan State Universities Library is host to the African Activist Archive Collection of material generated by American activists who supported the struggle against oppression in southern Africa including South Africa. The Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden, plays a similar role. There is also the Ruth First papers lodged at the University of London's Institute of Commonwealth Studies as well as the archives of the Anti-Apartheid Movement at Rhodes House Library, Oxford. Coupled with this are various websites based in South Africa and elsewhere which provide access to struggle materials. These include South African History Online, Digital Imaging South Africa (Disa), Aluka, Michigan State University's *South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid, Building Democracy* and Africa World Press's *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000*. Other digitised collections include the Pdraig O'Malley collection made available by the Nelson Mandela Foundation.<sup>1</sup>

Other material pertaining to the liberation struggle falls under the National Archives. This ranges from trial records, including testimonies of the accused and of state witnesses, to various minutes, memoranda and correspondence generated by the different arms of government aimed at counteracting the activities of the liberation movements. In addition the records of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) established by the democratic government in the post-apartheid era to investigate apartheid atrocities are kept in the state archives and include dozens of interviews with apartheid victims and perpetrators. Though

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<sup>1</sup> For more on these citations see, <http://www.sahistory.org.za>, <http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za>, <http://www.aluka.org>, <http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu>, <http://www.noeasyvictories.org>, accessed on 21 January 2013, <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01508.htm>, accessed on 11 May 2012.



such material is classified as state records, it clearly relates to the concept of liberation and by extension liberation movements. Struggle material seized during apartheid times and never recovered forms, controversially, part of state documents. Some Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) documents are available on the organisation's website and in libraries, but others, when opened to investigators, will shed more light on how the organization's activities impacted on the South African political landscape, including the political violence between it and its arch enemy, the ANC. As the historiography of the liberation archives gains ground over the coming years, the definition of struggle records will no doubt extend even further.

\* \* \*

This thesis opens an account of the repatriation of the ANC material to Fort Hare, of the politics of liberation archives at the University and of how these impacted on the image of the institution. It then focuses on the repatriation process by other liberation movements, the PAC and BCM. This is followed by a chapter on Fort Hare in relation to other liberation collections. The thesis unpacks the problems and challenges faced by liberation movements during the repatriation of their documents. For instance it looks at where such material was housed before being shipped to Fort Hare and why certain material was put under embargo. The extent to which the various archives have been sanitized reflects on the political organizations and on their understanding of how they might protect their own image once they were made available to scholars and indirectly to the public at large. They tended to want to portray a perfect, guilt-free, image. The management of these records and the embargo process has limited researchers in their quest to document the history of the struggle and has indeed shaped historical investigation in a particular direction. Many questions arise such as to what extent and in what forms have the archives of the liberation movements been preserved, organized, catalogued, and made available to the public. There was, for example, a

serious lack of archival skills at Fort Hare which threatened the success of the archives project. The thesis also explores the kind of programmes that were introduced at Fort Hare to put the archives to use. The conclusion looks at the archives in the context of the changing South African and world environment and the legacy of the liberation movement's archives at Fort Hare.

### *The significance of this study*

There are many reasons for a study of this nature. Before consulting the archives at Fort Hare researchers would benefit from reading this thesis as they would gain insight into the history of repatriation, of the shaping of the collections and of their inevitably partial and incomplete nature. They will also obtain a sense of why the documents are at Fort Hare, and what the implications of that fact have been for the collections. Researchers who have visited the archives at Fort Hare have not understood why for many years the ANC archives were separated from those of the PAC and the BCM, at the Centre for Cultural Studies (CCS) and the University Library.<sup>2</sup> Rumours and half-truths made their rounds about the state of liberation material at Fort Hare. This study hopes to clarify the myths around these archives, whose history is particularly obscure as there is no website available. This study is the first of its kind and charts a new direction in the historiography of the liberation archives of South Africa. It is hoped that this thesis will encourage other researchers from South Africa and beyond to produce detailed work on their history and preservation.

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<sup>2</sup> The Centre for Cultural Studies was renamed the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) in 1997. For coherence, in the body of the thesis the centre shall be referred to as the CCS.

This thesis also hopes to make a contribution towards policy development in the country. South Africa's Department of Arts and Culture, formerly the Department of Arts and Culture Science and Technology (DACST) is, in 2013, working towards the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage, including digitization of archives. This study is relevant to this area. Fort Hare and other institutions that hold struggle records may benefit from this study, as lessons can be drawn from this documentation of the repatriation experience. There are many challenges such as preservation faced even by South Africa's long-established archives. There may be valuable lessons to be learned from relative newcomers in the archival world such as Fort Hare which nonetheless secured funding and expertise that enabled it to run proficient archives, while also paying attention to the problems and inadequacies that are also documented here.

The Department of Higher Education, which oversees tertiary institutions, may be able to make use of this work to produce policies on management of archives in such institutions. Political parties and civil society organizations which intend depositing their records with universities could also benefit from this study. This work may assist organizations and individuals who intend to set up new archives to decide whether it is feasible to set up archives from conception and what the challenges and difficulties of such an undertaking are.

*What has been written about the history and politics of liberation archives?*

While literature on liberation movements in South Africa is growing, little has been written on the archives of the struggle, besides a few mostly descriptive papers which do not raise the

questions that this study hopes to address.<sup>3</sup> This thesis occupies a space between the worlds of archives and of liberation history, drawing insight from the writer's experience. Though not an archivist, the writer is familiar with the archives terrain owing to work experience in the field and some publications in this area. As well as being a frequent user of South African liberation archives as an historian, he has also been fortunate to have been and to still be in contact with the politics and personalities of archival creation and preservation.

While many writers involved in documenting the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa intended to do justice to the topic, it is impossible to ignore the circumstances that constrained them from successfully accomplishing this. For instance, 'official' ANC histories, such as those of John Pampallis<sup>4</sup> are restricted by their loyalties. Vladimir Shubin's ground-breaking work, *The ANC: A View from Moscow*, which relied on the Mayibuye Archives at UWC, has its own limitations considering that Shubin was a Soviet official involved in aiding the ANC in its years of exile.<sup>5</sup> However, Francis Meli, an ANC intellectual stresses that the views in his book are clearly his and not that of the liberation movement.<sup>6</sup> In his study of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), Howard Barrell acknowledges that 'the story this book tells remains only a sketch...ANC and MK security remains an issue at the time of writing...'.<sup>7</sup> Autobiographical and biographical accounts written by and about important figures in the struggle often either follow a party line or are strongly opposed to

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<sup>3</sup> They include: Brown Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements', *History in Africa* 28 (2001), 417-438, Maaba, 'Challenges to Repatriation and Preservation of Tangible Heritage in South Africa: Black Art and the experiences of the Ifa Lethu Foundation', *South African Historical Journal*, 60,(3) (2008), Tim Stapleton and Ike Maamoe, 'An Overview of the African National Congress Archives at the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa*, 25 (1998), 413-422.

<sup>4</sup> John Pampallis, *Foundations of the New South Africa*, (Cape Town, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Vladimir Shubin, *The ANC: A View from Moscow*, (Bellville, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Francis Meli, *A History of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us*, (Harare, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Howard Barrell, *MK: The ANC's Armed Struggle*, (London, 1990), vii.

one. Such works include Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*<sup>8</sup>, Ntoko Babenia's *Memoirs of a Saboteur*<sup>9</sup> or Ronnie Kasrils' *Armed and Dangerous*.<sup>10</sup> Autobiographies by Bruno Mtolo, an ANC member turned state witness at the ANC trials and Mwezi Twala, a suspected spy in exile; take a particular anti-ANC point of view, dealing with the early sabotage campaign and the mid-1970s to 1990s, respectively.<sup>11</sup> Thula Bophela and Daluxolo Luthuli are very critical of early MK operations and particularly of MK commander, Joe Modise.<sup>12</sup> These latter books do not use the liberation archives.

Some writers whose work has benefited from the liberation archives do comment on their nature and worth. Such secondary literature has shaped the writer's understanding of the nature of material lodged in the liberation archives at Fort Hare. For instance, in her biography of Oliver Tambo, Luli Callinicos draws the reader's attention to the existence of liberation archives in different parts of South Africa including the Mayibuye Centre at UWC, Historical Papers at Wits, and the ANC archives at Fort Hare.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in their work on the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO), the ANC School in Tanzania, Seán Morrow, Brown Maaba and Loyiso Pulumani reflected about the challenges of writing near-contemporary history using documents from the recent past such as the SOMAFCO papers, part of the ANC collection at Fort Hare to which there was open scholarly access. They assert that the documents 'leave the historian like a terrier snarling fiercely at a mastiff along a

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<sup>8</sup> Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, (London, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Ntoko Babenia, *Memoirs of a Saboteur*, (Bellville, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> Ronnie Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: My Undercover Struggle Against Apartheid* (London, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Bruno Mtolo, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: the Road to the Left*, (Durban, 1966); Mwezi Twala, and Ed Bernard, *Mbokodo Inside MK: Mwezi Twala - A Soldier's Story*, (Johannesburg, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Thula Bopela and Daluxolo Luthuli, *Umkhonto we Sizwe : fighting for a divided people*, (Johannesburg, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Luli Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*, (Claremont, 2004), 11.

fence, only to find that the barrier ends and he comes face to face with the opposition. Now he has to make good his threats or slink disgracefully away'. They confronted 'the near contemporary and unwedded records of a sometimes-controversial aspect of the history of the governing party of this country' and 'might prefer to turn our gaze on the inconsistencies of others but could now find ourselves sliding towards self-censorship'.<sup>14</sup>

There is growing literature on the history of the PAC and BCM which is relevant for this study. The writers of *From Protest to Challenge*, Thomas Karis, Gwendolen Carter and Gail Gerhart laid a solid foundation on the PAC and BCM histories, condemned to the margins of South African historiography particularly in the post apartheid South Africa.<sup>15</sup> The work of Tom Lodge follows in the footsteps of *From Protest to Challenge* writers and unpacks the political spectrum of black politics in the country since 1945.<sup>16</sup> Other earlier works like that of Benjamin Pogrand on the life of Robert Sobukwe, the leader of a breakaway group from the ANC and founder member of the PAC, in 1959 provide readers with insights on the history of the organization. For quite a period of time before the availability of the PAC material at Fort Hare, the above work played a great deal in drawing writers to the importance of the PAC history. Recent sources on the history of the PAC, some of which relied on the archives at Fort Hare, include the work of Kwandiwe Kondlo, Brown Maaba and Thami ka Plaatjie and Ace Mgxashe. These sources have enriched PAC history particularly the exile period.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sean Morrow, Maaba, Loysiso Pulumani, 'Education in exile: The African National Congress's Solomom Mahlangu Freedom College(SOMAFCO) and Dakawa Development Centre in Tanzania: 1978 to 1992', in Peter Kallaway (ed), *The History of Education Under Apartheid*, (Cape Town, 2002), 155-173.

<sup>15</sup> See for instance, Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart (eds), *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964*, 3, (California, 1977).

<sup>16</sup> Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*, (London, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> See, Mxolisi Mgxashe, *Are You With Us?: The Story of a Pan-Africanist Activist*, (Houghton, 2006), Kwandiwe Kondlo, 'In the twilight of the Azanian Revolution': the exile history of the Pan Africanist Congress

Literature on the BCM has also grown over the years. The work of Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* is a pioneering work on the BCM written by a non-participant in BC politics. Coupled with this is the book, *Cry Freedom: Biko* by Donald Woods.<sup>18</sup>

Recent publications on the BCM some of which relied on the liberation archives at Fort Hare include the work of Mbulelo Mzamane, Maaba and Nkosingithi Biko appear in the different volumes of the Road to Democracy in South Africa. Through their work on the BCM in the 1980s, Mzamane and Maaba demonstrate that the movement survived beyond 1977 when it was banned by the apartheid state. The formation of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) in 1978 which was Black Consciousness-oriented kept the flames burning. In exile, BC minded 1976 generation formed the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) in 1980 following a meeting in London. It was natural for the organisation to have links with AZAPO which was a BCM stream inside the country. Both organisations were manned by BCM cadres from the 1970s divided by a fence of apartheid's making - some in South Africa and others in exile. AZAPO and the BCM (A) had to operate in a clandestine way so as not to attract the regime's attention. The two eventually merged in 1996 under the banner of AZAPO.<sup>19</sup> Another source on black consciousness is Dan Magazine's book with specific

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of Azania (South Africa):(1960-1990)'(PhD thesis, University of Johannesburg, 2003), Brown Maaba, 'The PAC's War Against the State: 1960 to 1963, in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Sadet), 1, 1960-1970, (Johannesburg, 2003), 257-297, Thami ka Platjje, 'The PAC's exile politics, 1980-1990' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Sadet), 4, 1980-1990, (Pretoria, 2010), 1227-1264.

<sup>18</sup> Gail Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology*, (Berkeley, 1979), Donald Woods, *Cry Freedom: Biko*, (New York, 1979).

<sup>19</sup> Mbulelo Mzamane, Maaba, Brown and Nkosingithi Biko, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa', 1970-1980, in *South African Democracy Education Trust(Sadet) The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 2, 1970-1980,(Pretoria: 2006), 99-159, Mzamane and Maaba, 'The Azanian People's Organization, 1977-1990', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (Sadet), 4, (Pretoria, 2010) 1299-1358, Maaba and

focus on theology in the 1970s at the height of the BCM. The latest work on the BCM is that of Xolela Mangcu which looks at Biko's life from his township of Ginsberg to his days as a BCM leader in the 1970s.<sup>20</sup> Insight on this history comes in handy for the thesis writer as he unpacks the story around the repatriation of the BCM records to Fort Hare. Above all, since the liberation archives were opened to the public, researchers interested in the history of the struggle could access information on the inner workings of the liberation movements in exile, their problems and challenges and how these organisations responded to those tribulations. Records like those of SOMAFSCO introduced readers to curriculum developments in exile, as well as the social life of exiles, a field that requires more coverage by historians.

As mentioned earlier, not much has been written about liberation archives as such, but there are important South African and international debates on archives with some of this literature leaning towards postmodernism and 'deconstructing the archive'.<sup>21</sup> Though this largely empirical work may not contribute directly to these postmodernist debates, the relationship between power and the written record is in fact a constant theme underlying this thesis and it may thus be useful to those interested in further interrogating such issues.

Two journal articles, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Oriented Movements' by Brown Maaba, and 'An Overview of the African

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Mzamane, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in Exile, 1980-1990', in South African Education Democracy Trust (Sadet), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 4, 1980-1990, 1361-1398.

<sup>20</sup>Daniel Magaziner, *The Law and Prophets: Black, Consciousness in South Africa, 1968-1977*, (Ohio, 2010), Xolela Mangcu: *Biko, A Biography*, (Cape Town, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> See for instance, Carolyn Hamilton *et al* (eds), *Refiguring the Archive*, (Cape Town, 2002), Tom Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives', *The American Archivist*, 65, 2002, 24-41, Randall Jimerson, 'Archives for all: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice', *The American Archivist*, 70, 2007, 252-281.



National Congress Archives' by Tim Stapleton and Ike Maamoe provide an overview of the liberation movements collections lodged at Fort Hare. They are mostly descriptive because their purpose was to make people aware of the existence and content of those archives, not to study the politics of how they were created, which is what this work proposes to do.

It is important to give readers a brief overview of what is actually contained in the liberation archives at Fort Hare. The ANC collection is arranged according to various missions, including those of Mozambique, Japan, Australia, Zimbabwe, Senegal, United States, France, Botswana, India, Italian, Belgium, and Namibia. In addition to this, the archives contain the Oliver Tambo papers and the SOMAFSCO collection. The Mozambique mission, for instance, contains policy statements on education and economics for the 1980s and early 1990s, and speeches by ANC leaders such as Ronnie Kasrils, Joe Slovo and Albie Sachs. There is also correspondence between the ANC and Frelimo between the years 1989 to 1991 and between Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 1988. Documents in the Zimbabwe mission largely covers the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the papers of this mission are documents on ANC policy including international relations, economics, and collections of speeches by ANC leaders such as Hani and Sachs. In addition, there are letters between Mandela and Mugabe dating from 1992-1993. The SOMAFSCO collection is the largest collection, with 278 boxes. The collection covers the period 1978-1992 and the material relates to the daily running of the school and ranges from educational to administrative files and various youth committees.

The PAC collection is also arranged in accordance to various missions and includes the Tanzanian, Zimbabwe, London and United Nations missions. The Tanzanian mission papers, for instance, contain letters between leaders of the movement and various organisations. In

the Tanzanian collection are speeches by PAC leaders such as John Pokela and Joe Mkwanazi. The Zimbabwe mission papers also contain letters on social aspects and speeches by PAC members, including Edwin Makoti, Motsoko Pheko and Gora Ibrahim. Included in the London mission is correspondence between the PAC and organisations such as the British Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches and the Commonwealth. There is also correspondence between the PAC and the BCM on cooperation between the two organisations. There are also some photographs of demonstrators in the London mission in the fight against apartheid and a collection of reel-to-reel tapes, including interviews with PAC leaders such as Johnson Mlambo, the address to the United Nations Organisation by Nyathi Pokela, and speeches given at the PAC Consultative Conference in Arusha, Tanzania in 1978.

Though the BCM documents are kept in acid free boxes and filed like those of the ANC and PAC, they are not classified according to missions. In addition, documents from the BCM(A) in exile are mixed with those of AZAPO, which operated internally. The archivists argue that they came from the AZAPO headquarters in this mixed form and that it is the duty of archivists to stick to the original order. Of interest in this collection is correspondence between the ANC and the BCM in exile in an effort to establish working relations between the two organisations. This correspondence dates back to 1978. There is little correspondence between the BCM (A) and AZAPO, but some of it is interesting. For instance, a letter from the BCM (A) to AZAPO dated 28 March 1985 requests AZAPO to act against the visit to South Africa by the All Blacks rugby team. The BCM collection also contains speeches by

the leadership, minutes of meetings, some newspaper clippings, BCM (A) newsletters and documentation on the BCM (A) activities in Dukwi.<sup>22</sup>

The latest book to mention the ANC archives at Fort Hare is that of Sadie Forman. In the early 1990s Forman returned to South Africa, Fort Hare, after many years of exile life in Britain.<sup>23</sup> Her involvement in the archives at Fort Hare will be discussed later in the thesis. Other recent work on the ANC in exile and which relied on the ANC material at Fort Hare includes *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* by Stephen Ellis.

Debates around digital archives have enriched this study.<sup>24</sup> Kate Allan's edited *Paper Wars* has deepened the writer's understanding on debates about gate-keeping. Contentious issues around digitization of struggle records range from suspicion to fear of what digitization could mean for struggle records housed in different institutions around the country. Debates around digitization have come to dominate the South African liberation archives landscape, with no visible solution as to how the issue should be handled. Though the US-based Aluka project

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<sup>22</sup> Stapleton and Maamoe, 'An overview of the African National Congress Archives at Fort Hare'. Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements' *History in Africa*, Some of the internal publications by the liberation movements include, 'Inside the ANC Archives' (Johannesburg: ANC Archives, 1995), 'ANC policy for transformation and development of heritage resources (museums, monuments, archives and national symbols) for a democratic South Africa' by Themba Sirayi, 'African National Congress papers' (Lusaka and London, 1960-1991) compiled by Kier Schuringa. A recent paper that covers some aspects of the liberation collection at Fort Hare is that by Zofia Sulej, 'Changing Landscapes: The University Archive in a new South Africa', *ESARBICA Journal*, 28 (2009); 146– 171.

<sup>23</sup> Sadie Forman, *Lionel Forman: a life too short*, (Alice, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> This includes, Michele Pickover, 'I want, I want, I want': Accessing and controlling the past in South Africa in the 1990's', unpublished paper. Allen Isaacman, Premesh Lalu, and Tom Nygren, 'Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive of Southern African Liberation Struggles: The Aluka Project', *Africa Today*, 52, (2) (2005), 55-77. Lalu, 'The Virtual Stampede for Africa: Digitisation, Postcoloniality and Archives of the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa', *Innovation*, 34 (2007), 28-44. Peter Limb, 'The Digitization of Africa' and 'The Politics of Digital 'Reform and Revolution': Towards Mainstreaming and African Control of African digitization', *Africa Today*, 52, (2) 2005, 3-19, Chris Saunders, 'Digital Imaging South Africa (DISA): a case study', *Pogram: Pogram: Electronic Library and Information Systems*, 39,(4) 2005, 345-352, Saunders, 'Content Selection Issues in Digitising Material on South Africa's Freedom Struggle', *Innovation*, 34 (2007), 12-17.

and Digital Imaging South Africa (DISA) wished to digitise some of the archival material at Fort Hare, they were not able to do this because there was never any agreement on the terms under which such digitisation could take place. This will be discussed later in the thesis.

The study has benefitted from a range of literature around archives. The editors of *Refiguring the Archive* assert that a country like South Africa emerging from the apartheid era needs to engage in archival issues as it 'seeks to imagine itself and its past in ways not constrained by the colonial and apartheid pasts'.<sup>25</sup> This thesis hopes to encourage exactly that, to point at the challenges and problems around liberation archives in South Africa in order to stimulate debate and discussion in this field. Some of the issues raised in this book by Jane Taylor, such as the question of ownership and control of the archives, are essential for this study.<sup>26</sup> For example, in the case of the ANC collections at Fort Hare and the Mayibuye Centre, crucial material is owned by the ANC. Fort Hare and Mayibuye serve as custodians of the collections. As will be seen, this makes it difficult for the custodians to take certain major decisions on the archives.

In their paper in 2005 *State of the Nation*, Morrow and Luvuyo Wotshela looked critically at the state of archives in South Africa. They assert that the condition of most of the country's archival deposits leave much to be desired.<sup>27</sup> Some of the concerns raised by Morrow and Wotshela were reworked into questions that were directed to those that were interviewed for

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<sup>25</sup> Hamilton *et al* (eds), *Refiguring the Archive*.

<sup>26</sup> Jane Taylor, 'Holdings: Refiguring the Archive', in Hamilton *et al*(eds), *Refiguring the Archive*, 243-281, Verne Harris, *Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective*, (Chicago, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Morrow and Luvuyo Wotshela, 'The State of the Archives in South Africa', in John Daniel *et al* (eds) *The State of the Nation: South Africa: 2004-2005*, ( Cape Town, 2005) 313-335.

this project including Graham Dominy the Director of the National Archives. A conference on the state of archives in South Africa held at the Nelson Mandela Foundation in April 2007 proceeded from where Morrow and Wotshela had left off. The conference produced an ‘Open Report to the Minister of Arts and Culture’, informing the minister that archives in South Africa were not taken seriously, were highly under-resourced and that lack of skills remained a concern. The report asked the Minister to seriously apply his mind to archives.<sup>28</sup> All these sources indicate that there is a lively though disquieted discussion on archives in South Africa. However, it is not clear whether the Minister responded to the report.

That South African literature on archives continues to grow indicates that there is a great deal of interest and concern about archives by the country’s archivists and academics. The latest work that highlights archival issues in South Africa is *Becoming Worthy Ancestors: Archive Deliberation and Identity in South Africa*, edited by Xolela Mangcu. Amongst other things, the book mentions the importance of archives, often a neglected stepchild in mainstream government planning. Not only are the National Archives in a state of chaos but also many documents from the apartheid past are inaccessible. The histories of the PAC and BCM, argues Mangcu, continue to be held at arms-length, as though nothing could be written about these organizations.<sup>29</sup> Such negation is discussed in this thesis and the story of the repatriation of the PAC and BCM material to Fort Hare suggests that there is indeed more to be done by researchers in writing the histories of these liberation movements.

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<sup>28</sup> Archives at the Crossroads: Open Report to the Minister of Arts and Culture.

<sup>29</sup> Xolela Mangcu, ‘Evidentiary Genocide: Intersections of Race, Power and the Archive’, in Xolela Mangcu (ed), *Becoming Worthy Ancestors: Archive, Public Deliberation and Identity in South Africa*, (Johannesburg, 2011), 1-16.

In *The Deaths of Hintsa: Post Apartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts*, Premesh Lalu problematises the death of Hintsa, the paramount Chief of the Gcaleka. Accounts from those of colonial officials to soldiers, are given on what transpired during the events surrounding his death. The lines between truth, lies and rumour are blurred.<sup>30</sup> Through analyzing different versions of the death of Hintsa, Lalu brings readers' attention to the need to evaluate archival sources critically before drawing conclusions. The use of oral sources and documentary evidence in this thesis is an effort to rely on a range of sources to draw conclusions on how and why struggle material was repatriated to Fort Hare.

Publications on archives beyond South Africa's borders have broadened the writer's perceptions. For example, the work of Michael Kurtz on strategic planning and governance of archives in the US shows how, over the years, the US began to seriously consider archives as an essential element in the preservation of the country's history and heritage. Kurtz also writes about the difficulties encountered in implementing such plans.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, there is much to be learned from Philip Mooney's work on *Corporate Culture and the Archives* in the US. He emphasizes that like any other department, archives should be run effectively drawing lessons from best practice in business where appropriate.<sup>32</sup> As will be seen, liberation movements such as the ANC demanded effective strategic planning from Fort Hare to ensure a viable archives programme.

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<sup>30</sup> Premesh Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa: Post Apartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts*, (Cape Town, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Michael Kurtz, 'Strategic Planning and Implementation at the National Archives and Records Administration': 1992-2000, in Bruce Dearstyne (ed), *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs*, (Westport, 2001), 71-83.

<sup>32</sup> Philip Mooney, 'Corporate Culture and the Archives', in Dearstyne (ed), *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs*, 85-99, Dearstyne (ed), *Leadership and Administration of Successful Archival Programs*, 131-151.

Ann Stoler outlines the Dutch colonial archives, most of which are located at the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague, described as the most accessible and modernized archive of our times. However, she notes that there are challenges in using Dutch colonial material due to the manner of description. For instance the documents of the Ministry of Colonies are chronological instead of being arranged by topic, making it difficult to use themes in locating the documents that a researcher hopes to find. This leaves the researcher relying on his or her skills to find a way through the documents.<sup>33</sup> Her work indicates that it is possible to provide a history of an archive that could prepare researchers on what to expect when visiting a particular archive that is also much more than a handbook. More often than not, researchers visit the archives without a clue about what to expect from that particular depository, meaning they are often disappointed when that particular archive does not yield the kind of material expected. Randall Jimerson says that the work of archivists makes them powerful, as they make decisions on which sources to preserve for generations to come. In that way they are gate-keepers and their decisions shape the future of history. Jimerson adds that archivists can use the power afforded them to ensure accountability, social justice, diversity and open government and can do so without negative effects on professional standards such as fairness, honesty, detachment and transparency.<sup>34</sup>

Terry Cook argues that the definition of archives evolves with time. To drive his point home, he cites the *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, better known as the Dutch Manual, authored by Samuel Muller, Johan Feith and Robert Fruin and published in

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<sup>33</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, (New Jersey, 2009), 9-10.

<sup>34</sup> Jimerson, 'Archives for all: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice', *The American Archivist*.

1898. These authors defined archives as mainly administration or official records, and Cook demonstrates that the Dutch Manual did not encompass private and personal documents.<sup>35</sup> Even today, many of us fail to recognize that each country or state has its own character in terms of its archives. In Germany for instance, the records of political parties are amongst those held at the Federal Archives in Koblenz.<sup>36</sup> However in South Africa archival records of political parties are mostly held at tertiary institutions, notably Fort Hare. What Cook implied was that we should be careful in our definition of archives.

Looking at the archival debates today, one can say that the 21<sup>st</sup> century may come to be defined as that of digital archives, an indication that archives are an evolving tool. Tom Nesmith points out that archivists should play a leading role in ensuring that electronic records take centre stage in the world of record making and management. But he warns of the challenges and shortcomings that the archival world is likely to face in using electronic records. Such problems, authenticity for instance, are similar to those posed by conventional records.<sup>37</sup> Users of digital records should not be blinded by their nature but should remain critical, never assuming that electronic records are unquestionably reliable.

#### *The Research process and the nature of the sources used in this work*

It has earlier been emphasized that no study of this nature has been undertaken before. This posed a challenge to the writer since this field remained barren and called for creativity in the

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<sup>35</sup> Terry Cook, 'What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift', *Archivaria*, 43 (1997), 17-63.

<sup>36</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German\\_Federal\\_Archive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Federal_Archive), accessed on 14 February 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Tom Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives', *The American Archivist*, 65(2002), 24-41.



researcher. The study required the writer to conduct oral interviews with individuals who were involved in the collection and preservation of the archives of the struggle lodged at Fort Hare. Those interviewed for this work include Fort Hare administrators, archivists and librarians who played a meaningful role in the repatriation and preservation of the liberation archives that Fort Hare boasts today. Interviews with these varied and sometimes conflicting stakeholders ensured a balanced story from the role players in the establishment of liberation archives at Fort Hare. Most networks were easy to access as they were cultivated during the writer's stay at Fort Hare. Though the writer had never met some of the interviewees before, the mere mention of Fort Hare brought back memories of the institution that they served and encouraged them to reflect on their experiences at Fort Hare.

The use of oral history has become increasingly important, especially for scholars interested in the history of the liberation movements. It enables the interviewees to reflect on their past experiences and cover the gaps left open by written resources. Through oral history, the author has been able to tap into the memories of the role players who were involved in the collection and preservation of the liberation archives. Much of the history of these archives could not be written without the use of this methodology.

The interviewees include administrators such as Professors Mbulelo Mzamane, the Vice Chancellor of Fort Hare who succeeded Sibusiso Bengu in 1994, and TNV Maqashalala, who was Vice-Chancellor Academic and also served on the CCS board. Others include Dr. Isaac Mabindisa, once University Planner and later Registrar, who was responsible for some of the committees that dealt with the archives on campus. Archives administrators interviewed include Yolisa Soul, Head of the University Library, Professor Themba Sirayi the Director of

the CCS, and Johnson Klu a senior CCS administrator. Archivists interviewed include Ike Maamoe associated with the liberation archives from 1993, and Dr. Festus Khayundi who was, until recently, a senior archivist at the CCS. Others are Annica van Gylswyk an experienced archivist who served as a volunteer at the CCS in the early 1990s and Punky Kwatsha, former archivist at the CCS nurtured by Robert Kukubo. Some were young former tertiary students who wanted to make careers in the archives: amongst them are, Khanyisile Botomani and Vuyoletu Feni-Feti. Stories from these individuals - their backgrounds, how they ended up at Fort Hare and their perceptions on liberation archives - were not available in the documentary evidence and enriched this work. Their accounts also enriched this thesis by corroborating or sometimes casting doubt on written documents.

Most of those interviewed for this project freely spoke their minds about the archives which, to some extent, remain a sensitive issue. Some role-players could not be interviewed as they live outside South Africa and the researcher's shoe-string budget did not provide for traveling beyond the country's borders. Others have since passed away and the opportunity for them to air their views has been lost. These are some of the limitations of oral history.

Beyond Fort Hare, role players from the liberation movements were also interviewed. They served in different capacities in the archives structures of the liberation movements. Some were active participants in the struggle against apartheid and passionate about the preservation of archival material. ANC officials interviewed include Frene Ginwala, Mohammed Tikly and Narissa Ramdhani, all of whom were central figures of the ANC Archives Committee. BCM officials who played an active role in the repatriation of the

organization's material were also interviewed. They include Strike Thokoane, Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, Mpotseng Kgokong, and Gerald Phokobye.

Oral history has been used alongside archival research because the two complement each other, enabling a balanced and detailed study of the history and politics of the liberation archives. Such documentary sources were located at the CCS, the University administration building and the University Library and included correspondence between the liberation movements and Fort Hare, minutes and memoranda. Internal University documents pertaining to liberation archives were also used.

Primary sources that shed light on the histories of Wits Historical Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Department at UCT and Disa at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal have been used to strengthen the argument of this thesis. Digital images are important and may represent the future of archival collections. The author has drawn from his experience as Collections Manager of the Disa project to examine the problems of digital projects in relation to the liberation archives. Documents from Disa, for instance, contain details on the differences between Disa and Aluka on the digitisation of struggle records in South Africa. A few private papers were also used during this research project; some came from Tanya Barben, daughter of Jack Simons and Ray Alexander, ANC struggle icons who lived in exile in Zambia, others from Van Gylswyk. Some newspaper reports have also been used.

The student faced challenges in obtaining written sources for this work. The bulk of the primary written records used are administrative records of established archives, in effect an

archive of an archive. Officials involved in the repatriation and preservation of the liberation archives at Fort Hare created and kept paper trails on developments in the repatriation and preservation of archives. This is standard procedure for any institution or company, and the documents remain administrative records of those institutions and are treated as such and not as an archive. The fact that the documents used in this thesis were viewed as administrative records created problems for the writer. The University administrators, particularly at the CCS, now The National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS), hesitated in allowing access to the administrative records which were not considered to be archival records but just administrative files. It had not dawned on them that these records were an archive of an archive. Only when this study was conducted did archivists from Fort Hare, Wits, UWC and UCT realize that their administrative records can be used for research purposes.

At Fort Hare, there were doubts if such documents existed in large quantities. Some university officials wondered if such documents could be found, as much had happened over the years and relatively little attention was paid to administrative records. Some officials at Fort Hare were reluctant to apply their minds on the matter as this would cut into their time as busy administrators. They imagined themselves trying to locate old records which seemed to have little significance to their daily activities. The researcher was often frustrated but he sensed that the documents he desperately needed for his study existed especially since administrators like Sirayi often committed things to paper. The first set of documents relevant for this thesis emerged when the researcher explained to Maamoe what his study hoped to achieve. Maamoe then recalled that he had kept administrative records on the ANC archives in two separate boxes. There was hope and jubilation when the researcher was presented with this small but significant treasure. Subsequently the researcher approached the CCS officials,

who also questioned the existence of such documents in large quantities. But one administrator recalled that during the recent renovation of the CCS building, she saw boxes of administrative records at the ground floor, but the documents could not be accessed. The researcher subsequently submitted a research request to the University Registrar, asking to be given access to university records which could benefit his study. This was granted. The researcher had already earmarked the CCS, the basement of the administration building where old University files are kept and the Human Resources Department where staff files could be found for investigation. The results were excellent as some files which contained correspondence between the University and the ANC were unearthed. A few staff files were found in the Human Resource Division, including those of the late Kukubo. The basement of the CCS building contained the bulk of documents that have been used in this thesis and they include correspondence between the University and the ANC, correspondence between University officials on liberation archives and correspondence between the CCS and different stakeholders from outside the University. This latter includes correspondence between the CCS and potential funders, institutions such as Michigan State University and between the CCS and government departments. Minutes, reports and memoranda of understanding between the University and the liberation movements were also unearthed. However, few documents relating to the PAC and BCM were found in this section of the CCS. This led the researcher to conclude that records that could shed light on the BCM and the PAC repatriation process were misplaced, non-existent or lost. But while making copies of the excavated treasure on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the CCS building, the researcher noticed that there were marked cabinet files in the same room and decided to take a closer look at them. He noted that some cabinets bore labels relating to the ANC, PAC and BCM archives initiatives. He requested and was granted permission from CCS administrators to go through them. The files contained correspondence between the liberation movements and the University, as well as

progress reports on repatriation. Though there were some documents on the relationship between the ANC and Fort Hare in the collection lodged on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the CCS building, the discovery of PAC and BCM material was rewarding to the researcher as he had given up hope of such documents.

At the Mayibuye Centre (UWC) the head archivist acknowledged that documents relating to the topic existed, but made it clear that they would not be made available for this thesis, while asserting that the researcher was free to conduct interviews with interested UWC members. After much negotiation and discussion the researcher was advised by concerned fellow historians to write to the Rector and request access to the records in question. This he did, but still there was no response. The researcher considered use of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) to gain access to UWC records. This act stipulates that citizens have the right to consult public documents especially for work of this nature. But the student realized that this could cause further delays which could affect the completion of this study.<sup>38</sup> Instead some of the documents that were used in this study which refer to UWC were obtained through consulting copies at Fort Hare. This is due to the fact that there was a working relationship between the two universities on archives.

Access to administrative records at ANC headquarters relevant to this study also proved difficult. The ANC archivist referred the writer to Fort Hare. Though a sizeable number of documents on the relationship between Fort Hare and the ANC were secured through the University, the writer believes that there are relevant documents at the ANC headquarters

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<sup>38</sup> There are many people who've tried to use PAIA before but their efforts were frustrated, see for instance Piers Pigou, 'Accessing the Records of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission', in Kate Allan(ed), *Paper Wars: Access to information in South Africa*, (Johannesburg, 2009).

which could have enriched this study. The researcher also visited the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) offices in Johannesburg to enquire about similar administrative records. Though AZAPO officials were willing to assist in the matter, they did not know where to start as their filing system pertaining to old records had collapsed.

Lessons can be drawn from this experience. The research into often unorganized administrative records was a question of persistence, good human relations, imagination and, sometimes, luck. This may serve as a guide to other researchers who are interested in what may seem like themes that are near-impossible to research in any depth. The experience demonstrates that not all documents required for research and writing are lodged in organized archives. Researchers ought to be creative and think out of the box in order to answer their research questions.

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#### *The early 1990s*

As the author unpacks this study on the liberation archives at Fort Hare, it is important, especially for the benefit of the readers, to place this work in the context of the unfolding political situation in South Africa, the early 1990.

Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 and the unbanning of the ANC, PAC and other political formations brought hope to a country reeling from decades of apartheid oppression. Though the oppressed and those who sympathized with them yearned for a liberated South Africa, to this day many within the liberation movements agree that President F.W. de Klerk's unbanning of the liberation movements and release of political prisoners caught them

off guard. Mary Simons, the daughter of Jack Simons and Ray Alexander, the ANC's struggle icons, states that some even thought that the announcement by de Klerk was a trap and that exiles would be rounded up and imprisoned as soon as they returned to South Africa.<sup>39</sup> But the announcement turned out to be genuine, meaning that the liberation movements had to terminate their operations in exile, re-establish themselves in the country and prepare to engage the regime in deliberations to bring about a liberated South Africa.

At the time, many exiles were returning home, many political prisoners were being released and after many years of vacillation the apartheid regime prepared to sit down with their political arch-enemies in an effort to find a peaceful settlement. In the midst of the unfolding political situation of the early 1990s, liberation movements such as the ANC, PAC and BCM had to attend to the implications of for them of operating above ground after many years of being banned. In addition to the repatriation of cadres from exile, there was also a need to repatriate struggle archival material to South Africa as this would allow researchers access to documents generated during the many years of exile. Some of these liberation movements recognized the importance of the preservation of heritage and were keen to see their archives, generated in exile, repatriated to South Africa. By repatriating their collections, these movements could ensure the preservation of their fascinating and at times painful and controversial past. Rewriting the country's struggle history could only be accomplished if liberation documents were properly archived and preserved. Documentation to be repatriated by the liberation movements for preservation included letters, speeches, telegrams, memorandums, posters, minutes, audio visual tapes and some artifacts.

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<sup>39</sup> Author's Interview with Mary Simons, Cape Town, 6 February 2011. (Henceforth Interview with Simon).



The ANC, which seemed the natural future party of government, reacted hurriedly to the unfolding situation in South Africa and prepared for whatever might occur, above all for the negotiations with the apartheid regime. But negotiations with the state were not the only matters needing attention. The regime, where it was able, had imposed its will in many spheres in its attempt to ensure total control. From the perspective of the oppressed the heritage sector for instance was in an abject state. Over time the regime had systematically tried to wipe out versions of black history and heritage that did not accord with its vision of hierarchical, 'traditional' communities. Sirayi, charged with the preservation of the liberation archives at Fort Hare, explained this further in the early 1990s:

The rich South African history of the struggle for liberation is conspicuous by absence in the State Archives in Cape Town and Pretoria. The same holds true of the so-called national symbols, which are in fact colonialist and nationalist symbols. There are, for instance, no symbols of the liberation struggle in the ...museum in Simon's Town, in Cape Town. The collection of symbols housed in this museum celebrates the history of white struggle for domination and supremacy, together with its virulent segregation and Bantustan system. ... no attention has been given to the symbols commemorating the liberation struggle. Planning in apartheid South Africa has been characterised by dogma, fragmentation, myopia and a general lack of consultation and co-ordination. With specific regard to museum, monuments and symbols it is difficult to talk of planning at all. There is no coherent national policy for museums and monuments. Similarly, there is no coherent national policy for arts and culture in general.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, the South African landscape was peppered with symbols of white power and domination such as busts and statues of apartheid leaders.<sup>41</sup> The ANC was aware of all these difficulties and upon its return from exile initiated various projects. One of these related to heritage in South Africa and required consultation with relevant stakeholders to set the

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<sup>40</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Proposal from Themba Sirayi to Wally Serote: Research on Heritage Resources and Art Forms (Cultural Needs Assessment), [early 1990s].

<sup>41</sup> In the Xhariep district of Free State, for instance, apartheid busts still form part of the landscape many years after apartheid has been dismantled. For more details see, Maaba, *The Struggle for Freedom in South Africa 1912-2012: an overview of the Xhariep District in the Free State*, unpublished paper

ANC's agenda in motion. On 11 January 1991, a meeting was held between the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and 'discipline based bodies', including the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA); the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW); the South African Music Alliance (SAMA); the Film and Allied Workers Organisation; the Performing Arts Workers Equity (PAWE); Dance Alliance (DA); and Afrapix. The National Cultural Committee of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) sent its apologies. The aim of this meeting was to discuss and clarify issues around the academic and cultural boycott and to see how stakeholders in heritage and the arts could be brought together to create strong and coordinated pressure on the authorities.

To fine-tune its activities, a steering committee of the ANC's DAC, the Federation of South African Cultural Organisations (FOSACO) and UDUSA was formed. However, it became clear to the participants that they had no mandate to draft a policy which could give direction to the arts. To circumvent this problem, it was agreed that a sub-committee of Baleka Kgositsile, Angela Brown, Dan Robertse, Laurence Dworkin and Wally Serote, the head of the ANC's Arts and Culture Desk, would produce a document highlighting what had been discussed in order to start a national debate on the arts. This document raised the issues of the day, which included discussion of the academic and cultural boycott, national coordination of the arts, and engagement with commercial and state media and cultural institutions.<sup>42</sup>

The ANC's DAC invited the Performing Arts Council for talks on the future of the arts in South Africa. The ANC body noted that the Council's continued funding from the state was

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<sup>42</sup> UFH: ANC Archives, New York Mission, Discussion document, Debate on the academic and cultural boycott: National co-ordination and engagement with state and commercial media and cultural institutions and organisations.[1992]

at the expense of the majority of South Africans, whose cultures were trampled upon; however, the general feeling was that an opportunity existed to attempt to correct the mistakes of the past, thus laying a solid foundation in the arts for a liberated South Africa. To begin bridging the gap between these two arts bodies, a meeting was arranged with Louis Bezuidenhout, a deputy director of the Performing Arts Council in the Transvaal (PACT). The ANC's DAC proposed that the artists be represented in the structures of transformation. It added that from henceforth democratic principles should be followed in any of the Performing Arts Council's decisions on the future of the arts and that there should be consultation with relevant art structures. The DAC also proposed that a commission to discuss the arts be formed, composed of five representatives from progressive cultural structures including unions; five from PACT; and another five recommended by the DAC to be drawn from the Association for Community Arts Workers Centres (ACAC), PAWE, COSAW, SAMA and DA.<sup>43</sup> Clearly, the ANC and its allies, the 'progressive cultural structures', were making a bid for complete organizational control of the sector.

To the ANC's dismay, the Performing Arts Council backtracked and no longer wanted to hear anything about the transformation process. In its update to the ANC mother body, the DAC asserted that the Performing Arts Council was negotiating in bad faith and was still trapped in apartheid politics. The Performing Arts Council then informed the ANC that it had never been dictated to by any political party. This was promptly challenged by the ANC, which cited the fact that the Council had always received funding from the National Party (NP) government and could not, therefore, claim to be autonomous. The DAC also charged that the Performing Arts Council remained a white dominated organization, intolerant of opposing views. Serote challenged the manner in which the organization conducted its

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*: Department of Arts and Culture, Crusaders against change, nd.

business and accused it of negotiating in bad faith. He stressed that such patronage of whites by the Performing Arts Council, particularly PACT, was clear as it was covered widely in the press.<sup>44</sup>

This experience was an indication that it would be no easier to transform the heritage landscape than any other aspect of South African society. Many apartheid adherents had apparently internalized racism and were prepared to fight for the continuation of the benefits that they received from the status quo. In this, there were strong parallels with the broader process of political negotiations where the NP attempted to frustrate progress through repeated delays.

#### *The Commission for Museums, Monuments and Heraldry*

Despite the challenges faced by the ANC Arts and Culture desk in the heritage sector such as delaying tactics by the Performing Arts Council, the movement pressed forward and on 1 December 1991, its Arts and Culture Desk set up the Commission for Museums, Monuments and Heraldry (CMMH). The CMMH's short-term goals were to engage in local, regional and national debate regarding the preservation of culture; to facilitate the formulation of a national policy for museums and heraldry; and to educate the oppressed people of South Africa on the preservation of culture.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>*Ibid*: Department of Arts and Culture, Update on ANC's DAC and PACT negotiations: a running battle in progress? nd.

<sup>45</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, ANC's CMMH, Press Briefing, 1 December 1991. See also Graham. Dominy, 'Archives in a Democratic South Africa: The Proposals of the ANC, an Evaluation', *SA Archives Journal/SA Argiefblad*, 35 (1993), 67-76.

These organizations and discussions laid the basis for policy when the ANC later came to power. The CMMH was chaired by Dr. Wally Serote, head of the ANC Arts and Culture Desk.<sup>46</sup> Co-ordinated by Sirayi, who reported to Serote, the various commissions ranging from the arts to archives and monuments were expected to have their own sessions and discuss activities that affected their particular sectors. Sirayi, an apolitical and homeland academic from the apartheid era, was probably recommended to the ANC by Professor Sibusiso Bengu, the first full time black Vice Chancellor and Rector of Fort Hare in 1990 and a staunch ANC member. Under Bengu's leadership, Fort Hare provided many individuals who served the ANC in various capacities and as head of the CCS, Sirayi worked closely with the Rector on archival, cultural and heritage matters at the University.<sup>47</sup>

Once the CMMH had developed a basic framework, a conference was to be held that would include other organizations, which together with the ANC would be invited to formulate basic policies. The conference would establish a Culture and Democracy Project charged with policy implementation and fundraising. As soon as all the policy documents were ready, they were to be forwarded to Sirayi who would develop press statements in consultation with the movement.<sup>48</sup> He sought advice from other quarters on the nomination of arts-related council members from various heritage bodies such as the J.L.B. Smith Institute of Ichthyology, the Council of the South African National Gallery, the South African Association of the Arts, and the Council of the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg. Professor M.N. Bruton who had served on and was familiar with the workings of official arts-related

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<sup>46</sup> UFH: NAHCES, Administrative Files, Memorandum from Wally Serote to all concerned [participants of the CMMH, 12 January 1993.

<sup>47</sup> For interaction between Sirayi and Bengu at Fort Hare see *ibid*: Ad hoc Committee meeting to be held at 14h 45 on Monday, 4 November 1991 in the Rector's Committee Room.

<sup>48</sup> UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Minutes of the meeting of the ANC Commission on Museums, Monuments and Heraldry held on 21 June 1992, S.M.E. Bengu to Frene Ginwala, 8 November 1991.

councils in South Africa outlined to him how they were constituted.<sup>49</sup> Those who served on various CMMH committees were approached by Sirayi on behalf of the ANC. For instance, on 9 April 1992 Sirayi requested Gordon Metz of the Historical and Cultural Centre (later renamed the Mayibuye Centre) to serve as a member and convener of the Heritage Resources subcommittee. Metz had been a long standing member of the ANC in exile and was involved in the movement's arts and culture activities. Others who served on this committee were academics and heritage practitioners, including Dr. Iain Edwards, Gill Berning, Denver Webb, Aron Mazel and Lewis Matiyela.<sup>50</sup>

In 1992 the CMMH held a policy workshop near Bloemfontein of cultural activists. Archival collections remained one of the ANC's priorities and during this workshop the organization appointed an ANC archives sub-committee. Luli Callinicos, Nomawethu Danster, Verne Harris, Ike Maamoe, Nombulelo Mpongwana and Sirayi served on this committee, which was tasked with investigating archives management across the country, producing a policy document and making recommendations pertaining to the transformation and popularization of archives in South Africa.<sup>51</sup> As with similar sub-committees set up at the time, not all members of the committee charged with archives were ANC members but served because of their expertise. In its report, the sub-committee recommended that internationally accepted standards be applied in the management of archives and that heritage units such as archives are intertwined with the education system to enable citizens to familiarize themselves with the field. This, it was thought, could be achieved through outreach programmes. The sub-committee also reported that archives could be used as an important tool for nation building

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*: M.N. Bruton to T. Sirayi, nd.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Gordon Metz, 9 April 1992, Themba Sirayi to. Gordon Metz, 28 April 1992.

<sup>51</sup> Dominy, 'Archives in a democratic South Africa: The proposals of the ANC: an evaluation', *S.A. Archives Journal/S.A. Argiefblad*, 67-76.

in liberated South Africa after its lengthy experience of racial segregation and intolerance. The sub-committee added that all South Africans had a right to access state information for research purposes and that documents, particularly state documents, had to be preserved instead of being destroyed. The sub-committee was of the view that a proper national policy on archives could only be drafted once all the key stakeholders had been consulted. In addition, it recommended that oral history programmes be carried out to record untold histories especially those of the oppressed.<sup>52</sup>

Though the sub-committee on archives was not necessarily expected to cover issues relating to the ANC archives, the idea put forward of an indaba on heritage issues indicated that the ANC was conscious of the importance of preserving the country's tangible and intangible heritage. The recommendations of the sub-committee fitted well into the work of the ANC Archives Committee which, as will be seen, was charged with the repatriation of ANC papers from exile. But sadly this direct connection never happened as by the end of 1993 the CMMH had ceased to exist.<sup>53</sup> Though no explanation was given for the sudden cessation, it could be that other pressing issues such as the general election took centre stage. Instead, as is often the case in government departments, a white paper, on Arts, Culture, and Heritage, was eventually produced in 1996 by the then Department of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology. It aimed, as the ANC had wished in the early 1990s, to address imbalances in this field.<sup>54</sup> The white paper was silent on how the government hoped to ensure success in the area of archives. Instead, it focused on interaction in areas such as monuments, museums and archives while keeping them at 'arm's length'. The Department of Arts and Culture would

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<sup>52</sup>*Ibid*: see also, UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Memorandum from Wally Serote to all concerned [participants of the MMHC Commission], 12 January 1993.

<sup>53</sup> Harris, *Archives and Justice*, 81-182.

<sup>54</sup> Carolyn Hamilton, 'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving', in Hamilton *et al*, *Refiguring the Archive*, 209-227.

provide funding to such statutory bodies but would 'not pass judgment on artistic expression'.<sup>55</sup> The 'artistic expression' fits oddly with archives and gives an impression that the DACST did not know what to do about archives in general.

### *Beyond the CMMH*

Other than the CMMH initiative, in the early 1990s much publicity was given to the gathering of struggle documents which could not be collected during apartheid repression.<sup>56</sup> Michele Pickover, a Wits University archivist, observed that since liberation movements were now unbanned nobody could be prosecuted for keeping struggle documents. Many archives took full advantage of this in what could be described as the scramble for liberation collections.<sup>57</sup> Pickover noted that 'some archivists become obsessed with possessing information that is generally perceived to be politically fashionable and consequently prestigious'.<sup>58</sup> As will be seen later, in this highly charged environment, the ANC archives became a focus of discord.

In the early 1990s the regime was destroying documents that could implicate many of their own functionaries who had committed atrocious deeds during apartheid. The ANC's call to stop the shredding of these documents was ignored.<sup>59</sup> The movement was also concerned about the whereabouts of the numerous documents and other material that had been confiscated from it by the apartheid state. For instance, during the Gaborone raid of 1985, in

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<sup>55</sup>[http://www.dac.gov.za/white\\_paper.htm](http://www.dac.gov.za/white_paper.htm)CHAP5, accessed on 19 January 2013.

<sup>56</sup> Michele Pickover, "I want, I want, I want": Accessing and controlling the past in South Africa in the 1990's', unpublished paper.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Dominy, 'Archives in a democratic South Africa', *S.A. Archives Journal/S.A. Argiefblad*, 67-76.



which several ANC members were killed, the state had seized Thami Mnyele's artworks as evidence of ANC underground activities. To date, these artworks have not been recovered even though many of those that were seized are known to have survived.<sup>60</sup> But some of the material such as T-shirts, posters and videos from the freedom struggle was salvaged. Sandy Rowoldt, at the Cory Library, Rhodes, was especially creative in preserving such material.<sup>61</sup> On 22 February 1993, the organization instructed Frene Ginwala, a prominent member of the movement's national executive committee, to establish the fate of documents confiscated by the state.<sup>62</sup> Subsequently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) established in 1996 to investigate apartheid atrocities recommended that a detailed and comprehensive analysis be made by independent researchers of what and how much material from the apartheid era was still in the hands of the security structures, but nothing ever came of that initiative.<sup>63</sup> Some officials saw state documents as a form of investment from which they could reap financial rewards. Percy Yutar, the chief prosecutor during the Rivonia trial, kept a copy of the trial record and later managed to sell it to Harry Oppenheimer's Brenthurst Library for an undisclosed sum, despite it being state property.<sup>64</sup>

This then is the context of the repatriation of the ANC archives from exile from the early 1990s onwards, followed by those of the PAC and the BCM. Concern in the liberation movement with archives as part of a broader concern with heritage issues was evident, but

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<sup>60</sup> For more on the raid see Brown Maaba and Narissa Ramdhani, 'The Role of Visual Artists in the Struggle Against Apartheid (1980-1990)', in South African Education Democracy Trust(*Sadet*), (Pretoria, 2010) , 4, 1523-1549, see also, Diana Wylie, *Art and Revolution: The Life and Death of Thami Mnyele*, (Johannesburg, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.ru.ac.za/corylibrary/>

<sup>62</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files: Minutes of the Archives Committee, 24 February 1993.

<sup>63</sup> Allan, 'Applying PAIA: Legal, Political and Contextual Issues', in Allan (ed), *Paper Wars*, 184.

<sup>64</sup> Pickover, 'I want, I want, I want'. The Rivonia record was subsequently given by the Brenthurst Library to the National Archives.

seems to have lost impetus as more apparently pressing political issues took precedence; the old regime ruthlessly destroyed records that its functionaries saw as discreditable to their reputation or even survival; the new ANC-led government did not manage to come effectively to grips with the situation. As we will now see, the repatriation of the documents from the exiled offices and bases abroad was a mammoth task, with its own dynamics, challenges and controversies. To a considerable extent it took place in isolation from broader archival questions in a free and democratic South Africa.

University of Cape Town

## ***Chapter 1: Problems and Challenges of the Repatriation of ANC archival material***

The idea that the ANC should preserve its archives can be traced to its days in exile. When SOMAFSCO was established by the ANC in Tanzania in 1978, Mohammed Tikly, the director of the complex from 1982, engaged the architects through the planning committee on his vision about the school's future library. To Tikly it was important for the ANC to preserve its exile records for research purposes, particularly in post-apartheid South Africa. Apart from that, confidential ANC documents had to be kept in secrecy until such time that they could be made public. Tikly proposed that the library should have a basement section where the ANC material would be kept in relative safety. Other ANC cadres were also concerned about the future of documents generated in exile: in Zambia intellectuals such as Pallo Jordan and Thabo Mbeki showed interest in the preservation of the ANC's archival material.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Author's Interviews with Mohammed Tikly, Pretoria, 11 December 2009 (Henceforth Interview with Tikly), Ike Maamoe, Alice, 14 June 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Maamoe). For more sources on SOMAFSCO see, Morrow, Maaba and Pulumani, *Education in Exile: SOMAFSCO, the African National Congress School in Tanzania, 1978 to 1992* (Cape Town, 2004), Morrow, Maaba, Pulumani, 'Education in Exile', in Kallaway, (ed) *The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994*, Morrow, Maaba, Pulumani, 'Revolutionary Schooling? Studying the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, the ANC Liberation School in Tanzania, 1978-1992'. *World Studies in Education*, 3(1), 23-37, Maaba, 'Alternative Schooling for South Africans: Notes on the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College experience 1978-1992', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37, (2) (2004), 289-308.

The construction of an archive at SOMAFCO was unusual. It was rare for Tanzanian buildings to have basements. The archives left a positive and lasting impression in the minds of many Tanzanians and others who visited SOMAFCO.<sup>66</sup> This first ANC archives initiative at the school faced challenges such as humidity caused by the lack of ventilation. To deal with the problem, it was decided to install air-conditioning. During the installation a small room on the ground floor of the library was temporarily used as an archive. By 1988 the basement was ready, after which students were given access to selected material for their studies. But the library staff was overworked and the archive did not receive the attention it deserved, while convincing staff from different SOMAFCO departments to submit documentation for archiving was a challenge, as many did not understand the need for preservation of archival material.<sup>67</sup>

The survival of the archives of exile was due to policy decisions. It was also due to the particular histories of a small number of individuals with archival skills. The ANC viewed the lack of professional archivists in its ranks as a grave problem and a decision was made to release some of the movement's cadres for training in the field. These included ex-SOMAFCO students Nonkululeko Woko and Maamoe. When Maamoe returned to SOMAFCO from his studies in the United Kingdom in 1991, the repatriation of exiles was in full swing and he was unable to use his archival skills at the school. Woko was repatriated from London to South Africa and never had an opportunity to return to Mazimbu.<sup>68</sup> Maamoe's archival skills were helpful to the ANC during the repatriation of its archival

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Tikly.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, Maamoe.

<sup>68</sup> Notes from Marjatta Lahti, 23 November 2011.

material to South Africa.<sup>69</sup> Other SOMAFCO students who chose careers in archives include Andre Mohammed and Zolile Mvunelo. When Mohammed completed his secondary education at SOMAFCO, he hoped to take communication studies in India. However, when the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in 1991, this initiative collapsed. India was in a state of confusion, and was distracted from what were marginal issues from the Indian point of view, leaving the likes of Mohammed in limbo. Mohammed found himself trapped at SOMAFCO and had to find something to do on campus to remain focused. The temptations of exile were many ranging from crime to alcohol abuse and to avoid such traps, Mohammed worked as a volunteer at the SOMAFCO Library. Thenceforward, he embraced library and archives work. He subsequently registered for a one year archives diploma in Dar es Salaam and with six others was later funded by the Swedish Library Association to study librarianship at UWC. After their studies at UWC, Mohammed and Mvunelo joined the Mayibuye Archive on campus.<sup>70</sup> Their particular experience helped them to understand and process the archival material from exile.

#### *Shell House and the ANC Archives Unit*

To provide a base on its return from exile and emergence from illegality, in 1991 the ANC purchased an 11 story building from the Shell Company in Bree Street, Johannesburg city centre. Shell House was the ANC headquarters for many years, and as Luthuli House it still is. This is where the movement's archival material was kept before it was sent to Fort Hare. The purchasing of Shell House was a demonstration of strength by a movement perceived as a government in waiting. Like ZANU-PF's headquarters in Harare, the ANC headquarters

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<sup>69</sup> Interviews with Tikly, Maamoe.

<sup>70</sup> Author's Interview with Andrew Mohammed, Bellville, 25 January 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Mohammed).

towered over Johannesburg sending a strong message to all those who doubted the organization's financial muscle. However, the decision to buy Shell House later haunted the ANC as Johannesburg, like many cities world-wide, experienced inner city decay. This would prompt the ANC to relocate its headquarters to a better part of the city.<sup>71</sup>

To embark on the repatriation of its archival material, the ANC established the Archives Division at Shell House. The unit was charged with the repatriation of the movement's records from different parts of the globe. The estimated budget for the archives project was R2 million.<sup>72</sup> At first the archives section formed part of the ANC Research Division. However, due to the amount of work anticipated, it was felt that there was a pressing need to establish a fully-fledged archives unit focusing on the repatriation of the ANC documents.<sup>73</sup> To initiate this project the ANC established the Archives Committee which was charged with overseeing the repatriation process. It was chaired by Frene Ginwala who had the necessary credentials for the job. She held a doctorate in history and was a longstanding and trusted member of the ANC. In the early 1960s she was the editor of *Spearhead*, a Tanzanian newspaper, and had worked as a journalist for *Africa South*.<sup>74</sup> She was in that sense familiar with the importance of information and its preservation.

Ginwala was and still is an independent and forthright thinker and speaker who fought against racial and gender chauvinism within the ANC. She was a driving force behind the ANC archives project. Those with her in exile speak of her as someone with deep analytical

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<sup>71</sup> Author's Interview with Raziah Saleh, Houghton, 23 November 2009 (Henceforth Interview with Saleh)

<sup>72</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Minutes of the ANC Archives Committee, 24 February 1993.

<sup>73</sup> Author's Interview with Zanele Riba, Houghton, 23 February 2010 (Henceforth Interview with Riba).

<sup>74</sup> Hilda Bernstein, *The Rift: The Exile Experience of South Africans* (London, 1994), 12.

skills whose views carried weight in the movement.<sup>75</sup> As the chairperson of the ANC Archives Committee, Ginwala expected everyone involved to focus strictly on their work. She stressed that the documents were essential to enable innovative research on the history of the ANC. Ginwala made it clear that the ANC archives collection was not an exhibition to be viewed but rather a resource to be used.<sup>76</sup>

*The repatriation process resumes: pitfalls and achievements*

After the formation of the Archives Committee, the ANC asked Ginwala to find an archivist who would be directly responsible for the repatriation of ANC material from the organization's 33 missions across the globe.<sup>77</sup> The archivist to be appointed was expected to report directly to Ginwala. Ginwala quickly secured the services of Narissa Ramdhani who had studied at the University of Connecticut in the United States.<sup>78</sup> On 31 May 1993 Ramdhani reminded Ginwala of her 1992 conversation where she had expressed her willingness to serve the movement as its archivist, noting that she was an experienced archivist who had worked in the state archives at Pietermaritzburg, as an assistant archivist at the University of Connecticut, and as a visiting archivist in the Department of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University. Ramdhani viewed her experience at Yale as an introduction to the preservation of South African struggle records:

As an Archivist in South Africa, I found myself lacking in experience of handling of contemporary South African political material. Hence when I was offered the opportunity by Yale University to work with the South African related political archive with strong emphasis on South Africana outside of the country itself, my stay

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Author's Interview with Yolisa Soul, Alice, 26 January 2010, (Henceforth Interview with Soul), UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Workshop on the liberation movement archives- library position- a summary, University of Fort Hare Library Progress Report on the Archives of the African National Congress.

<sup>77</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files: Minutes of the Archives Committee, 24 February 1993.

<sup>78</sup> Interviews with Tikly, Author's Interview with Narissa Ramdhani, Pretoria, 1 March 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Ramdhani). See also <http://web.uconn.edu/ancpartnership/history.html>; <http://humanrightsresearch.wordpress.com/2007/10/16/african-national-congress-oral-history-interview-transcripts-collection/>; <http://www.si.umich.edu/fort-hare/tambo.htm>; [http://web2.uconn.edu/unescochair/Media/march1\\_99.htm](http://web2.uconn.edu/unescochair/Media/march1_99.htm); <http://web.uconn.edu/ancpartnership/history.html>, accessed on July 17 2009.

here could be of immense value. During my stay here, I have worked primarily on the South African Apartheid collection and other large anti-apartheid and South African collections. I have also liaised with South African Archivists/academics resident in the US about the need to donate their papers to Yale or institutions back in South Africa. Given all my experience and the fact that I am the only South African to possess a post graduate degree in Archival Management, I have much to offer the ANC in my capacity of Archivist.<sup>79</sup>

Ginwala's idea was that Ramdhani would be commissioned by Fort Hare to work on the archives project but seconded to the ANC in Johannesburg. She was expected to assume her duties on 1 April 1994.<sup>80</sup> The ANC also expected Fort Hare to play a leading role in the repatriation process and not just act passively as a custodian. Fort Hare was expected to account to the ANC and the movement was also prepared to send funds [R370 000] to the University for the archives project.<sup>81</sup> However eventually Ramdhani was directly employed by the ANC and the repatriation of the ANC material from exile became her division's responsibility and not that of Fort Hare.

Ramdhani's deputy was Zanele Riba. She had studied librarianship at UCT. Riba joined the ANC Research Department as an assistant librarian in 1993 at the time when the forming of an ANC archives division was being discussed by the movement. Riba explains that Ginwala had plans for her from the outset: 'comrade Frene Ginwala had sort of eyed me or like groomed me that within the research department I will be able to deal with archive related material. And that's how I ended up working in the archives....all archive related material were related to me at that stage'.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Narissa Ramdhani to Frene Ginwala, 31 May 1993.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*: Frene Ginwala to Narissa Ramdhani, 1 April 1994; Frene Ginwala to Sibusiso Bengu, 11 April 1994; Frene Ginwala to M. Mvula, 21 April 1994.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*: Frene Ginwala to Fort Hare authorities signed by Ramdhani, 20 January 1994.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Riba.



Apart from the SOMAFCO documents, the ANC material was first sent to its headquarters where it was received by the Archives Division. This is where documents were weeded out before being sent to Fort Hare. They included those of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) which was the military wing of the ANC, personal files, some health and financial records,<sup>83</sup> divorce cases, deaths, defections from the ANC, records around drop-outs from schools and colleges, ill-discipline, security issues, infiltrations of the movement and any other documents that the ANC deemed to be sensitive. Ramdhani asserted that these embargoed documents would remain classified until such time that they could be made public.<sup>84</sup> Maamoe added his voice on this embargo when he said that ‘there were bad things that were done by individuals some of these people are in very very important positions. Once you reveal some of the negative things that they did in the past it will cause havoc in the administration of this country’.<sup>85</sup> There could be some truth in this. For example Patricia De Lille, a PAC member of parliament in post-apartheid South Africa, threatened to reveal a list of ANC members who had acted as double agents during apartheid times. This issue caused uneasiness within the ANC.<sup>86</sup> It remains mysterious how the list ended up in De Lille’s hands. The public never came to know who formed part of De Lille’s famous list of alleged collaborators.

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<sup>83</sup> Author’s Interview with Xolani Walawana, Pretoria, 4 June 2010 (Henceforth Interview with Malawana), Ramdhani.

<sup>84</sup> UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare: CCR Progress Report on the processing of ANC archives and art collections April-September 1995, Interview with Ramdhani.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Maamoe.

<sup>86</sup> Staff Reporter, ‘Patricia De Lille names ‘spies’’, *Mail & Guardian*, 23 October 1997.

According to Khayundi, the decision by the ANC to embargo certain documents was based on international best practice. This suggests that the ANC had justifiable reasons for removing sensitive documents from its collection.<sup>87</sup> He explains that:

Luthuli House became the site of the ANC on their return. And in normal cases archives belong to institutions and therefore it was natural that ANC archives from overseas shall land in Luthuli House. In fact, if they had the facilities, the knowhow, and the competence and so on, they would have established the archives in Luthuli House because the ANC archives belong to them. We should also not forget that despite the fact liberation archives are deposited with the University of Fort Hare, according to archival principles, they do not belong to the University of Fort Hare. University of Fort Hare is just a custodian.....<sup>88</sup>

In fact in South Africa the law requires that official records be embargoed for 20 years before they can be declassified. This allows the owners of the documents an opportunity to keep their secrets under wraps until such time that they are comfortable with the truth. However, it should be noted that ANC documents are movement or party material and that the law about governmental records does not apply. Also, at times sensitive information emerges during oral history research projects. In the case of the liberation history, disgruntled ex-combatants are often forthright about exile politics, having no personal reason for secrecy. Others, though not disgruntled, think that secrecy is overplayed and that sensitive stories formed part of exile life and need not be hidden.

Other South African archives that house liberation material also adhere to policies of restriction. Some of the collections housed at Wits Historical Papers are also embargoed. For example on 9 December 1986, Taffy Adler informed Anna Cunningham, the Wits archivist

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<sup>87</sup>Interview with Ramdhani, UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Minutes of the meeting of the ANC/ Fort Hare Archives Committee on 21 April 1995 at 11H00 in the speaker's office in parliament.

<sup>88</sup> Author's Interview with Festus Khayundi, Alice, 15 December 2009(Henceforth Interview with Khayundi).

that he wished to deposit five boxes of union-based archival material with Historical Papers. He informed Cunningham that ‘should I not have claimed these boxes within two years, I would request you to open them and place the contents within your collection under a blanket embargo for a ten year period’ but that ‘thereafter any bona fide researcher should have unrestricted access to the documents’.<sup>89</sup> He later emphasized that ‘the existing collection and any other papers I place in the library are to be closed to anyone except myself until 2005. After that any items in the collection with the exception of the records of the unions and the federations may be placed on open access. The records of the unions and federations may only be used with the permission of the body concerned’. The National Party’s records at the Institute for Contemporary History at the University of Free State are open to the public, but the archivists there decide whether or not to give access to a particular collection and expect to be shown thesis work, to maintain the good name of the National Party, oppressive and ruthless as it was.<sup>90</sup> It is, in short, common practice even in non-governmental collections to impose conditions as to accessibility.

It should be noted that though the South African Archives Act requires that records be made publicly available after a period of 20 years, a loophole enables documents to be classified for longer periods. For instance, a government minister can come to an agreement with the National Archives and withhold documents considered to be sensitive even beyond the twenty year period.<sup>91</sup> There are ample precedents for liberation movements whose archival

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<sup>89</sup> Wits University Historical Papers Archive (Henceforth Historical Papers), Administrative Files, Taffy Adler’s File, T. Adler to Ms. A. Cunningham, 9 December 1986.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*: T. Adler to A. Cunningham, 6 June 1989. Michele Pickover, ‘The National Party records at the University of Free State’, work in progress.

<sup>91</sup> Allan, ‘Applying PAIA: Legal, Political and Contextual Issues’, in Allan(ed), *Paper Wars*, 184

material is housed at Fort Hare to refuse to part with sensitive documents by simply adopting practices such as these.

Individuals and institutions risk being sued should damaging documents be made public. As early as 1995, the CCS raised its concerns about sensitive documents:

...care must be exercised when it comes to opening up records for research purposes. There must be a balance between genuine desire to open up the records and the collective responsibility to protect the rights of individuals, governments and organizations. Misuse, abuse and distortion of information could have counterproductive results than was envisaged. Selective release of document for research would amount to censorship, but whatever happens the custodians of the records must be clearly indemnified against any likely litigation should a scholar abuse or misuse the records. With the manual lists available, the archives are prima facie accessible, but this is at the theoretical level.<sup>92</sup>

Overall, the implication is that historians should make do with what was sent to Fort Hare by the liberation movements whilst relying on oral histories to augment their findings.

In the early 1990s, the ANC was sufficiently organized to locate and identify the documents that had to be repatriated to South Africa. The ANC's offices in different parts of the world were manned by chief representatives with adequate office staff to run the activities of the movement in those designated countries. But in spite of this, the ANC faced challenges during the repatriation process. For instance, no documentation could be traced in countries like Algeria, India and Egypt.

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<sup>92</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Progress Report on the processing of ANC archives and art collections April-September 1995.

Loss of material, negligence and the moving of offices were some of the reasons documents could not be repatriated. Egypt and Algeria in particular were of particular importance being amongst the first ANC missions in exile. That no documents could be traced in these countries meant that an important part of ANC history has been lost.<sup>93</sup> Material from Angola could also not be repatriated due to political violence and instability in the country. This was another substantial loss.<sup>94</sup> The ANC chief representative in Spain instructed his staff to destroy the organization's files. Ramdhani suspects that it could be that the official concerned did not know about the ANC's intentions to archive the documents. Instead, the chief representative may have thought it wise to clear the office instead of leaving a pile of documents behind which would be of no use to the next tenant.

In addition to the repatriation dilemma, some chief representatives had misgivings about sending documents to South Africa. They were concerned about the country's stability as political violence flared in the early 1990s and wondered in the circumstances whether the repatriation initiative would succeed. Such delays left the Archives Division deeply frustrated. There were many pressures prompting the Division to retrieve collections from the various missions. For example, South Africa's 1994 general election was imminent and it was crucial for the Archives Division to act quickly as the ANC missions were expected to close down in time for the elections.<sup>95</sup> Seeing that they might fail to repatriate the material as planned, the Division brought its problems to the attention of senior ANC officials. Upon hearing about the delays and hesitations of some chief representatives, the mother body instructed them to ship their collections to South Africa immediately. Ramdhani asserts that were it not for the ANC's intervention, the situation would have been disastrous as a sizeable number of documents would have been lost permanently. She thinks that even though they

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<sup>93</sup> Interviews with Tikly, Ramdhani.

<sup>94</sup> Interviews with Riba, Ramdhani.

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

experienced resistance from some chief representatives, the challenges and confusion faced by some of these during the repatriation process need to be looked with understanding:

A number of our chief reps, you know, hadn't really understood the value of the material that had in their offices. That that was the record of the ANC's activities abroad. They saw it as just their administrative files. And so there was this fear that because of this lack of understanding of the value of what they were holding that they might be tempted to just destroy it. Of course this goes back to the whole issue of documents and apartheid, you know, our people have always feared keeping documents because possession of documents meant detention, death, and torture, whatever. So many of these chief reps coming back to South Africa in my discussions with them I realized (that) they were highly suspicious, even though this was an ANC project, it was very difficult to assure them that it was safe for us to bring it back into the country. In fact, I think it may have been the office in Spain that already destroyed all the material. That's why if you go back to our list of offices and you find missing material, two or three of them relate to the fact that materials were already destroyed. As soon as they knew that they were coming back into the country- 'let's destroy all this', not for any other reason other than the fact that they were afraid. And that's what I discovered. It was a major undertaking to have to convince them that they needed to package the material for us, send us a listing, and we would arrange for the transfer of the material into South Africa.<sup>96</sup>

On the other hand, some chief representatives were keen to ship the material to South Africa as they dearly wanted to return home after many years of tough and often frustrating exile. Also, chief representatives were mainly classified as senior ANC members and their services were required in South Africa as the movement tried to find its feet inside the country.

After the problems mentioned were ironed out, things went smoothly for the Archives Division. One container after another landed at the Durban harbour loaded with archival material from the different missions and was sent to Johannesburg for the attention of the Division.<sup>97</sup>

The containers held documents in different conditions. Some missions tried to organize the documents systematically before shipment. Others simply loaded the material into containers

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Interviews with Riba, Ramdhani.

without making any effort to arrange the consignment in some order. Some missions did not even bother to remove the documents from the filing cabinets and simply loaded the cabinets into containers for shipment,<sup>98</sup> leaving it to the Archives Division at ANC headquarters to sort out the papers. However, it cannot be ruled out that the pressure exerted on the different missions to send their respective consignments made them act hurriedly just to avoid criticism from the mother body. Others were no doubt preoccupied with thoughts of returning home and systematically packing documents for shipment was a secondary matter.

Due to lack of communication between the Archives Division and some missions, some documents remained at Durban harbour for lengthy periods. As a result, some were damaged beyond repair. To minimize the loss, where possible damaged documents were photocopied, this being the only way in which they could later be useful to researchers.<sup>99</sup> Some of the filing cabinets rusted due to conditions at sea. They were often difficult to open and crowbars had to be employed to open them by force. Ramdhani states that it is possible that some documents may have been lost in transit as clearance at customs often took longer than expected. There was also a suspicion that some of the companies involved in the shipping process were opposed to the new political dispensation in South Africa and might have sabotaged the repatriation process. Also, some apartheid agents were still active in the early 1990s and some ANC officials thought that they might turn their attention to containers arriving at the Durban harbour and remove sensitive documents in order to tarnish the image of the ANC.<sup>100</sup> Though some ANC officials were paranoid, they can perhaps not be blamed as the apartheid regime's moves were difficult to predict and generally brutal. When they struck, as they did during cross border raids in neighboring countries like Lesotho, Botswana

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*: Malawana.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Ramdhani, a sense of paranoia around the ANC archives documents continued to prevail long after the repatriation process had been completed. In 2010, the ANC closed its archives at Fort Hare after certain documents were published in the *Sunday Times* newspaper. (This issue is discussed in the Conclusion.)

and Mozambique, the damage was enormous. The suspicions of interference may not have been justified, but they vividly illustrate the atmosphere of fear and suspicion in which the repatriation process took place.

Amusingly, other chief representatives viewed the repatriation process as an opportunity to send their personal belongings to South Africa. Such items included furniture, computers and even clothing. Such chief representatives did not see the need to spend their personal funds to ship their belongings to South Africa since there was an alternative. Though such behaviour cannot be condoned, exiles did not know what the liberated South Africa had in store for them and saving the little that they had for the foreseeable future is understandable.<sup>101</sup> At SOMAFCO for instance, some cadres sold whatever they could to save money for their arrival in South Africa.<sup>102</sup>

The problems around repatriation had other dimensions. For example, some ANC officials at Shell House regarded the archives initiative as a nuisance, grumbling about the piles of boxes which occupied office space. Such officials did not view the repatriation process as a priority in the light of the many challenges facing the ANC in the early 1990s. Others thought that the space provided to the Archives Division could be better utilized for offices instead of being crammed with boxes.<sup>103</sup> This uninspiring attitude led Ramdhani to issue a circular to departmental heads explaining the role and importance of the Archives Division.<sup>104</sup> But in spite of such negative attitudes, the repatriation of archival material continued.

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<sup>101</sup> Interview with Ramdhani.

<sup>102</sup> Morrow, Maaba, Pulumani, *Education in Exile*, 177.

<sup>103</sup> Interviews with Malawana, Ramdhani.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*



More challenging for the Archives Division was the lack of manpower to process the avalanche of documents sent to Shell House. Initially, there were only two staff members in the Division, Ramdhani and her deputy Riba. The Division was clearly understaffed and found it difficult to process the large volume of documents that were its responsibility.<sup>105</sup> To tackle the problem, the ANC embarked on a recruitment drive but encountered obstacles. In the early 1990s and before, the field of archives was the preserve of white South Africans. Graham Dominy, the Director of State Archives, asserts that only white South Africans were employed in the state archives with the exception of some homelands such as the Transkei, Ciskei and KwaZulu where some of the archivists were black. In comparison to other homelands, KwaZulu was in a relatively favourable position as Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi had a personal and even vested interest in heritage matters. As a result, a reasonable number of black archivists worked for the Kwa-Zulu government.<sup>106</sup>

Black South Africans who hoped to pursue a career in archives were treated as outcasts and were sometimes marked down by their respective lecturers. This left many aspiring black archivists frustrated. Some blacks who had insight on archives were not able to gain practical experience.<sup>107</sup> On 2 July 1987 an individual named Gill who was based in London warned Gibson, a black South African, that undertaking a career in archives in South Africa was unwise as he was likely to be deliberately failed in his studies. She explained to Gibson that:

As with most things in South Africa, the government does not offer the same opportunities for Black people. What they will do is to train archivists in the homeland archives, if they exist. But I think you would find this incredibly frustrating, Gibson. I don't know if Ciskei has a national archive, but, Transkei's used to be a South African repository. After speaking to Mr.

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Author's Interview with Graham Dominy, Pretoria, 4 November 2010 (Henceforth Interview with Dominy) for more on the state of archives in South Africa see, Morrow and Wotshela, 'The state of the archives in South Africa and access to information', in Daniel, Southall, Lutchman(eds), *State of the Nation*, 313-335.

<sup>107</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Jill to Gibson, 2 July 1987.

Makuzeni and Mr. Nomjana, and Mrs. Mpongwana, I was horrified to hear how Pretoria had treated them. They are frustrated firstly because Pretoria took back most of the pre independence archives that Transkei had, and sent them to Cape Town. Secondly, they find the most ridiculous, racist excuses for failing the Transkei students who sit for the Diploma. It is really sad to see dedicated archivists going to ruin from deliberate frustration, unable to apply their knowledge to any documents, but spend most of their time trying to get the government departments to keep their filing systems in order.<sup>108</sup>

Harris later commented that ‘the stranglehold enjoyed by whites over the archival profession needs to be broken’. This, he said, mattered ‘in terms of power relations, in terms of the construction of social memory in the archives-that whites control archival institutions and dominate transformation discourse’.<sup>109</sup> But to this day the archives field is still white dominated and formal archival training is only offered by a few institutions including Unisa.

The fact that Kwa-Zulu had a reasonable number of black archivists was itself a dilemma for the ANC.<sup>110</sup> Ulundi was an IFP stronghold and many government officials from the area were thought to be associated with the organization, the ANC’s nemesis. The ANC may have realized that recruiting archivists from this area could have had negative consequences as its collection could be archived by individuals with an Inkatha background. The consequences could be dire as sensitive documents could easily end up in the public arena, leaving the ANC image tarnished.

The lack of skills was so severe that most black archivists who later worked in the different archives in South Africa were foreigners. The few black South African exiles who took up

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Harris, ‘The Archival Sliver: A Perspective on the Construction of Social Memory in Archives and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy’, in Hamilton *et al*, *Refiguring the Archive*, 144.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Dominy.

archival studies included Maamoe and Ethel Kriger.<sup>111</sup> Surely, it was the fact that the likes of Maamoe and Kriger lived in exile that exposed them to different careers such as archival studies. If it were not for the exile experience, such people would have not been exposed to such careers as black South Africans were pigeonholed in the townships during apartheid. Since the ANC had a limited pool of black archivists to tap into, it recruited university graduates with skills in library science, history and political science.<sup>112</sup> In addition, they had to show an interest in archives and be keen to acquire relevant skills in the field. The first recruit after Ramdhani and Riba to join the ANC Archives Division, in 1996, was Xolani Malawana, a political science graduate from Wits University. Others followed including Sibongile Simelane, Khanyisile Botomani, Nokubonga Gugwini and Mduduzile Mpanza.<sup>113</sup>

The ANC also succeeded in securing the services of Razia Saleh who played a central part in the repatriation and preservation of ANC material, later replacing Ramdhani as ANC Chief Archivist. Saleh was an experienced archivist who played a role in the formation of SAHA.<sup>114</sup> The employment of these young archivists was a huge relief to the ANC as these greatly assisted in processing archival material and reported directly to Saleh who in turn reported to Ramdhani.<sup>115</sup> Saleh also offered crash courses to the aspiring archivists which included description of material, labeling and sorting of documents. They also attended other archives workshops as advised by senior archivists such as Saleh and Ramdhani.<sup>116</sup> Such in-service training helped to expose the trainee archivists to international archival standards.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Ramdhani.

<sup>113</sup> Interviews with Saleh, Ramdhani, Malawana.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Saleh.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Soul.

<sup>116</sup> Author's Interview with Khanyi Botomani, 14 June 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Botomani), Saleh.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

Though the recruitment of young archivists by the ANC was a success, a problem was that the young recruits often stayed for two to three years and then left for more lucrative jobs.<sup>118</sup> They were concerned that they were on contract and this led them to look for permanent jobs elsewhere.<sup>119</sup> Though these young recruits were important for the Archives Division, some ANC officials at Shell House were not impressed. There was resentment that though the ANC retrenched some of its staff in the 1990s, ironically the Archives Division expanded and flourished. The new archivists were young and perceived as mere university graduates with no struggle credentials and were thought to be employed at the expense of struggle veterans.<sup>120</sup> It would appear that many ANC veterans did not understand that archival work required the mastery of a specialized skill. Struggle credentials alone were completely inadequate for employees of the Archives Division.

The overall plan was that the young archivists would end up at Fort Hare to assist in manning the ANC archives. However, many identified with city life and did not imagine themselves living and working in a rural place like Alice for what could be long periods of time. This had a negative impact on the project, putting pressure on the Fort Hare archivists to redouble their efforts to process the ANC archives.<sup>121</sup>

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has demonstrated that the repatriation of the ANC archives from exile was no easy task. The process required commitment with organizational, logistical and archival skills and the cooperation of the different missions in exile. The establishment of the ANC archives committee under the leadership of Ginwala gave firm support to the repatriation process.

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with Soul.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Botomani.

<sup>120</sup> Interview with Malawana.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Ramdhani.

Though the repatriation of the material from exile was a success, the process had its own ups and downs which, had they not been handled delicately, could have jeopardized the work of the Archives Division. The ANC archives at Fort Hare today were shaped by the prevailing conditions and circumstances of the time. No documents could be repatriated from war torn countries like Angola. Some missions discarded their archives and only realized their mistakes later after being disbanded.

### ***Chapter 2: Fort Hare and the tussle over the archives***

In the early 1990s the University of Fort Hare showed signs of renewal, as it became clear that the new democratic dispensation in South Africa was on the horizon. The announcement by F.W.de Klerk in 1990 that the government was to end apartheid impacted on Fort Hare as it did throughout the country. The Rector, Professor J.A. Lamprecht and six other senior administrators resigned in 1990, paving the way for a new administration. Oliver Tambo, the President of the ANC, became the first black Chancellor of the University in 1991, with Bengu its first full time black rector. Well-qualified exiles and sympathetic expatriates from different countries offered their services to Fort Hare. The mood at the university was high and many forward thinking people looked forward to the renewal of what had been an

illustrious institution. It was during this vibrant era that the idea of hosting material from the country's liberation movements began to be entertained.<sup>122</sup>

Initial discussions between the ANC and Fort Hare on the future of the ANC archives took place in 1990 with Pallo Jordan, a longstanding ANC intellectual who was head of the movement's Research Department.<sup>123</sup> There were various reasons why the ANC chose Fort Hare to host its archives. The University, established in 1916 under the tutelage of Alexander Kerr, was for many years the only institution of higher learning for blacks south of the Equator.<sup>124</sup> Those who attended Fort Hare included members of the westernized African elite who later led African nationalist movements in their respective countries during decolonization. Some became heads of state, such as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana, Ntsu Mokehle of Lesotho, and Yusufu Lule, a brilliant scholar who ruled Uganda for a brief period in 1979 after Idi Amin was toppled.<sup>125</sup> Leading ANC members who had attended Fort Hare included Tambo himself, Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani, Govan Mbeki, Zachariah Matthews, Arnold Stofile who succeeded Raymond Mhlaba as the Eastern Cape Premier, Ivy Matsepe-Casaburi, first woman Premier of Free State Province, and such high-ranking ANC officials in exile as Stanley Mabizela, Henry Makgothi, Andrew Masondo, and Ambrose and Tennyson Makiwane.

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<sup>122</sup> Not much has been written about Fort Hare in the early 1990s but see Morrow and Khayaletu Gxabalashé, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa* 27(2000), 481-497, Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements'; *History in Africa*.

<sup>123</sup> UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Minutes of a meeting of the Centre for Cultural Studies Committee held on 28 June 1994, Centre for Cultural Studies, Fort Hare.

<sup>124</sup> Alexander Kerr, *Fort Hare 1915-48: the Evolution of an African College*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1968).

<sup>125</sup> Other high profile politicians who studied at Fort Hare include Keso-Sonkole (nee Ngozwana), a one-time member of parliament in Tanzania, Herbert Chitepo of Zimbabwe, Charles Njonjo and Eluid Mathu from Kenya, Orton Chirwa and Henry Chipembere from Malawi and Sikota Wina of Zambia. Ambrose Phešheya Zwane who became the General Secretary of the Swaziland Progressive Party and was the founding member and President of the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress in 1961, was another Fort Hare graduate. Cf. Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements', *History in Africa*, Morrow and Gxabalashé, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa*.

Other famous Fort Hare graduates included Robert Sobukwe, founder and first president of the PAC, Sabelo Gqweta, whose *nom de guerre* was Sabelo Phama, who was later the commander of the PAC's military wing, the Azania Peoples Liberation Army (APLA), I.B. Tabata of the Unity Movement and Barney Pityana and Thenjiwe Mtintso of the BCM. Dr. Nthato Motlana, a member of the ANC Youth League at Fort Hare, was a Soweto struggle icon in the 1970s and 1980s and when Mandela was released from prison became his personal doctor. Frank Mdlalose, an ANC member who later became a high ranking IFP politician, became the first Premier of KwaZulu-Natal in 1994. Others who studied at Fort Hare included the coloured politician Allan Hendrickse, leader of the Labour Party who formed part of P.W. Botha's controversial tri-cameral parliament. Homeland politicians who went through Fort Hare included Chief Buthelezi who was a member of the ANC Youth League at the university, as well as Kaiser Matanzima who ruled the Transkei during apartheid, and his brother George.<sup>126</sup>

Some who studied at Fort Hare did not become politicians but made significant contributions in other fields. They included Don Mtimkulu, a brilliant scholar and educationist; Joseph Mokoena, one of the finest mathematicians to emerge from Fort Hare; the celebrated writer Can Themba, who worked for *Drum* magazine in the 1950s; Archibald Campbell Jordan, a linguist and author of the celebrated isiXhosa novel, *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya (The Wrath of the Ancestors)*; Stanlake Samkange, historian, novelist and politician from Zimbabwe; Ernest Mancoba, notable sculptor and painter who settled in France in 1938; Mary Maxakana, née

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<sup>126</sup> Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements' Morrow and Gxabalashé, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare', Daniel Massey, *Under Protest: The Rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare*, (Pretoria, 2010).

Mahlasela, the first black female medical doctor in South Africa; Ticofa Samuel Parirenyatwa, the first black medical doctor in Southern Rhodesia; and Professor Lameck Goma who became the first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Zambia.<sup>127</sup>

In spite of Fort Hare's glorious and colourful past, some within the ANC argued against sending the organization's archives there. There were concerns that Fort Hare was located in a remote and desolate area, the Ciskei, and that this posed a challenge to researchers. Those holding this view argued for easily accessible institutions in cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg, believing also that Fort Hare was under-resourced and was incapable of mounting a project of this magnitude. There were racial undertones, as some thought that black people could not successfully organize and run archives.<sup>128</sup> Those who argued against Fort Hare were of the view that urban-based institutions had the required infrastructure to house the archives and it would be best to send the ANC archives to institutions with experience in receiving archival material where sound custodianship was guaranteed, even though white institutions had been beneficiaries of apartheid while Fort Hare was a shadow of its former self, mainly because of the legacy of apartheid.<sup>129</sup> It could be argued that some of these urban universities were deserving hosts, especially considering the role played by liberal institutions in the struggle against apartheid. For others, however, sending the ANC documents to Fort Hare, a symbol of the struggle against apartheid and colonialism, was a form of redress which could stimulate research and infrastructural development on campus.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements' *History in Africa*, Morrow and Gxabalashé, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa*, see also Massey, *Under Protest*.

<sup>128</sup> Interviews with Tikly, Ramdhani; Author's Interview with Themba Sirayi, Fort Beaufort, 26 January 2010 (Henceforth Interview with Sirayi).

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Ramdhani.

<sup>130</sup> For Fort Hare's role in the struggle against apartheid see, Massey, *Under Protest*.



Former white institutions that lobbied for the ANC archives were not blind to the fact that hosting the records of what was perceived to be a government in waiting would give them prestige and recognition. There were extensive potential spinoffs to hosting the ANC collection, including using the material to leverage other benefits. Realizing the value of these archives, some even put pressure on the ANC archives officials to change course.<sup>131</sup> Ramdhani recalls that she came under a great deal of criticism from academics of the former white institutions, ‘because of the fact that I was involved in the start up of the ANC archives, many of them saw that as my decision that I, the individual, had decided to designate Fort Hare as the official archive. That wasn’t true it was a collective decision taken by the party’.<sup>132</sup>

On 28 February 1995, Cook, the then Director of the Records Disposition Division of Canada, wrote to Dr. Jean-Pierre Wallot, the president of the International Council on Archives (ICA) and raised his concerns about the ANC archives and the manner in which white institutions perceived Fort Hare. Terry Cook had been interacting with South African archivists in the early 1990s and also presented papers in the country’s archives conferences. Such platforms gave him opportunity to familiarize himself with the South African archives discourse.<sup>133</sup> He told Wallot:

There is controversy concerning the location for the ANC archives. Some of the ANC personal papers are now held by “prestigious” white universities, who are lobbying for the rest, perhaps as a way of demonstrating friendliness to the new regime. Some object that the archives

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<sup>131</sup> Interview with Ramdhani.,

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*: It is difficult to tell when exactly the ANC made a decision to choose Fort Hare as a custodian of its archival material. Access to minutes and documents that could shed light on this decision was not granted to the writer by the ANC Archives Unit. The ANC archivist advised the writer to look for documents at Fort Hare that shed light on the relationship between the ANC and Fort Hare, but no minutes that shed light on the date emerged from the documents at Fort Hare.

<sup>133</sup> NAHECS, Administrative Files, Letitia Theunissen to Themba Sirayi, 13 July 1994, Letitia Theunissen to R.J. Kukubo, nd, see also Harris, *Archives and Justice*.

should go to the University of Fort Hare, a rural, “black”(dismissively called by some whites a “bush”) university, and one somewhat distant from the main centres. But Mandela himself has declared this to be the home for the folks. Fort Hare educated Mandela and many other ANC leaders when they had no access to the main white universities, and he and most ANC leaders view it emotionally as their spiritual home.<sup>134</sup>

Cook’s concern could be interpreted to mean that white institutions, instead of rallying behind Fort Hare in its efforts to house the ANC archives, were acting as colonialists, demanding even the archival material that historically disadvantaged institutions like Fort Hare hoped to preserve.

A counter argument was that the very fact that Fort Hare was in a remote area was an advantage. The archives, it was argued, would benefit the impoverished community of Alice. For instance, there was a talk of building a hotel in Alice to be used by visiting researchers.<sup>135</sup> Fort Hare was a cradle of Pan-Africanism, and it would be unworthy to overlook such an institution. In the early 1990s, when the repatriation process was gaining momentum, Mandela, Tambo, Govan Mbeki, Hani and other Fort Hare alumni were highly placed within the ANC, and it was natural for them to make a case for Fort Hare. As mentioned earlier, Tambo was the Chancellor and Govan Mbeki, who succeeded Tambo as Chancellor in 1994, a research associate of the University.<sup>136</sup> Bengu also supported the University as the rightful heir of the ANC archives.<sup>137</sup>

Most, if not all of these leaders had fond memories of Fort Hare and were quite sentimental about the institution. Though Thabo Mbeki never studied at Fort Hare, his interaction with

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<sup>134</sup> UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Terry Cook to Jean-Pierre Wallot, 28 February 1995.

<sup>135</sup> Interviews with Ramdhani, Mzamane.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Tikly.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

ANC Youth League members from the university in the 1950s before being expelled from Lovedale inspired him to associate with the institution. Thabo Mbeki would probably have studied at Fort Hare after his secondary school studies had he not gone into exile.<sup>138</sup> He spoke highly of Fort Hare and Lovedale, which were adjacent to each other and only separated by the Tyume River, across which ‘and opposite each other, are two educational institutions which made a great impact on the wider Southern and East African renaissance, Lovedale and Fort Hare, the one established in 1841, before the battle of Isandhlwana, and the other, in 1916, after the formation of the ANC’.<sup>139</sup>

All this put Fort Hare on an increasingly sound footing to secure the ANC archives. Mandela, backed by Tambo and later by Thabo Mbeki<sup>140</sup>, asserted that:

The University of Fort Hare should be proud for having produced such outstanding sons and daughters of the African continent. We, in the African National Congress, salute the university for the manner it has impacted the struggle for the liberation of our country. The struggle for the liberation of our country is clearly indebted to and has benefitted enormously from the individual and collective contribution of such visionaries and stalwarts who at various times have graced the liberation movement with their dignified and selfless presence. The names of Z K Matthews, O R Tambo, Robert Sobukwe, I B Tabata and Govan Mbeki evoke nothing but respect and such qualities as have underpinned our liberation struggle through the long and lean periods of our struggle. We recognize the fact that the history of the African National Congress is interwoven with that of the University of Fort Hare. It is for this reason that the African National Congress has resolved to lodge its archives with the University of Fort Hare.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup>For Thabo Mbeki and his time at Lovedale see, Mark Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream deferred* (Johannesburg, 2007).

<sup>139</sup> UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Speech by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki during the opening of the ANC archives, 17 March 1996.

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup><http://www.si.umich.edu/fort-hare/mandela.htm>, accessed on 23 October 2010.

When Tambo was installed as Chancellor of Fort Hare on 19 October 1991, Mandela delighted the university community by announcing that the ANC archives were to be deposited at Fort Hare, all the more so as in 1991 Fort Hare celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Bengu thanked Mandela and the movement's NEC and assured him that the University would embark on a fundraising drive for the archives and that the material would be in capable hands.<sup>142</sup>

While Fort Hare celebrated the good news, UWC was licking its wounds, for it had hoped to be the custodian of the ANC archives. The university had spent the latter part of the 1980s attempting to persuade the ANC in London to consider UWC as a future custodian its archives. To demonstrate its seriousness, UWC management relieved Professor Andre Odendaal from his duties in the Department of History to focus on establishing a centre that would host the ANC material in the liberated South Africa. He was expected to cement relations with the ANC in exile and from time to time he visited the movement in London.<sup>143</sup> The relationship with some members of the ANC in London was solidified and there was hope that the ANC would deposit its archival material at UWC. The decision by the ANC to choose Fort Hare as the custodian of its archives came as a surprise to UWC. On 28 October 1991 professor Jakes Gerwel, the UWC Rector, realising that the rug had been pulled from under the university's feet, asked Mandela to clarify the ANC's position on the future of its archives:

Madiba.....

The purpose of this memo is to request the ANC to publically re-affirm its support for the Mayibuye Centre project, and to ask for clarification about the announcement that the ANC archives will be donated to our sister institution, the University of Fort Hare. As we have been under the impression that we will be receiving ANC material (and indeed already have some), the announcement clearly has big implications for our project.

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<sup>142</sup> UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Sibusiso Bengu to Nelson Mandela, 8 November 1991.

<sup>143</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Memorandum from G.J. Gerwel to Nelson Mandela, 28 October 1991.

Therefore it is important for us to get clarification. Does the ANC still support our project and will we be receiving ANC material? We very much hope that the answer in both cases is yes.<sup>144</sup>

It is not clear whether Mandela responded to Gerwel's letter, but the ANC and Fort Hare forged ahead with their plans. This was a hard pill for UWC to swallow, and the archives became the subject of discussion for years to come.

### *Fort Hare rolls up its sleeves*

It soon dawned on the Fort Hare authorities that hosting the struggle archives had its own headaches. After the National Working Committee of the ANC had formally agreed that the movement's material be lodged at Fort Hare, on 24 October 1991 Ginwala urged Bengu that Fort Hare and the movement work closely together for the project to succeed. Ginwala confided in Bengu that the archives project was close to her heart and that she and the Fort Hare Rector had to engage further on the project and produce a funding proposal.<sup>145</sup>

Fort Hare took the archives very seriously and could not afford to disappoint, as the early 1990s presented the university with an opportunity to rebuild after decades of apartheid domination and deformation. On 4 November 1991 Bengu called a meeting of an *ad hoc* committee to discuss the archives. This was probably the first Fort Hare meeting on the subject. Present were Bengu, Sirayi, Dr. Ben Khoapa (Registrar Academic), Professor J.R. du Plessis (Executive Assistant to the Rector), Mr. Manikan Moodley (University Library), Dr. N. Vera (Senior Administrator), Professor B.M. Mini (Department of Geography) and Dr. P.M. Fihla (Department of Education). Bengu informed the attendees that it was of paramount

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Frene Ginwala to Sibusiso Bhengu(sic), 24 October 1991.

importance for the archives project to take off without further waste of time. He elaborated on how the project was conceptualized and why Fort Hare was the preferred host. It was at this meeting that Bengu recommended that Sirayi be appointed as provisional chairperson of the *ad hoc* committee, owing to his experience in the Xhosa Literature Centre, recently renamed the CCS. Considering the CCS's new vision, outlined later in this chapter, the university management felt it appropriate for the centre to be the custodian of the ANC archives. However, some, including Fihla, argued in favour of the Library as custodian of the ANC archives. Fihla's position was that the classification of documents could be done by the library, which had the experience and facilities to do so. Khoapa differed, raising the issue of expert advice on archives, and was backed by Sirayi who stressed that 'archives are different from books; an expert on the housing of books is not necessarily an expert on the housing of archives'. Sirayi added that he already had someone in mind for training on archives. Moodley pointed out that the library lacked the necessary security for the archives. This meeting prefigured the later battle for the ANC archives at the university.

For unspecified reasons, Moodley was convinced that if the documents were housed at the Library, it would take 3-5 years for the collection to be accessible.<sup>146</sup> That there had been a break-in at the library earlier in 1991, which had resulted in the loss of audiovisual material, weakened the Library's case. Moodley later explained that if the University Library had been modern and well equipped he would have been in favour of housing the ANC documents there.<sup>147</sup> Though the Library was ruled out as the possible custodian of the ANC archives, the tables would be turned in a few years. After the meeting Bengu briefed Ginwala on the new developments at Fort Hare regarding the archives. He mentioned the establishment of the *ad*

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*: Administrative Files, Ad hoc Committee meeting to be held at 14h 45 on Monday, 4 November 1991 in the Rector's Committee Room.

<sup>147</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Manikam Moodley to M.N. Tau, 2 June 1994.

*hoc* committee for the archives and said that its chair, Sirayi, would meet with Ginwala to thrash out some of the issues. He requested Ginwala to liaise with Sirayi.<sup>148</sup>

To accelerate its activities, the University assembled a team to conduct a feasibility study on where a permanent archives building could be positioned on campus.<sup>149</sup> Plans for the building were drafted and Bengu believed that a Fort Hare required a state-of-the-art building for the archives. The University was well aware that a rigorous fund raising drive was a precondition for the success of the project. Sirayi offered to play a leading role in the fundraising process and was mandated by the University to liaise with the ANC on all matters pertaining to the archives. He was also expected to chair a sub-committee on archives consisting of himself, Vera and Moodley. Fort Hare was aware of the magnitude of the project and the threats to it as 'there are other institutions which would give their left arms to get these archives'. Bengu also had a broader vision for the archives, encompassing other liberation movements. On 4 November 1991 he said that, 'we shall first house the ANC's archives but we will not be small minded. The very fact that we are housing these archives might give rise to other movements wishing to have us house their archives. This would be to the credit of Fort Hare. I have already been in touch with persons who would be prepared to house their collections at Fort Hare'.<sup>150</sup> Bengu was an ANC member, but by considering the archives material of other liberation movements, he proved himself to be broad-minded and inclusive.

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<sup>148</sup> UFH : NAHECS, Administrative Files, S.M.E. Bengu to Frene Ginwala, 8 November 1991.

<sup>149</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare: Centre for Cultural Studies Annual Report to the Ford Foundation.

<sup>150</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, *Ad hoc* Committee meeting to be held on 4 November 1991 in the Rector's Committee Room.

Subsequent meetings of the sub-committee, chaired by Sirayi, were held on 21 and 27 November. These focused on the nature of the proposed archives building which, it was thought, had to have seminar rooms, a TV production studio, amphitheatre, museum, lending facilities, lifts and a strong room.<sup>151</sup> Another meeting focused on the issue of temporary storage for the ANC material which was likely to reach Fort Hare in a few months. Different venues were suggested and eventually it was agreed that a section of Henderson Hall be used for temporary storage, though concerns remained around the security of and lack of temperature control in the building. In terms of its historical resonances, Henderson Hall was ideal temporary storage for the archives as it formed part of the first Fort Hare buildings, and many ex-Fort Hare students were emotionally attached to the building with its memories of their student days.<sup>152</sup> Other places identified as future temporary storage areas for the archives included a strong room at the premises of the CCS, two reasonably large spaces at the Department of Fine Arts and the University Great Hall, which came under the control of the CCS in 1993. The CCS also identified another storage facility on the second floor of the Biology block where the centre's offices were located. This space was viewed as suitable for processed material.<sup>153</sup>

The University continued to remind the CSS of the importance of liaising with the ANC. On 28 November 1991 Fort Hare held a meeting with Ginwala and two of her colleagues, Tony Trew and Mohammed Tikly. Matters discussed included the issue of temporary premises for the ANC archives, the construction of the archives building, the formation of Fort Hare's *ad*

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<sup>151</sup>*Ibid*: Administrative Files, Minutes of the ANC Archives sub-committee and architects held at the offices of the director of Technical Services on Thursday, 21 November 1991 at 10h15, minutes of a meeting of the Committee on archives held at Bellad-Ellis's office on 27 November 1991 at 15h00.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid*: Administrative Files, Minutes of a meeting of the Archival Committee (Fort Hare) held at the CCS on 26 November 1991.

<sup>153</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare: CCS Annual Report to the Ford Foundation.



*hoc* committee on archives, a funding proposal for the archives project, and the retrieval of the movement's educational material from SOMAFSCO.<sup>154</sup> On 13 December 1991 it was resolved that a joint management committee between Fort Hare and the ANC be established to oversee the archives project.<sup>155</sup> Clearly, accountability was important in a project of this nature, one held in high esteem by the two stakeholders. Between the two meetings, Fort Hare officials met with Tambo on 10 December 1991 where he was briefed about Fort Hare's plans for the archives.

The CCS began 1992 in high spirits and its members were motivated to pursue the archives project eagerly. On 13 January Sirayi wrote to Ginwala briefing her on what he argued were the impressive CCS plans. He informed her that the decision by the ANC to house the archives at Fort Hare came at the right time as the University had experience in the collection of material. He cited the experience of the Centre for Xhosa Literature, renamed the CCS, which had collected and preserved oral and written Xhosa material since its inception in 1981, though its scope was limited to material in that language. Other homelands had promoted the history and culture of 'their own', breeding tribalism. More positively, the Centre had been renamed the CCS with a new and wider vision. It should be noted however that the material mentioned by Sirayi consisted mostly of secondary material such as theses.

The 1991 transformation of the Centre for Xhosa Literature had been endorsed by the university council. Had the Centre's focus remained Xhosa literature, the ANC, judging by its record on cultural inclusivity and diversity, would have questioned the idea of keeping the

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<sup>154</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Frene Ginwala, 13 January 1992, Minutes of a meeting of the Centre for Cultural Studies Committee held on 28 June 1994, Centre for Cultural Studies, Fort Hare.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*: Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Frene Ginwala, 13 January 1992, Minutes of a meeting of the CCS committee held on 28 June 1994, Centre for Cultural Studies, Fort Hare.

movement's collection in such a narrowly focused institution. But, as explained by Sirayi, the scope of the new Centre was broad, focusing on staff, students and community development programmes. There were also plans to develop postgraduate programmes, student exchanges and fellowship programmes, all directed towards utilising the archives. Since the Centre's research programmes were to be community-based, schools and community-based structures would be involved. Such programmes were essential for a university like Fort Hare, which was located in a rural area and had to do its utmost to attract students for tertiary studies.

Sirayi also stressed that that the Centre sought to transform Fort Hare into a 'Mecca of black cultural heritage reflecting the aspirations, experience, values and history of the majority of South Africans'. Briefly, it aimed at accommodating 'people's archives, people's museum and people's performing arts' obscured and ignored during white minority rule which lasted 'three centuries'. All these ambitious plans, noted Sirayi, required an excellent facility and skills to drive the Centre's programmes, without which all this would remain on paper. In fact, as will be seen later, the question of skills remained intractable and some of the envisaged plans were difficult to implement. But university officials needed to market and maintain Fort Hare's romantic image to keep the ANC on board. Some of Sirayi's thoughts are captured below:

We have ensured that the Concept Design provides for various special collections. In other words there will be, within the master plan, identifiable space provisions for specialist collections such as ANC Archives, Lovedale Archives, A.C. Jordan Archives, etc. The same applies to the museum space. It is being designed in such a way that the needs of the major depositors will be met as far as deemed expedient. The fact that our University has been scheduled to house the ANC museum within which Umkhonto we Sizwe, Women's League, Youth League, etc will be subsumed has been taken on board. We envisage an identifiable permanent wing devoted to ANC museum. Your input regarding the museum in general and the ANC wing in particular, will be highly appreciated. I am convinced that my experience as co-ordinator of the ANC Commission on

Museums, Monuments and Symbols will benefit the Museum project in several ways.<sup>156</sup>

The CCS's mission was 'to serve as a custodian of the University's own records, and historical manuscripts, and a repository of the records of the Liberation Movements, public or quasi-public, private, commercial, financial and industrial enterprises, individuals, families, trade and labour unions, cultural bodies, ecclesiastical bodies, learned societies and so on'.<sup>157</sup>

The overall objectives of the CCS archives were:

- To provide an archival service with a national and institutional outlook; to acquire and preserve for posterity historically and intrinsically important records and data for research, teaching, learning and lifelong education and community service
- To serve as a focal point for efficient, effective and scientific management of all the University's operational records.
- To serve as an official repository of the archives of the liberation movement; to function as a custodian of private records in general - this includes the records of individuals, families, cultural organisations and ecclesiastical bodies.

The specific objectives were:

- Assisting in developing sound and script archives, and documentation services related policies and instrumentalities, and ensuring uniform application of the approved policies and instrumentalities
- Providing archives services to all sectors of a democratic South Africa

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<sup>156</sup> UFH : Postal Section Files, G.T. Sirayi to Frene Ginwala, 13 January 1992.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*: Postal Section, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare: Centre for Cultural Studies Annual Report to the Ford Foundation.

- Making archives and documentation services accessible to all members of the democratic communities of South Africa for the purpose of education, self-development and information
- Conducting appropriate research and evaluation programmes in areas of archives administration, information management and records services.
- Developing, coordinating and maintaining professional standards, systems and practices in archives and records sources to ensure most effective service to the University's research community, depositors of records and the public.<sup>158</sup>

Bengu hoped that, as part of the renewal of Fort Hare, the Department of Agriculture and the CCS would provide the backbone of the University's curriculum. It is understandable why Bengu thought in this way. Fort Hare had a strong Faculty of Agriculture and was located in the heart of Ciskei where the peasants relied on agriculture to eke out a living. As outlined above, the CCS was expected to champion the archives course and in Bengu's vision the centre would evolve into a School of Cultural and Media Studies.<sup>159</sup> Sirayi echoed Bengu's words when he said, 'we see it [the CCS] emerging as a national school offering grassroots education and high education in cultural and media studies which have little space in the current South Africa's education system'. A partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University in Britain was, he thought, going to make this dream possible.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Bengu to M. O'Dowd, 12 November 1992.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*: Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Tim Sheehy, 13 November 1992, Leeds Metropolitan University was thought to be formidable in Cultural and Education Studies: UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, S.M.E. Bengu to Eric Molobi, 26 February 1993.

### *Wooring other liberation movements*

While Bengu envisaged that other South African liberation movements were to be approached for their archival material, it was left to Sirayi to implement this policy. He contacted the PAC, AZAPO and the Unity Movement and requested them to consider Fort Hare as custodian of their respective papers.<sup>161</sup> The Unity Movement warmed to the request and Xolani Nakani, a high ranking official of the organization, agreed to visit Fort Hare to discuss the issue.<sup>162</sup> The CCS also requested the widow, now based in New Orleans, USA, of the late N.I. Honono, a leader of the African People's Democratic Union of South Africa (APDUSA), cognate to the Unity Movement, to donate her late husband's papers to the university.<sup>163</sup> In principle, the Unity Movement was favorable to the idea of sending its papers to Fort Hare, but the organization's executive council had to finally decide.<sup>164</sup> The project was duly endorsed and on 11 May 1992 Sirayi thanked Nakani for presenting a thought provoking paper, symbolizing their collaboration, on the archives.<sup>165</sup> Nakani asserted that 'the promotion and nurturing of a symbiotic relationship between the Centre for Cultural Studies of the University of Fort Hare and the oppressed Black population at large will impact a sense of strength and instill confidence into the oppressed and will assist them gain freedom and build a single South African nation. We urge all and sundry to support the Centre for Cultural Studies'.<sup>166</sup>

Though in principle the Unity Movement agreed to send its consignment to Fort Hare, there were glitches surrounding the movement's papers. On 10 July 1992, R.Wilcox, a joint

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<sup>161</sup> Sirayi, Author's Interview with G.M. Mona, East London, 16 November 2010. (Henceforth Interview with Mona).

<sup>162</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, G.V. Mona and G.T. Sirayi to Xolani Nikani, 31 March 1992.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*: Administrative Files, G.V. Mona to G.T. Sirayi, 2 April 1992.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*: Administrative Files, R. Wilcox to G.V. Mona and G.T. Sirayi, 4 April 1992.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*: Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to L.M. Nikani, 11 May 1992.

<sup>166</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies: Progress Report: 1981-1994.

secretary of Unity Movement South Africa (UMSA) informed Sirayi that the main archives of the organization were housed at UCT following the organization's earlier decision many years before Fort Hare was in a position to pioneer a project of this nature. According to Wilcox, Fort Hare could still negotiate with UCT to try and secure copies of the material. To show its commitment, the Unity Movement hoped to donate their recent material to Fort Hare.<sup>167</sup> What this meant was that the University would make do with whatever material they could secure from the Unity Movement and, if UCT agreed, some photocopies. Meanwhile, Fort Hare also wooed the PAC and AZAPO to donate their collections to the University.

On 18 May 1992 Sirayi requested Don Nkademeng, the secretary general of AZAPO, to donate the movement's struggle material to Fort Hare:

I have the pleasure to invite the AZAPO to lodge its archives, publications and museum artefacts with the University of Fort Hare Centre for Cultural Studies. This Centre is destined to become a South African Mecca of black heritage resources and facilities. The regime has continued not only to marginalise these resources and facilities, but also to condemn them into extinction. Hence the enjoyment of the third generation conservation rights has been the exclusive preserve of the ruling white minority. Also, the management of heritage resources and facilities continues to be the exclusive domain of the ruling minority. This accounts for the racist, elitist and Eurocentric nature of the extant heritage resources in terms of coverage, content, form and organization.<sup>168</sup>

Sirayi notified Nkademeng that Fort Hare was taking the lead in affirming and empowering anti-apartheid heritage structures. He outlined the reasons, including that Fort Hare was the hub of black intellectualism and at the helm of African liberation. He also mentioned that the archives initiative was an opportunity for the downtrodden to access the country's heritage resources and declared that Fort Hare would ensure 'that the Centre serves as a national

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<sup>167</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, R. Wilcox to G.T. Sirayi, 10 July 1992.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*: Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Dawn Nkademeng, 18 May 1992.

custodian of the anti-apartheid heritage resources, which subdivide into anti-apartheid archives, anti-apartheid museum collection, anti-apartheid library and people's performing arts or theatre'. Sirayi singled out the rich cultural heritage of the Eastern Cape particularly that of Transkei and the Border Region. He reminded Nkadimeng that black students often enrolled with historically black institutions but that most of them did not offer programmes in cultural studies. He asserted that the post apartheid era presented Fort Hare with an opportunity to offer cultural research programmes. The CCS, argued Sirayi, hoped to play a leading role in transforming Fort Hare from a mere teaching to a research oriented institution. He also reminded Nkadimeng that other liberation movements had already pledged their papers to the University.<sup>169</sup>

Though AZAPO sounded convinced by Fort Hare's request, within the BCM as a whole there were those who felt that their documents should be kept at AZAPO headquarters in Johannesburg. Others believed that since Fort Hare had approached the movement, it would be wise to cooperate especially since other liberation movements were optimistic about the initiative. The fact that Fort Hare was an educational institution with an impeccable struggle history played a vital role in persuading those who were skeptical to relent.<sup>170</sup> Those arguing in favour of Fort Hare were also concerned that BCM history could end up in obscurity if the documents were not sent to the university. After all, none within the organization had acquired archival skills and the documents could be lost or damaged over time if they were kept at the organization's headquarters.<sup>171</sup> With hindsight, Kgokong, the Secretary General of AZAPO, thinks that the BCM should have been positive and grateful that an institution like Fort Hare showed interest in the preservation of the movement's history. He states that:

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Mona.

<sup>171</sup> Author's Interview with Molefe Pheto, Johannesburg, 20 April, 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Pheto).

The gesture on the part of Fort Hare is fairly noble. Others may not have come to us for instance because they felt we are a small organization as they put it. Now they forget that for a very long time in this country there was no one on the scene, we kept the fires burning in this country. And you cannot ignore that if you were to write South Africa's history objectively. We are talking a number of years, from 1968 until the unbanning of the organizations.<sup>172</sup>

Other factors worked to Fort Hare's advantage in attracting BCM material. Mbulelo Mzamane, who succeeded Bengu as the rector of Fort Hare in 1994, was Black Consciousness-oriented. This encouraged the BCM to be comfortable with the idea of sending their material to the University.<sup>173</sup> Other BCM-minded academics at Fort Hare like Khoapa also made a case for Fort Hare.<sup>174</sup> AZAPO also developed confidence in the leadership of Sirayi and saw no reason why they should not cooperate.<sup>175</sup> Nkadimeng also emphasized the role played by Fort Hare in the emancipation of blacks, mentioning that Fort Hare was the breeding ground for the BCM ideology. The movement was thus:

proud to deposit its archives, publications and artifacts with the Centre for Cultural Studies of this University. In addition, the University is the *alma mater* to many of the past and present leaders within the Black Consciousness Movement. Amongst the names that come to mind are those of: Twiggs Xiphu, the current Deputy Chairperson of the exiled Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) and a microbiologist in Washington, DC. Jerry Modisane, who rose to become the President of the South African Student Organisation (SASO), Jeff Baqwa, Menziwe Mbewu, Sandile Majeke, Joe Soeka and SabeloNtwasa, all household names in the BCM today....As the oldest of the universities for Blacks in the country, Fort Hare is most appropriate for this honour.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Author's Interview with Jairus Mpotseng Kgekong, Johannesburg, 13 April 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Kgekong).

<sup>173</sup> Author's Interview with Strike Thokoane, Johannesburg, 20 April 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Thokoane).

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Mona.

<sup>175</sup> Author's Interview with Gerald Phokobye, Pretoria, 28 April, 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Phokobye).

<sup>176</sup> <http://www.si.umich.edu/fort-hare/nkadimeng.htm>, accessed on 12 November 2009.



At Fort Hare excitement about the archives spread as it became known that the liberation movements were enthusiastic about working with this renowned African institution. On 13 May 1992 the CCS informed the PAC's Director of Publicity and Information, Barney Desai, that they were delighted with the news that the movement had agreed to send its papers to Fort Hare. The CCS informed Desai that the relationship they were establishing with the University would be a symbiotic one. The Centre also suggested that meetings be held with the PAC to iron out some issues including the question of the memorandum of agreement, repatriation logistics, funding and research projects that could emanate from the archives. The Centre also assured Desai that Fort Hare would rise to the occasion as a custodian of the liberation archives. The PAC was positive about the archives project and Desai advised Sirayi to contact Mfanasekhaya Gqobose and initiate the process.<sup>177</sup> Gqobose was a revered member of the National Executive Committee NEC and long standing member of the PAC and hoped to dedicate the latter part of his life to the repatriation of the PAC material from exile.

The CCS did as advised by Desai and on 5 May 1992 informed Gqobose that the PAC should appoint a person or a committee to liaise with Fort Hare on archives. Such a committee or person would have to be decisive about the direction of the repatriation project as time to locate and repatriate material from exile was limited. The CCS put it to Gqobose that the project was an enormous responsibility as private collections of PAC leaders such as Sobukwe, Zephaniah Mothopeng and Clarence Makwetu were also earmarked for archiving at Fort Hare. The Centre also requested a meeting with Gqobose to discuss the practical

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<sup>177</sup> UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to Benny Desai, 13 May 1992.

details of the project. This was followed by two meetings with the veteran which focused on cementing relations between Fort Hare and the PAC.<sup>178</sup>

After the meetings with Gqobose, a PAC Archives Committee meeting was held at Fort Hare on 2 June 1992 to chart the way forward. Present were Sirayi, PAC members including Gqobose, Mr. M.K. Tsotsobe, and Mr. A.G. Ngcolo. Gqobose was pleased with the draft memorandum which was presented by Fort Hare at the meeting and promised to forward it to the PAC's legal department for scrutiny and endorsement. An oral history project was also discussed at the meeting. The PAC was obviously aware that not all the organization's activities were captured in the documents making it important to capture the voices of its struggle veterans so as to reconstruct the history of the struggle.<sup>179</sup> As Gqobose stated in 1995, the question of oral history 'is very important because for the last 30 years when PAC was banned its members carried the activities of their organization in their heads. Now is the time for those activities and experiences to be documented and become part of the PAC archives'.<sup>180</sup> This was again emphasized by the PAC in the same year when it declared that:

the story of the PAC cannot end only in office records etc. The members of the PAC themselves must be interviewed and tell their own stories and experiences about the PAC which will form part of an integrated history that will benefit schools, researchers and future generations of the African people. This aspect of the work must be done now before the older members; some founder members of the PAC are dead.<sup>181</sup>

Though the PAC never carried out an oral history project as intended, the movement was mindful of its importance and that existing gaps in its collection had to be filled.

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<sup>178</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Benny Desai, 15 June 1992.

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid*: Minutes of a UFH/PAC Archives Committee meeting held on 2 June 1992 at the Centre for Cultural Studies.

<sup>180</sup>*Ibid*: A short memo on the creation of the archives for the Pan Africanist Congress(PAC).

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid*: Archives Report for September and October, 1995.

Gaps identified in the PAC collection included the organization's underground activities notably APLA. Later on as they went through the material the archivists at Fort Hare also identified gaps and made recommendations on how they should be covered. Generally, the liberation movements believed that gaps in their histories could be covered through oral history. The ANC, with its financial muscle, succeeded in implementing an oral history project in partnership with The University of Connecticut (Uconn). Ramdhani played a leading role in the coordination of the oral history project with her *alma mater*, Uconn. ANC activists were interviewed for the project and the records were eventually deposited in the ANC archives at Fort Hare with copies of 133 transcripts being sent to Uconn in 2007.<sup>182</sup> This was a positive step as oral history gained ground in post apartheid South Africa. In fact, in South Africa oral history falls within the requirements of the country's National Heritage Resources Act. As Carolyn Hamilton states, oral history 'presents a challenge to archives to move away from their strong documentary bias, and demands that they do not simply expand their concept of documentary bias, and demands that they do not simply expand their concept of document to include the transcribed oral text'.<sup>183</sup>

One of the most vital issues discussed in the meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1992 was the repatriation of the PAC material. This is what tied Fort Hare to the PAC. It was agreed that repatriation of the PAC material be speedily carried out and that members of the movement be alerted about the project and its importance. Other issues discussed at the meeting included the drafting of the archives policy and finding means to fund the project. It was

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<sup>182</sup> For more on the ANC-Uconn oral history project see, [http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/asc/findaids/anc\\_interviews/MSS20070040.html](http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/asc/findaids/anc_interviews/MSS20070040.html), accessed on 27 November 2012

<sup>183</sup> Hamilton, 'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving, in Hamilton, *et al*, *Refiguring the Archive*, 224.

proposed that a funding proposal be drafted for submission to potential donors. To ensure continuity, it was agreed that Sirayi would liaise with Gqobose on repatriation.<sup>184</sup>

In addition, other institutions that housed liberation archives took oral history seriously. Wits Historical Papers houses an important collection of oral history interviews conducted by Gail Gerhart. This has over a period of time been used by different historians to deepen their understanding of the history of the struggle. Between 2009 and 2012 Historical Papers initiated a project in which more 200 labour activists were interviewed across the country on their experience and different aspects of the labour movement. The Mayibuye Centre at UWC also holds a sizeable number of oral history interviews, including those with ex-Robben Island inmates. These oral history interviews have enriched the various struggle archives, and to a great extent an effort has been made to narrow the gaps and silences that worried the liberation movements whose archival material was deposited at Fort Hare. The South African Democracy Education Trust (Sadet)'s oral history collection, the largest pertaining to struggle history, is stored at the National Archives.

By inviting all these liberation movements to form part of the archives project, Fort Hare had positioned itself as a potential custodian for rare and important struggle documents that would reshape South African historiography, particularly that of the struggle. This was a unique opportunity that Fort Hare was quick to seize.

### *Solving logjams and formalizing the archives project*

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<sup>184</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Minutes of a UFH/PAC Archives Committee meeting held on 2 June 1992 at the Centre for Cultural Studies.

That the ANC chose Fort Hare as a custodian of its collection did not mean that the UWC people were a thing of the past. An amicable solution had to be attempted and a meeting between Mayibuye Centre and the CCS was held at UWC on 23 August 1992. Odendaal believed that since it was clear that Fort Hare was the anointed custodian of the ANC material, it would be wise for the two institutions to cooperate rather than dwell on problems. After all, he pointed out, universities were by nature attuned to acquiring information and therefore it was logical for Fort Hare and UWC to find themselves in a competitive space. Gordon Metz concurred with his colleague and pointed out that it was crucial for the two institutions to cooperate for mutual benefit especially since the misunderstanding over the archives had 'been inherited from crossed lines within the ANC'. Sirayi admitted that indeed there was an overlap and confusion between the two projects and that the situation impacted negatively on their work. This was a positive and important step for the two institutions as both were meant to be working for the good of the country's liberation heritage and conflict between Fort Hare and UWC could cause serious confusion. Both Metz and Odendaal were part of the CMMH which was co-ordinated by Sirayi and at that level all had a harmonious working relationship. Only the issue of the ANC archives came between them.

In the meeting, the CCS asked UWC to propose ways and means in which the archives question could be resolved especially since the ANC consignment was on its way to Fort Hare. Odendaal explained that the Mayibuye Centre had requested a meeting with the ANC to clear the air. In his opinion, the ANC had to view the two projects as equal partners. Sirayi was not opposed to the suggestion and proposed that a joint proposal be submitted to the

ANC on how the equal partnership initiative could be implemented. The next day, 24th August, the following recommendations were tabled by the Mayibuye Centre:

- That the ANC recognise and support the UWC Mayibuye Centre and Fort Hare CCS initiatives as twin projects
- That a recommendation be made that the UWC Mayibuye Centre be represented on the ANC Archives Committee
- That the meeting be tasked with drafting guidelines, working practices, areas of responsibility, etc. for co-operation between the ANC, Fort Hare and UWC.

Odendaal proposed that Fort Hare and UWC should co-operate as follows:

- A shared data-base
- Duplication of material via preferential agreement
- Joint microfilm project
- Joint research and training project
- Broader co-operation between Fort Hare and UWC generally
- Joint publication and exhibition projects

The proposal was embraced by the CCS which suggested that ways and means be found to implement this programme. Just after the proposal had been tabled, the meeting was joined by Wally Serote, the head of the ANC Arts and Culture Desk and a member of the Archives Committee who expressed his appreciation that the two institutions were looking cordially into the matter especially since the ANC believed the issues could be resolved amicably. At this point, Odendaal handed the Mayibuye Centre's progress report to Serote and unequivocally informed him that UWC would remain unhappy to lose the collection they had

already acquired to Fort Hare. Metz added that it remained crucial for the UWC material to be enriched from time to time as it could otherwise 'fossilize'. For UWC, the material could only be enriched through oral histories as the ANC had already made a decision to send its papers to Fort Hare. Serote concluded that all the main points were covered and made a summary of what could be presented to the ANC:

- That Fort Hare would be the main archival centre and that there would also be archives at the Mayibuye Centre that would be continuously enriched by the ANC.
- That the two initiatives must be seen as twin projects with equal status. The specialist focus of the respective projects plus the material already at UWC would determine what material went where.

Serote agreed that a draft proposal be urgently produced and submitted to the ANC Archives Committee for consideration. This responsibility was placed on Odendaal and Sirayi. The draft proposal would include the three points proposed earlier by Odendaal.<sup>185</sup> Unfortunately for UWC the ANC continued to demand that the movement's material in their possession be sent to Fort Hare via Shell house.

Between 27 September and 22 October 1992, Bengu and Sirayi toured European countries including Britain, Sweden, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. They intended to network with European universities and to acquaint themselves on the latest debates around higher education. They also hoped that the establishment of these networks

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*: Minutes of Meeting between Themba Sirayi (Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Fort Hare) and Andre Odendaal and Gordon Metz (Mayibuye Centre, University of the Western Cape), Fort Beaufort, 23 August 1992.

could result in staff and student exchanges between Fort Hare and European institutions, joint initiatives in curriculum and research and the development of joint funding proposals on certain programmes followed by partnerships. Fort Hare also hoped to raise funds for its existing academic programmes. Bengu and Sirayi met various institutions and funding organizations, amongst them the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in Sweden, the University of Helsinki in Finland and the Finnish Library Association which provided funds for the employment of one archivist at Fort Hare, the German funding agency Bread for the World and the German academic exchange agency DAAD which was already funding some programmes at Fort Hare, the University of Amsterdam which committed R80 000 for staff and student development at Fort Hare, the Department of Development Cooperation in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs which favorably received the CCS proposal, the Ursula Fund of the Development Aid Agency in Switzerland which was keen to fund the CCS as well as the Human Rights Resource Centre at Fort Hare, and Leeds Metropolitan University in Britain where an MOU was signed between the CCS and the Faculty of Cultural and Media Studies. Sirayi and Dean Brian Duffield were to jointly monitor the establishment and co-ordination of a School of Cultural and Media Studies at Fort Hare. The Fort Hare delegation also visited York University as it had a specialization in archives.<sup>186</sup> A few days after the two men had returned from abroad, they were to attend the signing ceremony in Johannesburg where the liberation movements would officially commit to a working relationship with Fort Hare. The long awaited day had finally arrived.

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<sup>186</sup>*Ibid*: Report on a visit to Britain, Sweden, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, 27 September to 22 October 1992, by S.M.E. Bengu and G.T. Sirayi



The signing ceremony was held at the Devonshire Hotel in Johannesburg on 26 October 1992. In the early 1990s, the mood amongst the liberation movements was high as they were working towards the formation of a Patriotic Front to jointly tackle the apartheid regime. The signing ceremony can be seen as an aspect of this particular political moment when a united position amongst liberation movements was perceived as being of paramount importance. The ceremony was also an opportunity for old Fort Hare alumni to meet and communicate as the apartheid period had separated many comrades and friends. Some had been in prison and others were exiled in different parts of the world whilst some remained in the dusty township streets waging battles against the apartheid state.

At the ceremony Bengu thanked the liberation movements present for their commitment to Fort Hare. It was no mean feat to get these organizations together. The ANC, PAC, BCM and Unity Movement all sent their presidents to represent them at this important ceremony. The ANC was represented by Mandela, the PAC by Clarence Makwetu, the BCM by Pandelani Nefolovhodwe and the Unity Movement sent its highest delegation at the function. Bengu reminded the guests that most leaders who were part of these liberation movements were ex-students of Fort Hare and that it was logical that their archives should be deposited at their *alma mater*. To him, the deposit of the papers was part of the renewal of Fort Hare after the apartheid period. Bengu said:

The University of Fort Hare regards the custodianship of the archives of resistance as an act of liberation and empowerment. When the Liberation Movement was banned by the regime and forced into exile in 1960, the University of Fort Hare was also forced into captivity. For three decades the conservative forces dominated the University and championed its underdevelopment. Interestingly, the unbanning of the political organisations and release of political leaders early in 1990 ushered in the release of the University of Fort Hare from captivity-thanks to the progressive constituencies of our campus, which continued to struggle for

the liberation of Fort Hare, and in March 1990 orchestrated the overthrow of the conservative forces at Fort Hare.<sup>187</sup>

Bengu also asserted that the liberation archives would play a significant role in the transformation of Fort Hare which had just emerged from the doldrums of apartheid. He reiterated the importance and role of the CCS in ensuring that the vision of the archives was achieved and informed the dignitaries present that donors ought to play a meaningful role in ensuring that the project was launched successfully. He summarized his concerns as follows:

The need for more financial assistance for our University is overwhelming. Whilst the international partnerships will cover most of the programmatic side of our Cultural Studies project we need local South African business community partners who will finance the brick and mortar costs of this project. Professor Sirayi has at his disposal an elaborate funding proposal for the Cultural Studies Centre at Fort Hare. All the local donors interested in the accommodation costs of the archives, the museum or theatre are invited to contact Professor Sirayi. We are therefore in search of partnerships with anyone who shares our vision. We look to traverse this road, not alone, not only with this nation, but also with the rest of the world. Let us, together, build a new Fort Hare for a new South Africa.<sup>188</sup>

Liberation movement leaders also spoke at this ceremony. Makwetu said that:

The University of Fort Hare has a unique place in the history of the liberation movements of our land. We, in the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania are therefore proud to be associated with the University's Centre for Cultural Studies where the political archives of the PAC will be lodged. The first founding President of PAC, Comrade Robert Sobukwe, as a student leader at Fort Hare, made a profound impact when he, with great passion and dynamism, attacked the white paternalism of the then hierarchy of the University. From his utterance then, it was clear that this courageous undergraduate was going to make his mark on the history of our liberation movement. It is therefore most appropriate that our historical archives should be lodged with this Centre, above all others. I am pleased that the Centre will have a wider compass covering a spectrum, which includes the promotion of our great African cultural heritage free from the Eurocentric domination of the past; community research programmes, which concentrate on the African experience and promote the development of human resources and training programmes that mould a new free and

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<sup>187</sup>*Ibid.*: Opening address by S.M.E. Bengu at the signing ceremony held at the Devonshire Hotel, Johannesburg, 26 October 1992.

<sup>188</sup>*Ibid.*

independent African personality. The Centre receives the blessings of our Party and people. Let men and women of goodwill give support to it with enthusiasm and generosity.<sup>189</sup>

Nefolovhodwe on behalf of the BCM asserted that the archives initiative would remind the cadres of the liberation movements of their responsibility to preserve struggle records. He emphasized that it was appropriate for Fort Hare as the oldest black university in southern Africa to build a facility that would house struggle material and that the archives would assist researchers interested in the history of the oppressed and dispossessed in South Africa. He also stressed the significant role the archives could play in the lives of African children as they undertook research on the liberation movements. Like the other liberation movements, he unashamedly proclaimed that Fort Hare was entitled to custody of the liberation material as some of the history captured in the documents was a product of its alumni. He also emphasized that the collection would provide:

a basis of identity and background to the causes and issues relating to Black People's struggle for total emancipation. Unfortunately our children find it difficult to learn and to a large degree have been misled to view freedom as separate from both psychological and intellectual emancipation. The destruction of the learning process within the Black community is a phenomenon that if unchecked, will destroy the basis of our future human resource development. By not learning our children will be creating a situation where the Azanian Nation will be without the necessary intellectual capacity and ability to sustain future educational processes and programmes.<sup>190</sup>

As Chancellor of Fort Hare Tambo declared that:

We as the University of Fort Hare, feel that the occasion further fortifies and extends our long-lasting commitment to unity and accommodation in our common pursuit of Freedom and Liberation. It therefore does me proud, as Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare to congratulate all the signatories to this historical arrangement between our Centre for Cultural

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<sup>189</sup><http://www.si.umich.edu/fort-hare/makwetu.htm>, accessed on 10 June 2010.

<sup>190</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Remarks made by the President of the Azanian People's Organisation [AZAPO] Pandelani Nefolovhodwe at a signing ceremony between AZAPO and the University of Fort Hare in respect of the Black Consciousness Movement[BCM] Archives, dated 26 October 1992.

Studies, and the liberation organisations here represented. To us, this arrangement represents the fine thread of commonness of purpose amongst the organisations of the people. More importantly, the signing ceremony should, hopefully, form an aspect of the Bedrock upon which the much needed firm solidarity of the victims of oppression must ultimately rest.<sup>191</sup>

Tambo also emphasized that South Africans ought to use and learn from the archives. He added that, well used, the archives could help create patriotic citizens with a keen interest in acquiring knowledge. In his view, the archives had to be accessible to a broader range of social and political scientists ensuring that Fort Hare 'shall have created the foundations of a future, proud nation that can point at the archives as evidence of a once beleaguered people, who never gave up in the face of adversity'.<sup>192</sup> With signed agreements in place, the liberation archives could now be sent to Fort Hare. This was a moment of relief for Fort Hare especially since many well established institutions continued to eye the priceless material.

#### *SOMAFCO: A collection of a specific kind*

The first consignment to be repatriated by the ANC was the SOMAFCO collection. In the early 1990s the organization thought it important to repatriate this collection from Tanzania as the school was the jewel of the movement in exile and well wishers, potential donors and all those who valued education as a tool for liberation, were drawn to the school. With the attractive image of SOMAFCO in mind, the ANC felt that it was extremely important to repatriate the school's archival material first. The movement hoped that historians could write

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<sup>191</sup>*Ibid*: Closing address by . O.R. Tambo at the signing ceremony between the University of Fort Hare Centre for Cultural Studies and the ANC, PAC, AZAPO and UMSA, 26/10/ 92.

<sup>192</sup>*Ibid*.

SOMAFCO's history and that lessons could be drawn from the school's experience which could benefit education in the liberated South Africa.<sup>193</sup>

Maamoe, with other ANC cadres including John Pampallis, Zwelakhe Mankazana, and Sinikka Sipila, a Finish librarian and a volunteer at SOMAFCO, was instrumental in repatriating the school's material to Fort Hare in 1992. Funded by the Batlagae Trust, a body established to attend to the educational needs of ANC returnees, Maamoe and others were instructed to remain at SOMAFCO and repatriate the school's archival material to its destination at the University of Fort Hare. These people had to collect documents from the school, from Dakawa which was the ANC vocational centre 50km from SOMAFCO, and from the Dar es Salaam and Morogoro ANC offices. The Morogoro records covered the early history of the ANC in exile. The collection had since been forgotten and was retrieved thanks to a student who alerted Maamoe and others to the existence of the material stashed in some filing cabinets in the Morogoro offices. They went from department to department and collected the documents and assembled them at one point. It took the team about five months to put together all the records for shipment to South Africa. There were also some documents from Lusaka stored in the SOMAFCO archives at the school's library. These were also packed into containers for shipment to South Africa. This was an emotionally challenging time for Maamoe and his colleagues as the euphoria to return to South Africa gripped many in the early 1990s. They could not however leave Mazimbu until all the documents were sorted and shipped to South Africa. That they remained at SOMAFCO when many were leaving demonstrated that they were resilient cadres, committed to the movement and concerned about the writing of SOMAFCO's history. Thus, the SOMAFCO material and

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<sup>193</sup> Interviews with Maamoe, Ramdhani.

some papers from Morogoro, Dar-es-Salam and Dakawa were the first to be repatriated and sent straight to Fort Hare. These were classified under the SOMAFCO collection simply because the bulk of the material came from the school.<sup>194</sup>

The repatriation of the SOMAFCO documents straight to Fort Hare filled many with excitement on campus as the archives dream came to fruition. Fort Hare historians recall the emotional atmosphere at the university when the SOMAFCO consignment arrived:

Anyone present will remember the scene in Freedom Square, Fort Hare, on 21 September 1992. A lorry from the port of Durban deposited a large container in the square. A knot of university dignitaries and others gathered around while a workman with a crowbar broke the seal. The doors swung open; there was a scatter of applause, and there, with a typewriter balanced on top, was a pile of apparently unorganised papers and objects. The container seemed to exhale the breath of another time and place. These were the records of SOMAFCO and Dakawa, raw from Mazimbu.<sup>195</sup>

Accommodation was organized at Henderson Hall to house the documents and the building was fitted with burglar proofing and shelves.<sup>196</sup> The building's alarm system was linked to that of the Protection Service, guaranteeing quick response from University security.<sup>197</sup> Maamoe, who assumed his duties on 1 October 1992, was first placed at SAHA in Johannesburg for a period of two weeks to update himself on archival processing. He subsequently returned to Fort Hare and from the 15<sup>th</sup> of October commenced the enormous task of processing the material.<sup>198</sup> In May 1994 it was reported that 'since September 1993 already three major Archival groups, namely, LEC, Lusaka and SOMAFCO have been

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<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Morrow, Maaba, Loyiso Pulumani, 'Education in Exile' in Kallaway (ed), *The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994*.

<sup>196</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Progress Report: SOMAFCO Archives from SOMAFCO, Tanzania.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*: Minutes of the UFH Archives Committee Meeting held on 21 May 1992 at 11h00 in the Rector's Office.

<sup>198</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Progress Report: SOMAFCO Archives from SOMAFCO, Tanzania, Centre for Cultural Studies: Progress Report: 1981-1994.

processed, inventoried, boxed and shelved. In particular the work of the first two groups is complete. Focus now is on SOMAFCO, which by far is the largest Group of Archives'.<sup>199</sup> Ramdhani, who arrived in 1993, a year after the SOMAFCO collection had been sent to Fort Hare, questioned the decision to send the material straight to the University. She argued that international archival standards required that sensitive documents be placed on embargo until such time as they could be released. It was rather late to reverse the situation as some scholars had already accessed the SOMAFCO material.<sup>200</sup> The sensitive documents were removed from the SOMAFCO collection a few years later.<sup>201</sup>

That the ANC material was destined for Fort Hare did not mean that the movement could rest on its laurels. Much work had to be done to ensure that the whole repatriation process was a success. For instance, the issue of the Mayibuye Centre remained a thorn in the side of the movement as there seemed to be no proper resolution on the matter in spite of the meetings between UWC and Fort Hare. In the ANC Archives Committee meeting on 24 February 1993, the issue resurfaced. The Committee heard that the Mayibuye Centre remained unimpressed about the ANC's decision to choose Fort Hare over UWC as the destination for the archives. It was agreed at the meeting that the ANC had to clarify a number of things including whether there was an intention on the side of the movement to make the Mayibuye Centre a custodian of the ANC archives, when such a decision was made and had it later been reversed.

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<sup>199</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Progress Report on the processing of ANC Archives, September 1993-May 1994.

<sup>200</sup>Interview with Ramdhani, UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Narissa Ramdhani to Yolisa Soul, 19 June 1999, Yolisa Soul to NarissaRamdhani, 23 June 1999.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid*: Narissa Ramdhani to Yolisa Soul, 19 June 1999, Yolisa Soul to Narissa Ramdhani, 23 June 1999.

Since UWC did not sign a contract with the ANC they could not substantiate their claims. UWC successfully cultivated and used ANC networks in Lusaka and London to acquire some material but without a contract their claim to the ANC material was baseless. But since some material was already at the Mayibuye Centre, the ANC once more proposed that Fort Hare and UWC cooperate instead of competing. In the same meeting, the Archives Committee concluded that it was urgent to produce a policy document which would explicitly explain to its cadres that ANC documents and the organization's paraphernalia be sent to Fort Hare.<sup>202</sup> This is another indication that the Mayibuye Centre was losing the race against Fort Hare. The idea that the Mayibuye Centre and the CCS were equal partners was, in fact, not true. It was just a matter of time before the ANC issued instructions that the archives be removed from UWC and sent to Fort Hare. As will be seen, the ANC indeed later demanded that the movement's documents at UWC be returned to the organization's headquarters for shipment to Fort Hare.

#### *Fort Hare and the legacy of apartheid*

In 1990 Fort Hare emerged from its bruising encounter with apartheid, seriously affected by Bantu Education. When the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 segregated universities along ethnic lines, Fort Hare was condemned to the margins. The institution lost prominent staff members such as Matthews who resigned in December 1959 in protest against the introduction of the Act. Others like Sibusiso Nyembezi and A.M. Phahle followed in Matthews' footsteps.<sup>203</sup> The apartheid government imposed its own teaching staff at Fort Hare and some of these were unsympathetic to students and deeply imbued with right-wing

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<sup>202</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files: Minutes of the Archives Committee, 24 February 1993.

<sup>203</sup>Mary Alice Beale, 'Apartheid and University Education, 1948-1970' (PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1998), 224.



agendas.<sup>204</sup> The Rector, H.R. Burrows, was dismissed and replaced with Prof. J.J. Ross.<sup>205</sup> Staff members and students viewed as politically unreliable were expelled from Fort Hare.<sup>206</sup> By 1969 only 20% of academics in institutions like Fort Hare and Turfloop were black and they earned far less than their white counterparts in the same universities.<sup>207</sup>

In the 1960s the apartheid regime tightened its grip on tertiary institutions, intensifying separate development. Universities were funded from accounts specifically designed for that particular race. White institutions received their funding from General Revenue via the Department of Education. Though the university colleges for coloureds and Indians were at first funded through the Department of Education, their funding was soon transferred to the Department of Coloured and Indian Affairs. Black universities were funded through the Bantu Education Account.<sup>208</sup> This was a strategy of divide and rule at tertiary level.

The regime also diminished the science stream in black universities and students were channeled into the arts, social sciences or education. Science remained almost entirely the preserve of white students, though because of its long history, Fort Hare continued to offer some science courses including agriculture.<sup>209</sup> Some of the staff members hired to teach in black institutions could barely communicate in English. Such lecturers tended to be the less successful graduates of Afrikaner universities who could not secure prestigious jobs in white institutions. In an institution like Fort Hare the ambitions of these second grade academics

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<sup>204</sup> For more on student strikes and a sense of unhappiness on different campuses see, Mzamane, Maaba and Biko, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, 1960-1970' in Sadet, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.

<sup>205</sup> Beale, 'Apartheid and University Education', 224-225.

<sup>206</sup> Massey, *Under Protest*.

<sup>207</sup> Beale, 'Apartheid and University Education', 357-358.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*: 343-344.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

could be fast-tracked but the quality of their teaching and their academic competence was questionable, and indeed the point was that they should offer an education considered suitable for blacks based on a watered down curriculum. In Fort Hare's Department of History for instance, English speaking lecturers were shown the door and replaced by Afrikaners expected to provide an Afrikaner nationalist interpretation of South African history. Courses dealing with governance were shrunk into native or 'Bantu' administration which emphasized the separation of races and instilled the idea that discriminatory laws benefitted the country. Some of the lecturers bluntly told students that theirs was a sub-standard form of education aimed at producing half-baked graduates.<sup>210</sup> Militant students who protested against this situation were expelled from Fort Hare and other black institutions like Turfloop.<sup>211</sup> These were trying times for the increasingly marginalized and boxed in black community.

By the time Fort Hare emerged from apartheid in 1990, much damage had been done to the institution. Bengu and his successors Mzamane and Derrick Swartz inherited an institution burdened with problems, needing to be nursed back to health. Mzamane felt that he was faced with:

the challenge not only of building the institution but of building the country as a whole. It kind of brought all these problems you might encounter in the larger sphere of our lives together in this microcosm called Fort Hare. For example, we know that the liberation struggle was about the most marginalized etc and so forth. And of course these were people that an institution like Fort Hare was now serving, but serving without the capacities: I'm now talking about the academic staff; I am talking about the infrastructure whether it was laboratories or libraries. In fact you might find a beautiful looking library from outside and the moment you walked in it was a skeleton actually, more shelves than books, or for that matter the facilities where our students were supposed to live. All of these were sub-standard and it was quite tragic to think you were expected to educate in this ghetto situation. It was

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<sup>210</sup> Massey, *Under Protest*, 166-169.

<sup>211</sup> Mzamane, Maaba, Biko 'The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa', in Sadet, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.

even more tragic when you went to where we were educating people who would be health practitioners. Our nurses were training in a hospital in Mdantsane called Cecilia Makiwane and where they lived you would not have wished your prized horses to stay there. It was worse than ghetto conditions, I mean it was squalor and filth and yet these were people you were training to be health conscious, health providers and so on. There was this discordance, this discrepancy between the outcome envisaged and the conditions and I didn't you could actually think you could educate effectively under such ghetto conditions. That was the challenge, the major challenge.<sup>212</sup>

The problems experienced by Fort Hare extended to the collection and preservation of archival material. At the time, historically disadvantaged universities like Fort Hare were not well prepared in terms of financial resources or staff to preserve archival material. As a result, the archives were at risk of not being properly managed and not meeting certain archival standards. Over the years, the university had not produced postgraduate students in the field of archives and preservation. In fact no department of that nature existed at Fort Hare other than that of library science. Even Soul who ended up as a librarian and later as an archivist admits that her career change was accidental:

For me to be honest with you, do you know that it was a default? I used to teach around Alice, in fact my first degree was BSc... and then UED, University Education Diploma then I taught around Alice, Jabavu and then later Lovedale. Lovedale closed down and I found a school, Phandulwazi, which was a bit far because at that stage I had small children and my son, second son was not very well that stage.... I needed a place very near home so that I could go lunch time and after work I can rush whenever there was a problem. So when I left Pandulwazi I was head of division, biology, I was teaching biology, and in charge of their library. In fact when I was still teaching at Jabavu I decided after BSc and UED to do a Higher Diploma in Library Science. You know just as a second kind of fallback position. And then at Pandulwazi and at Lovedale I was the school librarian but also teaching. So there was a position here at Fort Hare of an assistant librarian, I applied, which was a real demotion. But at least I was near home I could go home lunch time as I say it was walking distance because I was staying here on campus. And then I developed love for library work and I ended up doing an honours degree in library science.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Author's Interview with Mbulelo Mzamane, Kempton Park, 8 June 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Mzamane).

<sup>213</sup> Interview with Soul.

How then were the liberation archives going to be properly organized if the necessary skills were not in place? In addition, how was the liberation history to be written and disseminated in the absence of well-organized archives? The shortage of skills was the most challenging question that Fort Hare faced once the archives were received. When the University received the SOMAFSCO documents in September 1992, Maamoe was the only archivist on campus. It was unimaginable that Maamoe could single-handedly process the avalanche of documents from the different ANC missions. Also, documents from other liberation movements would soon be on campus. Fort Hare was faced with an intricate problem that it had to solve.

#### *Tackling the apartheid-created scourge*

In 1993, the CCS only had five staff members to carry out its mandate, Sirayi, G.V. Mona a research officer, Maamoe the only archivist, Nomawethu Danster an assistant librarian and N.D. Nyawombi the secretary. This was a mere skeleton staff considering the need to coordinate, receive and process archival material as well as build the different arms of the Centre.<sup>214</sup> The field of archives is specialized and specific skills were needed. Fort Hare had to act quickly and effectively.

Augmenting the archives staff was discussed by the Fort Hare Archives Committee on 2 September 1993. It was agreed that it would be to the best interests of the University to employ a senior, experienced archivist to work with Maamoe. The CCS was fortunate as the Ford Foundation was prepared to pay the salary of the much needed senior archivist. Sirayi was

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<sup>214</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare Centre for Cultural Studies Archives of the Resistance Project (ARP).

advised at the meeting that should he not succeed in attracting a suitable candidate for the position, he should approach the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ARCARM) in London for assistance. Should this or other channel yield no results, the Centre should try to secure the services of an archivist on sabbatical.<sup>215</sup> However, this would be a temporary measure as academics are expected to return to their home institution after sabbatical leave.

On 27 May 1993 Manileo Tau, the head of the university library, requested a Botswana based archivist, Robert Kukubo, to identify a specialist who could advise Fort Hare on policy formulation on archives including copyright issues.<sup>216</sup> Kukubo was a Kenyan lawyer-cum-archivist.<sup>217</sup> Kukubo informed Tau that he knew of no expert in the field of archives who could come to Fort Hare but that he could himself set aside some time to help the University. At the time Kukubo was a member of the Committee on Legal Matters, which included copyright, of the International Council on Archives. In some ways, it was demeaning for Tau to have asked Kukubo to recommend someone who could help to Fort Hare, since if she had known the field she would have realized that he had the relevant expertise. In fact, she knew of Kukubo's abilities as he worked under him as head of the university archive at the National University of Lesotho when Tau was the university librarian. It was well known within the university circles that Tau had an antipathy for Kukubo and went out of her way to frustrate him. It must have been torture for Kukubo to have to deal with Tau later at Fort Hare. Again, that Tau took it upon herself to contact Kukubo leaves much to be desired as

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<sup>215</sup>UFH: University Library Files, Minutes of a meeting of the UFH Archives Committee held on Thursday, 02 September 1993 at 14h15 in the Rector's Committee Room.

<sup>216</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, M.N. Tau to Kukobo, 27 May 1993.

<sup>217</sup> Author's Interview with Caroline Kukubo, Alice, 27 January 2010 (Henceforth Interview with Kukubo), UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, document on recruitment efforts entitled 'Expert mission to South Africa: National Liberation Archives at the University of Fort Hare', Human Resource Department: from H.Z Hansie: To Whom it may concern, 1 March 1995.

she was not associated with liberation archives at the time (1993) and was head of the university library, leaving her without jurisdiction on the matter. Perhaps she was acting in good faith and trying to assist the CCS where she could but as will be seen later, the ANC archives ended up under her control in just two years. Nonetheless, Kukubo did come to Fort Hare.

Kukubo was expected to join the University on 1 August 1993 as a visiting research fellow funded by the Ford Foundation and was to be attached to the CCS for only one month. Due to administrative delays, which often characterized the University, he arrived at Fort Hare on 15 August.<sup>218</sup> His responsibilities included assisting with the formulation of archival policy and developing a needs assessment encompassing strategic planning and capacity building. The training process he was charged with was expected to cover conservation, preservation and compilation of finding aids.<sup>219</sup> It seems clear that the assigned work was demanding and could not be completed in one month.<sup>220</sup>

The CCS was impressed by Kukubo's work and on 20 September 1993 requested the University to extend his stay to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. This was approved by Bengu.<sup>221</sup> Kukubo went through draft plans aimed at converting the Great Hall to an archives building and made recommendations on modifications to the building to meet the requirements of a proper archive. His duties included drafting the ANC position paper on the destruction of records

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<sup>218</sup>UFH: Human Resource Department, Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Gobe, 9 August 1993.

<sup>219</sup>*Ibid*: Registrar Administration to Robert Kukubo, 18 June 1993, G.T. Sirayi to Robert Kukubo, 22 July 1993.

<sup>220</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Robert Kukubo to Nana Tau, nd.

<sup>221</sup>UFH: Human Resource Department, Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Bengu, 20 September 1993.

and the movement's policy on archives.<sup>222</sup> Plans were initiated to employ Kukubo as a permanent member of the CCS staff as the Centre could not afford to lose the services of a highly skilled archivist of his calibre. The post of senior archivist was advertised and Kukubo submitted his application and received the job. He was highly recommended for the position by A.D Bankie of the University of Lesotho:

Mr. Kukubo served as the University Archivist at the National University of Lesotho for quite a number of years during which time he initiated the establishment of the archival unit of the University. He is outstandingly knowledgeable about his profession and possesses creative innovation in executing his duties. Mr. Kukubo is a prolific writer and has published books in his discipline which are today standard reference texts. In addition to his normal duties, Mr. Kukubo also taught courses in the Faculty of Law where his expertise as an Archivist with a legal background was utilized to the fullest. I testify to Mr Kukubos's (sic) versatility and dedication to his duties. He is a modest and unassuming gentleman with excellent ability to relate with others. I have no hesitation in recommending him for your consideration. I assure that you will find him not only suitable for your needs, but also loyal and dutiful.<sup>223</sup>

Another respected archivist who joined Fort Hare as a visiting research fellow from 22 August to 15 October 1993 was Annica van Gylswyk who was Finnish by birth. She had South African connections having been, as a child, affectionately attached to her aunt, an agronomist at the University of Pretoria. van Gylswyk thought of pursuing journalism and her aunt advised her to come to South Africa and undergo training in this field. She joined her aunt in Pretoria in 1954 but instead of journalism eventually took librarianship through Unisa which brought her closer to the world of archives. She subsequently worked as a librarian at Unisa and met her future husband in Pretoria.<sup>224</sup> van Gylswyk later became involved in the struggle against apartheid and served in different organizations opposed to the regime, and

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<sup>222</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Robert Kukubo's progress report, 14 October 1993.

<sup>223</sup>UFH: Human Resource Department, Administrative Files, A.D. Bankie to The Personnel Section at Fort Hare, 19 November 1993.

<sup>224</sup> Author's Interview with Annica van Gylswyk, Cape Town, 26 January, 2011 (Henceforth Interview with van Gylswyk).

was arrested in 1986 and detained for several weeks. The Swedish government pressured the regime to release her and she was eventually set free. But the regime insisted that she either face trial for her political involvement or agree to deportation. She opted for deportation to Sweden and remained there for 10 years.

When van Gylswyk heard that the ANC was repatriating its collection to Fort Hare, she volunteered her services having heard enthusiastic accounts of the institution. She thought that her contribution would make a difference.<sup>225</sup> At Fort Hare she was charged with the formulation of archival policy, needs assessment, training, addressing legal issues and contributing to CCS research documents. She also assisted with policy documents produced by Kukubo and with the plans to adapt the Great Hall as an archive. When a decision was made to construct a new archives building adjacent to the Art Gallery, her views on the structure of the building were once more solicited. She also trained the available staff on archives management, making use of the ANC London collection to achieve her objectives, and advised Maamoe on how to catalogue the SOMAFCO collection.<sup>226</sup> After making her mark at Fort Hare, she went to UWC at Odendaal's request and plied her archival skills at the Mayibuye Centre.<sup>227</sup> The fact that Kukubo and van Gylswyk were assigned complementary roles was an indication that there was a dire need to educate the CCS staff on the dynamics and practicalities of running the archives. To further strengthen CCS capacity, staff members were encouraged to study further. This paid off, and for example in 1994 Danster received an honours degree in Library Science and her counterpart, Mona, acquired a masters degree.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Visiting Fellowship: Executive Report, compiled by Annica van Gylswyk, 19 November 1993.

<sup>227</sup> Interview with van Gylswyk.

<sup>228</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies: Annual Report January- December 1994.



To intensify its archives campaign, the University solicited skills and financial assistance from organizations such as the Kagiso Trust. Many American and European institutions hoped to partner with Fort Hare but eventually the University strengthened its relations with Leeds Metropolitan University.<sup>229</sup> At this stage, South Africa was making headlines worldwide, and many institutions hoped to participate in developments in the country. An example of a US based institution that hoped to establish relations with Fort Hare was Northeast Missouri State University, described by T. Hargey, its Director of African Studies, as the best liberal arts and sciences institution in the Missouri. Hargey would have loved to meet Bengu or any other senior Fort Hare officials in June or July 1993 to discuss linkages.<sup>230</sup> It appears that this never materialized.

Fort Hare and Leeds University took steps to make their relationship more concrete. Leeds' Faculty of Cultural and Education Studies linked with the CCS to draft programmes for the mutual benefit of both institutions. Leeds deployed top people to work with Fort Hare, including the Rector, Professor Christopher Price.<sup>231</sup> The two institutions established a task team which produced a framework for CCS research and academic programmes.<sup>232</sup> It seemed clear that the CCS was making strides, helping Fort Hare reposition itself as an institution to be reckoned with.

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<sup>229</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, S.M.E. Bengu to Eric Molobi, 26 February 1993.

<sup>230</sup>*Ibid*: T. Hargey to Bengu, 17 May 1993.

<sup>231</sup>Others were Duffield, Ian McDonald who was the Head of Film and Television School, and Denise York, a senior lecturer in Arts and Contemporary Studies.

<sup>232</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Progress Report on Fundraising for the Centre for Cultural Studies and Request for further Funding, 1993.

Many more initiatives were in the pipeline for the CCS. The Finnish Library Association promised to send a professional to Fort Hare to investigate and assess the needs of the Centre. The association reiterated that it would try to secure funds for Maamoe's salary and lobbied the donor community intensively to fund CCS programmes. The Ministry of Education in the Netherlands promised to provide funds if the partnership between the CCS and the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam materialized, and this partnership was cemented.<sup>233</sup> Further, the CCS also approached the European Commission hoping that they could fund the proposed film and television school at Fort Hare.<sup>234</sup>

But more challenges faced the CCS. For instance, the lack of funds to repatriate some of the identified material was a challenge and 'other institutions who are scrambling for these archives want[ed] to exploit this for their own ends'.<sup>235</sup> Even more challenging was that by 1993 the Centre was still without a proper archival facility:

Another item which requires immediate funding is accommodation. We have asked the University to set aside an appropriate spacious accommodation for the archives and museum materials. We have had to do so because various depositories have approached us complaining about the lack of accommodation for their archives argue (sic) that there is no point in depositing archives with Fort Hare which has no accommodation facilities. In fact Ford Foundation has undertaken to fund an archives related project provided there is accommodation. We are certain that the University will set aside a suitable accommodation for the archives and museum project. We will, however, need alteration funds to ensure that accommodation is altered to suit archival needs such as security, temperature and humidity controls.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup>*Ibid*: Mark Baard and Ben Nomoyi, 14 September 1992, proposal for the research funding towards the creation of a new South African Film and Television School at the University of Fort Hare, Report on Preliminary Investigation into the Creation of a New South African Film and Television School, prepared by Mark Baard on 29 July 1992.

<sup>235</sup>*Ibid*: Progress Report on Fundraising for the CCS and Request for further Funding, 1993.

<sup>236</sup>*Ibid.*

The CCS had to make even greater efforts, and to do so looked towards the US for assistance. Between 6-18 March 1993 Sirayi visited different US institutions. The United States Information Agency promised to fund a museum programme if the CCS involved US institutions. The African and Museum Project of the Social Sciences Research Council promised to make funds available to be used to compile the catalogue of the liberation archives. The Carnegie Corporation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the UNDP also promised assistance. Locally based funders and institutions such as the British Council, The Friederick Ebert Foundation, The Ford Foundation and Anglo-American also promised to assist.<sup>237</sup> Anglo-American did not disappoint and committed R2 048 000 for the construction of the first phase of the CCS building. The envisaged building would accommodate the archives, a research unit, the museum, and a conservation and preservation laboratory.<sup>238</sup> It was thought that erecting the new building next to the existing art gallery was cost effective. The University envisaged that the construction of the building would take 11 months.<sup>239</sup> The Ford Foundation eventually donated R166 000 for the development of archives policy and appointment of a senior archivist, Kukubo. The Social Science Research Council in New York also lived up to expectations and donated R48 000 for the repatriation of records whilst Lincoln University contribute R350 000 for the same purpose.<sup>240</sup>

For the international community and liberation movements to take Fort Hare seriously, especially since the University seemed to have overestimated what it could do, the archivists had to urgently process the documents the Centre had already received. The archivists worked towards this goal and between January and March 1993 catalogued the SOMAFCO

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid*: University of Fort Hare: CCS Annual Report to the Ford Foundation.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid*: G.T. Sirayi to E.A. Ngara, 8 August 1994.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*: Administrative Files, Archives of the Liberation Movement: Executive Summary on Progress.

collection into different categories such as the SOMAFCO Nursery School Division, SOMAFCO Primary School and SOMAFCO Secondary School Division. Efforts were also made to secure the remaining ANC papers most of which were still scattered over the world. There was certainty that the remaining documents would reach Fort Hare as the ANC remained cooperative. Tikly assured the University that some of the consignment from Britain would reach Fort Hare before the end of 1993. This was encouraging as London was an important base and documents on structures such as the anti-apartheid movement would be made available for research. It was gratifying that when the ANC delegation led by Sindiso Mfenyana visited Fort Hare in 1993, it was satisfied and impressed by the work of the Centre. Mfenyana's visit dispelled the rumours that Fort Hare was not up to the challenge and that the archives project was headed for disaster. What impressed Mfenyana and his team was that the temporary storage for the ANC collection was safe from fire, burglary and weather conditions.<sup>241</sup> Tikly also visited Fort Hare on 5 November 1993 to assess progress and he too was impressed with the progress made in processing the Tanzanian and London missions and was delighted with the quality of his reception at Fort Hare.<sup>242</sup> Red carpet treatment for ANC delegates was important especially since the outside world did not expect much success from the archives project.

Apart from the ANC, there were others who were emotionally attached to the archives and remained impressed by the work of the CCS. These included the likes of Marjatta Lahti of the Finnish Library Association who had been a SOMAFCO librarian. Like many, Lahti had fond memories of SOMAFCO and supported ANC projects after the movement was unbanned in 1990. After her visit to Fort Hare in 1993 she confirmed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of

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<sup>241</sup>*Ibid*: CCS Archives Report: January-June 1993.

<sup>242</sup>*Ibid*: Mohammed Tikly to G.T. Sirayi, 12 November 1993.

September that the Finnish Library Association would pay Maamoe's salary for October-December 1993. This would not have been done if she had been unimpressed by the work of the CCS. Her visit to Fort Hare left an indelible impression on her and she expressed her gratitude thus:

I wish to thank you for your hospitality during my recent visit to Fort Hare. I was very impressed by the work done at your centre. It was particularly good to see that the archive material from Somafco had safely reached its destination and was being organized. I wish you will extend my greetings and gratitude to Ms. Nomawethu Danster and Mr. Ike Maamoe who both did an excellent work in introducing me to the centre and even to the University at large. Wishing you all the best in the future.<sup>243</sup>

Such positive comments were encouraging to Kukubo, Maamoe and others who laboriously worked in the archives.

The CCS staff was highly motivated by the positive developments. Even Kukubo who assumed his duties as a senior archivist in October 1993 polished and refined his earlier policy documents and worked on the long and short term needs analyses of the Centre, including the relocation of records, storage facilities, processing and management of archival documents, human resource development, conservation facilities, and preparation of finding aids for processed records to service the research community and members of the general public.<sup>244</sup>

Kukubo's knowledge and background was apparent when he was invited to attend an international symposium on archives on 22-23 November 1994 organized by the South African Society of Archivists (SASA). Letitia Theunissen, who formed part of SASA's

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<sup>243</sup>*Ibid*: Marjatta Lahti to G.T. Sirayi, 21 September 1993.

<sup>244</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare: CCS Annual Report to the Ford Foundation.

organizing committee, informed Sirayi that Kukubo could make a valuable contribution by sharing his knowledge and experience in the repatriation and preservation of the liberation records at Fort Hare. He was expected to share a platform with Cook who was critical of the role of white institutions in the ANC archives debacle.<sup>245</sup> The efforts at ensuring the success of the archives project were encouraging and there was optimism that 1994 would be another good year for the CSS. This was not to be.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has argued that the decision to house the liberation archive at Fort Hare was deeply political in a number of senses. Fort Hare did all it could to secure the ANC material, and to leverage the power that came with the fact that the ANC would soon become the governing party. It has been shown why Fort Hare won the tussle over the ANC archives, and why the many arguments as to why they should not go to Fort Hare advanced by others who wished to house the archives were refuted. While UWC was only interested in ANC material, Fort Hare also sought other liberation material, though the PAC and BCM material that was eventually lodged at Fort Hare was not a means to power, resources and influence. Fort Hare won the battle for the liberation archives in part because it renewed itself in the early 1990s, and because of the preparations made by the CCS to take over the material of the various liberation organizations.

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<sup>245</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, LelitiaTheunissen to Themba Sirayi, 13 July 1994, Lelitia Theunissen to R.J. Kukubo, nd.

### ***Chapter 3: The Battle for the ANC Archives: the CCS versus the University Library***

As we have seen, Fort Hare fought tooth and nail to secure the archives of the ANC and other liberation movements. As shown in the earlier chapters, the University signed MOUs with the liberation movements, formalizing and cementing the relationship with them. The work of archiving began to the satisfaction of the ANC and collections from other liberation movements were on their way. Everything seemed on track. But, sadly, instead of consolidating their gains, Fort Hare officials were soon at each other's throats, battling for the ANC archives.

The problems and debates around the ANC material at Fort Hare extended to University officials who knew something about archives and preservation and battled over the ANC

collection. It had become clear to such individuals that archival material boosted the University's image and attracted researchers interested in rewriting the history of the struggle. They hoped to be elevated by being custodians of the ANC archives and to control the movement's material, which would give them a strong voice in the University community. In addition, the archives could give them an opportunity to rub shoulders with the ANC, which could bring many opportunities.<sup>246</sup> Ntobeko Maqashalala, Mzamane's Deputy Vice-chancellor, summed up: 'people realised at that stage that the ANC has power, so the nearer you are the greater are the opportunities for you to escalate to a higher level. Let us be honest, it was also personal and had to do with what I call self-aggrandisement. And that's why everybody wanted the ANC archives and forgot about the PAC and AZAPO'.<sup>247</sup> He went on to say that the ANC archives 'would give you political clout, the very fact that you have archives under your name because at that particular time everybody wanted to be associated with the struggle directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously and nobody wanted to be left behind'.<sup>248</sup> Ironically, the University's own archives were in disorder in the basement of the administration building, where they were ignored. In this neglected archive are, for instance, students' files which shed light on their backgrounds and activities on Campus, but these records were not perceived as having the kind of value that the ANC archives had. To this day they remain unorganised.<sup>249</sup>

The battle for the ANC archives was disturbing for a University with an unparalleled resistance history record. Mzamane remembers that:

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<sup>246</sup> Interview with Mona.

<sup>247</sup> Author's Interview with Ntobeko Maqashalala, Port Elizabeth, 27 March 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Maqashalala).

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> For more on these records see, Morrow and Gxabalashé, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa*.



There was a lot of empire building, there's no doubt about that....But ... I tried very very much to ... bring these warring parties, these factions together always. And once you could get in a meeting some consensus over where to go and how to get there and so on, immediately they walked out of the office all hell broke loose and the next day you heard that they were no longer on speaking terms and so on. So, I just could never put my finger on where the problem was. So at the end of the day then we ended with this state of the art building housing a miniscule [PAC and BCM (A) collection] of the totality of the archives and the others being housed in inappropriate conditions....in the library in some basement situation...<sup>250</sup>

To add to Sirayi's woes, an altercation with an ANC-aligned official at Fort Hare put him on the back foot, as the individual concerned allegedly had nothing good to say about him to the movement.<sup>251</sup> Such disagreements could be traced back to 19 March 1993 when Siphon Pityana, a special assistant to the Rector, complained about lack of acknowledgement of his office in a document relating to the co-ordination of international linkages programmes by Professor Ngara (Deputy Rector) and Sirayi. Only the CCS was positively acknowledged in this document.<sup>252</sup> Siphon Pityana told Ngara that 'the document was not going to be tabled before the Extended Management nor at the group charged with the responsibility of working on the final version before its presentation to Senate'. He further 'lectured' Ngara on the document, stating that it needed to have a mission statement and had spelling mistakes.<sup>253</sup> To further disadvantage Sirayi, his detractors accused him of being a PAC member. And 'once you go tell the ANC that' Sirayi said, 'all hell could break loose.'<sup>254</sup> Sirayi was caught both ways. He also came under pressure from the PAC-aligned Pan Africanist Students Movement of Azania (PASMA) which demanded the loan of certain PAC documents from the archives. Clearly these students did not understand that documents could not simply leave the archives on public demand. The students informed PAC officials of his refusal to hand over the

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<sup>250</sup> Interview with Mzamane

<sup>251</sup> Interview with Sirayi.

<sup>252</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Special Assistant to Ngara, 19 March 1993.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid*: Siphon Pityana to Ngara, 26 March 1993.

<sup>254</sup> Interview with Soul, Sirayi.

documents and stressed that ‘we fail to understand where was the sympathy of the Director who amongst other things claims that he was once accused of being a PAC member because of the fact that he fought painfully for recognition of minority groups’.<sup>255</sup>

There was no love lost between the ANC and the PAC following the acrimonious split in 1958 which led to the formation of the PAC in 1959. Though there were attempts in the 1960s to form a united front between the two organizations, this crumbled rapidly. After that, there was no political relationship between the ANC and the PAC for the rest of the exile period. In the early 1990s, the two formed a Patriotic Front with the BCM, but this was short-lived.<sup>256</sup> Therefore to be accused of being a PAC member as alleged by Sirayi, was almost equal to being referred to as an enemy agent. No ‘enemy’ could oversee an ANC project of this nature.

For the CCS, things changed for the worse on 11 March 1994, when Siphon Pityana became Registrar Academic at Fort Hare and raised his concerns about the state of the ANC archives with Bengu, the Rector.<sup>257</sup> As mentioned earlier, there were already undercurrents between Sirayi, Ngara and Siphon Pityana, whose appointment to his new position was opposed by the unions including the Democratic Staff Association (DSA) and Technical and Administrative Staff Association (TASA). A proportion of the academic staff agreed. It was argued that Siphon Pityana did not have a PhD, one of the requirements for the position of Registrar Academic; that he did not have the ten years experience required for the new position; did not

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<sup>255</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Memorandum from PASMA to the PAC officials Gqobose and Mwati copied to the PAC headquarters in Johannesburg and the media.

<sup>256</sup>Maaba, *The Black Consciousness Movement in the early 1990s: Perspectives on negotiations*, forthcoming in Sadet, (6) *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.

<sup>257</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Siphon Pityana to Sibusiso Bengu, 11 March 1994.

have the respect of deans, heads of departments and divisions, and was often dictatorial. They also accused him of nepotism.<sup>258</sup> Though TASA and the DSA took the matter up with Bengu, accusing him of appointing the incumbent without proper procedures, the Rector did not withdraw the appointment.<sup>259</sup> So when Siphon Pityana assumed power, Sirayi's position was threatened.

Siphon Pityana mentioned to Bengu that there was no doubt that the ANC archives would enhance the University's dwindling research capacity 'and lay a solid foundation for the development of links with other international scholars'. He reminded Bengu that the archives project could put Fort Hare on the map, but that there was stiff competition between the University and other institutions vying for the material, and that some material that could have been lodged at the University had been lost to rival institutions. For instance, he noted that the Tambo collection was lodged at Wits University, with Fort Hare only receiving copies although Fort Hare was the first to lay claim to this collection. Questions needed to be asked as to how this had happened. In other words, the CCS was not ensuring that all archives earmarked for Fort Hare, like the Tambo collection, were indeed brought to the University. It was for such reasons, said Siphon Pityana, that he raised the matter with Bengu, who needed to crack the whip, as Fort Hare could not afford to incur further loss of archival material.<sup>260</sup> However, Siphon Pityana's assertion was questioned by Sirayi who argued that the Tambo collection was kept temporarily at Wits to enable Luli Callinicos to work on the

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<sup>258</sup>*Ibid*: Memorandum from DSA, TASA and Academic Staff: Rejection of the Special Assistant's appointment as Registrar Academic.

<sup>259</sup>*Ibid*: Memorandum from TASA and DSA to Joint Administrators of Ciskei and Council: Call for Enquiry on Charges of misconduct and irregularities involving the Vice-Chancellor and other senior administrators.

<sup>260</sup>*Ibid*: Siphon Pityana to Sibusiso Bengu, 11 March 1994.

biography of Tambo,<sup>261</sup> and the family had agreed on 6 August 1993 to house his collection at Fort Hare.<sup>262</sup> Siphon Pityana raised further concerns with Bengu:

Firstly there is doubt in the minds of people well placed and pivotal to decisions to deposit archives at Fort Hare. This doubt stems, correctly or otherwise, from the uncertainty as to whether the institution has the capacity to administer such important historical material in the life of any nation. This should be looked at from two dimensions:

- a) Does the Centre have a body of personnel with the requisite expertise to process, administer and make accessible the archives to the wider public with due regard to the transfer agreement?
- b) Other universities keep archives in libraries. Is Fort Hare opting for a different home on account of the shortcoming of its library?

Secondly, where archives have been deposited with institutions, elsewhere, an active research programme ensued; the same cannot be said of the ANC education archives that have already been delivered at Fort Hare. Indeed when these were delivered at Fort Hare, Mr M Tikely (sic) had a research proposal which never took off. Thirdly that the materials are not accessible. The multiple copies of volumes that were deposited with the archives from the ANC's education department are not available to the wider research community through the University Library.

Siphon Pityana reminded Bengu that the Mayibuye Centre had some of the key ANC documents and that Odendaal and Colin Bundy, both attached to UWC, were actively researching in the archives. It was a concern that no research and writing activities were taking place at Fort Hare. Siphon Pityana said that what prompted him to raise this issue was that he had received news that the A.C. Jordan collection was likely to be lost by Fort Hare and relocated to UCT and even more serious 'is the likelihood that we might lose the rest of the ANC archives'. 'I have no doubt in my mind that the risk of losing these archives is very real', he said, 'However, I am equally of the opinion that decisive steps could salvage the situation'.<sup>263</sup> The cat was amongst the pigeons. The battles for the ANC archives had begun,

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<sup>261</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies: Progress Report: 1981-1994.

<sup>262</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, written announcement from SME Bengu to all sectors of the Fort Hare Community, 9 August 1993.

<sup>263</sup>*Ibid*: Siphon Pityana to Sibusiso Bengu, 11 March 1994.

and Sirayi's wings were about to be clipped. As Rector, Bengu was worried about Siphon Pityana's concerns and demanded a strategic plan and progress reports on archives from the CCS.<sup>264</sup>

The letter to Bengu worried the CCS as it was copied to the University Librarian, Tau who had nothing to do with the archives. That was reason enough for the CCS to suspect that there was a hidden agenda aimed ultimately at transferring the ANC archives to the University Library. There was nothing wrong, argued the CCS, with the manner in which issues around the A.C. Jordan collection were being handled. The Centre contradicted Siphon Pityana and made it clear that funding for the repatriation of the collection had been secured and that the collection was successfully repatriated to Fort Hare on 13 April 1994. The Fort Hare management member [Siphon Pityana] viewed as opposed to the continued housing of the archives at the Centre was reported to be influencing ANC members against sending funds (R370 000) to the CCS. This also became clear during an informal meeting between the ANC and the CCS on 3 March 1994 when the Centre discovered that indeed they would not be in charge of the ANC archives funds.<sup>265</sup>

Another contentious issue discussed at this meeting was that of the depository for the ANC archives. The CCS mentioned that the archives and the museum would no longer be housed at the Great Hall as reported to the ANC Archives Committee on 26 September 1993, as potential funders were not pleased with the idea. Instead, the University would construct an archives building adjacent to the De Beers Art Gallery. However, there was a 'misunderstanding' on the subject as 'the ANC representatives took this to mean that the

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<sup>264</sup>*Ibid*: Sibusiso Bengu to Themba Sirayi, March 1994

<sup>265</sup>*Ibid*: Administrative Files, Archives of the Liberation Movement: Executive Summary on Progress.

archives would be attached to the Art Gallery and therefore would not be accessible. They insisted that the archives be rather attached to the University Library'. There were reasons why the CCS argued in favour of the site next to the Art Gallery: this would promote the idea of a museum of struggle artifacts and liberation archives in one place, for the archives and the Art Gallery, which contained works by black South African artists, had much in common. The CCS argued that it was common to have art galleries, museums and historical records in the same vicinity, as with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, Yad Vashen in Israel, museums of resistance in Cuba and Norway, the Mayibuyee Centre at UWC, the National English Literature Museum in Grahamstown and the UDW Documentation Centre in Durban.

To the CCS, there were many unanswered questions regarding the idea of removing the ANC archives from the Centre. To them it was strange that the ANC was reluctant to embrace the idea of a link between the archives and the gallery, as the agreement between the movement and Fort Hare specifically accommodated the idea of a museum within the envisaged building. The CCS was also accused of failing to produce a strategic plan, when the Library allegedly had one. At times administrative problems at the CCS were cited as the reasons why the archives had to be relocated. It is clear that there were sour relations between the ANC and the CCS, which was said not to be giving access to the material already received.<sup>266</sup>

The CCS argued against the idea of relocating the archives to the Library as it did not

have archivists, experienced researchers and museum specialists to undertake archives, museum and research responsibility. It does not have funding for the new premises; it does not have adequate security as evident in the burglary and mutilation of books the library continues to experience. In fact the Library and its holdings need extensive development. Library

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<sup>266</sup>*Ibid.*

focus on archives will be a degression (sic) which the Government of National Unity should not encourage.<sup>267</sup>

Kwatsha elaborates on the difficulties of trying to implement a project of this nature in a rural town like Alice which, perhaps, is what the university management needed to consider:

We were building the facility in a rural university; you know that is a limitation. And also because the rural university is in a small town that doesn't have a proper infrastructure... I want to emphasize, the constraints that are brought about by the ruralness of the university and by the infrastructure of Alice, because with such important documents you need to ensure that within five minutes, if there's a problem, fire or something, the municipality responds immediately and ensures that there's no damage....Also the university itself needs to have resources to take things further...<sup>268</sup>

While the debate about the future location of the archives continued, boxes were arriving at the ANC headquarters. A concerned Ginwala raised the matter with Fort Hare:

at a recent meeting, to consider our archives and the agreement with the University of Fort Hare, it was agreed that I should write to you and seek information on the University's plans and finalise matters. Material is mounting up at Headquarters-including all the records of the 34 offices of the external mission, elections material, and departmental records following the restructuring of the ANC as we entered government. It is now urgent that we make provisions to house this material at a university as soon as possible. However, we clearly cannot do so at Fort Hare, until we are satisfied with the management of the archives at the University.<sup>269</sup>

### *The plot thickens*

These problems were beginning to affect the preservation process, and the ANC Archives Division thought it necessary to organize a meeting with Fort Hare to get to the bottom of the

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<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> Author's Interview with Punky Ntombi Kwatsha Pretoria, 21 July 2010. (Henceforth Interview with Kwatsha).

<sup>269</sup> UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, ANC Archives Project: An Update.

matter. But the meeting scheduled for 3 May 1994 only heightened tension between the ANC and the CCS. Apparently on the eve of the meeting, an argument took place between Ginwala and Sirayi during a telephone conversation. Sirayi allegedly informed Ginwala that the ANC Archives Committee should not attend the meeting at Fort Hare as he had not called one. Furthermore, he 'was legal custodian of the archives, and we [the ANC Archives Committee] had no right to deal with anyone else'. Sirayi warned that he was not going to attend the meeting, 'nor would members of the Centre's Board'. Ginwala responded vigorously and magisterially. She informed Sirayi that the ANC had entered into an agreement with Fort Hare and that the movement had every right to engage with Bengu as a member of the joint committee on archives. Sirayi responded that the planned meeting was unconstitutional, adding that Fort Hare had its own internal problems, and that Ginwala needed to be fully briefed about these. Ginwala made it clear that Fort Hare's problems had nothing to do with the ANC, but Sirayi would not back down.<sup>270</sup> This exchange indicated that the situation had greatly deteriorated and that the future of the ANC archives lodged at Fort Hare was in jeopardy.

At the meeting between Fort Hare management and the ANC Archives Division held on 3 May 1994, Ginwala insisted that the ANC material be moved to the Library. She believed that the University Library could be extended to house the ANC collection. Bengu, who chaired the meeting, and the other University officials present, had no choice but to agree to the ANC's demands. That Sirayi did not attend the meeting gave Tau leeway to assert herself. She assured the ANC and University management that the Library was equal to the task. She also stated that the Library strategic plan included a section on archives, and that they had trained archivists and librarians who could handle the archives in a professional manner. As

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<sup>270</sup>*Ibid.*



will be seen, once the archives had been transferred to the Library, the issue of skills became a serious problem and Library management had to apply its mind to dealing with the situation. But by arguing that the Library already had skilled archival personnel Tau ensured that they did not miss the opportunity to be the custodian of the ANC archives. At the same meeting it was suggested that the archivists employed by the CCS be transferred to the Library. Clearly the Library wanted the ANC to agree to send its material to them. The challenges of actually running the archives would be dealt with later. The meeting also resolved that the subject of the ANC archives be referred to the University Senate and Council.<sup>271</sup> This may have been because any decision endorsed at Senate or Council level cannot be easily overturned, as these are executive structures. After the ANC delegation had toured the Library, it concluded that it was indeed a suitable home for the movement's archives.

The ANC delegation was satisfied with the Library as the future host of the movement's material. However Ginwala stated that they were frustrated during their visit to Fort Hare as they 'were denied the opportunity to examine our own material that had been sent to the university, nor could we meet with the staff members dealing with it, as the Centre had been closed down for the day. This only served to confirm our view, that the ANC archives needed to be managed by the university [Library] and should not be treated as the private property of one individual'.<sup>272</sup> The ANC was not prepared to send more archival material to the CCS, but

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<sup>271</sup>*Ibid*: Minutes of a meeting of the Centre for Cultural Studies Committee held on 28 June 1994, Centre for Cultural Studies, UFH: Postal Section Files, Minutes of the Centre for Cultural Studies Committee and the ANC Archival Department held on 3 May 1994 at Fort Hare.

<sup>272</sup>*Ibid*: ANC Archives Project: An Update by the Vice-Chancellor.

entertained the idea of diverting it to the University Library.<sup>273</sup> Mzamane felt that the decision by the CCS to refuse to cooperate with the ANC was very disturbing as:

the ANC had brought its archives to Fort Hare so that they could be accessible to researchers, to learners, to everyone else and that if they themselves coming to Fort Hare could not access their own archives, they wondered if the purpose was being served, if learners, if researchers and so on were able to access these things. They were saying they were not interested in putting them in a museum ... They were more interested in having them as living ...tangible, enticing, artifacts that people could relate to. They themselves were very much interested in understanding better their own histories.<sup>274</sup>

That the ANC documents were to be removed from the CCS left the staff de-motivated and slowed down the pace of processing.<sup>275</sup> But the CCS worked on, and on 19 May 1994 a few days after the meeting between the ANC Archives Division and Fort Hare, Tikly visited the CCS to inspect progress in processing the ANC archives. He requested that the educational material, death and marriage certificates be the first to be processed. He urged the archivists to make photocopies of these or alternatively scan them and send the originals to the ANC headquarters. He hoped that the owners of important documents such as marriage certificates would eventually surface and claim them. Other documents to be prioritized during processing related to building plans for Dakawa houses. Tikly believed that these could be helpful to the new Ministry of Housing as they constructed houses for the poor. In fact, many lessons for liberated South Africa could be drawn from experience at Dakawa and SOMAFCO, including alternatives to corporal punishment and how to deal with student pregnancy.

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*: University Library, Administrative Files, Narissa Ramdhani to M.V. Mzamane, 4 November 1994.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with Mzamane.

<sup>275</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies: Progress Report on the processing of ANC archives and art collections April-September 1995.

During his visit to Fort Hare, Tikly held a meeting with CSS management and was handed a copy of the progress report.<sup>276</sup> Tikly praised the archivists for their sterling work. They had, amongst other things, resumed the process of removing sensitive material from the SOMAFCO collection which had already reached Fort Hare. It was formally agreed at this meeting that all sensitive documents be put aside until further notification from the ANC. Tikly emphasized that even though the removal of sensitive documents from the collection was an important exercise, archival standards need not be compromised.<sup>277</sup>

On 2 June 1994 Tikly informed Sirayi that he was satisfied with progress made in cataloguing the SOMAFCO documents, which was expected to be completed in September. He also promised Sirayi that he was likely to visit Fort Hare in September to assist in the identification of sensitive material from the material already received. But he reminded Sirayi that in spite of their good work, the Batlagae Trust was aware of the developing politics around the ANC archives, of which the SOMAFCO documents formed part. 'For the present', said Tikly, 'I am providing the ANC's Department of Education and other relevant structures with a report of my visit and conveying my satisfaction with the progress so far made with this processing of the SOMAFCO archives'.<sup>278</sup> The implication was that even though the Batlagae Trust was satisfied with the work of the CCS, any future decision on the ANC archives would impact on the SOMAFCO collection. Above all, moving the ANC archives to the Library meant that all the efforts made by the CCS in archiving the documents would amount to nothing and would reduce the Centre to a shell. The movement's archives were amongst other things a tool to leverage support, and their removal was likely to

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<sup>276</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Report on the visit to the CCS by Mohammed Tikly on 19 May 1994.

<sup>277</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Minutes of a meeting of Mohammed Tikly and the Director and staff of the Centre for Cultural Studies, 19 May, 1994.

<sup>278</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Mohammed Tikly to G.T. Sirayi, 2 June 1994.

complicate matters for the CCS, as donors had committed funds to the project. Anglo-American and the De Beers Chairman's Fund had committed R2 048 000 for the construction of the CCS building, and as the CCS required an additional R2 248 000 to complete the project, Liberty Life was approached.<sup>279</sup> All these initiatives were likely to fade into thin air were funders to get wind of the problems. Meanwhile, a sub-committee of Muziwamadoda Zide the Registrar Administration, Tau, Sirayi and Sipho Pityana, was established to facilitate discussions on the future of the archives. The first meeting of this committee was scheduled for 10 June 1994.<sup>280</sup>

Despite the tensions, the CCS forged ahead with its plans to erect the archives building. As will be seen, the CCS held to the view that they would somehow succeed in convincing the ANC to review its decision on the archives. Also, the CCS was still expecting material from other liberation movements not party to the ANC's decision to move its collection to the Library. On 9 June 1994, a day after Zide had requested the sub-committee for archives to meet, the *ad hoc* Construction Management Committee consisting of Sirayi (chair), Kukubo, A. Quinlan, Head of Building Services, P. Gibbs, Vroom Yetton from Anglo, Richard Latimer from the architectural firm Osmond Lange, and Ms. S. Makalima the minute taker, met to discuss the envisaged building.<sup>281</sup> Zide sent his apology, and no other senior University official attended the meeting. The absence of senior managers gave the impression that they were no longer in support of the CCS project. Most probably at this stage, the funders did not know about the ongoing battles and to the outside world it looked as though it was business as usual at Fort Hare. But on 15 June 1994, Zide informed Sirayi that before

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<sup>279</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Applebaum, 6 June 1994, Postal Section Records, M.C. O'Dowd to G.T. Sirayi, 29 April 1994.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid*: Zide to Ngara, 9 June 1994.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid*: Minutes of a Centre for Cultural Studies Ad Hoc Construction Management Committee Meeting held on 09 June, Fort Hare.

any construction of the archives building could commence, EXCO would have to approve the project.<sup>282</sup> This implied that the CCS was acting without consulting the University management.

Tense meetings continued to be held on campus to discuss the ANC archives and strongly worded letters flew between University officials.<sup>283</sup> Zide warned ‘that such letters are not for the good of the University and that we should all attempt to build a culture of tolerance and respect for the feelings of one another... we should rather discuss our differences if there are any, before we put our thoughts on paper which would hurt the next person’.<sup>284</sup> Siphon Pityana received a letter from Tikly on the future of the SOMAFSCO collection, copied to other stakeholders including Sirayi and ANC Archives Committee members including Ginwala, John Samuel and Serote. Siphon Pityana informed Ngara, who was acting Vice-Chancellor following Bengu’s departure from Fort Hare that Tikly was not opposed to the transfer of the SOMAFSCO collection to the Library. However, ‘consistent with our discussion, he emphasises that the education archives should not be separated from the ANC archives’.<sup>285</sup> Tikly himself wrote that:

I wish to emphasise that the Somafco archives are considered an integral part of the ANC archives. Since the ANC has taken a formal decision to locate its archives in the Library, it therefore follows that the Somafco archives will remain a part of this collection, and will be housed with the entire collection in the Library. The Centre for Cultural Studies has completed a considerable portion of the processing and cataloguing of the archives, and according to Professor Sirayi, this task will be completed in September 1994. It would, therefore be logical that once the exercise is complete, the archives should be transferred to the Library to make up the complete set of the ANC archives. I would like to take this opportunity to

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<sup>282</sup>*Ibid*: G.N. Zide to G.T. Sirayi, 15 June 1994.

<sup>283</sup>*Ibid*: G.N. Zide to Siphon Pityana 29 June 1994, M.N. Tau to G.N. Zide, 15 June 1994, G.N. Zide to Siphon Pityana, Siphon Pityana to E.A. Ngara, 17 June 1994, Siphon Pityana to E.A. Ngara, 17 June 1994.

<sup>284</sup>*Ibid*: G.N. Zide to Siphon Pityana, 29 June 1994.

<sup>285</sup>*Ibid*: Administrative Files, Siphon Pityana to E.A. Ngara, 17 June 1994, UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Mohammed Tikly to Pityana, 27 June 1994.

express my appreciation to the Centre for Cultural Studies for the work which has been completed to date. Once the project is in a finished form, it is our express request that all modalities are agreed upon by the Batlagae Trust and the Centre for Cultural Studies in order to ease the transfer of the SOMAFCO archives to the Library.<sup>286</sup>

Though Tikly hoped that the matter surrounding the ANC archives would be resolved amicably,<sup>287</sup> vitriolic exchanges over the movement's material continued. On 28 June 1994 another meeting was held by the CCS Management Committee to look into the matter. It became clear to those present that the CCS had already incurred thousands of rands in costs in preparation for the project which the Centre was committed to complete.<sup>288</sup> In other words, the ANC and those at Fort Hare opposed to the CCS as custodian of the movement's archives had to re-consider their position. The Committee decided that:

- The CCS remain a repository for and the custodian of archives.
- That the plans approved by the Central Planning Committee, Senate and Council to house the archives of the ANC, PAC, AZAPO/BCM, UMSA, institutions and private individuals in the CCS be upheld.
- That for professional reasons and to maintain the national character of the archives project the ANC archives should not be split from the rest of the archives. To split the archives would be uneconomical and wasteful. It would create problems for the national and international donor agencies who had already committed funds to the project. The University ran the risk of having such funds recalled as provided for in the contracts signed.

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<sup>286</sup> UFH : Postal Section, Administrative Files, Mohammed Tikly to Siphon Pityana, 27 June 1994.

<sup>287</sup> UFH : NAHECS Administrative Files, Minutes of a meeting of Mohammed Tikly and the Director and staff of the Centre for Cultural Studies, 19 May, 1994.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*: Minutes of a meeting of the Centre for Cultural Studies Committee held on 28 June 1994, Centre for Cultural Studies, Fort Hare.

- ANC leadership should be provided with progress report on the ANC archives.
- The committee of four comprising the Chair of CCS, its Director, Professor Mzamane and the Senior Archivist should meet ANC leadership as soon as possible and have the matter resolved.
- There should be a moratorium on the transfer of the archives until the matter was resolved.
- All matters and correspondence pertaining to the archives should be referred to the Director and Chair of CCS.
- The Director and Chair of CCS should seek an appointment with ANC leadership.
- CCS dissatisfaction with some Fort Hare administrators and the Library should be fully investigated and recommendations should be made to Senate and Council.

Members of the committee praised the CCS for its hard work and commitment to the archives project. The meeting also noted that once all avenues aimed at settling the archives dispute were exhausted, a commission of inquiry might be necessary to investigate the conflict.<sup>289</sup>

Meanwhile, there were developments at the University Library regarding the ANC archives. On 28 June 1994 Siphon Pityana informed Tau about the ANC's R370 000 for the ANC archives project, saying that due to workload in his office, it would be best for the Library to

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<sup>289</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Status of the Centre For Cultural Studies Committee/ANC Archives Dispute(sic).

take charge of these funds.<sup>290</sup> In spite of the CCS's protests the office of the Registrar Academic implemented the decision to work with the Library on the project.

On 4 August 1994 Sirayi notified Ngara that the meeting of 3 May 1994 which had resolved to relocate the ANC material to the Library was not called by the CCS Committee and was held without his knowledge and that of the committee chairman. He insisted that whoever convened the meeting was in violation of the agreement between Fort Hare and the ANC which stipulated that matters surrounding the ANC archives would be decided by the ANC and the Fort Hare Archives Committee. Instead, argued Sirayi, the meeting had misrepresented the Centre. The CCS had additional concerns: it wanted to promote Danster from Assistant Librarian to Librarian, and it recommended that two archival assistants be appointed. But instead of responding to the Centre, the staffing sub-committee referred the matter to Tau. This was bizarre as Tau had nothing to do with the CCS, which reported directly to university management, and she was Sirayi's rival. Sirayi took offence and viewed the snub as an effort to undermine his authority. To him, the entire exercise was meant to subordinate him to Tau. The sub-committee also recommended that the appointment of the archives assistants be put on hold until such time as the archives debacle was resolved.

The CCS regarded the decision as unfair as the assistants were expected to process the archives of other liberation movements and not that of the ANC only. This led Sirayi to conclude that those who wanted the ANC archives to be removed from the CCS also harboured hopes of transferring the rest of the Centre's archives to the Library. He made it clear that unfounded allegations leveled against him and the CCS by some in the University

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<sup>290</sup>*Ibid*: Siphon Pityana to M.N. Tau, 28 June 1994.



management was the actual bone of contention, adding that there was evidence that the dispute over the archives was ‘personality based’ and orchestrated by some university administrators to dislodge him. There was evidence, he said, that such administrators hoped to destabilize the CCS and subject it to Tau’s control. He added that if Fort Hare lost the liberation material, the CCS would be made the scapegoat and stressed that efforts to resolve the dispute were undermined by Siphon Pityana, who had unilaterally advised Tau to liaise with the ANC. Sirayi was also aware that Siphon Pityana had also advised Tau to administer the funds from the ANC. In view of all this, Sirayi requested Ngara to request Council to set up a commission of inquiry into the archives. Its findings and recommendations had to be presented to all stakeholders including ANC leadership, other liberation movements, the CCS and the University Senate and Council.<sup>291</sup>

On 15 August 1994 Siphon Pityana updated Ginwala about developments. He reiterated that Tau would be charged with liaising with the ANC on the archives. He also informed Ginwala that Fort Hare had made submissions to the Education Minister for funding to expand the library to accommodate the archives.<sup>292</sup> On the same day, he told Sirayi that not only were the ANC archives going to be removed from the CCS but that EXCO had decided to put the construction of the CCS archives building on hold, giving as reasons that:

- The site nominated for the project had earlier been earmarked for phase 2 of the expansion of the Art Gallery.
- The original project approved by EXCO was costed at over R100 million and EXCO had no knowledge of the revised plan and how it related to the overall project.

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<sup>291</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Ngara, 8 August 1994.

<sup>292</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Siphon Pityana to Frene Ginwala, 15 August 1994.

- EXCO did not have details of the conditions of financial assistance from the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund and so the University's financial commitment could not be fully assessed.

The Centre was also informed that the Council had reached a decision to review the CCS and that a task team would soon be established.<sup>293</sup>

It thus seemed that the efforts of Sirayi, who had been at the helm of the archives project since the inception of the project in 1991, had been in vain. On 24 August 1994 Tau requested Sirayi to meet her to discuss the transfer of the ANC archives to the Library.<sup>294</sup> This exacerbated tension between the Library and the CCS. The CCS proposed that the meeting be held at Sirayi's office but Tau sharply refused as she felt that she was being dictated to by the CCS director.<sup>295</sup> The gloves were off and the clash between the CCS and the Library was in the open.

### *Hope?*

The CCS, still believing that the matter could be resolved, took it to the newly elected Vice-Chancellor, Mbulelo Mzamane. On 1 September 1994, Sirayi congratulated Mzamane on his appointment and requested a meeting to discuss the ANC archives and the future of the CCS. Sirayi believed that even at that 'late hour' the decision to relocate the ANC archives to the Library could be reversed.<sup>296</sup> At the meeting between Mzamane and Sirayi on 9 September the CCS Director invited the new Rector to visit the CCS to meet his staff and familiarize himself with the day to day running of the Centre. He informed Mzaname that he had gone through

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid*: Siphon Pityana to G.T. Sirayi, 15 August 1994, Siphon Pityana to M.N. Tau, 15 August 1994.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid*: M.N. Tau to G.T. Sirayi, 24 August 1994.

<sup>295</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, M.N. Tau to E.A. Ngara, 7 September 1994.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid*: G. Sirayi to M.V. Mzamane, 1 September 1994.

EXCO's minutes, that there was no mention of the transfer of human and financial resources to the Library and that there was nothing on paper alluding to putting the construction of the CCS building on hold. Sirayi warned Mzamane that any further delay in the construction of the archives building could prompt Anglo-American to cancel its grant and the repercussions would be felt by the university, the liberation movements and the Eastern Cape as a whole.<sup>297</sup> The CCS was also concerned that further delays in construction would result in escalation of costs.<sup>298</sup>

Sirayi also informed Mzamane that extensive PAC documentation from different countries would reach Fort Hare by the end of September 1994. He reminded Mzamane that researchers had been promised that the archives would be accessible by October and that the temporary archive should be ready in time for researchers to access the struggle records. Failure to do this would lead the liberation movements to conclude that Fort Hare was not up to the challenge. Sirayi also informed Mzamane that there was hope that the CCS could become the province's archives department and that delays in constructing the envisaged building could have dire consequences.<sup>299</sup> Much as Mzamane understood the pressures on the CCS, as a new Rector he had to continue from where his predecessors had left off. In his response to the CCS, Mzamane said that the task force recommended by EXCO to determine the future of the CCS would be allowed to undertake its work in time for the next Council meeting on 26 November 1994. As for the ANC archives, 'EXCO had supported the decision to accede to the request of the ANC that the archives be housed in the library'.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> *Ibid*: G.T. Sirayi and Head of Physics Department to M.V. Mzamane, 23 September 1994.

<sup>298</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, B.E. Freitag to R.M. Latimer, 30 September 1994.

<sup>299</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi to Mzamane, 16 September 1994.

<sup>300</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane to G.T. Sirayi, 20 September 1994.

It seemed that the CCS's hope that the ANC decision on the archives could be reversed was misplaced as the movement continued to raise questions about its collection. For example, on 17 November Ginwala presented a new list of grievances to the CCS. The ANC was concerned that the archives were not being utilized by researchers and that there was a great need to train students to make use of the material. She also complained that research on archival policy, on the ownership of documents seized by the police during apartheid and on international policy which could assist the repatriation process had not been delivered as promised.<sup>301</sup>

Realising that its path was blocked, the CCS tried other avenues to keep the ANC archives. Now that the ANC was in power following the 1994 general elections, it could discuss the matter with the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, the Deputy Minister of which was struggle stalwart, Winnie Mandela. On 20 September 1994 Sirayi met and briefed her about the situation. She was surprised to hear that there was a dispute over the ANC collection and that a decision had been taken to transfer the material to the University Library. The CCS requested Winnie Mandela to intervene and set the record straight. Sirayi told her that 'national interests should not be sacrificed to the altar of personal interests, delusions of grandeur and selfishness'. He also requested the Deputy Minister to visit Fort Hare and witness the progress made by the CCS as custodian of the liberation archives. Sirayi also asked that if Winnie Mandela should decide to visit Fort Hare, she should direct her energies to the archives' problem consider joint programmes with the CCS and engage with it on the possibility of transforming it into the Eastern Cape archival depository.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>301</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, ANC Archives Project: An Update by the Vice-Chancellor.

<sup>302</sup>*Ibid*: G.T, Sirayi to N.W. Mandela, 22 September 1994.

Other liberation movements whose material was destined for Fort Hare were also drawn into the fracas. Upon hearing about the developments around the archives, Jerry Mosala, the President of AZAPO, informed Nelson Mandela on 28 September 1994 that he was disturbed by the unfolding situation at Fort Hare and requested a meeting between him, Mandela and Makwetu. He explained that:

The reason for this meeting is that I had had discussions with Prof. T. Serayi (sic) whose (sic) is the Director of the Centre for Cultural Studies about certain developments relating to the archives of resistance. In our discussions it seems that the original idea of a museum of resistance to house the Archives and records of liberation movements at Fort Hare may be in danger of being changed against the agreements signed with ourselves. In order, therefore, to avoid controversy on this matter it seems to me that a meeting of the Presidents of AZAPO, ANC and the PAC at least is urgent. Prof. Serayi (sic) has indicated that he would be able and prepared to attend such a meeting.<sup>303</sup>

The CCS also sought professional advice from Dr. Charles Kecskemeti, the Secretary-General of the International Council on Archives based in Paris, on whether it was sensible for archives to be housed in a library. On 30 September 1994 Sirayi briefed Kecskemeti about the repatriation of the ANC archives to Fort Hare and told him that the CCS was the chosen destination for the collection. He also outlined to him the ground that the CCS had covered since the inception of the project including bringing on board archives specialists, developing policy and fundraising. Sirayi told Kecskemeti that it seemed that all the CCS's efforts were fruitless as the Library was now earmarked as future custodian of the ANC material. The Library, he said, believed that since archives and secondary sources are somewhat related, it was logical for the ANC archives to be housed under their roof. Sirayi noted that the University Library was very old and had never made an effort to preserve the University records which were gathering dust at the basement of the administration building. Instead, the

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<sup>303</sup>*Ibid*: Itumeleng Mosala to Nelson Mandela, 28 September 1994.

CCS was now the custodian of these neglected records. The whole issue had caused division on campus and strained relations.

Sirayi requested Kecskemeti to advise whether the University Library was professionally ready and competent to oversee the archives, especially since it was also expected to perform its library duties. To Sirayi, the Library's priority was to re-build in the aftermath of apartheid. He believed that Kecskemeti's advice could help the University management to resolve the matter and also benefit other South African libraries and archives as the country, long a pariah state, had not been following international debates and developments around archives and libraries.<sup>304</sup>

Kecskemeti's advice to the CCS arrived on 3 October 1994. He said he had been associated with archives for 40 years. Many libraries, he said, were under the illusion that they were competent to be custodians of archives, though archival theory and practice forms a mere sub-section of the librarianship curriculum. He asserted that this mistaken belief remained common in countries like Australia, the United States and Britain but less so in many European countries, Asia and Africa. He explained that there was 'psychological and intellectual change' on the horizon and that in the last 10-20 years the field of archives had made inroads even in countries that were dominated by library-oriented thinking. Considering that the CCS was charged with hosting the archives and that much work had been done under very difficult circumstances, the University Library had no grounds to lay claim on the ANC archives, especially since a legal document was in place. He thought that it was the responsibility of the CCS to take legal steps 'that would protect its existence and prevent

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<sup>304</sup>*Ibid*: G.T. Sirayi to Charles Kecskemeti, 30 September 1994.

further trials of annexation'. Though Kecskemeti was not familiar with South Africa's laws governing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations, he insisted on the autonomy of the liberation movements archives. The archives could be governed by a foundation with board members drawn from the movements whose consignments were lodged at the Centre, academic institutions with interests in the field, the country's archive structures and the funding community. He believed that the chair of the board should be a leading figure in South Africa who would command respect within and outside the archives board.

Kecskemeti stressed that the liberation material could not be assimilated in the work of the Library as the rules governing library material were different from those of archives. He also believed that the CCS had to develop and run programmes with the National Archives and with international institutions, working closely with the liberation movements. The CCS could work with the University Library on technical matters such as conservation. He ended by stressing that the Library's wish to house archives was irrelevant.<sup>305</sup>

This was a powerful argument from a major international authority in the field. However there were loopholes in Kecskemeti's conclusions. Firstly the Library was headed by Tau who was familiar with archives and was a practiced and well-connected professional. Kecskemeti may not have been aware that in South Africa many tertiary institutions such as Wits, UCT, Unisa and UWC housed archival records pertaining to the struggle.

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<sup>305</sup>*Ibid*: Professional advice on the claim of the university library to extend its competence to the archives of the liberation movements, Charles Kecskemeti to G.T. Sirayi, 3 October 1994

### *Fighting a losing battle*

With the future of the CCS hanging in the balance, stress levels were on the increase. At a meeting of the CCS Committee held on 6 October 1994, it was agreed that the task force recommended by the Council to look into the future of the Centre be allowed to do its work and that the construction of the CCS building be held in abeyance pending its decisions. The CCS's strategic plan for 1994-1998 was to be submitted to the task force and to the Senate's representative for these structures to get a sense of the Centre's vision and activities. Perhaps the CCS could be exonerated if its strategic documents were weighty. The CCS would be kept abreast of developments as the task force was expected to liaise with the Centre. Members of the CCS Committee realized that the Council was the most powerful decision making body in the University, and challenging its decisions could be viewed as acts of defiance. The meeting also discussed the issue of other liberation movements' material. The Committee was informed that though other liberation movements were still keen to house their collections at Fort Hare, they were very concerned about the drama surrounding the archives. Sirayi told Makwetu of his concern that the Anglo-American grant for the archives and museum building was being drained by inflation and cost escalation.<sup>306</sup> To ensure that Anglo-American remained on board, the Committee requested Mzamane to write to the company and assure them that the University was still committed to the project.<sup>307</sup> Funds received from institutions such as the Social Science Research Council in New York and Liberty Life for the repatriation of PAC, BCM and Unity Movement documents were now inaccessible. Funders expected progress reports on the repatriation of the material by June 1995 and it was impossible to meet the funders' request since the centre was in

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<sup>306</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to C. Makwetu, 28 February 1995.

<sup>307</sup>*Ibid*: Minutes of a meeting of the Centre for Cultural Studies Committee held on 6 October 1994 in the Rector's Committee Room.



crisis.<sup>308</sup> Through UNDP, UNESCO had agreed to fund the archives project to the tune of R 300 000, but apparently ‘one party [ANC] individual’ advised the UNDP to put the funds on hold.<sup>309</sup> The CCS’s reputation was in question.

The PAC was not impressed by the ANC’s decision to send its archival material to the Library. On 28 August 1995, the organization’s Secretary for Youth, Sports and Culture, Sipiwe Sithole, condemned the ANC and accused it of unilaterally planning to raise funds for its archives. Sithole believed that this was a bid by the ANC to declare its monopoly over the history of the struggle in South Africa.<sup>310</sup> To the PAC, this confirmed their view of the ANC as arrogant and individualistic. Sithole probably relied on the CCS for his information and was not privy to the kind of material used for this thesis.

After the CCS committee meeting of 6 October 1994, Siphon Pityana raised concerns about some of the things discussed in that meeting. On 14 October he told Sirayi that the responsibility of setting up a task force which would make recommendations on the future of the CCS rested on University management in consultation with the chairman of Council and his deputy. He stressed that the task force was expected to report to EXCO, then to Council, and Siphon Pityana stated that the CCS had no powers to appoint the task force. He also raised issues in connection with the construction of the CCS building. He asserted that there was a significant change regarding the original plans pertaining to the envisaged archives building. The original budget for the entire project was R99-100 million, subsequently reduced to R2

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<sup>308</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to C. Makwetu, 28 February 1995, Barbara Bianco to Themba Sirayi, 1 September, 1993, Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995, Themba Sirayi to Mfanasekhaya Gqobose, 14 July 1995.

<sup>309</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to C. Makwetu, 8 February 1995, Patrick Bulenzi to Themba Sirayi, 17 December 1993, United Nations Development Programme: Project of the Transitional Government of South Africa.

<sup>310</sup>*Ibid*: PAC statement issue by Sipiwe Sithole, 28 August 1995.

million.<sup>311</sup> The CCS would have to explain itself to EXCO. It is not clear how the CCS responded, but the fact that the University suspended the Centre's activities indicates that it was convinced of Siphon Pityana's concerns.

Sirayi now contacted the South African Presidency, hoping for a meeting with the Presidents of the liberation movements, Mandela, Clarence Makwetu of the PAC, Jerry Mosala of AZAPO and Richard Dudley from the Unity Movement to discuss the issue of archives in the week of 17 October 1994.<sup>312</sup> He reminded Mandela of the commitment made by the liberation movements in Johannesburg on 26 October 1992. He argued that the liberation movements had had faith in the Centre to carry out its mandate and that the CCS had not disappointed on this. However:

some individuals have started a campaign to foil and tamper with the project. The campaign is not based on professional grounds, it is personality based. Apparently, such individuals have infiltrated some members of the ANC Archives Committee. The outcome of the infiltration has been the so-called "request" of the ANC to have its archives transferred to the University of Fort Hare Library. Senate and Council of the University of Fort Hare were advised orally that if they did not accede to the request the ANC archives would be withdrawn and transferred to another university. The Council had to accede to the "request" willy nilly.<sup>313</sup>

Sirayi informed Mandela that the battle for the ANC archives had started in January 1994 and that he had done his best to resolve the issue amicably without success. He said that 'the matter has now become very explosive'. He requested a meeting to resolve the matter, preferably in Cape Town.<sup>314</sup> Such a meeting did not take place. The CCS had hoped to resolve the matter before the sitting of the University Council at which the archives issue was

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<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Academic Registrar to G.T. Sirayi, 14 October 1994.

<sup>312</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, G.T. Sirayi, to Mojanku Gumbi, 11 October 1994.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid*: G.T. Sirayi to N.R. Mandela, 11 October 1994, G.T. Sirayi to I..J. Mosala, 15 September 1994.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid*.

to feature, but Mandela had more pressing responsibilities. Sirayi requested Mosala to consider engaging Winnie Mandela on the subject as it appeared that her department was keen to intervene. Sirayi thought that it would be ideal for Winnie Mandela, with the province's Member of Executive Council (MEC) for Education and Culture, Makwetu and Mosala and the Unity Movement's representatives, to visit Fort Hare and resolve the matter.<sup>315</sup>

Tikly had promised the CCS that he would return to Fort Hare on 27-28 September to assess progress in the archives. He met Sirayi on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> and went to Henderson Hall where he was briefed about achievements and warned about sensitive documents:

Most of these records deal with people who are young, alive and in high positions in government. It would be disastrous if records pertaining to individuals were indiscriminately opened up to researchers. Of particular interest were records dealing with marriage, birth, divorce, offenses associated with these, drugs, mental health, diseases, defections from ANC complaints by students in foreign institutions, volunteers, communications between the ANC and governments, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, etc. military operations, strengths of the MK in various training camps, etc.<sup>316</sup>

Tikly then selected classes on which ANC structures would wish to place an embargo. These included documents from the ANC Lusaka, Morogoro and Dar es Salaam offices, records on deaths, SOMAFCO's Social Order Unit and the military, disciplinary and finance departments.

Meeting with Sirayi with other senior CCS staff members, Tikly thanked them for the excellent work achieved in a short time and encouraged them not to give up. Sirayi assured

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<sup>315</sup>*Ibid*: G.T. Sirayi to I.J. Mosala, 4 November 1994.

<sup>316</sup>*Ibid*: Report on Mr. Mohammed Tikly's visit to the Centre for Cultural Studies 27-28 September 1994.

him that they would continue, despite the archives problem.<sup>317</sup> Though the CCS wished to work proficiently, there were delays in the processing of material. These included the unavailability of acid free boxes exacerbated by the sluggish procurement process, confusion on the future of the ANC collection, which lowered staff morale, and the unlisted consignments from SOMAFCO, London, Dakawa, Morogoro, and Dar-es-Salaam. This meant that the archivists had to develop inventories for these records.<sup>318</sup>

In spite of the high-quality work noted by Tikly during his various visits to Fort Hare, the transfer of the ANC collection to the Library was imminent. The Council meeting on 25 November 1994 reiterated its earlier stance that the ANC archives should be sent to the Library. The Council noted that the MOU explained that the University was only a custodian of the material and that the ANC remained the owner. It argued that this gave the ANC the power to decide where their archives could be housed. The Council was worried that if Fort Hare refused to carry out the ANC's wishes the University could lose the movement's collection to another institution considered more capable. The order that the archives be transferred to the Library was confirmed.<sup>319</sup>

On 20 January 1995 the CCS requested Mzamane to call a meeting for 23 January to decide on procedures in transferring the ANC records to the Library. The CCS asserted that this would ensure transparency and accountability during the transfer.<sup>320</sup> The office of the Rector responded positively and the meeting took place on 31 January. It was agreed that an MOU on the transfer of the archives to the University Library be produced and signed to protect the

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<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*: Progress Report on the processing of ANC Archives and Art Collections.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*: ANC Archives Project: An Update by the Vice-Chancellor.

<sup>320</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to Mbulelo Mzamane, 20 January 1995.

CCS against any liabilities, damage and loss of the documents.<sup>321</sup> Zide, and Mziwonke Dlabantu, the Director of Finance, were charged with the logistics of the transfer which was scheduled for 9 February. The two archivists, Maamoe and Kukubo, were expected to join the Library. The future of the other liberation collections was left in the hands of the movements concerned.<sup>322</sup>

The PAC, BCM and the Unity Movement were still keen to work closely with the CCS. The President of the Unity Movement, Richard Dudley wanted to attend the archives meeting at Fort Hare scheduled for 30 January 1995 but was unable to do so. However he emphasized the importance of a joint liberation archives and urged that the Johannesburg agreement be honoured. He also asserted that the Unity Movement remained indebted to Fort Hare which had nurtured its cadres. He emphasized that the three movements did not favour the transfer of the archives to the Library.<sup>323</sup> After the meeting he reiterated the Unity Movement's position, stressing that the decision to transfer the ANC archives to the Library would jeopardize funding opportunities for the entire project. He proposed to Fort Hare that there be a moratorium that could give all the parties involved an opportunity to reflect on the archives question.<sup>324</sup> He hoped that Mandela would form part of these deliberations.<sup>325</sup> Meanwhile the clock was ticking for the CSS, as 8<sup>th</sup> February was the deadline for the transfer of ANC material to the Library.

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<sup>321</sup> *Ibid*: University of Fort Hare: Office of the Registrar Administration: Agreement transfer of the ANC Archives including the SOMAFCO Archives from the Centre for Cultural Studies to the Library, G.N. Zide to Themba Sirayi, 8 February 1995.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid*: University of Fort Hare, office of the Registrar Administration: agreement of withdrawal: Memorandum of agreement entered into by and between the Centre for Cultural Studies, Office of the Registrar Administration: Agreement transfer of the ANC Archives including the SOMAFCO Archives from the Centre for Cultural Studies to the Library, G.N. Zide to Themba Sirayi, 8 February 1995.

<sup>323</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Dudley to the Rector of Fort Hare [Mbulelo Mzamane], 29 January 1995.

<sup>324</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, R.O. Dudley to the University Rector [Mbulelo Mzamane], 7 February 1995.

<sup>325</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, R. Dudley to the Director for the Centre for Cultural Studies, 10 February 1995.

Zide was expected to take the lead in transferring the ANC archives from the CCS to the Library, but on 8th February 1995 he informed Mzamane that the CCS was reluctant to sign the contract to transfer material until certain changes were effected. Sirayi argued that this should wait until Mzamane could make the suggested changes in the MOU when he returned from a trip to Australia. Zide had a telephone conversation with Mzamane, who told him that any delays in the transfer of the archives would be detrimental to the University, but Sirayi was only prepared to release the documents on condition that the revised agreement faxed to Mzamane on 7 February was signed and formed part of a discussion on his return from abroad.<sup>326</sup> The University was obviously under great pressure from the ANC to act and no one could predict what the movement would do as threats had been made that Fort Hare could lose the collection. Mzamane now instructed Sirayi to transfer the archives to the Library with or without the MOU and reminded him that this was the Council's decision. He assured Sirayi that the CCS would be exonerated from any loss or damage of documents transferred. He also informed Sirayi that both Kukube and Maamoe had to be redeployed to the Library.<sup>327</sup> The CCS then signed the agreement on 9 February.<sup>328</sup> On the 15<sup>th</sup> Zide reported to Mzamane that the transfer of the records had been carried out on the agreed date.<sup>329</sup>

It was left to the CCS to explain to the Batlagae Trust that the archives had been transferred to the Library. On 17 February Sirayi updated Tikly. He thanked the Trust for its financial

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<sup>326</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Gordon Zide to Mbulelo Mzamane, 8 February 1995.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid*: Mbulelo Mzamane to Themba Sirayi, 9 February 1995.

<sup>328</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare: Office of the Registrar Administration, Agreement of withdrawal Memorandum of Agreement entered into by and between the Centre for Cultural Studies and the University of Fort Hare Registrar.(Administration), 9 February 1995.

<sup>329</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Gordon Zide to Mbulelo Mzamane, 15 February 1995.

assistance to the CCS and informed Tikly that since the SOMAFCO collection was now under the Library's custody, the CCS was no longer accountable for the collection. Sirayi assured Tikly that the collection was in good hands at the Library and promised that the CCS would write and send the last archives report to the Trust in due course.<sup>330</sup> Tikly could not overrule the decision made by his movement to transfer the organization's material to the Library. As a loyal and longstanding member of the ANC, he knew how the organization operated and had to abide by its rules.

The last report by the CCS on 329 boxes in the SOMAFCO collection covered the period October 1994 to 9 February 1995. It explained that sensitive documents had been removed from the SOMAFCO material and photographs put in envelopes and acid free boxes. Certificates of ANC graduates had been photocopied and SOMAFCO artifacts properly packed for transfer to the Library. The report concluded by stating that the transfer of the SOMAFCO material to the Library marked the end of the Centre's involvement with the collection and that as from 9 February 1995 the Library would be accountable for the collection.<sup>331</sup>

After the transfer, the first meeting of the Fort Hare ANC Archives Committee was held to chart the way forward on 7 March 1995. No one from the CCS was present, an indication that the University had opened a new chapter with regard to the ANC archives.<sup>332</sup> Mzamane informed the meeting that the archives had been moved to the Library, and that the future of

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<sup>330</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to Mohammed Tikly, 17 February 1995.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid*: Terminal Report on SOMAFCO Collection.

<sup>332</sup> Present was Mzamane who chaired the meeting, professors H. Aucamp who was the head of the Department of History, Lokangaka Losambe from the English Department, Dr. Mkhululi Sobahle from the Department of Anthropology, Amos Mdebuka from the Department of Physics, Fihla, Tau and Soul. Other invitees were Mr. C.R. Namponya from the Howard Pim Library which was a Library section in where the ANC archives were kept and Professor Kofi Etsiah from Political Science Department who sent his apologies.

Kukubo and Maamoe was to be discussed with the CCS. He reminded those present that the two archivists were expected to process consignments from other liberation movements and not just the ANC material. It was proposed that they could serve both the CCS and the University Library depending on the amount of work that had to be done in the two divisions. Mzamane informed the meeting that though the University had financial difficulties, the Library could still consider hiring more staff members for the archives. The Library staff said that the issue of archivists needed speedy resolution as there were no archivists at the Library and that hindered access to the archives. The Library staff also reported that viable academic programmes could be based on the SOMAFSCO collection and that the SOMAFSCO book collection could be used by academics to enhance their knowledge. The meeting noted that it was imperative to promote interdisciplinary activities on campus utilizing the archives. The Library informed the meeting that they had improved the security of the Howard Pim Library, where the archives were stored, by installing an alarm system and burglar proof gates. Mzamane said that the archives initiative was the most important institutional programme and that he had released R 23 600 to the Library for it. It was noted that the ANC Archives Division had requested a meeting with their Fort Hare counterparts, to take place on 15 March 1995 in Cape Town. The University Librarian, Tau, was expected to attend the meeting, to be accompanied by Fihla and H. Aucamp, the Head of History Department.<sup>333</sup>

On 6 March 1995 Mzamane held a meeting with the CCS to discuss the matter of Kukubo and Maamoe. Writing to Sirayi on 20 March, Mzamane reiterated that the two archivists would have to commute between the CCS and the Library until June 1995 when their contracts

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<sup>333</sup>UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Minutes of the ANC Archives Committee held at 16h30 on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 1995 in the Vice-Chancellor's office.



would expire.<sup>334</sup> One archivist would spend a week at the Library and the other at the CCS and then exchange.<sup>335</sup> Mzamane explained that after the expiry of the two archivists' contracts the Library and the CCS would submit applications for their permanent absorption in their respective domains. In addition, after June both institutions were expected to have separate budgets to run their respective archives.<sup>336</sup> The University undertook to pay their salaries once their jobs were made permanent. Until then, this was the responsibility of outside donors.<sup>337</sup> The CCS believed that this plan would harm its work, but University management pressed on,<sup>338</sup> tired of the fights between the Library and the CCS.

But the dispute over the ANC archives was not over. On 14 March 1995 Sirayi told Dudley that he was completely opposed to the transfer of the archives to the Library and that all concerned knew that he did not attend 'the irregular partisan meeting' which took a decision to transfer the ANC material. He informed Dudley that the *Star* newspaper's reference to his full cooperation on the matter took him by surprise. Hedrew up all the MOUs for the archives and 'there is not an iota or dot in the agreements which give the depositors the right to decide which building or department to house the archives'. Instead 'all the agreements specify the location of the archives, namely the Centre for Cultural Studies'. Sirayi made it clear to Dudley that 'I am eagerly looking forward to the emergence of a proper joint forum that will afford me the opportunity to expose the truth. I sincerely hope you (sic) efforts will ultimately bring about such a forum. Suppression of the truth, abuse of power and position should not be

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<sup>334</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Memorandum Mbulelo Mzamane to all members of Council, Senate, Library Committee, Centre for Cultural Studies Committee, 5 April 1995.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid*: Mbulelo Mzamane to Themba Sirayi, 5 April 1995, Mbulelo Mzamane to N. Tau, 5 April 1995, Mbulelo Mzamane to Ike Maamoe, 5 April 1995, Mbulelo Mzamane to Robert Kukubo, 5 April 1995.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid*: Mbulelo Mzamane to Themba Sirayi, 10 March 1995, UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Mbulelo Mzamane to Themba Sirayi, 5 April 1995.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid*: Memorandum Mbulelo Mzamane to all members of Council, Senate, Library Committee, Centre for Cultural Studies Committee, 5 April 1995.

<sup>338</sup> UFH: NAHCES, Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to R. Dudley, 6 April 1995.

allowed'.<sup>339</sup> Sirayi hoped to reveal what he saw as the full story, but the platform to do so was never provided.

### *The CCS's future- hanging in the balance*

The task force charged with reviewing the work and future of the Centre was headed by the University Planner, Dr. Isaac Mabindisa, who requested the CCS and various bodies on campus to make submissions on the Centre's future.<sup>340</sup> Some were positive about its possible future role whilst others were pessimistic. Professor Phillip Brouwer, head of Political Science, criticized the CCS. In his view, it had failed to carry out its mandate of organizing and preserving the liberation archives. He mentioned that his department had been waiting for the archives to be opened for research purposes but that the CCS had 'not by along shot (sic)' succeeded. Brouwer proposed that the CCS be closed, especially since the coffers of the University were running dry. He proposed that all other liberation collections be transferred to the Library, which could work closely with departments like History and Library Science. Brouwer thought that CCS staff members could be deployed at the Library. Once all this was achieved, thought Brouwer, the University's Department of Public Relations would market the Institution as a prestigious liberation archives centre and that 'then Fort Hare can begin to thrive and draw support for itself, for rendering an efficient and indispensable service, rather than to find itself queried for lack of adequate activity, given such an asset entrusted to our care'.<sup>341</sup> Ironically, when the archives were eventually opened to the public, nobody from the Political Science Department, Brouwer included, made use of the material. Other University officials were positive about the future of the CCS. Barbara Morrow from the Agricultural

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<sup>339</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to R. Dudley, 14 March 1995.

<sup>340</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Isaac Mabindisa to Themba Sirayi, 18 April 1995.

<sup>341</sup>*Ibid*: Phillip Brouwer to Isaac Mabindisa, 25 April 1995.

and Rural Development Research Institute (ARDRI) believed that since the Art Gallery and F.S. Malan Museum were under the control of the CCS, the Centre had the potential of attracting tourists to the town of Alice.<sup>342</sup>

The CCS, suspicious of the task team's intentions, sought legal advice from Ntsebeza Attorneys & Conveyancers in Umtata. The firm engaged Fort Hare on the ANC archives dispute and the defamatory allegations said to be propagated against Sirayi by the University. They stated that their client was keen to resolve the archives matter amicably without embarrassing the ANC. The alleged allegations against Sirayi included mismanagement of the archives project, fraudulent fundraising, fraudulent communication with funders or organizations, misrepresentation of Fort Hare, violation of University procedures, failure to produce a strategic plan, build a facility for the liberation movements archives and to submit proposals to international funding organizations.<sup>343</sup>

Sirayi's lawyers were also concerned about the task team which, in their understanding, was charged with investigating these charges against their client. The lawyers believed that the task team would investigate whether or not the resolution to move the ANC archives from the CCS to the University Library was regular. If that was the case, to them the task team was attempting what a commission of inquiry, judiciary or otherwise, would normally cover. After taking notes, the firm advised Sirayi that this was a complex matter and he required sound advice before he could appear in front of the task team especially since its findings could be used against him later. The firm asserted to Mzamane that even as Sirayi instructed

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<sup>342</sup>*Ibid*: Submission to Council Task Force on the Centre for Cultural Studies: University of Fort Hare, The Centre for Cultural Studies and the Tourism potential of the greater Alice area by Barbara Morrow.

<sup>343</sup>*Ibid*: Ntsebeza Inc. to Mbulelo Mzamane, 15 May 1995

them 'he could not give us all the information we needed because some information –as you appreciate-is possibly privileged. Prof Sirayi was very careful NOT to infringe University Regulations by telling us things that he regarded as confidential between him and the University. As a consequence, we were unable to properly advise him'. Ntsebeza Attorneys & Conveyancers explained to Mzamane that in order to offer good advice to Sirayi, full access to all relevant information on the archives issue would be of outmost importance to them. This included minutes of all meetings, be it Council or any committees that focused on the dispute. All these documents were needed before Sirayi could appear before the task team. Sirayi informed his lawyers not to 'hesitate to approach the Supreme Court for urgent and appropriate relief should any of his or the CCS's rights be threatened'. But the lawyers hoped that this matter would not end up in court.<sup>344</sup> By requesting his lawyers to intervene on his behalf, Sirayi had thrown down the gauntlet to University management, further straining its relations with the CCS. The ANC would also not be pleased to hear that it was likely to be dragged into court due to the archives fiasco.

Mzamane did not take the matter lightly as the University's image was at stake. On 16 May he engaged the University lawyers, to whom he explained that the Senate and Council were statutory bodies whose duty was to ensure that teaching, research and community outreach were successfully carried out. He said that the Senate or Council reviewed such programmes at their discretion and that such review need not be viewed as instituting a commission of inquiry against those who may be affected by the outcome. He also stressed that the University had to achieve excellence through its programmes and that the Council remained a powerful University body which ensured quality control. Therefore, its decision to set up a task team should not be viewed as a witch hunt against the CCS but rather it aimed at the best

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<sup>344</sup>*Ibid.*

for the University. Mzamane also emphasized that the task force would not address the issue of the ANC archives as the movement's collection was already housed at the University Library, as desired by the organization. Mzamane expected Sirayi to comply as he was employed by the University to carry out its mandate. Mzamane asked the lawyers to request Sirayi to hand over to him all documents from donors and other agencies linked to the CCS and to co-operate with the task team whose report upon completion was to be tabled before the University Council.<sup>345</sup>

Fortunately for the CCS, the task team ruled in favour of the Centre and its recommendations were approved by the University Senate. The task team recommended that for the work of the CCS to run smoothly and efficiently and for the Centre to deliver on its programmes which included archives, museum, teaching, research, publications, cultural and community outreach programmes, it had to be capacitated.<sup>346</sup> And indeed the Centre's staff was subsequently increased as recommended by the Council. In 1995 the Centre was joined by a new secretary Mrs. L. Smit and by Ms. Janet Pillai who became the curator. In 1996 it secured the services of Professor Kiyga-Mulindwa, a visiting scholar charged with assisting in the development of the museum as well as the academic and research division of the CCS. Others employed around this time included Ms. F. Madyibi, an administrator, Kwatsha and Lupuwana, trainee assistant archivists. The trainee archivists came under the Kukubo's tutorship.<sup>347</sup> The CCS survived, but without the ANC archives it no longer had the influence it exercised when it housed the ANC's collection.

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<sup>345</sup>*Ibid*: dictated by Mbulelo Mzamane and signed in his absence to University lawyers, 16 May 1995.

<sup>346</sup>*Ibid*: Brief Progress Report: U.F.H. / AAC De Beers Centre for Cultural Studies Construction Programme, Centre for Cultural Studies: Office of the Director, progress report: July-September 1995, Council Task Force on the Centre for Cultural Studies.

<sup>347</sup>*UFH bid*: NAHECS, Administrative Files, NAHECS to Olivia Frost, 11 September 1997, Interview with Kwatsha.

## *Conclusion*

This chapter has shown why there was high drama at Fort Hare in 1994 and 1995, as the University Library competed with the CCS for control of the ANC records, and why these they were transferred to the Library in 1995, so splitting the liberation archives. For the CCS, the fight to retain the archives proved unwinnable. Senior University administrators, influential within the ANC and at Fort Hare, pushed for the relocation of the ANC papers to the Library, where Tau and others impatiently waited to house them. Efforts by the CCS to draw the attention of the liberation movements' leaders such as Nelson and Winnie Mandela, Mosala and Makwetu and to get them to resolve the archives debacle were unsuccessful. Sirayi sought legal and professional advice in an effort to stop the relocation of the ANC material to the Library, but this did not help. The battle at Fort Hare did not, however, lead to the ANC *archives* being lost to another institution, as some had feared. The CCS's wish to construct a new archives building was however delayed, harming its work.

#### ***Chapter 4: The repatriation of the PAC and BCM material to Fort Hare***

##### *a) Problems and challenges of obtaining and repatriating PAC material*

As discussed in chapter two, Fort Hare established relationships with the PAC and the BCM to enable repatriation of those movements' papers. After the signing of the archives MOU in October 1992 between the University and the PAC, the organization, working closely with the University, began to repatriate its archival material. At the beginning of January 1993, PAC officials and the CCS produced a funding proposal to turn the PAC's repatriation ambitions into reality. The proposal was submitted to potential funders for consideration.<sup>348</sup> Though the names of potential funders were not listed in this proposal, that the CCS subsequently

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<sup>348</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies: Archives Report: January-June 1993.

received funds from organizations such as De Beers, the Social Science Research Council in New York, Liberty Life and others, signaled that the Centre made progress in its fund raising drive.<sup>349</sup> That the PAC and BCM did not have the financial muscle that the ANC possessed to repatriate their materials helps explain why they relied on the CCS for funding.<sup>350</sup> Were it not for the fundraising efforts of the CCS, the repatriation of the PAC and BCM material would not have materialized.

The PAC was optimistic that the repatriation of its papers would take place in October 1993. Why the PAC earmarked that as the date for their repatriation is unclear; perhaps the movement was keen to repatriate its material before the 1994 general election. But the repatriation of the PAC material did not materialize on the proposed date due to the slow response from its missions.<sup>351</sup> On 1 March 1994 the PAC reminded its various missions about the repatriation project.<sup>352</sup> Gqobose informed them about the archives agreement signed between Fort Hare and the PAC and asked them to cooperate with the CCS.<sup>353</sup> PAC offices were requested not to destroy any records and to refrain from releasing documents to individuals or institutions other than Fort Hare.<sup>354</sup> However, as will be seen, in some instances documents were destroyed.

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<sup>349</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, G.N. Zide to Ngara, 9 June 1994, NAHECS, Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to C. Makwetu, 28 February 1995, Barbara Bianco to Themba Sirayi, 1 September, 1993, Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January-31 December 1995, Themba Sirayi to Mfanasekhaya Gqobose, 14 July 1995.

<sup>350</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Interim Report on SSRC Grant.

<sup>351</sup>*Ibid*: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Mfanasekhaya Gqobose to Themba Sirayi: Report on the collection of materials for PAC Archives

<sup>352</sup>*Ibid*: NAHECS, Administrative Files, PAC office to its members, 01 March 1994.

<sup>353</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare Centre for Cultural Studies Interim Report on SSRC Grant.

<sup>354</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies: Interim Report on SSRC Grant.



A.E. Miyeni, the PAC's chief representative to the United Nations in New York, responded positively. On 9 March 1994 he assured the CCS that his staff would systematically arrange the organisation's material before permanently closing the office in April 1994.<sup>355</sup> The CCS requested Miyeni to notify the Centre about the quantity of documents to be shipped to South Africa and to secure quotations and banking details from shipping companies, which he did.<sup>356</sup> However, transportation of the material from New York to South Africa did not come cheap, with quotations ranging from \$2 013 to \$4 800.<sup>357</sup> Numerous problems affected the PAC's repatriation project. For example, the liberation movements were closing down their operations in exile and it was difficult to focus attention on records. Also, the project was shelved so as to focus on South Africa's first democratic election of April 1994.<sup>358</sup>

#### *Gqobose takes the lead*

The PAC went into the 1994 elections hoping to secure a strong voice in parliament. To their disappointment, its performance in the elections was dismal. Repatriation of the PAC material resumed after the 1994 elections, and Mfanasekhaya Gqobose, the PAC veteran, ensured the success of the project. Fort Hare felt that the movement would be at ease if one of their own was in the forefront during repatriation. Gqobose knew the exile terrain and could give the necessary guidance. He was expected to travel to the movement's different offices and identify and repatriate the organization's records.<sup>359</sup> This was a mammoth task for the elderly Gqobose. However, as a committed PAC cadre, he thought it essential to play a key role in repatriation of the movement's material.

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<sup>355</sup>*Ibid*: A.E. Miyeni to Themba Sirayi, 9 March 1994.

<sup>356</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to A.E. Miyeni, 24 March 1994.

<sup>357</sup>*Ibid*: Bruce Valente to A.E. Miyeni, 5 April 1994 A.E. Miyeni to Themba Sirayi, 15 March 1994, Themba Sirayi to A.E. Miyeni, 25 March 1994.

<sup>358</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies: Interim Report on SSRC Grant.

<sup>359</sup>*Ibid*.

On 6 June 1994 the CCS informed Gqobose that he could resume his travels around southern Africa, including Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Botswana, to repatriate the PAC consignments from these countries. Gqobose's expenses were fully covered by Fort Hare<sup>360</sup> and some of the funds for repatriation of PAC material, managed by the CCS, came from the US Social Science Research Council.<sup>361</sup> Gqobose first went to Tanzania, arriving in Dar es Salaam on 11 June. To his disappointment, operations were winding up, the PAC office was closed and members of the organization operated from their homes. PAC material from Tanzania was in danger of being lost. This was serious as the organization's headquarters had been in Dar es Salaam, and Tanzania, which had hosted PAC military bases, was central to the movement in exile.

In spite of the difficulties that Gqobose encountered in Dar es Salaam, he succeeded in locating a sizeable collection of papers in various locations. The material was loaded into trunks and sent to South Africa. Unfortunately, some PAC members had already burnt documents prior to their return to South Africa, though the material recovered was in good condition. PAC artefacts found in Tanzania were also shipped to South Africa. After spending 11-18 June in Dar es Salaam Gqobose moved to Zimbabwe.<sup>362</sup>

PAC affairs in Zimbabwe had been wound up just after the 1994 elections. However PAC material, including museum objects, was stored in Harare and Bulawayo offices and was

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<sup>360</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Mfanasekhaya Gqobose, 6 June 1994.

<sup>361</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

<sup>362</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies: Interim Report on SSRC Grant, B. Manumbu to the Centre for Cultural Studies, 18 July 1994, Themba Sirayi to Cheleni Grant, 28 April 1995.

collected from three offices in Harare and three more in Bulawayo, though as in Tanzania, ‘some documentary and artifacts materials were either burnt or destroyed by people who had no insight or had no appreciable understanding of archival preservation’. The material was packed in trunks for shipment to South Africa.<sup>363</sup>

From Zimbabwe Gqobose flew to Botswana on 22 June, spending two days in Gaborone. As in Harare, the PAC had wound up its affairs in Botswana soon after the 1994 elections. Fortunately, the Botswana office was small and had been used as a transit base for PAC members who left for exile during apartheid. The possibility that this office might have been attacked by the regime was high which may be why it was manned by a skeleton staff. Few documents were obtained in the Gaborone office and this prompted the removal company to demand payment in advance. Though this was common practice, it may in this case suggest that the company believed they might have problems obtaining money from Fort Hare for this small job. On the other hand, from a historian’s point of view, though there were few documents from Botswana, they had a certain significance. Also, because some PAC members remained in Botswana the organization concluded that arrangements could be made later to collect more material from its cadres there.<sup>364</sup>

From Botswana, Gqobose went to PAC headquarters in Johannesburg. He arrived on 27 June and learned that the PAC consignment from the United Nations (UN) New York office had arrived in excellent condition. Miyeni had kept his word.<sup>365</sup> The CCS arranged for the

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<sup>363</sup> *Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies: Interim Report on SSRC Grant.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid*: Themba Sirayi signed by Robert Kukubo to C. Grant, 30 August 1995, Centre for Cultural Studies: Interim Report on SSRC Grant.

transportation of the PAC UN consignment from Johannesburg to Fort Hare.<sup>366</sup> But though the PAC secured its material from the UN office, it experienced problems in locating material from its New York mission. For instance on 2 June 1992, Motsoko Pheko, the PAC representative in New York at the time, informed the CCS that it would be difficult to locate PAC documents in the US as during the previous 25 years several chief representatives had run the office, and he could only account for material accumulated while he was in charge.<sup>367</sup> That a chief representative posted to New York in 1992 was unable to locate material generated by his predecessors implies that there was no continuity in the organization's New York office. To this day, no material from the New York office has been deposited at Fort Hare.<sup>368</sup> The material has been permanently lost. However, this was not the case with some of the missions whose collections were recovered in spite of the challenges faced during the repatriation process.

With its available material ready for transportation to Fort Hare, the PAC's dream of archiving its historical records was about to be realized. The CCS was anxious that Frasers International should deliver the PAC documents in time,<sup>369</sup> to avoid embarrassing the Fort Hare officials who planned to receive the consignment in the presence of PAC dignitaries. The PAC was aware of the conflicts over the ANC material, and the CCS, having been cheated of the ANC records, wanted to demonstrate its capability. But logistical problems arose during the shipment of the PAC material to Fort Hare.

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<sup>366</sup> *Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Frasers International Removals, 12 September 1995.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid*: S.E.M. Pheko to Themba Sirayi, 2 June 1992.

<sup>368</sup> Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements', *History in Africa*.

<sup>369</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Robert Kukubo to Frasers International Removal, 7 February 1995.

Since the PAC material was due to arrive, the CCS requested the Faculty of Science to provide space in a laboratory in the Livingstone Building to house the collection temporarily.<sup>370</sup> As described earlier, the CCS had plans in place to house the archives in suitably modified temporary buildings until such time as a proper repository was erected. For instance, there were plans to convert the top floor of the Livingstone Building into a suitable space. However on 24 October 1994 Zide informed Mzamane that there were insufficient funds to implement this plan. He asked the Rector to table the matter urgently before the Budget Committee so that alterations of the building could resume during the summer vacation.<sup>371</sup> Meanwhile, the CCS looked at alternative spaces to house the material.

By early 1995, PAC material, including artifacts from Tanzania, Zimbabwe and the USA, were ready for transportation from PAC headquarters to Fort Hare. This was good news for the CCS in the wake of the demoralizing debacle over the ANC material. The first PAC records and artifacts, from Tanzania, were delivered at Fort Hare on 28 August 1995 and were stored at Henderson Hall.<sup>372</sup> This was followed in October by the material from the London mission.<sup>373</sup> The Lesotho, British and New York UN consignment also reached Fort Hare in 1995.<sup>374</sup>

Numerous problems were experienced during the repatriation of the PAC documents. For instance, on 30 August 1995 the CCS informed Frasers International Removals that it had

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<sup>370</sup>*Ibid*: G.T. Sirayi and Head of Physics Department to M.V. Mzamane, 23 September 1994.

<sup>371</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, G.N. Zide to M.V. Mzamane, 24 October 1994.

<sup>372</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRG Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

<sup>373</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare Centre for Cultural Studies Archives Division: Draft Programme of work 1 April-30 June 1995.

<sup>374</sup>*Ibid*. A short memo on the creation of the archives for the Pan Africanist Congress(PAC).

received eleven rather than the expected twelve locked metal trunks of PAC material from Tanzania. Also, the trunks could not be opened as the keys were missing. The removals company undertook to track the missing trunk in Tanzania,<sup>375</sup> while to everyone's relief the missing keys were found.<sup>376</sup> The trunks were opened in front of PAC dignitaries and University officials towards the end of 1995.<sup>377</sup>

It seemed for a while that the CCS was going to be involved in yet another embarrassing upset. Of particular concern to the CCS was that the matter of the missing documents came to Gqobose's attention.<sup>378</sup> The CCS could not afford to have this kind of problem as they had already lost the ANC archives to the Library. If such episodes characterized the repatriation process, the PAC and the BCM would question the Centre's capabilities. However to everyone's relief, the CCS reported on 20 September that in fact only eleven trunks had been shipped to South Africa.<sup>379</sup> Nevertheless there were other difficulties during repatriation of the PAC material as when a company hired to transport records from Tanzania and Zimbabwe failed to do so in spite of being paid in advance. South Africa also experienced labour strikes in 1995 that impacted on repatriation of the PAC material.<sup>380</sup>

Though the PAC material from Zimbabwe was assembled by Gqobose in 1994, it took two more years for it to reach Fort Hare. It was transported by road from Harare to Pretoria where it was warehoused and then sent to Fort Hare in 1996. The material was addressed to

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<sup>375</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi signed by Robert Kukubo to C. Grant, 30 August 1995.

<sup>376</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Frasers International Removals, 12 September 1995.

<sup>377</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

<sup>378</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Mwendu, 12 September 1995.

<sup>379</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi signed by Robert Kukubo to Frasers International Removals, 20 September 1995.

<sup>380</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

Gqobose and arrived at Fort Hare on 4 April 1996. Here, the ludicrous intervened. The University security personnel said that as there was no staff member named Gqobose, the goods could not be accepted. The freight company took the consignment to a removals warehouse in East London where it was stored until a solution could be found. Luckily, the problem came to Kukubo's attention, and he ensured that the consignment was resent to Fort Hare on 18 April.<sup>381</sup>

*b) Problems and challenges of obtaining and repatriating BCM material*

Exile disrupted normal existence. It meant leaving behind family, friends and stability. It often meant leaving one's country without travel documentation and without the belongings needed for a long journey. It meant abandoning or disposing of politically-oriented documents, as being found in their possession would lead to arrest. During the SASO-BPC trial of 1976-1977 the court used documents seized by the police to sentence BCM activists to five years imprisonment on Robben Island. These documents eventually found their way to the Department of Archives and Special Collections at Unisa.<sup>382</sup> This BCM collection at Unisa is valuable and has been used by researchers to record the history of the movement in the 1970s.<sup>383</sup> The BCM (A) material at Fort Hare however was generated in exile following the flight of many young people in the aftermath of the 1976 student revolt. Those who went into exile did not carry documents with them.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup>*Ibid*: Report on the arrival of PAC records and artifacts from Zimbabwe by Robert Kukubo, Robert Kukubo to Frasers International Removals, 15 April 1996.

<sup>382</sup>Interview with Kgekong.

<sup>383</sup> See for instance, Mzamane, Maaba and Biko, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa' in Sadet, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.

<sup>384</sup>Interview with Pheto.

In exile, the newly founded BCM (A), launched in Brixton, London in 1980, following the amalgamation of the different BCM streams in exile, established itself in different parts of the world. Chapters were organised in Britain, Canada, the United States, Nigeria, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. Most of these aimed at implementing the programme of the BCM (A), *Our Urgent Tasks*, which was drawn up by members of the BCM (A) at the inception of the organisation in London in 1980 and today forms part of the BCM (A) collection at Fort Hare. It set out what the movement aimed to achieve in exile. It did not address the issue of archives, an indication that the subject was never really a priority for the movement.<sup>385</sup> The most pressing needs of the organisation at the time were funding, and keeping the new organisation intact.<sup>386</sup>

Most BCM (A) members were students from the Soweto generation, and many found that the easiest way to establish themselves in various countries was to apply for student visas. They used this situation to their advantage as they established various missions or chapters as they referred to them, in those countries.<sup>387</sup> However, BCM (A) cadres tended to leave host countries upon completion of their studies, leading to collapse of those particular chapters. A case in point is the Nigerian chapter, which closed in the mid-1980s soon after BCM (A) members had completed their studies. As a result, the fate of most BCM (A) documents generated in Nigeria is unknown.<sup>388</sup> In addition, there was an absence of archival skills within the BCM (A), as most members were interested in pursuing military training and other careers.<sup>389</sup> However, though nobody within the movement studied archives, political

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<sup>385</sup> Maaba and Mzamane, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in Exile', In South African Democracy Education Trust(Sadet), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.

<sup>386</sup> Interview with Kgokong, Maaba and Mzamane, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in Exile', in Sadet, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.

<sup>387</sup> Author's Interview with Kabelo Makola, Pretoria, 28 April 2011(Henceforth Interview with Makola)

<sup>388</sup> Interview with Thokoane, Kgokong.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid*.



consciousness within the movement remained high, and went beyond politics in the narrow sense to matters of culture and education. This was apparent at Dukwi, a refugee camp in Francistown. A 1980 memorandum to members of the BCM (A)'s Interim Committee by Thandiwe Motsisi, a BCM (A) cadre, stated:

There is a need for the Movement to boost its Cultural Wing. The comrades in Dukwi have formed a Cultural Committee, which also includes educational aspirations. The Comrades possess an immeasurable amount of talent and potential, which needs to be developed and articulated. They have begun to produce sculptural works, e.g. the Black Fist [clenched fist, a symbol of black power] etc. hope to produce as many as would be required for our members, to sell these and have these resources to run the region. But they need some basic funds to be able to start full force on such a project.<sup>390</sup>

With hindsight, Molefe Pheto, the Secretary General of the BCM (A) in exile and the organisation's chief representative in London, believes that the kinds of artifact mentioned in Motsisi's memorandum should have formed part of the archives.<sup>391</sup> But it is clear that the material demands of exile as well as the emphasis on self-sufficiency prompted BCM (A) cadres to trade in these objects. In this context it is not surprising that archives were not high on the movement's agenda.

*Dealing with exile existence: the future of the movement's documents*

The chapters of the BCM (A) sought funding from different quarters. For instance, the Canada branch was sponsored by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and its funds greatly assisted students to settle down in that country. Leftwing organizations were sympathetic to the BCM and some supported the movement financially. Such organizations included In Struggle, the Workers Communist Party of Canada,<sup>392</sup> the All-African People's Revolutionary Party led by Stokely Carmichael which had a branch in Canada, and groups

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<sup>390</sup> UFH: NAHECS, BCM(A)/AZAPO Collection, Box 3, Memorandum from Dodo Thandiwe Motsisi to members of the Interim Committee, 29 November 1980.

<sup>391</sup> Interview with Pheto.

<sup>392</sup> Interview with Phokobye.

oriented towards Walter Rodney's thinking. So sympathetic were these organizations that some of them allowed the BCM (A) to use their office space for their activities. The BCM (A) kept its publicity material in the offices in Toronto of sympathetic organizations, while documents pertaining to party activities were kept in members' homes. In the 1980s these sympathetic organizations often invited members of AZAPO to visit them in Canada under the pretext of exploring relations and this enabled AZAPO to meet with the BCM (A).<sup>393</sup>

That the BCM (A) did not have its own office in Canada implied that the movement's documents were scattered in different parts of the country. That alone had a negative impact on the repatriation of documents to South Africa as some of the cadres could not submit their documents for repatriation. Some still living in Canada kept documents and did not return them to post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>394</sup> Some have since died and the whereabouts of the material that was in their possession is unknown.<sup>395</sup> In addition, infighting led some members to keep organizational documents with them. One is reported to have kept all the material that emerged from the important Brixton conference of 1980, never returning it to the BCM (A). Everything possible was done to get the documents from him, but in vain.<sup>396</sup>

Initially, the London chapter had its own office, thanks to funding that came through Barney Pityana's church networks. This funding sustained the movement for some years, but was subsequently withdrawn. After Barney Pityana left the BCM to join the ANC in the early 1980s his networks could not be accessed.<sup>397</sup> Barney Pityana was part of the theology

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<sup>393</sup> Interview with Makola.

<sup>394</sup> Interview with Phokobye.

<sup>395</sup> Interview with Thokoane.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>397</sup> Interview with Pheto.

fraternity in London. In 1982 he received an honours degree in Philosophy of Religion and Christian Doctrine degree from King's College, University of London, followed by a certificate in Theology in 1983 from Ripon College, University of Oxford, thereafter being ordained an Anglican priest.<sup>398</sup> As there were no other funders available the London office had to close, leaving the branch members to operate from their homes.<sup>399</sup> Pheto kept documents at this home. He allocated an entire room for the purpose and systematically and meticulously catalogued these documents for posterity. That he had some skills in Library Science benefitted the London collection. Members in London were encouraged to submit BCM(A) related material to Pheto. Researchers from various parts of the world often visited Pheto and made use of the BCM (A) documents in their writings.<sup>400</sup>

In Washington DC, the movement's documents were kept at the home of the regional chair, Twiggs Xiphu. When the US authorities attempted to deport Xiphu in the 1980s, the collection was at risk of being lost or even confiscated, but after a court battle, the authorities had to leave him in peace. In 1996, a few years after the unbanning of the liberation movements, Xiphu temporarily returned to South Africa to explore work opportunities. He left the BCM (A) collection and some of his important personal belongings in storage and hoped to return later to collect everything. Sadly, his friend who was charged with the responsibility of making monthly payments for the storage skipped one month. The owners of the storage facility simply sold the stored valuables to recover their money. That was how the BCM (A) material from the US was lost. Only material that had been shipped to Botswana in

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<sup>398</sup><http://www.google.co.za/search?hl=en-&source=hp&q=barney+pityana+biography&gbv=2&oq=Barney&gs>, (Curriculum Vitae of Nyameko Barney Pityana, September 2009) accessed on 26 December 2012.

<sup>399</sup> Interview with Pheto.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid*: researchers who made use of BCM(A) documents housed in Pheto's flat were African Caribbeans, African Americans, and those from the African continent.

the mid-1980s eventually made it to Fort Hare.<sup>401</sup> Thus, in flats and borrowed offices in London or Washington or elsewhere, through the dedication of individuals, or the carelessness or infighting or simple stress of comrades, did the records of the exiled movement disappear or survive. The history of an important element in the liberation movement could hang on such tenuous threads.

Other factors complicated issues for the movement with regard to documents. Some material was lost due to the fact that the camps where BCM (A) members were housed, such as Dukwi in Botswana, were run by the governments of the host countries. Members of the liberation movements did not have total control of how and where archival material generated in those camps was kept. Strike Thokoane, an exiled BCM (A) member, explains:

We were not having traditional camps which were controlled by us, unlike other organizations in Angola. The camps we used in places like Botswana and Zimbabwe were state camps so the administration is the state. So we were not going to have offices where we can keep materials. But admittedly we were not also schooled in the idea of archiving. So when you have a material, you just keep that material and it can get lost. My own books that I left at home of a personal nature, I left in 1976 and when I came back home I could not trace a single book, I could not trace a single paper, I could not trace even my own results which I had left at home when I was at school. So a lot of material got lost in that way.<sup>402</sup>

Though policy and other documents were generated in exile, sometimes security measures were taken to protect their authors. For example some of the BCM (A) policy documents did not bear the author's name. This became a problem when documents were sent to Fort Hare as researchers could not establish authorship. While researchers encounter such problems today, during exile the concern was more about safeguarding people's lives than worrying

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<sup>401</sup> Author's Interview with Twiggs Xiphu, Centurion, 11 June 2011(Henceforth Interview with Xiphu).

<sup>402</sup>Interview with Thokoane.

about future researchers. Thokoane asserts that for instance in Botswana the security structures worked closely with the South African police. This meant that any sensitive documents could be easily leaked to the regime. Such suspicions were confirmed in post-apartheid South Africa. Thokoane asserts that ‘when you left the country in 1976 and you report yourself in Botswana, they would take you to the police station, to the security police and the security police would make you fill in forms and they would take your picture. That picture found its way to the South African government’.<sup>403</sup> Ironically, in post-apartheid South Africa those photographs, retrieved from South Africa’s police archives, are used by the Special Pensions Board which is charged with allocating pension funds to struggle veterans to verify cases of those claiming to have reached exile through Botswana.<sup>404</sup>

Experience also showed that the apartheid regime intercepted mail. One BCM cadre, Onkopotse Tiro, was killed by a parcel bomb in Botswana in 1972.<sup>405</sup> When *Our Urgent Tasks* was produced for discussion at the 1980 Brixton conference, steps were taken to ensure that it was not intercepted by the apartheid regime. The document was developed and finalized in Botswana. To ensure that it reached London without being intercepted, it was sent as registered mail. Today the document is among those at Fort Hare.<sup>406</sup> The London office was broken into in the early 1980s and documents were stolen. On another occasion, thieves broke into Pheto’s flat in Brixton and again made off with some movement documents. Pheto believes these break-ins were the work of South African security agents,

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<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>405</sup> Mzamane, Maaba and Biko, ‘The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa’ in Sadet, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.

<sup>406</sup> Interview with Makola.

whose presence in different parts of the world was a thorn in the side of the exiled liberation movements.<sup>407</sup>

In spite of these challenges, for Jairus Kgokong, who ran the central office of the BCM (A) in Botswana, it was important for those in the movement to safeguard the material generated over time so that in post-apartheid South Africa researchers could write the history of the BCM.<sup>408</sup> To ensure that this dream became a reality, members of the movement were encouraged to send their material to the central office in Gaborone where most BCM (A) documents were lodged. However, some found it expensive to post the material, and simply traveled with documents to Gaborone every time they had a commitment there. This in itself was a nuisance, as personal costs could be incurred at the airport.<sup>409</sup> Such problems were understandable for an organization that ran on a shoe-string budget but was concerned about the future of its documents.

The BCM (A) wanted to keep the Botswana office as its headquarters because it was strategically located in southern Africa. Those who left South Africa and joined the organisation in exile passed through Botswana, which was also strategically placed for those who wanted to infiltrate South Africa militarily. Repatriation of the BCM (A) material from Botswana to South Africa would be much easier than from elsewhere once South Africa had been liberated. However, the apartheid regime had plans to destabilise the BCM (A) in Botswana. It put pressure on the Botswana government to drive the cadres out of the country. Kgokong recalls that ‘there were repeated raids [by the Botswana police] on our residence in

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<sup>407</sup>Interview with Pheto, other such episodes: see, e.g, Roger Fieldhouse, *Anti-apartheid: A History of the Movement in Britain, 1959-1994*(London, 2005), Diana Wylie, *Art and Revolution: The Life and Death of Thami Mnyele*, (Auckland Park, 2008).

<sup>408</sup>Interview with Kgokong.

<sup>409</sup>Interview with Phokobye.

Gaborone, and they would take documents and whenever they bring them back, a lot of those documents would be missing and they would claim they cannot find them. We don't know where they took those documents'.<sup>410</sup> In the 1980s the Botswanan authorities arrested Kgokong, Vuyiswa Qunta and Thokoane and they languished for seventy days in one of the country's maximum security prisons. They were not sure what would happen to them upon being released and their safety could not be guaranteed as it was rumoured that the apartheid government was preparing to dispatch its security agents to assassinate them. Such threats were not to be underestimated as the South African regime conducted many cross border raids into Mozambique, Lesotho and Botswana, leaving scores of liberation activists dead. However, after the arrests in Botswana the Zimbabwe government was prepared to take in the BCM (A) cadres.<sup>411</sup>

Relocating to Zimbabwe meant that the organisation had to move its archives to that country. The organisation's skeleton staff did its best to pack and transport whatever documents they could to Harare. Some documents were housed in Dukwi, including personal files and documents concerning political education. Some of these were salvaged and sent to Harare.<sup>412</sup> But though the BCM (A) relocated to Harare, attacks by the regime could still not be ruled out. In 1981, barely a year after the fall of Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front regime, Joe Gqabi, the ANC's chief representative in the country, was assassinated by apartheid security agents at his Harare home. But the BCM(A)'s only option was to remain in Zimbabwe. Like

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<sup>410</sup>Interview with Kgokong.

<sup>411</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>412</sup>*Ibid.*

Botswana, Zimbabwe was in southern Africa and there were no language barriers as English was the medium of communication.<sup>413</sup>

Once settled in Harare, the work of the organization continued. More documents trickled in from various chapters and when the liberation movements were unbanned in 1990, it became clear to the BCM (A) that the time to return to South Africa had come and that, sooner rather than later, they would have to close their operations in exile.<sup>414</sup> The organization's records, most of which had now been assembled in Harare, needed to be shipped to South Africa where their future would be determined. However, this was the beginning of another dilemma, as once more the issue of funding took centre stage. Different organizations were approached and briefed on the value and importance of the collection at the BCM (A) offices in Harare. It was crucial for the documents to be repatriated to South Africa while the movement's cadres were still active and in place. Many of them belonged to the Soweto generation and had not seen or heard from their families in many years. However, to the movement's disappointment, their requests for funds were ignored. Even the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) did not come to the rescue. Instead, BCM (A) officials were informed that the UNHCR was only interested in funding initiatives that leaned towards the negotiation process with the apartheid regime, which was largely pioneered by the ANC. Since the BCM (A) and AZAPO eventually decided not to take part in the negotiation process, the implication was that they would not secure UN funds to repatriate their material. After all, as mentioned earlier, only the ANC and PAC were recognized by the UN as legitimate political formations in the struggle against apartheid. Most of the BCM (A)

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<sup>413</sup> Brown Maaba, 'The ANC's Joe Gqabi in exile no more', *Daily Dispatch*, 16 December 2004, Brown Maaba and Sean Morrow, 'Fear and Infiltration in Mazimbu, The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, 1978-1992', *Society and War*, 23 (1) (2005), 107-124.

<sup>414</sup> Interview with Phokobye.



rank and file did not rely on the UNHCR for repatriation to South Africa, but found other means, including using personal funds, to finance their return.<sup>415</sup>

The BCM (A) was aware of the importance and value of their material in Harare. Since they could not secure funding to repatriate their collection, they had to seek alternatives. In an unexpected move, a decision was made to get AZAPO counterparts in South Africa to help transport the material over the border. Kgokong remembers how this decision came as a relief to many: ‘our AZAPO comrades were useful. They released their vehicles into Zimbabwe to go and pick us up there. Every day, every weekend they were going in and bringing in loads into South Africa, the same with Botswana and so on’.<sup>416</sup> Pheto feels that even though AZAPO came to their rescue, it was dehumanizing for things to turn out this way, ‘the way they moved [the documents] was so unfortunate and so hard that carrying important documents like that was not easy because we were not funded, we were not helped to come back home from Harare, we found our way. Whereas the other movements had United Nations funds...’.<sup>417</sup> Once the consignment had reached South Africa, it was kept in the homes of comrades pending a decision on its future.<sup>418</sup>

*BCM internally: the struggle to keep documents intact*

Let us now consider the BCM within the country. The 1980s was one of the most brutal eras for those involved in the liberation of South Africa. During this period, repression intensified as the regime attempted to crush the struggle against apartheid. Many were arrested; activists

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<sup>415</sup> Interview with Kgokong.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>417</sup> Interview with Pheto.

<sup>418</sup> Interview with Kgokong.

were killed and sometimes disappeared without trace. The masses waged war against apartheid with whatever they could lay hands on. A nation-wide state of emergency was declared in 1986 and those who could not bear it any more left for exile. It seemed that the regime was prepared to fight until the bitter end. The offices of political formations were raided and even at times raised to the ground. For example, after the regime declared a state of emergency in 1986, resulting in mass arrests including of trade union leaders, union offices were raided and office equipment confiscated.<sup>419</sup> In 1988 the apartheid regime bombed Kgotso House, the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), an interdenominational organisation opposed to apartheid. It was an open secret that the SACC was ANC aligned and this alone was enough for the regime to sabotage the organisation's activities.<sup>420</sup>

In May 1984 police raided AZAPO offices nationwide. The homes of AZAPO leaders were also raided and the police confiscated a sizeable number of documents. Seeing that this might result in imprisonments due to the kind of documentation that was seized, AZAPO lodged and won a court appeal in Durban. There was relief when the organization's documents were subsequently returned. Lybon Mabasa, one-time president of AZAPO, believes that were it not for this court appeal, many within AZAPO would have received stiff sentences, as some of the seized documents included material from BCM(A), a banned organization. For furthering the aims of a banned organization the minimum sentence was five years imprisonment. AZAPO survived this onslaught mainly because the police did not follow the

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<sup>419</sup>Jeremy Seekings, *UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991*, (Cape Town, 2000), 196-197.

<sup>420</sup> For more on the bombing of Khotso House see, *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, 1-5(1998)*.

correct procedures during the raid.<sup>421</sup> Apart from this incident, many other documents were seized by the police and never returned. This loss influenced the nature of the BCM archives after the democratic dispensation. Due to these raids and other challenges, AZAPO as well as other political formations operating within the country sought alternative ways to ensure the safety of documents.<sup>422</sup> According to Harris, all the records confiscated during apartheid were destroyed by the state before the national elections of 1994.<sup>423</sup>

Ishmael Mkhabela, a founding and longstanding member of AZAPO, says that documents had to be kept in unconventional spaces, such as inside mattresses, which would be cut open, the documents inserted and sewn up again. Other documents were kept under coal stoves or even in bread tins. Alternatively they were kept with relatives with minimal formal education who showed little interest in documents. The thinking was that individuals with this kind of profile would not bother to read these documents or perhaps could not do so. Thus they were not likely to attract police attention.<sup>424</sup> The downside to this arrangement was that such documents were often lost and could not be retrieved when they were subsequently needed for archiving.<sup>425</sup> Sometimes documents had to be quickly read and then disposed of considering the security pressures. Mkhabela revisits this experience:

Some of the speeches, you'd even be reluctant to write a paper because there would be roadblocks. So you've written a paper, spent time, effort, money only to find that before you reach a planned or scheduled event someone would stop you on the road and you are somehow not detained but a document is taken and you feel very fortunate that they only took a document. So you find that then we had to have a culture of just saying that

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<sup>421</sup> Author's Interview with Lybon Mabasa, Johannesburg, 5 May 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Mabasa).

<sup>422</sup> Author's Interview with Pandelani Nefelovhodwe, Leondale, Alberton, 12 May 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Nefelovhodwe).

<sup>423</sup> Harris, 'The Archival Sliver' in Hamilton *et al*, *Refiguring the Archive*. 135.

<sup>424</sup> Author's Interview with Ishmael Mkhabela, Johannesburg, 13 May 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Mkhabela).

<sup>425</sup> Interview with Mabasa.

look I'm going to a meeting I'm going to convey some few ideas and you just list a number of ideas in the cigarette pack.<sup>426</sup>

This was one of the ways in which a message could be conveyed without putting one's life in danger. But it was a stop gap, necessary at the time, which would later impact negatively on the archives.

Cases of this nature were not limited to AZAPO. As a member of the UDF in the Eastern Cape, Don Pinnock worked closely with Mathew Goniwe, a Cradock activist. Goniwe's wife, Nyameka, was aware that her husband had a number of documents that could result in imprisonment. To avoid this, she buried the documents in the family garden. A few years later, in 1987, Pinnock advised her to dig up the material as it could be damaged by soil. She agreed and Pinnock organized a student to type the documents. Once this task was completed, Pinnock donated the material to Mayibuye.<sup>427</sup>

The persisting violence between AZAPO and the UDF impacted negatively on the AZAPO documents. For example, Port Elizabeth experienced a wave of political violence which led to serious loss of life. Lungile Dick, one of the 1980s AZAPO youth activists, states that:

Unfortunately around 1983, 1984, especially here in Port Elizabeth we found ourselves in a situation of conflict. Many would term it black on black violence between AZAPO and UDF and that became a huge challenge because people had to leave their houses. Some were leaving because they had to secure their families, thinking that if they leave and went to a central place, their families won't be hurt. So the [AZAPO] comrades became based at New Brighton and their houses became targets. Some of our things were bombed. Some of our things were burned during

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<sup>426</sup> Interview with Mkhabela.

<sup>427</sup> Author's Interview with Don Pinnock, Cape Town, 26 February 2011(Henceforth Interview with Pinnock)

the raids by the (amabutho) warriors and others. So you find in the area a lot of our information was destroyed. So a whole lot of information could not be archived, could not be kept somewhere. It was destroyed.<sup>428</sup>

The documents destroyed included manifestos, literature on Biko and other influential writers, literature on the origins of AZAPO, poetry on AZAPO generated by the organization's youth and many other important documents.

Many other challenges confronted AZAPO in the 1980s, including that of resources. There were no long term plans for such things as preservation of documents as the struggle against apartheid took its toll on those involved. In the 1980s, AZAPO did not have funds to rent suitable offices and sustaining the organization proved a challenge. Due to such factors, there was a tendency to operate in an *ad hoc* way and the preservation of documents became of secondary importance.<sup>429</sup> After all, activists did not get involved in the struggle against apartheid to create archives. Instead, the archives resulted from their involvement in the struggle against apartheid and were arguably not self-consciously created as a record.

Reflecting on this situation, Mabasa states that it is difficult even today to take stock of what happened to the liberation movement's weaponry. 'If such major things do not have an inventory', he says, 'how much more the issue of just ordinary documents'.<sup>430</sup> Also for AZAPO the constant moving of offices in Johannesburg resulted in the loss of a sizeable

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<sup>428</sup> Author's Interview with Lungile Dick, New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, 31 March 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Dick).

<sup>429</sup> Interview with Mkhabela.

<sup>430</sup> Interview with Mabasa.

number of documents.<sup>431</sup> However, though much AZAPO material was lost over time, some was salvaged, while part of the correspondence between AZAPO and the BCM (A) ended up being preserved in exile.<sup>432</sup> Most of these documents focused on the relationship between AZAPO and the BCM (A),<sup>433</sup> and they were recovered during the repatriation of the BCM (A) documents to Fort Hare.

### *The turbulent journey to Fort Hare*

As mentioned earlier, in the early 1990s Fort Hare showed signs of renewal when it became clear that the new democratic dispensation in South Africa was on the horizon. It was during these vibrant times that the CCS approached the BCM and pleaded with them to make its materials available for preservation at Fort Hare.<sup>434</sup> As mentioned previously, the BCM agreed to do so and signed an MOU with the University in 1992. But there were many obstacles along the way.

The BCM did not form part of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) negotiations aimed at ensuring a peaceful transition in South Africa. The BCM's demands, such as the formation of a constituent assembly to determine the future of the country and produce a new constitution, were not met. The movement did not take part in the first democratic elections, and the violence that had taken place between AZAPO and the ANC in the 1980s still left a sour taste for some in the BCM. The movement did not distrust Fort Hare, but it did not accept or endorse the democratic change of 1994. Its members wondered

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<sup>431</sup>Interview with Mkhabela.

<sup>432</sup>Interview with Kgokong.

<sup>433</sup>Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements', *History in Africa*.

<sup>434</sup>Interviews with Kgokong. Pheto.

if indeed the new South Africa was going to stand the test of time. Sending their collection to Fort Hare could give the impression that their position with regard to the new dispensation had changed, and that they now accepted its permanence. This led to indecision within the movement as they were not sure whether to send their material to Fort Hare or not. Another concern was that sensitive documents could be unearthed for the purpose of misrepresenting the organization, harming its image. Though the BCM observed that security in the archives at Fort Hare was tight, Phokobye asserts that the possibility existed that some staff members could be browbeaten into leaking certain documents to the public.<sup>435</sup> Clearly lack of knowledge of archival practice once more haunted the BCM, as sensitive documents could be placed on embargo until such time that they could be authorized for release to the public. These are the finer details around the preservation of archives with which the BCM rank and file was not familiar, though the continued interaction with Fort Hare would eventually clarify such issues. AZAPO's concerns about how the South African post-1994 *status quo* affected the repatriation process are well summarized by Nefolovhodwe:

In AZAPO's ranks, we did not come to trust the new dispensation, despite the fact that we lived under it, we were still hostile and some of the cadres definitely would not have given all the documents....The trust would not have been on Fort Hare, the trust would be on whether the documents will not then land somewhere else. We had an attitude against what happened at Kempton Park and our attitude went on and on until we entered the elections later, in 1999. So you can imagine from 1994 we held an attitude, very strong attitude. We didn't even go and vote when the first vote was conducted.<sup>436</sup>

On several occasions the CCS reminded the BCM of the importance of undertaking the project. No AZAPO material had been received by the end of 1995, but discussions between the University and the BCM continued to address the matter. There were other issues that

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<sup>435</sup>Interview with Phokobye.

<sup>436</sup>Interview with Nefolovhodwe.

slowed down the archives project including the fact that the movement focused on the merger relationships between AZAPO and the BCM (A). But since the BCM was committed to the repatriation of its records, in September 1995 Mosala promised to look into the subject.<sup>437</sup> Again on 9 February 1996 the CCS requested the BCM to recommend one senior official who would be charged with the repatriation process. Fort Hare was prepared to pay all expenses relating to the repatriation process, including an honorarium for the individual who would manage the project. To whet the BCM's appetite, it was reminded that the CCS had succeeded in repatriating PAC material from different countries.<sup>438</sup> Arguably, this was meant to demonstrate that the University had made serious inroads in repatriation, and that the BCM would be left in the cold if they did not form part of the initiative. The CCS may have also been concerned that the archives issue was dragging on, as the contract between the University and the BCM was signed in 1992 and nothing substantial took place after that. On 5 July 1996 the CCS proposed that the BCM should send a general letter to all its structures inside and outside the country and draw their attention to the archives project.<sup>439</sup> After all these deliberations, the repatriation process was once more endorsed by the AZAPO executive and Thokoane was charged with liaising with the University on the matter.<sup>440</sup>

Different AZAPO structures were requested to cooperate. They agreed to gather, collate and make their documentation available. As early as 1994, AZAPO and Fort Hare held meetings with the aim of identifying key individuals within the organization who could play a central role in finding and retrieving the organization's documentation. Those particular persons were expected to communicate the work of the archives to the leadership of the organization

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<sup>437</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

<sup>438</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi signed by Kukubo to Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, 9 February 1996.

<sup>439</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Strike Thokoane, 5 July 1996.

<sup>440</sup>*Ibid*: Mpotseng Jairus Kgokong to Themba Sirayi, 7 March 1996.



and its other structures, produce a programme of action on repatriation, administer the collection points and contacts across the country, liaise with Fort Hare on developments, conduct oral history research with members of the movement and collect artifacts including t-shirts, flags, buttons and audio-visual material.<sup>441</sup> The CCS reminded the BCM that it should identify a capable individual to run the project.<sup>442</sup> At first Oupa Ngwenya, a BCM cadre, was identified, but he had work commitments in Durban which required his complete attention and could only be available after 29 August 1994 and only if the movement had not succeeded in finding another relevant person.<sup>443</sup> AZAPO realized that they had to look elsewhere as the repatriation process had stalled for some time and action had to be taken. The movement turned to Mandla Mtsweni and Vuyisa Qunta to coordinate the repatriation project but this also fell through.<sup>444</sup>

AZAPO then turned to Gerald Phokobye. Though Phokobye was not an archivist by training, he was an intelligent and educated man. He had been a student at the University of the North, Turfloop, in the early 1970s and was one of those who pledged solidarity with the SRC when it was expelled from the university in 1972. Phokobye did not return to the university to further his studies and instead went to Johannesburg where he became regional secretary of SASO for the Transvaal and Free State. Due to political repression in the 1970s, he went into exile and later completed a masters degree in Political Science at the University of Toronto in Canada. A person of this calibre and experience could be expected to understand the

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<sup>441</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies: Interim Report on SSRC Grant, Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

<sup>442</sup>*Ibid*: Project Proposal: Archiving of Black Consciousness Material, G.T. Sirayi to Mandla Mtsweni and Oupa Ngwenya, 17 March 1993.

<sup>443</sup>*Ibid*: Oupa Ngwenya to G.T. Sirayi, 4 August 1994, G.T. Sirayi to Mandla Mtsweni and Oupa Ngwenya, 29 July 1994.

<sup>444</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies: Interim Report on SSRC Grant, Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

importance of heritage. In addition, Phokobye was a long standing member of the BCM with insight into its political activities.<sup>445</sup>

On 20 August 1997 the CCS updated Mzamane on developments around the repatriation of the BCM consignment and informed him that AZAPO had handpicked Phokobye to run the project. The CCS asked the University administration to approve Phokobye's appointment as Adjunct Research Fellow for three months and this was attended to with the following specifications:<sup>446</sup>

- To conduct a survey of BCM/AZAPO records
- To assemble, pack and relocate... records to Fort Hare
- To prepare a comprehensive research proposal on BCM/AZAPO history, focusing on oral and written history.<sup>447</sup>

The CCS looked forward to a warm working relationship with Phokobye.<sup>448</sup> Once he had assumed his duties, Phokobye was expected to give progress reports to the CCS timeously.<sup>449</sup>

The earlier repatriation of the BCM collection from Zimbabwe to South Africa made things easier for Phokobye as he could identify all those who housed the material for collection and

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<sup>445</sup> Interview with Phokobye, UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Curriculum Vitae of G.M. Phokobye.

<sup>446</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to Mbulelo Mzamane, 20 August 1997.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid*: Fezeka Madyibi to B. Ngcobo, 12 September 1997.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid*: Memorandum from Themba Sirayi to Gerald Phokobye, 3 November 1997.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Gerald Phokobye, nd.

shipment to Fort Hare. However, there were challenges with regard to AZAPO material in the hands of its members. For example in the mid-1990s AZAPO had no central office from which it could carry out its operations due to financial problems. In fact, the landlord of the Johannesburg building from which AZAPO operated locked the offices due to outstanding rent and helped himself to some of the valuables in the office in an effort to recover his money.<sup>450</sup> Probably the documents found in those offices were thrown into the nearest dustbin as they were obviously worthless to the owner of the building.

Phokobye took his work seriously and wrote to the rank and file of the BCM explaining that he was employed by Fort Hare to help identify BCM related material for repatriation and that he would soon be on the doorsteps of everyone concerned.<sup>451</sup> A draft generic letter from the BCM which Fort Hare had requested illustrates the strategy:

Dear Comrade

You may be aware of the fact that our Organisation has agreed to deposit its official archives and museum material with the University of Fort Hare. Our president signed an agreement of deposit in October 1992, thereby mandating the Centre for Cultural Studies to engage in retrieval of the archives and museum artefacts that are presently scattered in various repositories/offices of the organisation. In view of this, the Centre in collaboration with our organisation, is ready to embark on collection of these materials from offices of our organisation inside and outside South Africa. To assist the Centre and our movement in this task, we request you to give us an idea of the quality/nature and quantity of the material that is in your office. We therefore request you to complete the attached questionnaire and return it by fax at your earliest convenience. We also request you to identify a reliable freight company in your area which transport the material to South Africa. Could you, furthermore, request the freight company to, on the basis of your estimation of the quantity of the

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<sup>450</sup>Interview with Thokoane.

<sup>451</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Report from Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 5 November 1997, Gerald Phokobye to BCM cadres, nd.

material, provide us with a quotation for the transportation of the documents and artefacts.<sup>452</sup>

Phokobye telephoned and faxed letters to some cadres and where necessary visited them at their homes. He also sorted the movement's collection at the AZAPO headquarters in Dobsonville, preparing it for shipment to Fort Hare.<sup>453</sup> He also rang Gail Gerhart and requested her to consider Fort Hare as a custodian for her BCM collection. Earlier on, Gerhart had donated material to the CCS but was concerned since the collection was not acknowledged by the Centre. At the time, she was also completing another volume of *From Protest to Challenge* and was not sure where to donate her material upon completion of her book. She considered Fort Hare but was worried about media reports that the archives were gutted by fire.<sup>454</sup> These reports were misleading as it was the Fine Arts Department that was damaged by fire.<sup>455</sup>

Some BCM members heeded the call and others, problematically, opted to send copies of the material rather than the originals. AZAPO insisted on the originals as only thus could it be guaranteed that the documents were authentic.<sup>456</sup> Some BCM members may have developed a proprietorial attitude to the papers, hence the idea of clinging to them. Some remained distrustful and uncertain about the new South Africa. And it is also possible that some cadres had no idea about archives and simply saw no point in sending them to Fort Hare.

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<sup>452</sup>*Ibid*: draft letter, nd.

<sup>453</sup>*Ibid*: Report from Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 5 November 1997.

<sup>454</sup>*Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Themba Sirayi, 6 October 1997.

<sup>455</sup> See, <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=104090&sectioncode=26>, accessed on 23 July 2009 ; Interviews with Soul, Mzamane. UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files: Dawn Zain to Eddie Hedlin, 17 October 1997, Soul to Derrick Swartz and Narissa Ramdhani to Soul, 19 June 1999.

<sup>456</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 2 December 1997, Interview with Thokoane;

As noted, some of the documents were at AZAPO headquarters in Dobsonville; some at the regional office in Pietersburg and some at Nefolovhodwe's house in Leondale, Johannesburg.<sup>457</sup> The CCS requested Phokobye to photocopy such material with the understanding that the originals would be sent to Fort Hare, the copies remaining with the owners.<sup>458</sup> But the sorting of documents by Thokoane at AZAPO headquarters was slow. Though he promised to redouble his efforts this never materialized.<sup>459</sup> Cash strapped organizations like AZAPO were manned by a skeleton staff. It was a challenge to fulfill some of their obligations and the likes of Thokoane were drawn to other pressing issues. This impacted negatively on the archives project.

Since Phokobye had to duplicate material, it became his responsibility to locate photocopying outlets and notify the CCS to make payment arrangements.<sup>460</sup> Companies were identified by Phokobye<sup>461</sup> and Fort Hare promised to settle their accounts within 30 days.<sup>462</sup> This process was time consuming and some documents may have been lost during photocopying. For instance, on 11 June 1998 Phokobye informed the CCS that 12 boxes had to be collected from one of the photocopying companies and that no official from the Centre had shown up in spite of assurances that they would collect the material. The owner of the building was upset that documents were occupying space and not collected and threatened to charge for storage. Aggravating the problem was that the company had not been paid for the photocopying.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>457</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 6 January 1998.

<sup>458</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Gerald Phokobye, nd.

<sup>459</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Fort Hare Report by Gerald Phokobye.

<sup>460</sup>*Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Themba Sirayi, 20 February 1998, Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 27 March 1998.

<sup>461</sup>*Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 16 January 1998.

<sup>462</sup>*Ibid*: UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Themba Sirayi to Gerald Phokobye, nd.

<sup>463</sup>*Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Themba Sirayi, 11 June 1998.

Many BCM activists responded to the call and sent their documents to Fort Hare. One was Basil Manning, a long standing member of the BCM based in London during exile. On 9 March 1998 he informed Mzamane that he had sizeable BCM (A) documentation including the movement's publications. Mzamane promised Manning that the CCS would facilitate communication between him and Phokobye for the collection to be sent to Fort Hare.<sup>464</sup> Indeed, Phokobye did contact Manning and he repeated his willingness to part with his collection. The CCS made transport arrangements for the records to be sent to the University.<sup>465</sup> Advocate Imraan Moosa also had a collection on the BCM and promised to donate copies to the CCS.<sup>466</sup> Others who donated their material included Nengwekhulu, Dan Hebedi, Nkadimeng, Drake Koka, Sammy Tloubatla, Phil Mtimkulu, Dan Habedi, Chris Mokoditsoa and Mosibudi Mangena.<sup>467</sup> But in spite of this success, some BCM members who were requested to donate their collections to Fort Hare did not make their material available though they were constantly reminded about the project.<sup>468</sup> They probably did not see the point of going out of their way to plough through documents instead of paying attention to their daily needs and activities.

Some BCM linked structures like the Black Allied and Workers Union (BAWU) in Durban were not yet ready to send their collections to Fort Hare due to sluggish internal processes. For instance on 17 December 1997, Phokobye travelled to the BAWU offices in Durban to arrange for shipment of its documents to Fort Hare. Though he was assured before his trip

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<sup>464</sup>*Ibid*: Mbulelo Mzamane to Basil Manning, 9 March 1998.

<sup>465</sup>*Ibid*: T, Basil Manning to Mbulelo Mzamane, 9 February 1998, and Themba Sirayi to Basil Manning, 6 April 1998.

<sup>466</sup>*Ibid*: Robert Kukubo to Imraan Moosa, 15 September 1995, Imraan Moosa to Robert Kukubo, 22 September 1995, Robert Kukubo to Imraan Moosa, 17 October 1995.

<sup>467</sup>*Ibid*: Final Report: BCM-AZAPO documents /artifacts collection, by Gerald Phokobye,

<sup>468</sup>*Ibid*.

that he would have access to the documents, when he arrived he was informed by Dumisani Sithole, the union's acting Secretary-General that the NEC had not yet decided on the Fort Hare request. The documents still needed to be sorted and another set collected from Newcastle.<sup>469</sup> Sithole apologized to the CCS and said that the union's NEC would engage on the issue.<sup>470</sup>

There was, as mentioned earlier, still material held privately by BCM members in countries such as the Netherlands, Britain, US and Canada.<sup>471</sup> On 10 November 1997 Phokobye informed the senior administrator at the CCS, Johnson Klu, of his plans to travel to some of the European countries and the US to identify and repatriate the material lodged there.<sup>472</sup> But due to a tight budget, trips to these countries never materialized and different ways of retrieving such documents were investigated. For instance, Pheto promised to look into ways in which the material in London could reach AZAPO headquarters. Marge Boelisma, based in the Netherlands, also promised to send BCM material dating back to 1974, while Mike Moeti in Canada promised to bring documents on a visit to South Africa.<sup>473</sup>

For Phokobye, travel to different parts of South Africa had its own challenges. He often used buses and put his life in danger by using taxis. It was difficult for him to claim his money from Fort Hare since taxis issued no receipts, and on one occasion informed Lupuwana that he had not been refunded for a certain claim and asked her to 'please nudge them a little to effect these payments soon!' To add to his misery, he often ran out of cash and had to write

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<sup>469</sup>*Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 6 January 1998, documents B.A.W.U office(Durban).

<sup>470</sup>*Ibid*: D.E. Sithole to the Centre for Cultural Studies, nd.

<sup>471</sup>*Ibid*: Report from Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 5 November 1997.

<sup>472</sup>*Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Johnson Klu, 10 November 1997.

<sup>473</sup>*Ibid*: Final Report: BCM-AZAPO documents /artifacts collection, by Gerald Phokobye,

to the CCS and ask for more travelling funds.<sup>474</sup> When Phokobye's contract expired, he had collected 29 000 pages of archival material. Since there was more work to be done, he was re-employed by Fort Hare from 22 June to 31 December 1998.<sup>475</sup>

The CCS expected Phokobye to produce an oral history project proposal, which he did. His vision of the project was that it should be all encompassing and include the liberation struggle as whole as well as socio-economic, cultural and other aspects. He hoped that the CCS would create a department specifically dedicated to oral histories and that around one hundred interviews could be conducted. He envisaged the project running for six months.<sup>476</sup> As shown in this thesis, the CCS and the liberation movements whose material was housed at Fort Hare always believed that the repatriation of archival material had to be complemented with oral history programmes to produce a comprehensive history of the struggle. Thus, it was important for Phokobye to implement an oral history research programme as requested by the CCS. In fact, over the years, many researchers who used the struggle material at Fort Hare also conducted oral interview to complement their archival work.<sup>477</sup>

The squabbles within AZAPO in the 1990s also weighed heavily on the repatriation process. There were those dissatisfied with the leadership of AZAPO who eventually left to form the Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA). These included senior members such as Mabasa and Nkosi Molala. When Phokobye went around the country to collect AZAPO materials, he did not succeed in securing documents from the disgruntled SOPA members. They simply refused to

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<sup>474</sup>*Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Noludwe Lupuwana, 2 December 1997.

<sup>475</sup>*Ibid*: Memorandum from Themba Sirayi to T.N.V. Maqashalala, 18 June 1998.

<sup>476</sup>*Ibid*: Oral Research Program.

<sup>477</sup> For examples of work that relied on struggle records at Fort Hare as well as oral histories see the different volumes of South African Education Trust (Sadet), *the Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1-5.



part with the material which included important documents in the hands of Mabasa which remain at the SOPA offices in Johannesburg. However this situation may be rectified as officials from both parties assert that now that tension between the two organizations has subsided, they could perhaps engage on the future of AZAPO documents in the hands of SOPA members.<sup>478</sup> On 5 November 1997, Phokobye reported that ‘there are some documents-photographs in possession of Lybon Mabasa and possibly Dr. I.J. Mosala and Strini Moodley to which we may not be able to gain access. Already Lybon has intimated to me that he won’t release any of them at (sic) his group is no longer with Azapo - the arrangement with the centre was only made with Azapo and is only binding to that extent. Past Azapo materials with his group cannot be let go’.<sup>479</sup> Such are the difficulties of running an archives repatriation project.

The sensitive nature of some documents, such as those pertaining to military operations and other underground activities, meant that they had to be embargoed for an unspecified period. The movement was also concerned that the political situation in South Africa was still fragile. No-one could predict what former apartheid security agents might do to damage the image of the BCM. For such reasons the organisation was hesitant to release some of the documents kept in the AZAPO headquarters in Johannesburg to Fort Hare. Though the MOU between AZAPO and Fort Hare was signed in 1992, the organisation’s material was only sent to the University after Phokobye had been appointed as project co-ordinator in 1997. In addition there was concern that ‘the western agencies are all into...understanding the mind-set of all liberation movements in order to build up strategies against such movements and if you lay yourself to easy search, to easy spying activities and so forth and so forth, people might get to

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<sup>478</sup> Interviews with Mabasa, Thokoane.

<sup>479</sup> UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Report to the Centre for Cultural Studies: University of Fort Hare: Re: collection of AZAPO and BCM documents and materials by Gerald Phokobye, 5 November 1997.

know things that they were not supposed to know existed at that time'.<sup>480</sup> It is not clear when embargoed documents are going to be released to the public as AZAPO has not yet developed an archives policy. In fact, archives have been overtaken by more pressing issues such as making efforts to grow the organization's membership. The embargoed documents remain at AZAPO headquarters and the rest are housed at the CCS and are accessible to scholars.<sup>481</sup>

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has shown how Fort Hare obtained PAC and BCM material, and what kind of material from these organizations ended up at Fort Hare. It has explained why the two organizations agreed to their material going to Fort Hare; the importance of individuals (notably Gqobose) in the repatriation; how funds were obtained to pay for it; and how some material was seized by the police or destroyed before it reached Fort Hare, some during the intense violence between AZAPO and the UDF. Some documents remain in the hands of BCM members, who continue to refuse to hand them over for archiving at Fort Hare. All this helps to explain why the material at Fort Hare is there, and why it has the particular profile that it has.

### ***Chapter 5: Separate but 'Equal'?***

#### *A) The CCS- without the ANC archives*

As we have seen, the CCS emerged battered from the battle for the ANC archives. The fight to retain the ANC archives was in vain. Sirayi and his staff had to pick up the pieces and

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<sup>480</sup>Interview with Phokobye.

<sup>481</sup>Interviews with Thokoane, Kgokong, for an overview on these documents see, Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements', *History in Africa*.

move on. After all, the Centre was still a custodian of other liberation movements archives, though such collections did not carry the same weight as those of the ANC.

The process of reviving the CCS resumed in September 1994 when the University task team approved its work, leaving the University Council to rubber-stamp its recommendations, which included consent to the construction of the CCS building. That the construction of the building had been put on hold had caused alarm among different stakeholders. Had the project been permanently shelved, De Beers would have lost faith in Fort Hare's ability to deliver on projects of this nature. To reopen negotiations with De Beers, Fort Hare held a meeting with the company on 1 September 1995. To the University's relief, Dr. Michael O'Dowd, the Chairman of the De Beers Fund, reaffirmed the company's commitment to the CCS building project.<sup>482</sup> O' Dowd, who had an academic background and later in 1998 was appointed Chairman of the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), understood the problems and challenges that institutions of higher education often face. Mzamane wrote to O'Dowd on 4 October and expressed his gratitude for understanding Fort Hare's trials and tribulations. He reassured O'Dowd that indeed the University Council approved the construction process and added that he had authorized the University Construction Management Committee to implement the plans. He also informed O'Dowd that the first meeting of the Construction Committee was scheduled for 29 September 1995, where issues about the construction of the CCS archives building were to be thrashed out.<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>482</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Brief Progress Report: U.F.H. / AAC De Beers Centre for Cultural Studies Construction Programme; NAHECS Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies: Office of the Director, progress report: July-September 1995.

<sup>483</sup>*Ibid*: Mbulelo Mzamane to M.C. O'Dowd, 04 October 1995.

The unpalatable news for De Beers was that the cost of the new building had ballooned to R5 493 832 after some new features were added to the building plan.<sup>484</sup> In spite of this, De Beers stood to gain from this initiative. It was strategic for the company to be associated with a liberation-related project in the new South Africa. That the ANC archives were moved to the library was a blow, but the situation at Fort Hare was not of De Beers' making and the fact that the company had opted to support the illustrious University was a public relations advantage for De Beers. Tim George, a representative from De Beers, was open to the University's new financial demands. On 17 November 1995 he informed the University that a new funding proposal and business plan should be submitted to the De Beers trustees for consideration. George also wanted assurance that Fort Hare would pay CCS salaries and financially support the Centre's research and academic activities. He also queried whether the project would have buy-in from the government and other donors.<sup>485</sup> This indicates that De Beers did not want to construct a building unless it had the blessing of the government, and wanted it to be adequately utilized, as if it was not it would amount to wasteful expenditure. The CCS did in fact continue to receive funds from various organizations, such as Wirtschaftministerium Baden in Germany, Transnet, and the United States Information Agency, thanks to the linkage between Fort Hare and Michigan State University.<sup>486</sup> Though ANC material had been removed from the CCS, it still had the support of government departments like Arts and Culture. Now as Minister of Education, Bengu would open the CCS building. So there was buy-in from the government and the private sector with regard to the construction of the archives building. On 19 December Mzamane assured George that the CCS was working on revising its funding proposals for De Beers and that they would be

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<sup>484</sup>*Ibid*: Mbulelo Mzamane to M.C. O'Dowd, 16 October 1995.

<sup>485</sup>*Ibid*: T.R. George to Mbulelo Mzamane, 17 November 1995.

<sup>486</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Report on two years work of the Centre for Cultural Studies 1 January 1995-31 December 1996.

submitted in due course.<sup>487</sup> Fort Hare could not afford to lose this funding and the revised CCS strategic plan and other documents requested by De Beers were duly submitted to the company. The CCS's strategic plan had also been approved by the University Council.<sup>488</sup>

From 1995, the CCS established links with other institutions to make its archives programmes more concrete. It initiated partnerships with the University of Michigan and Michigan State University. During their visits to Fort Hare in 1995 and 1996 officials from the University of Michigan met with those from the CCS and discussed matters of mutual interest and agreed to continue to communicate.<sup>489</sup> Clearly, the University of Michigan was impressed by the CCS's work, as after their initial meetings the institution sought to strengthen relations with Fort Hare and the Centre. On 15 March 1996 Renee Simmons, a University of Michigan official, informed the CCS that her institution was prepared to donate books to the Centre to enhance academic programmes. She also promised to visit Fort Hare, to take discussions between the two institutions to a higher level.<sup>490</sup> Fort Hare took this relationship very seriously.

The relationship between the CCS and the University of Michigan was further strengthened when Charles Moody, its Executive Director and Vice Provost for Minority Affairs, informed Sirayi on 23 April 1996 that he had been nominated to be King/Chavez/Parks (KCP) Visiting Professor at his university. Moody hoped to link him with departments that would benefit the work of the CCS, the Center for African American & African Studies, the Bentley Historical

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<sup>487</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Mbulelo Mzamane to T.R. George, 20 December 1995.

<sup>488</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies, office of the Director: Third interim report on SSRC Grant: Covering the period 1 January- 31 December 1995.

<sup>489</sup>*Ibid*: Kathryn Moore, Susan Melnick, Moses Turner, Norris Bryson to ThembaSirayi, 26 January 1996.

<sup>490</sup>*Ibid*: Renee Simmons to ThembaSirayi, 15 March 1996.

Library, the Art Museum, Department of Museum Practice, and the Institute for Social Research, the Vice Provost for Academic Multicultural Affairs, the Eva Jesse Music Collection, and the Department of Drama. Moody hoped that Sirayi would visit the DuSable Museum in Chicago, the National African American Museum at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio and the Smithsonian in Washington.<sup>491</sup> These connections were likely to benefit the work of the CCS. Sirayi was grateful for the opportunity to immerse himself in the US heritage and tertiary sectors and used the opportunity to raise funds for the CCS.<sup>492</sup> As part of these collaborations, the University of Michigan wanted to introduce their first black vice-chancellor, Horner Neal, to Mzamane, his Fort Hare opposite number. Moody also hoped that the relationship with Fort Hare would familiarize Neal with South African higher education. The CCS continued to feature in Moody's plans,<sup>493</sup> and when he retired at the end of 1996, acting director Oscar Barbarin promised to take over from where his predecessor had left off.<sup>494</sup>

### *Implementation and challenges*

There was much enthusiasm and optimism at the CCS when in February 1997 a sod-turning ceremony for the long awaited CCS building was held. Maaba recalls that 'in what appeared to be a repeat of the scene at Freedom Square when the first consignment of the ANC papers arrived, dignitaries, students and university officials watched, on 17 February 1997, as the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Arnold Stofile, who is also a Fort Hare alumnus, turned the sod

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<sup>491</sup>*Ibid*: Charles Moody to Themba Sirayi, 23 April 1996.

<sup>492</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Charles Moody, 13 June 1996.

<sup>493</sup>*Ibid*: Charles Moody to Mbulelo Mzamane, 30 May 1996.

<sup>494</sup>*Ibid*: Oscar Barbarin to Themba Sirayi, 23 October 1996.

at the site where the new building was to stand.<sup>495</sup> By the end of 1997 the building was ready.<sup>496</sup>

From 13-19 April 1997 Mzamane and Sirayi visited the University of Michigan and Michigan State University. During their visit at the University of Michigan, Mzamane attended the Advisory Board of the University's International Institute and held a meeting with Neal, discussing staff development programmes for Fort Hare. Sirayi focused on the preparations for the planned visit by the joint University of Michigan and Michigan State University delegation to Fort Hare scheduled for June and July that year. It was agreed that the intended visit should focus on a situational audit and needs assessment for the CCS and that recommendations be made on steps to be undertaken in tackling the needs of the archival and museum deposits at the university. Furthermore, as part of staff development Kwatsha would enroll for a masters degree in Archives and Record Management with the University of Michigan and upon the completion of her studies archives assistant Lupuwana would register with the institution. When Mzamane and Sirayi met the University of Michigan Chancellor, Charlie Nelms, he promised to mobilize resources for Fort Hare.<sup>497</sup> Michigan State University also committed to the Fort Hare staff development programme. Fort Hare staff was welcome to register for degrees and diplomas that would improve research and academic programmes at Fort Hare. An MSU team consisting of Dr. Kurt Dewhurst and ML Macdowell were to form part of the delegation to visit Fort Hare mid-year to offer advice on

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<sup>495</sup>Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness-oriented movements', *History in Africa*. Other dignitaries present were Mzamane, representatives from Anglo-American, Margie Keeton and George and the Provincial Government representatives from Arts and Culture including Lindiwe Msengana-Ndlela, a Director in the department as well as the town's mayor, M. Masala

<sup>496</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Centre for Cultural Studies, Progress report for the period, January-December 1997 by Themba Sirayi.

<sup>497</sup>*Ibid*: A report on a visit to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 13-19 April 1997, Fezeka Madyibi to Linda Russel, 26 May 1997, Kurt Dewhurst to Themba Sirayi, 30 May 1997.

museum and archival holdings<sup>498</sup>. Funding for the partnership had been secured from the United States Information Agency, the University Of Michigan School Of Information, the Ford Foundation and the MSU College of Arts and Letters.<sup>499</sup> The programme was expected to run for three years. It remained crucial for Fort Hare to make good use of this opportunity as there was no guarantee that the partnership would be extended beyond the allocated time. To draw the University community into the collaboration between the CCS and the Michigan institutions, the Centre requested Fort Hare management to persuade interested departments to tap into the Michigan networks.<sup>500</sup> The Fort Hare-Michigan partnership was indeed an opportunity for the CCS to reassert itself especially following the loss of the ANC archives to the Library.

At the CCS, the processing of PAC material had to be prioritized as some of the material had already been received. The work commenced in 1996, starting with the Tanzanian collection and followed by the Zimbabwean mission. The London mission was processed in 1997 followed by the New York material. The assistant archivists, Kwatsha and Lupuwana, were made permanent employees of the University, bringing about stability in the archives.<sup>501</sup> In June 1997 the PAC sent a further eleven full boxes of archival material in need of processing.<sup>502</sup> So though the ANC archives had been moved to the Library, the CCS archivists were fully occupied.

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<sup>498</sup>*Ibid*: A report on a visit to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 13-19 April 1997.

<sup>499</sup>*Ibid*: Preservation, Management, and Use of Archives and Museum collections at the University of Fort Hare, Report and Recommendations.

<sup>500</sup>*Ibid*: Themba Sirayi to Mbulelo Mzamane, 29 May 1997.

<sup>501</sup>*Ibid*: Robert Kukubo to Olivia Frost, 11 September 1997, Themba Sirayi to Olivia Frost, 11 September 1997.

<sup>502</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, Progress report for the period, January-December 1997 by Themba Sirayi.



The CCS remained concerned about the delay in initiating an oral history programme with PAC veterans. As noted, the PAC material received by Fort Hare had gaps including the movement's underground activities and its military activities. On 8 May 1997, Lupuwana raised this matter with the senior archivist, Kukubo, and argued that to close gaps, PAC veterans such as Gqobose, Johnson Mlambo and MlindazweNkula had to be interviewed. 'It would be great mistake on our part', he said, 'to let these old veterans leave this world without telling us their hands-on experience concerning PAC'.<sup>503</sup>

Some assistance in oral history came from elsewhere. In 1998 Gerhart found four more PAC interviews in her collection which she donated to the CCS. The first set of PAC interviews from her had been sent to the Centre in 1996.<sup>504</sup> This was a special donation especially considering that the CCS had not initiated an oral history project to interview PAC stalwarts. It remained an aspiration that was talked about from time to time. Also, though the CCS was doing its best to process material already received, it still experienced problems with repatriation of the Unity Movement material. Only a few documents trickled in, thanks to the efforts of Dudley, the organization's President.<sup>505</sup>

Kukupu fell ill in June 1997 and was hospitalized. This destabilized the CCS. Further, Kwatsha left for the University of Michigan at the end of August 1997 to pursue her studies.<sup>506</sup> Both Sirayi and Kukubo had acted as Kwatsha's referees and spoke highly of the young archivist, describing her as a mature, hard working, committed and diligent individual

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<sup>503</sup>*Ibid*: Noludwe Lupuwana to the Senior Archivist, 5 May 1997.

<sup>504</sup>*Ibid*: Administrative Files, Gail Gerhart to Themba Sirayi, 26 January 1998.

<sup>505</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, Progress report for the period, January-December 1997 by Themba Sirayi.

<sup>506</sup>*Ibid*: Fourth Interim Report on SSRC Grant covering the period 1 January-31 October 1997.

with a huge appetite for work.<sup>507</sup> Though her training would eventually benefit the CCS, and demonstrated how Fort Hare could benefit from the Michigan partnership, her departure put immense pressure on Lupuwana. As a stopgap, the CCS hoped to utilize the assistance of student archivists from the University of Michigan to assist in processing the archival material.<sup>508</sup> Sadly, Kukubo succumbed to cancer in November 1997.<sup>509</sup> His death created a serious void at the CCS which battled to find a replacement for the diligent, dedicated and hands-on archivist.<sup>510</sup> It had pained Kukubo to witness the fierce battles over archives on campus. His daughter Carolyn Kukubo recalls:

The building [archives building] that he was part and parcel of, drawing plans and everything came up and .... he didn't get to see the building. He only saw it from the road when.... we were driving him to the hospital. He felt that we never utilized such a tremendously important resource like the archives. It pained him that we did not structure ourselves to market the archives and get people interested. He was disappointed because he felt that more incentives should have been put out especially for there to be historians and students studying history at Fort Hare and try and link it with the archives we have.<sup>511</sup>

After a Michigan team visited Fort Hare from 23 June to 4 July 1997 to assess the University's archival and museum situation, they came to the conclusion that the following were essential for the envisaged archives building:

- A high quality heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system to control temperature and humidity and to establish and maintain pest control.
- Security systems to prevent theft of material and a fire detection and suppression system.

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<sup>507</sup>*Ibid*: Robert Kukubo to Olivia Frost, 11 September 1997, ThembaSirayi to Olivia Frost, 11 September 1997.

<sup>508</sup>*Ibid*: Centre for Cultural Studies, Progress report for the period, January-December 1997 by ThembaSirayi.

<sup>509</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>510</sup>*Ibid*: National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre: Final Report prepared for Social Science Research Council (SSRC), interview with Kukubo.

<sup>511</sup>Interview with Kukubo.

- Work spaces and equipment for processing and basic preservation of museum and archival materials (fumigation, cleaning, restoration, reproduction, cataloging, microfilming, and exhibit preparation).
- Shelving, storage equipment, and display cases meeting archival and museum professional standards.
- Acid-free folders, storage boxes, supports and matting materials for housing archives, works of art, and museum objects.
- Furniture and equipment for staff offices and research facilities (desks, chairs, tables, computers, filing cabinets, etc.).

The Michigan team was impressed by the work of the CCS archivists. In their view, the opening of the new building would make the Centre conspicuous. It recommended that the CCS align its work with departments like Anthropology, History and African Languages. Visiting professorships and other research-oriented innovations should be introduced to enhance archival research. Though similar suggestions were made by the ANC to the University to enhance the work of the archives, as stressed elsewhere in this thesis, the lack of research capacity at Fort Hare stood in the way of these dreams. The team also noted that:

the geographic isolation of the University of Fort Hare remains a significant impediment to research use of the collections ... strategies can be developed to reduce the inconvenience to researchers by providing remote access to the finding aids, indexes, and catalogs to the collections; preparing more detailed finding aids; and reforming selected portions of the collections so that copies can be made available at remote locations. If portions of the collections were microfilmed or digitised, copies of the microfilm or CD-ROMs could be sold...<sup>512</sup>

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<sup>512</sup>UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Preservation, Management, and Use of Archives and Museum collections at the University of Fort Hare, Report and Recommendations.

Digitizing or producing CD-ROMs for use elsewhere would prove a contentious issue, as we will see when dealing with an attempt to digitize ANC material by the University of Connecticut in 1999 and subsequently by Aluka. Had the Michigan team insisted on digitizing struggle material from Fort Hare, they too would have burnt their fingers as the University and the liberation movements concerned were likely to have opposed such attempts.

The Michigan team also made recommendations regarding staff, management and coordination of archives at Fort Hare. They believed that all liberation archives had to be housed in a single centre under the auspices of a *Fort Hare Archives for Liberation and Cultural Heritage*. This, they thought, could ensure the effective management of the archives and staff members could become skilled in more than one area 'rather than assigning staff to work with specific collections'. The team also believed that the University needed to run a single access system for archives as it would be frustrating for researchers to have to access different databases and finding aids while identifying material for their research projects. For the Michigan team, it was essential for the archives to be governed by a board of trustees with representatives from major donors, university administrators, government cultural agencies and professional associations as these stakeholders could play a meaningful role in strategizing, fundraising and promoting the work of the archives.<sup>513</sup> Stanley Mogoba, the PAC president at the time, held the same view,<sup>514</sup> and during the tussle for the ANC archives, Kecskemeti had made similar suggestions to Sirayi.<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*: [note] Mfanasekhaya Gqobose to Themba Sirayi.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*: Professional advice on the claim of the university library to extend its competence to the archives of the liberation movements, Charles Kecskemeti to G.T. Sirayi, 3 October 1994.

Though the Michigan team's proposals were sensible, they were difficult to implement due to the conflict between the Library and the CCS. To protect the image of the University, the Michigan team may have not been fully briefed about the tense situation and may have underestimated the magnitude of the problem. However, the CCS did table some of the recommendations made by the Michigan institutions to the University community at a liberation archives workshop held on 10 October 1997 aimed at creating a working relationship between the CCS and the Library. The CCS submitted a position paper proposing the integration of archives under one umbrella, adopting the Michigan team's title *University of Fort Hare Archives for Liberation and Cultural Heritage* to refer to the united archives. The Centre also embraced the idea of a board of trustees led by the University Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), University Librarian, Senior Archivist, Senior Curator, representatives from the liberation movements, donors, the Ministry of Arts and Culture, national and provincial, as well as the National Archives of South Africa or the Eastern Cape Archives. At the workshop, the CCS also promised to introduce research programmes that would cut across various disciplines. By arguing that the archives be housed under one roof, the CCS was advancing its own agenda as the future custodian of all the liberation archives. At the same workshop, the Centre reported on progress made in the construction of the new archives building expected to be completed by November. The CCS envisaged that the building would be officially opened between April and June 1998.<sup>516</sup> University management however advocated a separate new building which would be controlled neither by the CCS nor the University Library. University management assigned Dawn Zain, the Director of Development and Public Affairs, to raise funds for the project.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>516</sup>*Ibid*: Liberation Archives Workshop, 10 October 1997: a submission paper by the Centre for Cultural Studies.

<sup>517</sup>*Ibid*: The National Liberation Archives: fundraising position paper developed by Dawn Zain, Director of Development and Public Affairs at the University of Fort Hare.

The CCS continued to strengthen ties with the Michigan institutions and tried to implement some of the proposed plans. After all, both Michigan University and MSU were cooperative and willing to work with the CCS. Though the ANC archives formed part of the records that the Michigan team wished to process when they visit Fort Hare in May or June of 1998,<sup>518</sup> the fact that the CCS had cemented relations with the two institutions remained crucial in the context of power relations at the University.

The CCS also hoped to expand its reach elsewhere in the US. It eyed Howard University, a celebrated historically black institution. On 27 March 1998, Johnson Klu the Centre's project officer, informed Professor Oscar Barbarin from the University of Michigan on CCS plans to expand their links. The Centre hoped to secure three to five masters students from Howard to work as research assistants. Such research assistants could play a meaningful role in the oral history project which the CCS hoped to implement and would also assist in organizing the Centre's workshops, seminars and conferences.<sup>519</sup> On the other hand, the CCS was hard pressed to find a replacement for Kukubo. In May 1998, Margaret Hedstrom, an archives specialist in the School of Information at the University of Michigan, advised the Centre on the duties and qualifications that the new archivist ought to have: supervision of the transfer of archives, accessioning and initial processing of new archival material, and arrangement and description of archival material. She also expected the archivist to produce policies for procedures, reference and reader services for the new archives building, itemize requirements for use of the archival material, specify access restrictions and inculcate proper citation of material and new acquisitions. To her, it was important for the new senior archivist to develop a preservation programme especially since the new facility was to be equipped with a

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<sup>518</sup>*Ibid*: William Wallach to Themba Sirayi, 28 February 1998.

<sup>519</sup>*Ibid*: Memorandum from Johnson Klu to Oscar Barbarin, 27 March 1998.

conservation laboratory. He or she would also ensure that a proper website for the centre was maintained and play a meaningful role in fundraising for the CCS.<sup>520</sup> The CCS eventually secured the services of Khayundi, originally from Kenya like Kukubo. Khayundi was expected to assume duties on 1 October 1998 but his appointment was delayed following a moratorium on appointments by University management. The Centre feared that further delay in Khayundi's appointment would seriously affect the work of the archives.<sup>521</sup>

Though the appointment of Khayundi was temporarily delayed, the CCS could still count on its Michigan partners to ensure that the archives work, including the processing of material, was carried forward. Eight masters students from Michigan arrived in May-June 1998 to assist with processing the PAC records.<sup>522</sup> Though this was a stop-gap measure, it made a difference. For instance there were 508 reel-to-reel tapes produced through Radio Tanzania in Dar-es-Salaam, the UN Radio Service and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Company. The Michigan Team sorted and stored these reel-to-reel tapes separately. The Michigan team also properly categorized the PAC documents into London, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Johannesburg missions. The website and a finding aid were also developed as promised. The team also imparted archival skills to CCS staff,<sup>523</sup> and when the BCM material was received it was processed following the Michigan guidelines.<sup>524</sup> The team recommended that the PAC's 'audio visual material be transferred into proper individual plastic storage boxes for reel to reel and video tapes'. Due to lack of time, the Michigan team was unable to process non-PAC publications but recommended that efforts be made to process the material and

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<sup>520</sup>*Ibid*: Memorandum Margaret Hedstrom to ThembaSirayi, 15 May 1998.

<sup>521</sup>*Ibid*: Memorandum from Johnson Klu to NAHECS Committee, 6 October 1998.

<sup>522</sup>Denise Anthony, Heather Briston, Kwatsha, Cal Lee, Tabitha Ogglesby, Jennifer Lewis, Robinson and Jack Robinson.

<sup>523</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, University of Michigan School of Information summary of project work completed at the Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Fort Hare, May 9-June 15, 1998, National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre: Final Report prepared for Social Science Research Council(SSRC)

<sup>524</sup>*Ibid*.

update the finding aid. They added that they would for the moment host the CCS website but that this responsibility should eventually be Fort Hare's. The group also recommended that the struggle artifacts be properly described and listed in the finding aid, and that a proper description of the Unity Movement's microfilms be made.<sup>525</sup>

Apart from this, there were other notable achievements by the CCS in 1998. For example, there was a marked increase in the number of researchers who used the archives, including post-graduates from Political Science, History, African Languages and Library Science. Honours and masters students from Rhodes and Stellenbosch universities took advantage of the archives. PAC members also consulted the archives as the movement's material was lodged at the Centre. The CCS worked towards the implementation of the Michigan proposal that there should be a board of trustees. The advertisement calling for nominations of trustees was placed in newspapers in September and October. The Centre also moved towards formalizing relations with other institutions including Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom, Howard University, as mentioned earlier, and the University of Amsterdam.<sup>526</sup>

The formal opening of the CCS on 19 September 1998, which thenceforth was to be called the NAHECS, put it at centre stage. This was a long awaited occasion which nearly did not take place due to delays sparked by the battle for the ANC archives. The Centre's collection was no longer to be stored in various locations on campus but in a centralized building which would enable effective control of the material. Bengu, now Minister of Education, officially

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<sup>525</sup>*Ibid*: University of Michigan School of Information summary of project work completed at the Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Fort Hare, May 9-June 15, 1998.

<sup>526</sup>*Ibid*: National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre: Final Report prepared for Social Science Research Council(SSRC).



opened the building. This was a generous gesture considering that the squabble for archives started during his tenure. The Centre was proud of its state of the art building and invited the PAC to come and inspect it. Klu informed the movement that:

We wish to inform you that the Archives have been relocated to the new NAHECS building and have since been opened to researchers, who are showing a lot of interest in the collections. As part of the process of involving the PAC leadership in decisions affecting the Archives, we deem it necessary to invite PAC representatives such as yourself to visit the Archives in order to assess the state of the collections, view finding aids, and comment on any aspects that relate to the Archives. We wish to suggest Tuesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of December [1998] for the visit. Please apprise us of your availability at your earliest convenience.<sup>527</sup>

Ironically, after all the drama around the ANC material, the movement's records were eventually returned to the CCS, by then NAHECS, in January 2010, as efforts by the Library to extend the building for proper storage of the ANC archives did not materialize. University management had also not succeeded in raising funds for an archives unit separate from the influence of both Library and CCS. In an interview with Sirayi in 2010, the author of the thesis drew the former CCS director's attention to the fact that the ANC archives were again under the Centre's custodianship. 'Where else can they go?' he asked.<sup>528</sup>

#### B) *The ANC Archives in the University Library*

The CCS had fought hard to retain the ANC collection, without success. It was now under the control of the University Library, which was expected to develop the archives project appropriately. At the Library, the ANC archives came under the control of Tau, an esteemed librarian. She was an experienced manager who had headed the library at the University of Lesotho, which had its own archives section. She had also been the ambassador of Lesotho to the US and later Spain and Portugal. The benefits of such postings were numerous as she

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<sup>527</sup>*Ibid*: Johnson Klu to Mfanasekhaya Gqobose, 11 December 1998.

<sup>528</sup>Interview with Sirayi.

rubbed shoulders with senior ANC members in exile. She came to Fort Hare in 1992 after applying for the post of University Librarian.<sup>529</sup> Due to her impressive record, the ANC was comfortable that the organization's collection was under her stewardship.<sup>530</sup> Her deputy, Yolisa Soul, describes Tau as someone who:

carried that necessary depth and perhaps even political clout that was recognized by the political organizations especially the ANC. Because you know with archives, anybody who deposits archives especially liberation archives you'll make sure that you are comfortable with the views and opinions of whoever is heading the library because you'll want that archive to develop and somebody to maintain that kind of balance.<sup>531</sup>

Tau was indeed a very strong character who never minced her words. She was, in many ways, the Ginwala of Fort Hare and did not take nonsense even from the ANC. At one time she took a stance against an ANC archives official who appeared to be trying to run the archives without Library involvement:

I have thought long and hard about your visit on Th (sic) 22<sup>nd</sup> April to Fort Hare. I do not see why you would visit the Vice-Chancellor on the ANC archives in my absence. I also find it hard to believe that a meeting was held in Cape Town on the archives scholarship without a representative of the library. On Ike [Maamoe], I feel that you may level criticism at him. But, you never made time to come and sit with him for a few days to tell him what your expectations are. We must then be fair to him. I have a strong feeling that the library is being marginalized by the ANC. For this reason I will not be available on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April for our meeting. I will see you later in JHB at a time convenient to both of us to hear about your future plans.<sup>532</sup>

Tau's threats were real. She was not present at the archives meeting held at Fort Hare on 22 April 1997. She simply sent her apology.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>529</sup>UFH: Human Resource Department, Administrative Files, M.N. Tau to the Personnel Manager, Human Resource Department, Fort Hare, 21 February 1992.

<sup>530</sup>Interview with Mzamane, Soul.

<sup>531</sup>Interviews with Soul, UFH: Human Resource Department, Administrative Files, M.N. Tau to Fort Hare's Personnel Manager, 24 February 1992. Denis Fahy to Fort Hare, 28 February 1992,

<sup>532</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, M.N. Tau to Narissa, 18 April 1997.

<sup>533</sup>*Ibid*: Minutes of a meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1997.

Tau was recommended as University Librarian at Fort Hare by highly placed people. They are of course the recommendations of friends who would be unlikely to be openly critical, but they do capture Tau's personality and competence. One recommendation came from Timothy Thahane, Vice President and Secretary of the World Bank, who worked closely with Tau at the University of Lesotho. At the time, he was Director of Planning in the Lesotho government and relied on Tau to secure research material on economic and social issues. Over the years he kept in touch with Tau and later worked closely with her especially when she was Lesotho's ambassador to the US. He described Tau as:

Very intelligent, hardworking and full of drive. Through her untiring and persistent efforts, she persuaded the University authorities to build a new library and was instrumental in raising funds for it. As Ambassador to the United States, she quickly became one of the most respected and dynamic Ambassadors in the U.S. She displayed excellent diplomatic skills, tact and an unusual grasp of the complexities of the processes of the U.S. Administration and Congress. She has a sharp analytical mind and superb communication skills. As Ambassador, she led Lesotho negotiation teams with the World Bank and participated in World Bank sponsored workshops on Women in Development where her contributions were greatly valued.

He further described Tau as an experienced administrator who initiated and pioneered a number of Lesotho's national programmes including the establishment of the Women's Bureau and also played a leading role in seminars pertaining to women's rights. Thahane also brought it to Fort Hare's attention that Tau had served on the UNESCO Cultural Committee for the Development of Libraries, Archives, and Museums and was instrumental in persuading the Lesotho government to relocate the national archives to the University Library where she was in charge. She not only oversaw the archives at the University of Lesotho but

also taught librarianship in the Faculty of Education and advised on the development of School Libraries. 'Above all', stressed Thahane, 'she is a lady of great integrity'.<sup>534</sup>

Another positive recommendation came from Denis Fahy, former Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Lesotho, who knew Tau from her days as a new graduate recruit at the University Library until she became University Librarian. Fahy also interacted with Tau when she was Lesotho's ambassador to the US and Britain. He recalled that Tau was a formidable person of high integrity who worked well with others. Later on when Tau became a member of the University Council she made strong interventions and argued in favour of vernacular literature, local research and a focus on extra-mural activities. She also encouraged the University to establish a relationship with school libraries and built strong ties with libraries from other African countries, such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Swaziland and Botswana. Fahy said that Tau was a match for her counterparts including deans and heads of departments and on several occasions represented the University of Lesotho in international gatherings at the request of the Vice-chancellor. Her experience in the west gave her an opportunity to study different library models.<sup>535</sup> This would be an advantage for a Fort Hare emerging from apartheid. In addition, Tau was a South African from Alexandra township and could use her credentials to leverage. Also, some of the well placed ANC exiles came from Alexandra and included Serote, Alfred Nzo and Zanele Mbeki. In addition, there were many South African students in the 1970s and 1980s at the University of Lesotho and she could take advantage of this network to advance the ANC archives agenda.

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<sup>534</sup>UFH: Human Resource Department, Administrative Files, Timothy Thahane to the Personnel Manager, Human Resource Division at Fort Hare, 24 February 1992.

<sup>535</sup>*Ibid*: Denis Fahy to the Personnel Manager, 28 February 1992.

Now that the ANC archives had been transferred to the Library, the movement was prepared to release documents again as they were confident of Tau's leadership. On 7 June 1995 Ramdhani informed Tau that plans were under way to transfer a sizeable consignment to the University. This was to be done in stages as there was a large amount of material to be sent to Fort Hare. Ramdhani warned the Library to prepare for the deluge coming its way. More importantly, the ANC had ambitions to officially open the archives in July 1995 and it was important to it for the SOMAFSCO collection to be fully processed as it had to be show-cased during the launch. Ramdhani proposed that an archivist be assigned the responsibility of completing the processing of the SOMAFSCO collection.<sup>536</sup>

The first consignment from the ANC headquarters was expected at Fort Hare on 6 October 1995. All the boxes were labelled and the indexes of the documents were dispatched by courier. Ramdhani promised Tau that once the documents had been received, she would visit Fort Hare to assess the SOMAFSCO material in preparation for the official launch.<sup>537</sup> However, on 5 October 1995 Tau told Ramdhani that she was upset to hear that Ginwala was worried that the University was not ready to receive the ANC material. Zain had informed the ANC about the Fort Hare 'situation'. This irked Tau as she, rather than the Public Relations Office which Zain headed, was charged with liaising with the ANC regarding its archives. Tau felt that Zain had overstepped her boundary and wrote to Ramdhani, informing her that: 'this is false as you will agree with me. This particular exercise has nothing to do with PRO [Public Relations Office] and I wonder how Ms Zain got involved. Naturally I am upset'.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>536</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Narissa Ramdhani to Tau, 7 June 1995.

<sup>537</sup>*Ibid*: Narissa Ramdhani to Tau, 2 October 1995.

<sup>538</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, M.N. Tau to Narissa Ramdhani, 05 October 1995.

Even after the ANC archival material had been moved to the Library, the issue of skills remained a challenge. Though Fort Hare benefited from archivists such as Maamoe, more were needed to process the ANC collection. The University made a commitment to pay Maamoe's salary and relieve the Batlagae Trust of this responsibility, but could not pay for another archivist to work in the ANC archives.<sup>539</sup> As a result of staff shortage, to their frustration researchers could not undertake research in the ANC archives whenever Maamoe was on leave.<sup>540</sup> To remedy the situation, the University recruited volunteers to assist in the archives. These included Sara Beck, a museum expert from Canada, who played an important role in the preservation of the SOMAFSCO artifacts and mounted an exhibition of items in the University Library.<sup>541</sup> The CCS had planned to establish a museum containing artifacts from the liberation movements. However, the idea of a fully-fledged museum of the struggle did not materialize, as there were few artifacts from exile and most material was documentary.<sup>542</sup>

Another volunteer who worked with the ANC archives was Sadie Forman, a member of the Communist Party who had been exiled in London in the late 1960s. Her husband, Lionel, had worked on the history of the struggle before his early death. Forman recalls that 'the stresses and strains of living as a banned person, along with the frequent harassment by the police, took their toll on me' and she eventually opted for an exit permit.<sup>543</sup> When Fort Hare appealed to various organizations to send volunteers to assist in the ANC archives, Forman contacted the Canon Collins Trust to establish if it could provide funding to enable her to join

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<sup>539</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Marjatta Lahti to G.T. Sirayi, 21 September 1993. Author's Interview with Isaac Mabindisa, Port Alfred, 29 March 2011. (Henceforth Interview with Mabindisa), Soul.

<sup>540</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Minutes of a meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1997.

<sup>541</sup> Interview with Soul, UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Workshop on the liberation movement archives- library position- a summary, University of Fort Hare Library Progress Report on the Archives of the African National Congress.

<sup>542</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Archives of the Liberation Movement: Executive Summary on Progress.

<sup>543</sup> Forman, *Lionel Forman*.

the University Library. The response was positive and the Trust funded Forman who was eventually attached to the ANC archives at Fort Hare for about 10 years. Her presence was important as, amongst other things, she assisted in developing essential documents such as funding proposals and progress reports and also used her networks abroad to collect the ANC material. While at Fort Hare, she also completed a crash courses on archives, which enabled her to be more effective in her work.<sup>544</sup> Fort Hare provided her with a platform to write a memoir on her husband. To her this was an obligation she had to fulfill and working in the ANC archives inspired her to complete it.<sup>545</sup>

Other volunteers in the ANC archives included Vuyoletu Feni-Feti, who studied Library Science at Fort Hare and assisted in cataloguing the SOMAFCO collection,<sup>546</sup> and Khanyisile Botomani, mentioned earlier, who had studied Library science at Port Elizabeth Technikon.<sup>547</sup> Despite their background in Library Science, they came to the ANC archives with no clear idea of what the field entailed and it was only through determination and hard work that they learned, understood and built careers in this field.<sup>548</sup> Another person associated with the archives was Dawn Zain, also mentioned earlier, a colourful and stylish character with a penchant for the good life. She liaised with funders and those interested in plying their skills in the archives. Prior to her involvement with Fort Hare, Zain had served as an ANC fundraiser.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>544</sup>Interview with Soul.

<sup>545</sup>Forman, *Lionel Forman*, Soul.

<sup>546</sup>Author's Interview with Vuyo Feni-Feti, Alice, 15 December 2009 (Henceforth Interview with Feni-Feti).

<sup>547</sup>Interview with Botomani

<sup>548</sup>*Ibid.* Interview with Feni-Feti. .

<sup>549</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Dawn Zain to P. Mazikana, 17 October 1997, Dawn Zain to Tom Nygren, 15 September 1997, Dawn Zain to Mark Hill, 7 May 1998, Author's Interview with Dawn Zain, 24 January, Cape Town, 2011.

The Universities of Michigan<sup>550</sup> and Connecticut assisted where they could, including in training archivists,<sup>551</sup> to ensure that professional standards were applied in processing and preserving the ANC archives. The Library also emphasized that archives staff could not wait for some saviour to deliver them from misery: ‘we must not wait for the establishment and funding of hugely expensive projects and buildings. We must utilize our best resource, that which is immediately available to us, namely the skills and determination of our personnel who are already engaged in providing a service, however humble it may be in terms of physical resources’.<sup>552</sup>

When the official opening of the ANC archives had been postponed several times, 17 March 1996 was eventually chosen as the date. University management invited Mandela to officially open the ANC archives. Mandela was an ex-student of Fort Hare and President of the ANC and the country. Mzamane informed Mandela that Fort Hare was eager to make the material accessible to the community of scholars and the general public interested in writing the country’s struggle history. He promised Mandela that the University would send him a detailed programme, and told him that the institution was working closely with Ginwala to make the event a memorable one.<sup>553</sup> But Mandela sent the Deputy President of the country,

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<sup>550</sup> Author’s Interview with Isaac Mabindisa, Port Alfred, 27 January 2010.

<http://www.si.umich.edu/people/faculty-detail.htm?sid=48>, accessed on 15 April 2011, UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Meeting with ANC Archive Committee, University of Michigan School of Information ANC Archive Project Report-May/June 1999, Minutes of Library meeting with Mohammed Tikly, University of Fort Hare, 7 May 1999, NAHECS, Administrative Files, Michigan State University, University of Fort Hare/University of Michigan/Michigan State University(UFH/UM/MSU) Linkage Programme: Year One(1997) working document compiled by G.T. Sirayi and CSS Staff.

<sup>551</sup> Interview with Ramdhani, UFH:NAHECS, Administrative Files, Memorandum of Agreement and Cooperation between the University of Connecticut and the African National Congress, <http://web.uconn.edu/ancpartnership/history.html>, accessed on 15 February 2010.

<sup>552</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, workshop on the liberation movement archives- library position- a summary.

<sup>553</sup> UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Mbulelo Mzamane to Nelson Mandela, 07 February 1996.



Thabo Mbeki, to open the ANC archives on his behalf.<sup>554</sup> In his speech during the official opening, Mbeki stressed the important role played by Fort Hare in the liberation of South Africa.<sup>555</sup>

After the official opening, the Library continued to organize resources to enhance the work of the archives. Microsoft International pledged to donate software and promised to encourage hardware companies to make their own contribution to the archives project; the Xerox Company promised to donate funds, equipment and expertise; and Plessey South Africa promised to donate half a million rands, earmarked for marketing the ANC collection on the internet and for creating a website for the archives. The funds were duly received by the University and used accordingly.<sup>556</sup>

The Library also negotiated with the JP Getty Centre for grants for Fort Hare personnel to study archival science in recognized institutions, while the Smithsonian Institution promised to offer crash courses on preservation and conservation and the Library of Congress training in preservation and conservation.<sup>557</sup> It was hoped that training could be conducted via satellite and Fort Hare hoped to secure funding for this from the American Embassy.<sup>558</sup> David Frankel from Internet Solutions donated a modern server to the Library so that the unit would have a reliable internet system and so that all users could access the University server without

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<sup>554</sup>The ANC archives have been returned to NAHECS, formerly the CCS. For more on NAHECS see, Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements', *History in Africa*.

<sup>555</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Speech by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki during the opening of the ANC archives, 17 March 1996.

<sup>556</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files: 'The Liberation Archives at the University of Fort Hare, the management of archives'; Dawn Zain to Robin Kirby, 3 April 1998; Dawn Zain to Mark Hill, 7 May 1998.

<sup>557</sup>*Ibid*: The management of archives.

<sup>558</sup>*Ibid*: Dawn Zain to Donna Switzer. 1 September 1997.

problems.<sup>559</sup> On 15 September 1997, Zain thanked Richard Ekman of the Mellon Foundation for \$ 75,000 (R351, 562), towards the archives project.<sup>560</sup>

The University also worked with the Department of Education, and the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Arts and Culture for the benefit of the archives.<sup>561</sup> For instance, Foreign Affairs had links with UNESCO and the University realized that funds for the archives could be solicited from this body with the assistance of government. Alfred Nzo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, viewed the archives initiative as an important undertaking by Fort Hare and to show his commitment he called a meeting, which included his department and those of Education and Arts and Culture, in November 1997 in Pretoria, to discuss issues around the archives at Fort Hare. To Nzo, it was important to ensure that there was no overlap in the archives project, to avoid waste of government resources. Issues on the agenda included securing funds as well as technical support from government and looking into whether the archives at Fort Hare could form part of the Legacy Project, a government initiative to establish commemorative symbols in different parts of the country to celebrate history and heritage.<sup>562</sup> It was important for the University to keep this channel open as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a window to the United Nations and to embassies that had the potential to fund viable programmes. On 26 August 1997 Zain notified Nzo that ‘the Liberation Archives has been granted an international Assistance Programme by UNESCO’. She told Nzo that the University ‘would be deeply appreciative if you could pass this information on to your South Africa embassies abroad because UNESCO will be calling upon its member nations to contribute financially or in kind towards this project’.<sup>563</sup> In October Zain requested

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<sup>559</sup> *Ibid*: University Library, Administrative Files, the management of archives.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid*: Dawn Zain to Richard Ekman, 15 September 1997.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid*: Dawn Zain to Ghaleeb Jeppie, 15 October 1997.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid*: The Liberation Archives at the University of Fort Hare.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid*: Dawn Zain to Alfred Nzo, 26 August 1997.

the Director of International Relations in the Department of Education to represent the interests of Fort Hare at a UNESCO meeting in Paris. She asked him to emphasize the unique historic, heritage, and educational importance of the liberation archives, their vulnerability because of lack of security, their urgent conservation and preservation needs and the need to ask UNESCO members for in-house training and scholarships in archival management, information technology for archives, preservation and conservation skills training.<sup>564</sup>

Though the Library worked actively on the archives project, there were issues that were beyond its control which affected operations. Tau's health began to fail and she died in 1997. Soul, who took over as University Librarian, was, when the ANC consignment was transferred to the University Library in 1995, working on her master's degree in archives and records management at the University of Michigan. She returned to Fort Hare after the completion of her studies to work side by side with the experienced and knowledgeable Tau, so when Tau died she was ready to take over.<sup>565</sup> But tension between the CCS and the Library continued to impact on the general management of archives on campus. Staff morale was often low. This precarious situation made it difficult for the University to produce a policy on archives. There was also confusion with regard to lines of communication as the Library reported to the University Registrar while the CCS reported to Maqashalala, the Deputy Vice-chancellor.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>564</sup> *Ibid*: Dawn Zain to Ghaleeb Jeppie, 15 October 1997, Dawn Zain to P. Mazikana, 17 October 1997, 4 August 1997, Axel Plathe to L.B. Honwana, 10 July 1997, Dawn Zain to Donna Switzer, 17 September 1997. Zain also asked for 'in-kind assistance such as archival paper, computers, duplicating machines, digitalizing machines, microfilm machines, metal shelving and other archival aids' and for experts to visit the Archive and assist in information technology, preservation and conservation and archival management.

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid*: Dawn Zain to Alfred Nzo, 26 August 1997, Interview with Soul.

<sup>566</sup> Interview with Mabindisa, interview with Khayundi, UFH: University Library: Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare Howard Pim Library- Draft Archives Policy, Management of the Archives of the African National Congress at the Library of the University of Fort Hare, Draft preservation policy for the Library/ Archive.

Mzamane expressed his frustration about the ongoing conflict between the CCS and the Library. He stated bluntly in July 1998 that:

The unvarnished truth is that we have proved woefully unequal to the exciting challenges of the project (as outlined above), owing largely to interminable disputes over who houses what and personality conflicts among project leaders. Considerable in-fighting between, on the one hand, our late University Librarian and the Director of the Centre for Cultural Studies and, on the other hand, the ANC's archives committee- and minor skirmishes between the CCS Director and the Director of Development- have stalled such progress as we might have made in the following areas: amalgamating archival collections into a unitary archives project for UFH and the nation; fund-raising for the UFH archives project as a whole; forging national and international institutional partnerships that benefit the entire collection, and not mere fragments of the PAC or ANC documents; devising appropriate academic programmes around the archival collection.

Mzamane went further: 'Indeed, we lag so far behind in realizing just about every objective relating to the project that we are in real danger of losing custodianship of the archives. The ANC's National Executive Council has ruled, for example, that the ANC will reconsider its decision to keep their archives at UFH unless we can prove minimally: a satisfactory progress report and a plan indicating that we are utilising the facility in ways that meet their expectations'.<sup>567</sup>

There was another problem linked to the archives debate. The liberation movements, in particular the ANC, put immense pressure on the University as they expected its academics to take the lead and utilize the archives for research and writing. The ANC constantly reminded Fort Hare of this responsibility. Mzamane recalls that:

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<sup>567</sup> *Ibid*: University of Fort Hare Liberation Archives project: an institutional plan: workshop on the archives of the liberation movement: University of Fort Hare: 29:30 June, 1998 by Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane-Vice Chancellor & Rector.

My sense of it [the archival programme] was, it was the kind of programme that would force capacity development in a given direction. It would define the direction of growth in the University not just infrastructural because you would then need appropriate facilities to house these things, I was dead certain that that was going to be forthcoming somewhere down the line. But also, it would dictate the direction in which the curriculum for example might then change, change in situations that might make, for example, the University of Fort Hare, a University of first choice for students wishing to study in areas like liberation history, liberation culture or pan africanity, the kinds of subjects, the kinds of issues that were offered nowhere else in the South African university system. So it was also an attempt to cultivate a niche for the institution itself and hope that infrastructural developments would also fall in line with those kinds of aspirations.<sup>568</sup>

The University's History Department was expected to play a meaningful role in the use of the archives but the highest qualification it produced was honours degrees and very few students even qualified for that. At Fort Hare, history was considered to be a difficult course and as a result many students did not even consider registering for it.<sup>569</sup> Before 1990, only Professor H.Aucamp had a PhD in the History Department, which implied that the supervision of masters students, if there were any, was his responsibility. Other staff members had lesser qualifications ranging from honours to masters degrees. Despite the fact that the archives were open for use, the Department did not have the necessary skills and zeal to produce work using that source. In 1994 Aucamp structured an MA programme focusing on the use of the ANC archives, but nothing came of this initiative.<sup>570</sup>

That the University's research output was seriously in question could be traced back to the 1960s when black universities, which were under the thumb of the apartheid state, produced a

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<sup>568</sup>Interview with Mzamane.

<sup>569</sup>The problem around how students perceived the discipline of history at Fort Hare could be traced as far back as the 1960s, *Massey*, Under Protest, 168.

<sup>570</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, ANC Archives: Minutes of the meeting of the ANC/ Fort Hare Archives Committee on 21 April 1995 at 11H00 in the speaker's office in parliament.

tiny number of post-graduate students compared to white institutions.<sup>571</sup> Though Fort Hare attracted illustrious scholars to teach at the University in the early 1990s, few could strike the right balance between teaching and research.<sup>572</sup> According to Khayundi, the University's academics could have done better especially considering that:

Fort Hare has a good proportion of white people or non-black for that matter who are coming from the other side of non-bantu education. But they seem to gel in the tradition, in the culture where they sit back, teach and go home. So the hypothesis of Bantu education to me does not arise. If anything it would have been an inspiration- let us see what was keeping us down, let us see how unfair this thing was, this education by developing a research interest which would even result in them asking- let's find out what the ANC stand was on Bantu Education.<sup>573</sup>

To stimulate research in the Department of History, the University secured the services of Tim Stapleton who specialized in the wars of resistance in the Eastern Cape. Prior to Fort Hare, Stapleton was based at Rhodes University and his vision was to strengthen postgraduate research in the Department of History at Fort Hare. The first masters graduate at Fort Hare was Songezo Ngqongqo, who produced a biography of Walter Rubusana under the supervision of Stapleton. His next masters student was Erica Mandiringane whose 1998 thesis was *The Literary Legacy of Frederick Courteney Selous*. Mandiringane produced an article from her work published in a well-regarded international journal, co-authoring it with Stapleton, thus becoming the first student to produce a journal article in the Department of History at Fort Hare.<sup>574</sup> In 2008 Ngqongqo also published a section of his thesis in a book edited by Mcebisi Ndletyana.<sup>575</sup> Through Mandiringane and Ngqongqo, Stapleton

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<sup>571</sup> Beale, 'Apartheid and University Education, 1948-1970'.

<sup>572</sup> Interview with Mzamane.

<sup>573</sup> Interview with Khayundi.

<sup>574</sup> For Details on this publication see, Erica Mandiringane and Tim Stapleton, 'The Literary Legacy of Frederick Courteney Selous', *History in Africa*, 25(1998),199-218.

<sup>575</sup> Songezo Joel Ngqongqo, 'Mpilo Walter Benson Rubusana', in Mcebisi Ndletyana,ed., *African Intellectuals in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century South Africa*, (Pretoria, 2008).

demonstrated that the myth surrounding research was fallacious and that through proper training and determination students could succeed. But Fort Hare was in desperate need of students who could produce work from the ANC archives and Ngqoqngo and Mandirangane were middle aged graduates with commitments elsewhere. They could not be drawn into research in the liberation archives. There was a great need to mentor younger students who could channel their energies into the archives. In that way, the ANC could be kept at bay, as the movement was unhappy about the underutilization of its collection.

There were only a few history students who were keen to consider a topic from the ANC archives. These included Brown Maaba and Loyiso Pulumani, who were brought on board as Junior Research Fellows at the Govan Mbeki Research Resource Centre (GMRCC), run by another historian, Dr. Sean Morrow, who outlined what the GMRCC hoped to achieve:

to nurture a group of young researchers, known as ‘Junior Research Fellows’, in the social sciences and humanities. We would define these categories broadly, to include, for instance, education, human geography, religious studies and other areas. The objective is to encourage critical thinking and an interdisciplinary approach, and the focus is on issues relevant to the lives of the people of the Eastern Cape, in the context of the best South African and international scholarship.<sup>576</sup>

The idea of close cooperation between the Library and the then Govan Mbeki Fellowship was raised as early as May 1994 in a meeting between the ANC archives representatives and Fort Hare officials. The meeting noted that the Govan Mbeki Fellowship was already working towards the mentorship of black researchers. The Library viewed this as an opportunity to create an academic relationship with the fellowship and develop programmes around the

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<sup>576</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Sean Morrow to Head(s) of Department, 20 September 1995.

archives.<sup>577</sup> After the formation of the GMRCC, Morrow was careful not to bring on board Junior Research Fellows who would not receive proper supervision from their respective departments. Many departments at Fort Hare lacked capacity to supervise postgraduate students and the possibility that students might not finish their senior degrees for that reason was high. Morrow made it clear that ‘if because of staffing constraints or other problems, a particular department cannot at this stage offer such supervision over a reasonable spectrum of the discipline concerned, the GMRCC should not enroll Junior Research Fellows in that area’.<sup>578</sup> At least the Department of History could rely on Stapleton to ensure that more masters students were produced, especially in the field of liberation history. It was envisaged that Morrow would work closely with the department and supervise Maaba and Pulumani. When the Batlagae Trust proposed that the history of SOMAFSCO be written by Fort Hare historians, it seemed clear that the GMRCC should be the custodian of this project. Maaba and Pulumani came under Morrow’s tutorship at the GMRCC and their masters degrees were based on different aspects of SOMAFSCO.<sup>579</sup> This was the beginnings of satisfying the ANC’s desire that the archives should be utilized.

The first ANC advisory committee on the SOMAFSCO research project met on 14 November 1993. Those who attended the meeting were mostly ex-SOMAFSCO cadres including teachers, administrators and students familiar with exile education. Henry Makgoti, a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC in exile and a founder member of SOMAFSCO, emphasized the importance of preserving the school’s history and the significant

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<sup>577</sup>UFH: Postal Section, Administrative Files, Minutes of the Centre for Cultural Studies Committee and the ANC Archival Department held on Tuesday, 03 May 1994 at Fort Hare.

<sup>578</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Sean Morrow to Head(s) of Department, 20 September 1995.

<sup>579</sup>*Ibid*: SOMAFSCO Research Project Report, SOMAFSCO Research Project: Framework for discussion by Norman Levy and John Pampallis, 28 October 1993.



role that the school played in the struggle against apartheid.<sup>580</sup> The idea of a SOMAFCO research project was subsequently discussed by the Batlagae Trust and the CCS on 19 May 1994 when the ANC archives were still under the custodianship of the Centre. Tikly envisaged that the SOMAFCO research project would be followed by others, thus ensuring that the ANC archives were well-used.<sup>581</sup> But due to the squabbles over the ANC archives, the SOMAFCO project only commenced in 1996. Morrow would work on Dakawa, the ANC's vocational school 50km from SOMAFCO, his protégés on different aspects of SOMAFCO. Once the research project was complete, Morrow would write a book. The SOMAFCO initiative proved a great success and apart from the book other publications, which included journal articles, book chapters and newspaper articles, were produced.<sup>582</sup> Apart from the SOMAFCO book, there were other products from the archives initiated by Fort Hare academics. For instance the Department of English worked closely with the Archives Division, the GMRRC and the Fine Arts Department and produced an anthology of poems by SOMAFCO students. Beck worked closely with the Fine Arts Department and printed 56 linocuts produced by SOMAFCO students that were eventually exhibited by the Department of Fine Arts.<sup>583</sup>

The ANC made its own efforts to bring in young black researchers to comb its archives. During the launch of the ANC archives, British Aerospace, a major civil and military aviation firm, committed R200 000 to a PhD scholarship fund for a candidate to be attached to a

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<sup>580</sup> *Ibid*, Report: SOMAFCO Research Project, First Advisory Committee meeting, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1993.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid*: Minutes of a meeting of Mr. Mohammed Tikly and the Director and staff of the Centre for Cultural Studies, 19 May, 1994.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid*: Progress Report on the Archives of the African National Congress by the University of Fort Hare. University of Fort Hare: Howard Pim Library, Archives Division Annual Report, Liberation Archives Project: An Institutional Plan: University of Fort Hare, University of Fort Hare: Govan Mbeki Research Resource Centre: Use of the Liberation Archives by the GMRRC.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid*: Management of the Archives of the archives of the African National Congress at the library of the University of Fort Hare, the title of the poetry book is Sadie Forman *et. al*, *If you want to know me: voices from SOMAFCO*, ( Alice, 1999).

relevant department at Fort Hare to mine the ANC archives. Nhlanhla Ndebele from Wits University was awarded the scholarship.<sup>584</sup> Ndebele did not produce a PhD as expected but a masters degree, aspects of which were later published.<sup>585</sup> Though these initiatives were drops in an ocean, they were meaningful for a university like Fort Hare whose research capacity had been destroyed during apartheid.

Over the years, historians from other institutions have used the archives to produce outstanding works which give readers new insight on the history of the struggle in South Africa. Such works reveal the inner dynamics of power struggle within the ANC. They include *The Dream Deferred: Thabo Mbeki* by Mark Gevisser, *Oliver Tambo: beyond the Engeli Mountains* by Callinicos, and work by Sifiso Ndlovu on the ANC in exile. Jabulani Sithole and Sifiso Ndlovu's work on the labour movement covering the period 1970-1980 draws substantially from the ANC archives. The two writers show how effective unions were in the struggle against apartheid, particularly SACTU.<sup>586</sup> Gerhart has also used the archives for her work *From Protest to Challenge* and was often accompanied by up and coming young black researchers from Wits. Hugh Macmillan has made extensive use of the ANC archives for his forthcoming book on the ANC in Lusaka. But though a reasonable number of books, newspapers and journal articles have been written using ANC archival sources from Fort Hare, more could emerge. Studies like those of Shireen Hassim on women in the liberation struggle could greatly benefit from the ANC material at Fort Hare as there is a sizeable

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<sup>584</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Liberation Archives Project: An Institutional Plan: University of Fort Hare.

<sup>585</sup> Nhlanhla Ndebele, 'The African National Congress' commitment to non-racialism: the question of open membership, 1960-1990', (MA Thesis, Wits University, 2001) Ndebele, 'The African National Congress and the policy of non-racialism: a study of the membership issue', *Politikon*: 29, (2) (2002), 133-146, Ndebele and Noor Nieftagodien, 'The Morogoro Conference: A moment of self-reflection', in Sadet, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, (1), (Johannesburg, 2003), 573-599.

<sup>586</sup>Jabulani Sithole and Sifiso Ndlovu, 'The Revival of the Labour Movement, 1970-1980', in Sadet, 2, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, (Pretoria: 2006), 187-241.

number of documents on the ANC Women's Section in exile. These cover the organization's links with sister organizations in exile, fundraising, assisting in the health sector of the ANC as well dealing with the needs of the movement's children in exile.<sup>587</sup>

Apart from promoting research in the archives, the ANC always believed that Fort Hare had to formulate outreach programmes which would encourage different communities to interact with and understand the value of archives. The ANC was following in the footsteps of the CMMH which recommended in 1993 that outreach programmes should be encouraged for the country's archives.<sup>588</sup> It worried the ANC that Fort Hare appeared not to be doing much to encourage such programmes. Ramdhani remembers:

We were very concerned that when Fort Hare was designated as a repository of the ANC archives that the archive should be a living one, ....it shouldn't be just stuck in some basement for whatever concern. But we were concerned that it should generate a hive of academic and community activity. That a community should have access to the history, students should have access to a history affected the lives of their parents, grandparents whatever, it should have generated academic debate around liberation. It should have generated a whole range of academic debate around liberation. It should have generated a whole range of academic seminars masters, PhDs and so on. And of course because it was a honeymoon period for the whole history of liberation and for the writing of the liberation history, it wasn't seized upon. It wasn't exploited, the ANC archives, as much as we would have like it to happen.<sup>589</sup>

The University remained mindful of its shortcomings and on 5 June 1997 the office of the Vice-Chancellor announced that 'the Archives have conferred upon the University of Fort

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<sup>587</sup> For more on the role of women in the ANC see: UFH , ANC Archives, Women's Section Collection.

<sup>588</sup> Dominy, 'Archives in a democratic South Africa: The proposals of the ANC: an evaluation', *S.A. Archives Journal/S.A. Argiefblad*.

<sup>589</sup> Interview with Ramdhani.

Hare a unique feature we have yet to learn to capitalise on and to exploit fully in our teaching, research, and other outreach programmes'.<sup>590</sup>

The inability of Fort Hare academics to take full advantage of the archives was indeed a missed opportunity as Soul reflected later: 'when Unisa for instance launched their hidden history project, I really felt that that should have been Fort Hare, Fort Hare should have done that. Because we are having this treasure trove which nobody else has and unearthing those hidden histories they are contained in archives'.<sup>591</sup> Sirayi concurs: 'even the academic programmes at Fort Hare on the archives would have been well developed with the archives integrated. And also the research programme would have been well developed. If we all spoke in once voice, we could have had an interdisciplinary approach to this whole thing of the archives'.<sup>592</sup>

The location of the ANC archives at the Howard Pim Library had its own limitations. A report commissioned by the European Union Higher Education Libraries Programme in 2000 was very critical of the library environment, which 'represents a missed opportunity unless access is greatly improved'. The report found that the security of the Howard Pim Library was unsatisfactory and that it was uncomfortable for research purposes. Furthermore, the section where the ANC artifacts were displayed was reported to be too small. The report added that the area around the library was too damp and humidity in the ANC archives could

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<sup>590</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare- office of the Vice-Chancellor, 05 June 1997.

<sup>591</sup>Interview with Soul.

<sup>592</sup>*Ibid*: Sirayi.

rise to 70%, far higher than the acceptable level of 45%.<sup>593</sup> Library management, criticized in the report, was aware of these problems and hoped to extend the Library to accommodate the archives in a proper building. In one progress report to the ANC it reported that:

We have requested the assistance of architectural consultants to assess more accurately the needs of the archive/library facility. The Department of Education/European Union Higher Education Library's Programme has agreed to finance the services of a consultant who will focus on the requirements of the library. We are revisiting the plan to have Mr. W.P. Lull, a UNESCO expert in archival design, of Garrison Lull Inc. to evaluate the needs of a modern archive and the museum facility.<sup>594</sup>

Though the Library was never extended, its management's desire to construct a better facility was an indication that Howard Pim Library was not really an ideal place to house the ANC archives. But to give credit to the Library, their willingness to seek funding to build a modern facility indicated that they were keen to improve the environment of the archival collection. Library officials also admitted that the Library building was not ideal even for its designated purpose: 'in terms of existing SAPSE norms, the current university library building has a shortage of approximately 270 square metres for the existing student population of 4,440FTE. The present building was badly designed. All other library buildings at HDIs [Historically Disadvantaged Institutions] dating from the same period have been replaced e.g. Universities of Zululand, Western Cape and Durban-Westville'.<sup>595</sup> The Library management hoped that UNESCO would bring in specialists to help redesign the building so that the archives could be housed in a proper facility.<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>593</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, University of Fort Hare Library: A report commissioned by the DoE European Union Higher Education Libraries Programme.

<sup>594</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Progress Report on the archives of the African National Congress by the University of Fort Hare Library.

<sup>595</sup>*Ibid*: Workshop on the liberation movement archives- library position- a summary.

<sup>596</sup>*Ibid*.

Though the Library had its own plans for the ANC archives, University management differed as it advocated a building separate from both the Library and the CCS where all the liberation material would be housed. University management was not taking sides when it stressed that:

It is envisaged that there be a stand-alone building for the Liberation Archives on the grounds of the University of Fort Hare, Alice Campus. This building would be separate from the Library and separate from the Centre for Cultural Studies where archival documents are being temporarily stored. All the liberation archives will be housed in this one building. In this way the collection of funds for the Archives will not be partisan. The donors are not in a position to fund one political party over another and if all the Archives from ANC, PAC, AZAPO and the Black Consciousness Movement are all together in one major collection, it would be easier to find both State, corporate, foundation and international funding.<sup>597</sup>

University management hoped that UNESCO's International Assistance Programme could provide an expert to evaluate the archives on campus and estimate how much it would cost to erect the new archives building. The expert would supply details on space, environment, staff and size of the building required. The envisaged building was expected to be technologically advanced, fitted with all the requirements of a modern archive such as digitizing facilities, movable metal shelving, air conditioning, advanced security system, fire-proofing and temperature control. It was thought that reading rooms, preservation and conservation areas, a small library and rooms for sorting out documents would form part of such a building.<sup>598</sup> In 1997, it was estimated that such a state of the art building would cost about R300 million.<sup>599</sup> Donors from the US, Denmark, Japan and Germany were earmarked as possible funders of the new building.<sup>600</sup> Zain dreamed that the new archives facility would be 'embellished with the names of the Martyrs and thus be a monument to the Liberation Struggle'.<sup>601</sup> University

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<sup>597</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, The Liberation Archives at the University of Fort Hare..

<sup>598</sup>*Ibid*: The Management of the Archives,

<sup>599</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Dawn Zain to Ghaleeb Jeppie, 15 October 1997, Dawn Zain to Donna Switzer, 17 September 1997.

<sup>600</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, The Liberation Archives at the University of Fort Hare.

<sup>601</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Dawn Zain to Michael Savage, 18 September 1997.

management made it clear that ‘neither the Library nor the Cultural Studies will have responsibility for it.’<sup>602</sup> Clearly, the University was not in a mood for another catfight between the CCS and the Library.

Peter Mazikana, an archives specialist from Zimbabwe, came to Fort Hare to make an independent assessment of the liberation archives. He made it clear that the existing dichotomy between the Library and the CCS posed a serious problem for the University and was a waste of resources. Furthermore, he noted that there was no cooperation between the two bodies and that because of the divisions each centre used its own methods to file and catalogue the archival material.<sup>603</sup> Financial and related problems weighed heavily on University management in the late 1990s. For instance, in 1999 there was suspected arson at the Fine Arts Department but the media misreported, saying that the ANC archives had been gutted by fire. The ANC was seriously disturbed but on enquiry it became clear that there was no substance to the reports.<sup>604</sup> Though the ANC was relieved to hear that their collection was safe, the organization wondered if Fort Hare had the right security in place for the archives.<sup>605</sup> On 27 September 1999, Soul reminded the University administration of the importance of installing an advanced security system in the archives.<sup>606</sup> Mzamane believed that though the ANC archives were not affected by arson, the implication was that the ANC archives as well as other structures such as the art gallery, both housing priceless tangible

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<sup>602</sup>*Ibid*: Dawn Zain to Peter Mazikana, 3 September 1997.

<sup>603</sup>*Ibid*: Dawn Zain to L.B Honwana, 1 April 1998.

<sup>604</sup>For some details on this subject see,

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=104090&sectioncode=26>; accessed on 17 July 2010, Interviews with Soul, Mzamane, UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Dawn Zain to Eddie Hedlin, 17 October 1997, University Library, Administrative Files, Soul to Derrick Swartz, Narissa Ramdhani to Yolisa Soul, 19 June 1999.

<sup>605</sup>*Ibid*: University Library, Administrative Files, Yolisa Soul to Mohammed Tikly, 26 May 1999, Yolisa Soul to Derrick Swartz, 16 May 1999, Funding proposal for securing the archives by installing an inergen (IG541) system, Liberation Archives Project: An Institutional Plan

<sup>606</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Yolisa Soul to Alan Shaw, 27 September 1999.

material, were in danger. He added that potential donors would not be impressed to hear negative stories such as reports of arson on campus.<sup>607</sup>

Besides the archives, the University as a whole experienced numerous problems. The University management was challenged by different stakeholders, including unions, for lack of effectiveness and proper management of the Institution. Tension escalated at the University between the management and the various sectors. The result was the establishment of a commission of inquiry into the management of the Institution by an independent assessor, Prof. Stuart Saunders, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town. Amongst its findings, the commission established that the University was not properly run, and that there was a communication breakdown between Mzamane and the different sectors in the University. Many of those interviewed by the commission reported that they had lost faith in Mzamane's leadership. However, Saunders did acknowledge that Mzamane was a sharp individual, and that his strength was in academia instead of management. By his own admission, Mzamane found no joy in sitting behind the desk, shuffling papers. Saunders recommended that Mzamane's contract should not be renewed, and he encouraged Fort Hare to find an academic with sound managerial skills to run the University. Alternatively, if such an academic could not be found, an individual with excellent managerial skills should be found for Fort Hare.

All these problems no doubt left the ANC wondering if Fort Hare was indeed the right custodian for its archives. The University, it would appear, was merely surviving on its glorious past and found it hard to rebuild after apartheid. This may have prompted the ANC

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<sup>607</sup>Interview with Mzamane.



to establish relations with the University of Connecticut (UConn). In the late 1990s there was talk of mirroring the ANC archive there. The institution ran the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center which had excellent archival facilities and the archives would come under Amii Omara-Otunnu, a history Professor. UConn's contacts and relationship with the ANC was made easier since Ramdhani was a former student of the university. In contrast, Ben Magubane, an ANC activist and academic with a long-serving record as professor of anthropology at UConn, was fiercely opposed to the involvement of UConn in the ANC archives matter, citing, amongst other things, that the university had showed no interest in the liberation of South Africa during apartheid. Nonetheless, the ANC continued to explore relations with UConn.<sup>608</sup>

On 1 March 1999, the ANC signed an agreement with UConn. Mark Emmet, the UConn Chancellor, flew to Cape Town to sign the agreement with Ginwala in Parliament. UConn agreed to train South African archivists to process the ANC archival material. In addition there would be an oral history project, with 200 ANC stalwarts to be interviewed on their role in the struggle against apartheid.<sup>609</sup> Fort Hare was opposed to the UConn agreement as it was not consulted on the matter. In Soul's view, the relationship between the ANC and UConn

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<sup>608</sup> For details on Magubane's general perception of UConn see, Bernard Magubane, *Bernard Magubane: My Life and Times*, (Scottville, 2010).

<sup>609</sup> <http://web.uconn.edu/ancpartnership/history.html>;  
<http://humanrightsresearch.wordpress.com/2007/10/16/african-national-congress-oral-history-interview-transcripts-collection/>;  
<http://www.si.umich.edu/fort-hare/tambo.htm>;  
[http://web2.uconn.edu/unescochair/Media/march1\\_99.htm](http://web2.uconn.edu/unescochair/Media/march1_99.htm); <http://web.uconn.edu/ancpartnership/history.html>, <http://web.uconn.edu/ancpartnership/history.html>, accessed on 18 June 2011. 'US Varsity safeguards ANC's past', *Cape Times*, 2 July 1999.

would render Fort Hare toothless. On 25 June 1999 Soul expressed her discomfort to Swartz, the acting Vice Chancellor:

Even if one accepts that the Connecticut agreement does establish an exclusive relationship between the ANC and Connecticut, it is questionable whether this can, or should be allowed to prescribe to the university of Fort Hare permissible relationships and linkages. It is therefore essential that the original agreement regarding the placement of the archives at the University be re-examined.<sup>610</sup>

Influential Fort Hare graduates like Barney Pityana, Smuts Ngonyama, and Arnold Stofile were made aware of the ANC-Uconn partnership which made headlines in the media.<sup>611</sup> University officials registered their concerns on the agreement for the attention of members of the ANC Archives Division.<sup>612</sup> On 19 August 1999 Soul reminded Stofile about the importance of keeping the ANC archives at Fort Hare. She stated that the University and the Eastern Cape would lose immensely should the idea of a mirror archives be implemented. She also informed Stofile that spadework had already been done to ensure that the archives project was a success and that progress reports were duly submitted to the ANC Archives Committee.<sup>613</sup>

Stofile, the Premier of the Eastern Cape, was also a member of the ANC Archives Division and on 3 September 1999 he assured Soul that he would take the matter up with the body. He took the opportunity to praise Soul for standing up for Fort Hare, 'I am particularly impressed by the manner in which you jealously preserve the status of the Archival records. It is absolutely correct that these Archival records afford a unique opportunity. These records are for Fort Hare and the Province as a whole. Please be assured that I will take up this matter in

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<sup>610</sup> UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Yolisa Soul to Derrick Swartz, 25 June 1999.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid*: Soul to Barney Pityana, 28 September 1999, Yolisa Soul to Smuts Ngonyama, 21 September 1999.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid*: Yolisa Soul to Smuts Ngonyama, 21 September 1999.

<sup>613</sup> *Ibid*: Yolisa Soul to Makhenkesi Stofile, 19 August 1999.

the next meeting of the ANC Archives Committee'.<sup>614</sup> On 21 October 1999, Soul briefed Swartz that many within the ANC were seriously opposed to the ANC-Uconn agreement.<sup>615</sup> Such news assured the University.

Swartz was also impressed by the manner in which Soul handled the latest developments and congratulated her for her efforts.<sup>616</sup> He was persuaded by the University Library to urgently engage Ginwala on the subject.<sup>617</sup> Fort Hare put forward thirteen points for the attention of the ANC. It emphasized that as custodian of the ANC archives they were never consulted about the Uconn partnership and complained that instead, details of this partnership came via the media such as the *New York Times*. The University further argued that the mirror archive would dislodge Fort Hare as the official host of the ANC archives and asserted that overseas researchers interested in ANC history would be bound to go to Uconn instead of travelling to Alice. The University emphasized that it could not compete with Uconn, which was financially viable and whose marketing strategy was bound to surpass that of the impoverished Fort Hare. The University made it known that 'the granting of such a gift to an American University would mean that Fort Hare, Alice, the Eastern Cape and South Africa would lose the value of the tangible, precious treasure of our history of the apartheid era. Any "return" they may consider could not compensate for the loss'. The University officials posed a question: 'what would American citizens say if we wanted a mirror archive of the Civil Rights Movement and the papers of Martin Luther King, particularly if we had made such a request in the early years of the Movement'?<sup>618</sup> The University requested a meeting with the

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<sup>614</sup>*Ibid*: Makhenkesi Stofile to Yoliswa Soul, 3 September 1999.

<sup>615</sup>*Ibid*: Soul to Derrick Swartz, 21 October 1999.

<sup>616</sup>*Ibid*: Memorandum from Derrick Swartz to Yoli Soul, 13 September 1999.

<sup>617</sup>*Ibid*: Yoliswa Soul to Derrick Swartz, 17 September 1999.

<sup>618</sup>*Ibid*: Points to raise re the Connecticut Agreement with the ANC Archive Committee.

ANC Archives Committee and proposed Fort Hare as the venue.<sup>619</sup> Eventually Fort Hare won the day, after a thorough discussion with the ANC on the matter.<sup>620</sup> The ANC archives remained on campus but the Uconn oral history research project and staff development programme was continued.<sup>621</sup> But this was a blow to Uconn as the main issue was they had hoped to secure access to the complete ANC collection.

### *Conclusion*

After the clash between the CCS and the Library, the CCS went ahead and erected its building with funds from De Beers, and it was opened in 1998. Fortunately, the task team had also recommended that the work of the CCS be continued and the Centre continued with archival work, despite being negatively affected by the loss of the ANC material to the Library. The links that the CCS established with the University of Michigan and Michigan State University gave it added expertise. Meanwhile, the Library had to keep the ANC satisfied, though little research was undertaken in the ANC papers apart from the SOMAFCO project. The ANC exerted pressure on the Library to implement viable academic and outreach programmes. Sadly, the Library and University management found it very challenging to get University academics to produce work from the archives and create a viable culture of research that would leave a lasting legacy. There was no research culture at Fort Hare, thanks largely to Bantu Education. The Library's nightmares were worsened by the University of Connecticut's plans to create a mirror archive for the ANC papers. Fierce resistance from Fort Hare prevented this, and the movement's material remained on campus.

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<sup>619</sup>*Ibid*: Yolisa Soul to Frene Ginwala, 17 June 1999.

<sup>620</sup>*Ibid*: Interview with Soul, Yolisa Soul to Alan Shaw, 14 October 1999, Interview with Soul.

<sup>621</sup>*Ibid*.

## *Chapter 6*

### *The Fort Hare liberation archive in relation to other liberation material*

This thesis has covered the history and politics of the liberation archive at Fort Hare, showing that their repatriation and preservation was a challenging task accompanied by controversy, ambiguities and at times explicitly ruthless decision making. We need now to ask: what bearing did the Fort Hare experience have on other institutions that housed liberation documents? Did these institutions experience challenges similar to that of Fort Hare? UCT, Wits, and to some extent UWC, had archives relating to liberation before Fort Hare, and in the early 1990s they hoped to house ANC material. They knew the value of struggle documents. A study fully unpacking the politics of the liberation archives in these institutions is needed as a follow up to this work, to enable us to see the national picture. All that can be done here is to give a few examples to show how the Fort Hare archives relate to the wider liberation archive picture.

#### *Carter et al*

Though the main battle over the liberation archive took centre-stage from the early 1990s, its politics can be traced back to the late 1940s, when Gwendolyn Carter, an American political scientist, began to take an interest in South African struggle history. She was subsequently joined by Thomas Karis, and later their protégée Gail Gerhart. These American academics did research in South Africa when the air was still thick with apartheid brutality. Their main *modus operandi* in the collection and preservation of archival material focused on the documents that they accumulated from political trials, such as the Treason trial, the Rivonia

trial and the SASO/BPC trial of 1976, and oral history interviews with struggle icons.<sup>622</sup> These records were taken to the US, though they were later sent to Historical Papers at Wits for archiving. As mentioned in earlier chapters, when Fort Hare organized liberation archives in the early 1990s Gerhart felt it was incumbent on her to also donate some struggle material to that University. The CCS thanked her for the collection. After Kukubo died in 1998, Gerhart hoped that CCS would carry on his outstanding work.<sup>623</sup> Clearly, to Gerhart, donating material to Fort Hare was a token of appreciation, especially since she used the archives extensively. As a knowledgeable and highly informed political scientist, she knew of the role played by Fort Hare in the liberation discourse across Africa. Over the years her work afforded her an opportunity to interact with a range of ex-Fort Hare students, some of whom shared memorable stories with her about the institution.

Carter and Karis, and later Gerhart, were applauded in academic circles for their outstanding contribution to struggle history,<sup>624</sup> but at the same time they found themselves in the liberation archives quagmire. Initially they were refused visas to enter South Africa by the apartheid state, and when they eventually secured them, they were subjected to restrictions and surveillance when visiting the country. This impacted negatively on their research findings.<sup>625</sup> For example, when Gerhart visited Kimberley in 1978 to interview Robert Sobukwe, she was kept under police surveillance. The interview was conducted from Gerhart's hired car, with a police vehicle parked just a few metres away.<sup>626</sup> However, this

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<sup>622</sup>William Cotter and Thomas Karis, 'We Have Nothing to Hide': Contacts Between South Africa and the U.S', *Social Dynamics*, 3(2)3-14, 1977.

<sup>623</sup>*Ibid*: Gail Gerhart to Themba Sirayi, July 1996, Robert Kukubo to Gail Gerhart, 10 September 1996, Gail Gerhart to Themba Sirayi, 26 June 1998,

<sup>624</sup>They produced five volumes of *Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa*. Gerhart published *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology*.

<sup>625</sup> Cotter and Karis, 'We Have Nothing to Hide', *Social Dynamics*.

<sup>626</sup> Author's Interview with Gail Gerhart, Johannesburg, 23 March 2011 (Henceforth Interview with Gerhart)

was a minor inconvenience compared to the criticisms that were directed at the *Protest to Challenge* writers.

Robert Molteno, a liberal academic of South African origin, who taught at the University of Zambia between 1967 and 1976, was suspicious of the intentions of American social scientists such as the *Protest to Challenge* writers. In 1976 he accused them of penetrating and frustrating the country's liberation movements. Their intention, he charged, was to 'monitor the struggle of a whole subcontinent for liberation—a struggle to which their home government is opposed'. He explained that his paper, entitled *Hidden Sources of Subversion*, 'aims to put all of us—academics and activists—on our guard against renewed attempts at penetration'.<sup>627</sup> He further stressed that his paper was 'strictly confined to those American academics—largely white and middle class—who share the ideology of the American capitalist class to the point of being prepared to act as intellectual auxiliaries to the normal U.S. agencies for espionage and counterrevolutionary subversion'. Molteno also questioned the publishing outlets of these writers, such as the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace which he perceived to be right-wing oriented, as well as the origin of the research funds for their numerous research trips to Africa to cover South Africa liberation history, suggesting that they came from dubious sources, including US security structures. He wrote: 'Above all there has been the cost of countless taped interviews, and Photostatted documents which then had to be shipped, catalogued, processed, and stored in the United States. One may reasonably ask how many hundreds of thousands of dollars this research effort has involved down the years. And where did the money come from?'<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Robert Molteno, 'Hidden Sources of Subversion', in Ellen Ray, William Schaap, Karl van Meter and Louis Wolf(eds), *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa*, (Secaucus, 1979) 94-111. This article first appeared in *Africa Youth* in 1976.

<sup>628</sup> Molteno, 'Hidden Sources'. *Dirty Work 2*.

Gerhart and her colleagues, taken aback by these accusations, did not take the matter lying down. They challenged Molteno, who was forced to submit a written apology.<sup>629</sup> Espionage is a very serious accusation, especially in the context of liberation politics. For instance, the manner in which the ANC dealt with infiltration in the camps was brutal, and even though in some cases such charges could not be proven, the stigma often remained and many of those accused found it difficult to be reintegrated and accepted in the exile community. Sirayi was accused of being a PAC member, and as a result he could not oversee the ANC archives. In the late 1980s another American, Julie Fredrickse, was part of the ANC team based in Harare which archived struggle era material taken out of the country for safekeeping in exile. Unexpectedly, her colleagues suspected, and indeed ‘confirmed’, that she was a spy. She was excommunicated from ANC circles and dispossessed of the archival material in her care.<sup>630</sup> When some of her colleagues later realized that she had been wrongfully accused, they duly apologized to her.<sup>631</sup>

#### *UWC, UCT and the Simons Papers*

UWC was unfortunate in regard to collections associated with the ANC. Since the university had long positioned itself as the custodian of the ANC archives, as discussed in chapter 2, it succeeded in securing some ANC documents from Lusaka and the London Mission. But it overlooked the process of signing an MOU with the ANC regarding their collection. They obviously spent time on superficialities instead of focusing on the essential, which was to formalise relations with the movement. Problems arose when Fort Hare was endorsed as the legitimate custodian of the ANC archives with the movement then demanding that its

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<sup>629</sup> Interview with Gerhart.

<sup>630</sup> Conversation with Julie Fredrickse’s ex colleague, 11 June 2010.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*



documents housed at Mayibuye be shipped to Luthuli house and then Fort Hare. The ANC also made it clear that there were sensitive documents in this collection which had to be weeded out and kept at the organization's headquarters. UWC procrastinated, but eventually obliged. As Ginwala put it:

Whatever ended up at Mayibuye about two or three years ago we brought back to headquarters. We have no problem with people having material. We were worried because a lot of material there had never been screened. We had policy guidelines...access guidelines... so we brought everything back on agreement; put it through our own processes and we gave it back to them except some very confidential material, which we kept.<sup>632</sup>

Apart from this loss, internal competition on the UWC campus threatened the smooth running of the Mayibuye archives. The university had different sections which housed different archives pertaining to different activities. The Mayibuye Centre, located within the university library, portrayed itself as an anchor of the liberation documents. Other archival collections on campus, such as the university records, were lodged in a separate building, while documents concerning 'coloured' history were kept at the Institute for Historical Research. It was clear to all concerned that the Mayibuye Centre had more prestige and presence on campus since it housed struggle documents, and this created resentment and tension between the different centres on campus. As a result, Mayibuye Centre senior personnel were always careful not to alienate other university officials, for fear of a backlash. When Odendaal left the university for Robben Island, an attempt was made to dislodge his deputy and longstanding member of the SACP and ANC, Barry Feinberg, from his new position as Director of the Mayibuye Centre.<sup>633</sup> Even though this palace coup did not succeed, the incident indicates how far maneuvers could go in the effort to control the struggle archives.

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<sup>632</sup> Author's Interview with Frene Ginwala, Johannesburg, 2 March 2011.(Henceforth Interview with Ginwala).

<sup>633</sup> Author's Interview with Barry Feinberg, Cape Town, 25 January 2011(Henceforth Interview with Feinberg). For more on Feinberg see, Barry Feinberg, *Time to Tell: An Activist' Story*, ( Newtown, 2011)

In another case pertaining to UWC, Jack Simons and Ray Alexander were keen to hand over their documents to the Mayibuye Centre. Their daughter Mary Simons protested and argued in favour of UCT which, she said had the infrastructure to house the archives. There was no guarantee that the family papers would be properly preserved at UWC. She was speaking from experience, as the Simons had earlier handed over some archival material to UWC and these documents never saw the light of day, despite numerous visits by the Simonses to the university to enquire about their whereabouts. So when the bulk of the Simons papers were to be sent to South Africa, Mary Simons put her foot down, arguing that ‘it was such a bureaucratic mess there’ (i.e at UWC). That is why the Simons collection ended up at UCT.<sup>634</sup>

In 1987 Margaret Richards, then Chief Librarian of the African Studies Collection at UCT, requested Jack and Ray Simons, then exiled in Lusaka, to consider sending their archival material to the university for archiving.<sup>635</sup> In 1987 van Gylswyk happened to be in the same conference as Ray Alexander in Lusaka. During their conversation Alexander discovered that van Gylswyk was a trained and passionate archivist, so Alexander requested her to ‘put some order in their papers’, which were ‘totally mixed up’ and piled in a shed at their Lusaka home van Gylswyk agreed to undertake this task and Sida agreed to pay for cataloguing and microfilming the papers. Hugh Macmillan, a friend of the Simons, assisted van Gylswyk to sort the papers in Lusaka.<sup>636</sup> Once all the papers were sorted, van Gylswyk shipped the consignment to Sweden, where she arranged it systematically and microfilmed it. After 1994,

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<sup>634</sup> Interview with Simons.

<sup>635</sup> UCT: Manuscripts and Archives Department, Administrative Files, M.P. Richards to the Simons, 11 June 1987.

<sup>636</sup> Interview with van Gylswyk, UCT: Manuscript and Archives Department, Administrative Files Files, Annica van Gylswyk to Leon Jones, 07 July 1994, Ray Simons to Margaret Richards, 31 December 1987.

when South Africa was freed from apartheid, the Simons felt that the time had come for the material to be sent to UCT. It was eventually shipped to UCT in September 1996 and subsequently opened to researchers.<sup>637</sup> During the handover ceremony at UCT, Alexander thanked van Gylswyk for her outstanding work in archiving the documents:

Annica van Gylswyk was given the responsibility of sorting out and putting in order this mass of documents. We pay tribute to Annica's perseverance, skill and determination in doing so excellently what must have seemed at times a gigantic and never-ending task. The documents are the raw stuff out of which she has built an impressive bibliography, as set out in the leaflet on the Simons papers. Her work on our papers has been yet another indication of the consistent support that the Swedish government and people have given to our liberation movement in its struggle to rid South Africa of apartheid and racial discrimination.<sup>638</sup>

In the early 1990s the CCS was already enquiring about liberation collections housed at UCT. In 1993 van Gylswyk, who was based at the CCS at the time, requested the Simons to donate a complete set of microfilms of their collection to the CCS. It would appear that this never materialized.<sup>639</sup>

The CCS did, however, succeed in securing copies of the Unity Movement microfilms. There were differences between UCT and the CCS on what they were entitled to. Margaret Richards was keen to settle their differences and on 31 October 1994 she assured the stakeholders that the matter was going to be resolved amicably:

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<sup>637</sup> Tanya Barben papers, Speech by Ray Alexander during the handing over ceremony of the Simons collection to the University of Cape Town, UCT: Manuscript and Archives Department, Administrative Files, Annica van Gylswyk to Lesley Hart, 23 September 1996, Lesley Hart to Annica van Gylswyk, 16 September 1996, Annica van Gylswyk to Lesley Hart, 4 August 1996.

<sup>638</sup> Tanya Barben Papers, Speech by Ray Alexander.

<sup>639</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Visiting Fellowship: Executive Report, compiled by Annica van Gylswyk, 19 November 1993. There are also microfilm copies of the Simons collection at Uppsala at the Nordic Africa Institute, Yale University's Sterling Memorial Library, Wits Historical Papers, University of Wisconsin Memorial Library, Duke University Library, Northwestern University and the Centre for Research Libraries.

We are hopeful that the problem with Fort Hare will be resolved soon. I have been in touch with Professor Serai (sic) to assure him that we are committed to ensuring that Fort Hare receives a microfilm copy of the Unity Movement archives, as agreed to by the Unity Movement. I have also sought to reassure him that, by retaining the negative of the microfilm, UCT is following universally observed archival practice, so that we would be able to make copies for others should the Unity Movement wish this.<sup>640</sup>

By 1996, when the Simons collection reached UCT, the CCS had already lost ANC related material to the Library, and the CCS's attention was now on the continued acquisition of the BCM and PAC papers, as the battle for the ANC material was almost lost. Phokobye showed interest in the BCM documents housed at Wits and UCT which covered the 1970s.<sup>641</sup> In 1997 he identified a BCM collection at Archives and Special Collections Centre in Unisa and hoped to make copies for shipment to Fort Hare.<sup>642</sup> The photocopying of these documents was, it seems, never carried out. To Unisa the BCM collection was a resource that would attract researchers and was wanted for reasons of prestige. Like many institutions they did not have the privilege of hosting the ANC archives and wanted to hold onto the little yet important struggle material in their possession.

#### *Wits and SAHA*

Established in 1965 as a section of the William Cullen Library, Historical Papers at Wits University grew over time, housing collections from trade unions such as the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), the Metal and Allied Workers' Union material (MAWU) and the Food and Canning Workers' Union. Political structures also sent their documents to

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<sup>640</sup> UCT: Manuscript and Archives Department, , Administrative Files, Margaret Richards to Mr. R. Britten, 31 October 1994, G.T. Sirayi to Margaret Richards, 9 August 1994.

<sup>641</sup> UFH: NAHECS, Administrative files, Final Report: BCM-AZAPO Documents and artifacts by Gerald Phokobye.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid*: Gerald Phokobye to Noludwe Lupuwana, 26 November 2011.

Historical Papers. This archive also houses material pertaining to the ANC and the BCM, as well as papers of eminent politicians such as Helen Suzman and Robert Sobukwe.<sup>643</sup> By 1991, Historical Papers had made tremendous strides in the collection and preservation of liberation documents:

We house and care for over 2200 collections at present. These collections are preserved in safe and suitable conditions, are professionally inventorised and are made easily available for use by researchers, lawyers and community organizations. Over the years we have consciously collected South African material which has historical, political and social relevance. This policy proved particularly helpful during the 1980's when various banned and restricted organizations and individuals housed their records with us for safe-keeping.<sup>644</sup>

SAHA came into existence in 1988, the brainchild of political activists linked to the UDF and Cosatu who noted the importance of preserving struggle related documents of organisations such as the UDF. Today the organization houses trade union material, posters and photographs relating to political activism, UDF documents and some documents emanating from the TRC process.<sup>645</sup> In 1994 SAHA relocated its offices from Braamfontein to Wits. Ironically Sirayi was the chair of the SAHA board, at a time when, as seen in earlier chapters, his kingdom at Fort Hare was beginning to crumble. SAHA's move to Wits was driven by circumstances. In 1994 the organization's existence was threatened when it ran out of funds to continue carrying out its mandate of archives preservation. In fact after 1994 many NGOs faced hard times as funding dried up. South Africa was now a free country and many international based funders saw no need for continued funding, as the democratically elected government could now fund programmes which had up to then been supported by

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<sup>643</sup>For a background on Historical Papers see, Zofia Sulej, 'Changing the Landscape', *ESARBICA Journal*

<sup>644</sup>Historical Papers, Administrative Files, Michele Pickover to Naidoo, 20 May 1991.

<sup>645</sup>[www.saha.org.za](http://www.saha.org.za), accessed on 27 May 2011, Harris, 'The Archival Sliver', in Hamilton, *Configuring the Archive*.

international funders. SAHA was a victim of this evolving situation.<sup>646</sup> Due to these circumstances, staff morale was low, ill-discipline prevailed and most staff members worked when it suited them. Some resigned as the collapse of SAHA seemed imminent.<sup>647</sup> Something had to be done to ensure the safety and continued preservation of the organization's archival collection. This is where Historical Papers intervened, as they considered SAHA's collection to be valuable and complementary to theirs. They entered into negotiations with SAHA, whose future was hanging by a thread.<sup>648</sup>

Eventually in late 1994, an MOU was signed between Wits and SAHA and the collection was transferred to the institution in August 1994. But difficult times still lay ahead for SAHA, as due to lack of funds, they could only keep one archivist to process the organization's material. Though SAHA's papers were held by Wits as a separate collection, the SAHA archivist was expected to operate from Historical Papers and report to its head, the Curator of Manuscripts. The MOU also spelt out that SAHA material had to be catalogued in accordance with the practices and standards of Historical Papers.<sup>649</sup> But the fortunes of SAHA changed in 2001 when they secured new funding and embarked on a drive to increase their collections. Subsequently SAHA insisted on a revised MOU with Wits which would give them more autonomy and independence. SAHA also began to perceive Wits as a mere provider of space. That Wits was not represented on the SAHA board made it difficult for Historical Papers to feel SAHA's pulse. The result has been 'two separate research archives

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<sup>646</sup>The Relationship between Wits and SAHA in relation to Archival Collections, see also Historical Papers, Administrative Files, Memorandum of agreement entered into and between the South African History Archive Trust and the University of the Witwatersrand.

<sup>647</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, South African History Archives interim report, June 1994, Prakash Morar to Themba Sirayi, 1 June 1994.

<sup>648</sup>The Relationship between Wits and SAHA in relation to Archival Collections'. See also Memorandum of agreement entered into and between the South African History Archive Trust and the University of the Witwatersrand.

<sup>649</sup>*Ibid.*

on campus (although they share the same space) which not only operate and are managed entirely separately but which are in competition with one another'.<sup>650</sup>

Not only did SAHA have a dispute with Historical Papers; it was also in conflict with the Mayibuye Centre over the UDF collection. This issue was discussed at the SAHA board meeting of 30 September 1994 after Odendaal approached SAHA on the subject. Apparently the meeting of the UDF National Executive Council (NEC) held on 14 August 1991, shortly before the UDF dissolved, was not clear about the future of its collection.<sup>651</sup> However it ended up at SAHA, which was a loss for the Mayibuye Centre.

There was also a disagreement between SAHA and the Mayibuye Centre over the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) collection. IDAF provided funds and support to apartheid victims and their families. Sirayi informed Odendaal at the SAHA board meeting on 1 December 1995, that the organization expressed itself as disappointed by the false allegations that were leveled against it over the IDAF collection, which was combed through for relevant material to be used by the TRC before the material was sent to UWC. The process of examination by the TRC was misinterpreted by UWC. Sirayi informed Odendaal that SAHA was willing to maintain a cordial working relationship with the Mayibuye Centre, but could not accept false allegations leveled against them. He told Odendaal that next time he should be sure about his facts before pointing fingers at SAHA.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>650</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>651</sup>UFH: NAHECS, Administrative Files, Minutes of the SAHA board meeting held on 30 September 1994.

<sup>652</sup>*Ibid.*: Themba Sirayi to Andre Odendaal, 13 February 1996, Raziah Saleh to Themba Sirayi, 27 February 1996.

### *Digitising the liberation archive*

More problems and controversies surfaced when the issue of the digitization of liberation documents arose in the late 1990s. Academics wished to launch a digitization project that would focus on struggle era records. Disa was conceptualized in 1997 with funding from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation. Though the Disa project was housed at the University of KwaZulu Natal, it drew its expertise from a range of South African tertiary institutions, and the National Library and State Archives.

The digitization of liberation material would enable researchers across the world to access materials on the South African struggles without difficulty. This pilot project, Disa 1, focused on digitizing struggle journals under the theme *South Africa's Struggle for Democracy: Anti-Apartheid Periodicals 1960-1990*. As part of Disa 1, digital skills were taught to individuals from participating institutions, ensuring institutional continuity and capacity building.<sup>653</sup> Universities like Fort Hare stood to benefit from this initiative. After all, it had ambitions to digitize its own material, despite its lack of resources. Digital skills acquired through the Disa project could mark the beginning of digital archives at Fort Hare. Now for the first time since the repatriation of liberation documents in the early 1990s periodicals relating to the struggle era such as *Sechaba* could be easily accessed through the Disa website. This had the potential to transform the liberation archives sector and made learning and teaching easier, as lecturers could refer their students to the Disa website, enhancing their research and computer skills. Disa's pilot project was a success and the Mellon Foundation agreed to fund the second phase, intended to focus on the digitization of primary sources such as letters, speeches and

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Disa Papers (DP) University of Kwa-Zulu Natal: Digital Imaging South Africa- digitizing documentary heritage in Africa by Dr. Dale Peters



memorandums. The theme for the second phase was *Southern African Freedom Struggles, c.1950-1994*.<sup>654</sup>

However, the second phase of the project was soon shrouded in controversy and this would eventually cripple the whole project. The Mellon Foundation unexpectedly proposed that Disa should partner with Ithaka, an American-based non-profit organization also funded by Mellon. Ithaka was launched towards the end of 2002 in the US, with Aluka as its subsidiary.<sup>655</sup> Aluka's *Struggle for Freedom in Southern Africa* theme was conceived of as regional and was expected to partner with Disa. Archival material from southern African countries such as Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana were expected to form part of the envisaged digital archive. Struggle documents on southern Africa in European and American archives were also to be digitized.<sup>656</sup>

Disa had no alternative but to cooperate with Aluka. The Mellon Foundation funded both, and Aluka was an American-based project, so naturally the funders complemented Aluka and Disa. No South African financier offered funds to Disa, which found itself without options and eventually had to accede to the Mellon Foundation's proposal. After all, the Mellon Foundation wished to synergize projects scattered in different parts of the world. For the Foundation, encouraging a partnership between Disa and Aluka could avoid duplication and fruitless expenditure.<sup>657</sup> Considering this, Disa was willing to try out the partnership, but it rapidly turned sour. As early as 2004, barely two years after the contract with the Mellon

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<sup>654</sup>DP: Digital Imaging South Africa.

<sup>655</sup> DP: Aluka International Resource- an Ithaka project, Allen Isaacman, Premesh Lalu, Tom Nygren, Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive of Southern African Liberation Struggles: The Aluka Project, *Africa Today*, 52, (2) (2005), 55-77.

<sup>656</sup> DP: Aluka International Resource- an Ithaka project.

<sup>657</sup> DP: Discussion paper for 7 June 2007- meeting between Disa and Aluka by Claire Wright.

Foundation was approved, Disa began to raise fundamental questions about the partnership with Aluka. For example, it was concerned that the formation of regional Aluka content committees comprised of representatives of the various southern African countries could reduce Disa to a mere ‘production centre’ resulting in the organization losing its independent status.<sup>658</sup> This argument was supported by the fact that even though Disa 1 focused on South African struggle history, Disa hoped that at some stage they would serve as an umbrella body for digitization in the rest of southern Africa. This was definitely possible considering the skills and networks that Disa had established rapidly since its conceptualization. However, the arrival of Aluka eliminated this opportunity for Disa, and the organization was reduced to being one of the regional committees. Disa raised the issue with Aluka:

initially, as part of its role, DISA was to build capacity in both South Africa and neighbouring countries, and this is an area in which we would like to make a contribution. Assistance, training, cross-pollination of ideas, cooperation and communication amongst country committees will improve the overall quality of the Aluka resource. My understanding is that this is still part of the plan. We wouldn’t want to be seen as “big brother” but we would genuinely like to assist where possible.<sup>659</sup>

The South African heritage sector, including universities like Fort Hare, joined Disa in raising concerns about the Aluka partnership. These concerns included access to the Aluka website which was expected to host the digital archives, intellectual property and copyright matters. Many archivists were concerned that the Aluka project would overshadow their own collections, as there would be a rush to the net, especially by western researchers who would see no need to visit the actual depositories.<sup>660</sup> The archives at Fort Hare for instance, are

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<sup>658</sup> DP: Report to the Andrew W Mellon Foundation for the year 2004.

<sup>659</sup> DP: Heather Edwards to Tom Nygren, 6 May 2004.

<sup>660</sup> Allen Isaacman, Lalu, Tom Nygren, Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive of Southern African Liberation Struggles: The Aluka Project, *Africa Today*, 52, (2) (2005), 55-77.

linked to the economy of Alice. Every researcher that visits the archives contributes to the economy of Alice and the poverty-stricken people of the town are able to reap some rewards.

Such concerns stalled progress, as digitization of identified documents could not be carried out as their custodians were suspicious of Aluka's intentions. The issue of losing power and control of liberation archives was much talked about and, like Uconn earlier; Aluka was even portrayed as an imperialist organization. When Disa proposed a joint MOU with participants like Wits, Rhodes University, UCT and Fort Hare, the ANC and Fort Hare refused to sign the MOU citing 'reluctance to be drawn involuntarily into the DISA/Aluka partnership without a national policy framework in place'.<sup>661</sup> Institutions like Fort Hare and UCT were merely custodians of the liberation archives, with limited powers over the collections. Important decisions like digitization could not be made without the involvement of the liberation movements of whose materials they were the guardians. After all, custodians like Fort Hare had, on various occasions and as demonstrated earlier, faced the wrath of liberation movements like the ANC over the handling of the archives. No-one in institutions like Fort Hare wanted to incur the displeasure of the liberation movements.

The fact that black institutions did not sign the MOU was a concern to Aluka, which concluded that:

In our reading, it is interesting that the institutions which have signed agreements are historically white institutions, with many being the preferred destination of grants from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. The historically black universities, of which there were only two, have been more hesitant because, we suspect, of their overwhelming dependence on the state for their sustainability. The project may opt to forego these

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<sup>661</sup> DP: Disa proposal for extension of grant 2007-2008.

historically black institutions of course and simply work with sites of historic privilege and resource. We might say that Mayibuye Centre at UWC is unimportant and that this further evidenced by the fact that the ANC itself is withdrawing its collection from this institution. But we suspect that this view would be antithetical to the spirit of Disa and Aluka and its inaugural statements on its commitment to the politics of the archives of the liberation struggle. It may also explain why the NHC may be worried about which institutions ultimately benefit from this project.<sup>662</sup>

Southern African countries which formed part of the Aluka project such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana were also expected to select struggle documents from their respective archives, but this did not happen. In Mozambique for instance, numerous attempts were made to get the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) officials to endorse the project, but they would not commit. In Zimbabwe, which had become an arch-enemy of the west, there were suspicions about the leading role of the US in the digitisation project, and the Aluka initiative was viewed as literally handing over the country's heritage to the Americans.<sup>663</sup> These problems were serious and would eventually cripple the project. Aluka brought in a lawyer, Claire Wright, to analyze the situation and offer an independent perspective. In May 2007 she concluded that from Disa's point of view:

- there was resentment of Aluka in that Disa 1 was a project on its own, and there was a sense that its project had been hijacked when Aluka was imposed on them for phase 2.
- it was proving more difficult than anticipated to obtain materials for various reasons not always appreciated by Aluka and the requirement that materials be shared with Aluka added to the difficulty.

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<sup>662</sup> DP: Report to the Aluka Maputo meeting, 10-12 March 2006 on behalf of the Disa/Aluka Content Committee.

<sup>663</sup> DP: Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa, Aluka Regional Advisory Committee meeting, Windhoek, Namibia, 11-12 March, 2005.

- Disa was under great pressure to meet deadlines and ensure sustainability. The objectives of the Mellon grant had to be met, while the linkage with Aluka hindered its ability to succeed.
- Aluka should have kept Disa better informed of contacts it made and materials it accessed outside of but concerning South Africa.
- Aluka should have shared materials obtained from third parties pertaining to South Africa.

From Aluka's point of view,

- Aluka, itself under pressure from Mellon to meet targets, was not receiving the materials anticipated. Its project was conceived of as a regional; if there was only very limited content from South Africa, the credibility and appeal of the whole regional content area to the broader international community was undermined.
- Aluka, having no direct interface with the custodians of materials, was removed/absent from the debate on macro and micro levels. In other words Aluka had not been in touch with the issues facing the sector and how its purpose in South Africa complimented or contradicted opinion or prevailing norms (if there was such a thing) on heritage and digitization. On a micro level, it could not engage, for example, with the concerns raised by custodians of materials about IP issues, terms of a licence etc, and it could not reassure parties with concerns because it was not present.
- The latter issue was made more serious because Aluka felt that the party speaking for it in the country, Disa, was ambivalent about this role and perceived Aluka as a competitor, not a partner.<sup>664</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> DP: Discussion paper for 7 June 07 meeting between Disa and Aluka by Claire Wright, 07.

These differences indicated that the situation was far from being resolved. Disa was under pressure to donate its content to Aluka. It toyed with the idea of securing information from donors without having to share it with Aluka through asking them if they wanted to share their material with Aluka, only doing so if the donors agreed. However, Aluka was opposed to this approach as one of the Mellon Foundation requirements was that Disa and Aluka would share content.<sup>665</sup>

Meetings were held in an effort to find an amicable solution, but none were successful. That South Africa had no policy on digitization further stalled progress.<sup>666</sup> Some viewed the partnership between Disa and Aluka as an attempt to rob Peter (the underdeveloped world) to pay Paul (the developed world). Disa began to worry that a continued relationship with Aluka, when seen in these terms, could affect the organization's credibility in heritage circles.<sup>667</sup> In a meeting in Pretoria in 2008, Pickover criticised Aluka for the unequal partnership with Disa:

Ultimately, what we are really talking about are partnerships between the USA and other countries in the North and African Institutions, custodians, governments and the education sector as well as other stakeholders. We do not want to be mere suppliers of documents held together with a veneer of inclusivity (a shop-floor that supports a massive infrastructure with bigger ambitions elsewhere). As a country, as a region, as a Continent, as civil society we need to vigorously engage in what this additional layer - which in this case is ALUKA/ITHAKA - brings to the table and whether local, regional and institutional mandates, missions and expectations are complementary or in opposition. And if indeed there is space to change the nature of these unequal partnerships?<sup>668</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>666</sup> DP: Report to the Aluka Maputo meeting, 10-12 March 2006 on behalf of the Disa/Aluka Content Committee.

<sup>667</sup> DP: Summary of the Disa Strategic planning workshop held at the Govan Mbeki Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal Westville Campus, Durban, 9 January 2007.

<sup>668</sup> Unpublished paper by M. Pickover, 'Challenges of the Aluka Projects'.

Premesh Lalu, a UWC historian, held the same views. He emphasised that the results of digitization of African material would be inequality between north and south. The north would have a high concentration of resources, reducing Africans to mere ‘consumers of knowledge rather than producers of knowledge’. To emphasise his point, Lalu referred to north-south inequities in publication:

Already, we are faced with a situation where the bulk of publishing on Africa is based in Europe and North America, placing the published material outside the reach of a general reading public. As a consequence we continue to experience expanding levels of illiteracy, high university dropout rates, not to mention creeping mediocrity that is having an adverse impact on the formation of a viable and dynamic public sphere in Southern Africa. This has been the forfeited promise of modern Southern African nationalisms as they increasingly set out to meet the demands of the apparatus of global governance.<sup>669</sup>

Tom Nygren, the Executive Director of Aluka, was ‘very disappointed by both the tone and substance of the way that Aluka was characterized’ and said of Pickover’s presentation that its main thrust seemed:

to be an attempt to argue that Aluka exercises an excessive, heavy handed “controlling” influence over Disa. However, the case is made primarily through innuendo and implication, with little in the way of actual evidence. For example, it is stated that Aluka “appropriated” the Disa project, and it is implied that Aluka controls the finances of Disa. It is also suggested that we attempt to dictate DISA’s technical choices (as well as asserting “technical control” over other partners in the region), and that we have demanded haste in making content selections. It is claimed that we are elitist because we are only accessible to tertiary institutions through a subscription model (outside of Africa), and that we are “locked into” an (implied inappropriate) propriety technology model.<sup>670</sup>

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<sup>669</sup> Lalu, *The Virtual Stampede for Africa: Digitisation, Postcoloniality and Archives of the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa*, *Innovation*, 34 (2007), 28-44.

<sup>670</sup>DP: Tom Nygren to Disa Executive Committee, 8 May 2007.

Nygren denied all of this and asserted rather that Aluka was establishing an international platform to digitise content on Africa which would be made freely available on the African continent. All that Aluka needed in return was ‘a non-exclusive copy of the materials for educational and research purposes’.<sup>671</sup> Further, he said that Pickover’s presentation used ‘language that implies Aluka is part of an exploitative, neo-colonial system that is “plundering” heritage and “stripping” cultural assets, even comparing us to the Apartheid state. We are deeply offended by this inflammatory language’, which was:

Clearly aimed at damaging Aluka and excusing DISA from any responsibility for criticisms of the project to date. We do not see how these statements advance our mutual interest in the use of digitization to promote higher education, research, knowledge sharing, and international collaboration. If these views truly represent the Disa view, which we can scarcely believe, then we also find it hard to see how DISA could participate in any international partnerships, no matter how equitably they are structured. If they do not represent the DISA view, then we find it disturbing that they were conveyed as such at an important public platform. We have been committed to working with DISA and have, we believe, shown understanding, patience and a willingness to renegotiate the terms of our agreement on many occasions.<sup>672</sup>

Frustrated by what could be the beginning of the end of the Aluka project, with nothing substantial to show the Mellon Foundation, Aluka was convinced that the time had come for them to negotiate directly with South African stakeholders as Disa had failed to convey Aluka’s message.<sup>673</sup> According to Aluka, it was important that they should convey their concerns directly to stakeholders as currently they were viewed with suspicion in the South African heritage sector. If they could make such direct contact, they would solve problems and satisfy the concerns raised by stakeholders who were reluctant to form part of the project. Aluka itself may have been seriously pressed considering the Mellon Foundation’s

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<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>672</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*



large investment in the success of the project.<sup>674</sup> Nygren assured Disa that by engaging South Africa's heritage sector without their assistance, they were not devaluing its role:

Please be assured that by adopting this new approach to the South African project, we are not seeking to circumvent working through a South African partner nor to circumvent the process of consultation. On the contrary, Aluka is committed to building capacity, to collaboration that is beneficial to local partners and to being sensitive and respectful of local concerns, including with respect to the issue of digital repatriation. We are seeking only to broaden the base and scope of the consultation. We anticipate, also, that many things will stay the same and that Disa will continue to play the role that it has to date.<sup>675</sup>

However, Aluka's plan to do their own spadework in the country never materialized. They were naive to think that this could succeed. Considering the paranoia around Aluka, it is highly unlikely that the organization could have succeeded in penetrating the South African heritage fraternity, delivering a message that would have been taken as plausible.

The National Archives did not play a meaningful role in relation to the digitization issue. In fact, the organization was dysfunctional, with tension between senior staff members an open secret. The ANC's decision not even to consider the National Archives as a possible custodian of its collection was a blessing in disguise. Ginwala said 'our archives in our view were something that belonged to the nation. But we didn't want to put them in the national archives because it was very much a political party...'<sup>676</sup> Strangely and unexpectedly, the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), charged with the rewriting of struggle history, has opted to deposit its oral history material in the state archives. Hopefully SADET will not regret this decision, considering the present state of the National Archives. Why was

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<sup>674</sup> DP: Tom Nygren to Disa Executive Committee, 19 July 2007.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>676</sup> Interview with Ginwala.

Fort Hare not considered as a custodian for the SADET oral history collection, especially since some SADET chapters draw on the liberation archives at Fort Hare?

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has demonstrated that conflict and differences characterised the South African archives landscape long before Fort Hare conceived the idea of liberation archives. Sadly in the process some role players were unfairly labeled as spies of the US government. This chapter has also shown that to this day, struggle archives remain contested terrain in South Africa and that squabbles over struggle material and differences between stakeholders has not been limited to Fort Hare though the ANC archives were particularly highly contested due to the power associated with the collection. Fort Hare archives disputes are in fact interwoven with the national discourse on struggle material. The chapter has also demonstrated that due to its value, struggle material located in different institutions has attracted foreign entities like Aluka that hoped to digitize the material for wider access. However, whether through concern, fear, or even paranoia the South African heritage sector doubted the intentions of organizations like Aluka. In all this, the liberation struggle material at Fort Hare, particularly the ANC archives, remained and remain at the epicenter. Any digitization or other project to broaden access to and promote the study of the liberation history of South Africa, could only succeed by engaging successfully with the exceptional records at Fort Hare. This thesis demonstrates that historical records, especially those that relate to a sensitive and contested area like South African liberation history, themselves become potent symbols of and routes to power, prestige and patronage. They are worth striving and competing for. They are indeed 'struggle archives'.

## *Conclusion*

The repatriation of the liberation movements' material to Fort Hare was a major achievement, in spite of the problems encountered. As we saw, the apartheid regime unbanned the liberation movements in 1990, and that the regime now favoured a negotiated settlement with its arch-enemies enabled the liberation movements to mobilize openly inside the country. The early 1990s was an era of hope for the oppressed South Africans and created a positive environment for the archives repatriation projects discussed in this thesis. The liberation movements' literature, struggle songs and other material had been banned under apartheid and anyone found in possession of such literature or singing struggle songs was likely to be arrested. Now that the liberation movements were unbanned, struggle flags were waved freely in township streets and freedom songs were sung with gusto as many hoped for a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy. It was in this politically charged setting that the repatriation of struggle records was made possible.<sup>677</sup> Had it not been for the unbanning of the liberation movements, there would have been no question of the repatriation of struggle documents. The regime would not have allowed ships transporting such documents to dock in Durban or elsewhere, while shipping companies would have not cooperated with the liberation movements. Fort Hare would have remained under apartheid's thumb and struggle material would not have been allowed on campus by the apartheid-appointed University administrators.

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<sup>677</sup> For sources on South Africa in the early 1990s see, Willie Esterhuyse, *Endgame. Secret Talks and the End of Apartheid*, (Cape Town, 2012), Adam Habib, 'The Transition to Democracy in South Africa: Developing a Dynamic Model', *Transformation*, 27(1995), 50-73, Richard Spitz and Matthew Chaskalson, *The Politics of Transition in South Africa: a hidden history of South Africa's negotiated settlement*, (Johannesburg, 2000), Ivor Chipkin, 'Nationalism as Such: Violence during South Africa's Political Transition', *Public Culture*, 16.2(2004) 315-335.

As we saw in previous chapters, in the early 1990s exiles and other expatriates were able to establish themselves at Fort Hare in an effort to revive the University. The presence of Tambo, Bengu and later Mzamane at Fort Hare assured the liberation movements that Fort Hare was indeed on the path to renewal and a deserving custodian of the struggle material. Also, the spirit of cooperation between the ANC, PAC and AZAPO in the early 1990s under the banner of the patriotic front added impetus to the moves to repatriate the liberation material to Fort Hare.<sup>678</sup> Above all, the 1990s created the opportunity to begin to undo the stitches, cultural as well as political, knitted by the apartheid government. One of the ways by which this could be achieved was by reviving the arts and culture aspects of the liberation organizations' activities, of which the archives were a major element. For South African historians this was an opportunity to rewrite the history of the country's struggle. Over the years the curricula of Bantu Education and its predecessors had virtually erased the history of black resistance against colonial conquest in favour of a form of history which assumed and instilled white supremacy. The new era gave Fort Hare an opportunity to take the lead in rewriting South African struggle history. It was an opportunity that was vital for the University to embrace, especially considering that it was the official custodian of the liberation archives.

After 1994 the ANC wished to make a rapid and visible mark on South African society. The liberation archives presented the Department of Arts and Culture with an opportunity to make an immediate symbolic impact, but the repatriation process was not close to the heart of the

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<sup>678</sup> Not much has been written about Fort Hare in the early 1990s but see Morrow and Gxabalashé, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa*. Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements'; *History in Africa*. For details on the patriotic front between the ANC, PAC and BCM in the early 1990s see, Maaba, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in the early 1990s', forthcoming in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol 6.

department. The repatriation process required commitment, organizational, logistical and archival skills and the cooperation of the different missions in exile. The establishment of an ANC Archives Committee under Ginwala gave impetus to the repatriation process. As noted, the repatriation of the PAC and BCM material had its own challenges: some material was seized by the police or destroyed before it reached Fort Hare, some was lost during the intense violence between AZAPO and the UDF, and some documents remained in the hands of BCM members who refused to hand them over for archiving. In spite of such problems, individuals (notably Mfanasekhaya Gqobose) helped make the repatriation process a success. The liberation archives that exist at Fort Hare today were shaped by the prevailing conditions and circumstances of the time. This thesis has shown why the material lodged at Fort Hare is what it is.<sup>679</sup>

The decision to house the liberation archives at Fort Hare was deeply political in a number of senses. For instance, Fort Hare secured the ANC material to leverage the power that came with the fact that the ANC would soon become the governing party. It has been shown why Fort Hare won the tussle over the ANC archives, and why the many arguments as to why they should not go to Fort Hare advanced by other institutions wishing to house the archives were refuted. Fort Hare won the battle in part because it renewed itself in the early 1990s, and because of the active and visible preparations by the CCS to house the material of the various liberation organizations. The University's illustrious history and the role it had played in nurturing black leaders was also taken into consideration by the liberation movements whose

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<sup>679</sup> For more on the nature of material available in the liberation archives see, Maaba, 'The Archives of the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Orientated Movements'; *History in Africa*, Stapleton and Maamoe, 'An Overview of the African National Congress Archives at the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa*.

archival material ended up at Fort Hare.<sup>680</sup> While UWC proved to be mostly interested in ANC records, Fort Hare, to its credit, sought other liberation material, even though the PAC and BCM material eventually lodged at Fort Hare was not a means to power, resources and influence because those movements carried no weight in the new order. In addition to the ANC material that UWC housed, UWC officials managed to secure private records of struggle heroes such as Brian Bunting, Yusuf Dado, Amhed Kathrada and Wolfie Kodesh.

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What then is the legacy of the repatriation of the liberation movements' archives to Fort Hare? At least the liberation movements succeeded preserving their records by sending them to Fort Hare, despite the difficulties and challenges surrounding the process. The material remains at Fort Hare today, in spite of the controversies and conflicts around the liberation archives discussed in this thesis. Undoubtedly, the liberation archives put Fort Hare on the map when it was emerging from the apartheid doldrums in the early 1990s. The SOMAFCO research project carried out by Fort Hare historians dented the image of Bantu Education and demonstrated that the university could succeed in nurturing up-and-coming researchers. Their research destroyed the myth that nothing good could come from black institutions and that research was the business of white institutions. The SOMAFCO research team left a lasting legacy at Fort Hare, as they were the first to effectively use the liberation archives. They went on to excel elsewhere after the completion of the SOMAFCO research project, and Fort Hare remains proud of the book they produced, *Education in Exile: SOMAFCO, the African National Congress School in Tanzania, 1978 to 1992*.<sup>681</sup>

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<sup>680</sup> For Fort Hare history see, Massey, *Under Protest*, Donovan Williams, *A History of the University College of Fort Hare, South Africa-the 1950s: The Waiting Years*, (New York, 2001).

<sup>681</sup> Some of the products of the SOMAFCO research project were mentioned earlier and include: Morrow, Maaba, Pulumani, *Education in Exile*, Morrow, Maaba, Pulumani, 'Education in Exile', in Kallaway(ed), *The*

The archives project had many other positive spin-offs for a university in the heart of the Ciskei homeland. For the first time the Fort Hare community was introduced to the world of archives, for the existing Fort Hare collection in the basement of the University administration building was not an archive in the true sense of the word but only a storage facility for University records.<sup>682</sup> But once the archives concept had been introduced at Fort Hare following the repatriation of the struggle material, some university members became associated with the archives, while potential archivists received training in the field and used the skills they acquired for the preservation of archives at Fort Hare. Some, like Lupuwana, Kwatsha and Botomani, went on to serve at higher levels in archives in different parts of the country. Though the departure of such archivists from Fort Hare created a vacuum, their skills and experience were harnessed for the benefit of the institutions they joined and their background at and commitment to Fort Hare affirmed the institution's significance in the archival field. The appointment of Sirayi in various positions of power signaled that Fort Hare's influence was growing in leaps and bounds. That he was initially associated with the ANC archives, a route to greater varsity and wider influence, benefitted other heritage and archives structures that he chaired, SAHA. The benefits for SAHA from this were numerous and include securing the ANC's ear and influencing policy development in the country.

Fort Hare management remained aware of the importance of keeping the archives at the University. Hosting the liberation archives bestowed prestige, and gave the institution opportunities to access political influence and economic benefits. University strategies

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*History of Education Under Apartheid*, 155-173. Morrow, Maaba, Pulumani, 'Revolutionary Schooling?', Maaba, 'Alternative Schooling for South Africans'.

<sup>682</sup> For more on the storage facility of the Fort Hare records see, Morrow and Gxabalashé, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare', *History in Africa*.

reflected this. For instance, its publicity material and the main University website habitually referred to the archives as a symbol of Fort Hare renewal.<sup>683</sup> Such tactics often led to funding opportunities. Though it must be said that much of this was potential rather than actual, the archives did draw researchers to Fort Hare, boosting Alice's tourism industry.<sup>684</sup> This was one reason why the university entertained the idea of building a hotel in the town. Visits by outside researchers, some of them high-powered academics like Gerhart, contributed to the research culture of the institution and networking opportunities. Since most researchers who visited the archives were familiar with the history of Fort Hare and Alice, their visits often resulted in tours to historical sites such as Lovedale and the Stewart Memorial (Somgxada), blending research with tourism. Heritage and tourism structures incorporated the archives in heritage routes. Had the archives been digitized, as planned by the UConn and subsequently by Aluka as discussed in chapter 6, Fort Hare would have lost out on the tourism revenue generated by visiting researchers. This is one reason why the university refused to have its material digitized by such institutions. Instead, it wanted to initiate a digitization project appropriate for its needs, though it was unclear when and how funding for digitization would be obtained, or where it would come from.<sup>685</sup>

Today the liberation material lodged at Fort Hare remains largely undigitized, in part because of lack of the funds, skills and facilities that would ensure proper digitization. While Fort Hare benefited from the windfall of what was seen as a miracle transition in South Africa, which meant that many outsiders wished to contribute to the 'new South Africa', it did not

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<sup>683</sup> For publicity on the liberation archives at Fort Hare see, <http://www.interstudy.org/u/2-university-of-fort-hare>, accessed on 8 October 2012, unfortunately the main liberation archives website has since been discontinued due to lack of maintenance.

<sup>684</sup> For the Maqoma Heritage Route which covers Fort Hare and the liberation archives see, <http://www.mojaheritage.co.za/detail/items/maqoma-heritage-route.html>, accessed on 8 October 2012.

<sup>685</sup> Interview with Mzamane.



consolidate its gains after receiving various form of assistance from such organizations and institutions as Michigan State University, the Ford Foundation and De Beers. Instead a great deal of time was spent quarreling over the ANC archives, and where they should be housed. In a presentation on the digitization of Fort Hare's liberation material at a conference held in East London on 31 October- 2 November 2012, Peter Dewah and Feni-Feti asserted that there were challenges as well as opportunities in digitizing the struggle archives at Fort Hare. Multi-Choice, a television company, has recently digitized mainly ANC audio-visual collections lodged at Fort Hare. This is just the tip of the iceberg, Dewah and Feni-Feti argue, as the rest of the liberation archive remains undigitized. Recently, a new website of digitized ANC material was launched in a funfair and glamorous event organised by Multi-Choice in Sandton. Sadly, the launch took place far away from Fort Hare and its town, Alice and where the real business of archives takes place. Once more questions could be asked about how these digitization initiatives bring financial rewards to the impoverished town of Alice.<sup>686</sup>

Many researchers found it difficult to get to Fort Hare and researchers from well-established institutions like UCT were not invited there, even for brief periods of time. The few that were invited were attached to the GMRCC. Invitations never came from the History Department which, under normal circumstances, might have been thought of as the driving force for the archives project. Some relevant academics, including those in the History Department, lived in East London, the 'first world' and the opposite of rural Alice, and drove in lift clubs to Alice to work, only to leave as soon as they could. This came at a price for students, as their

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<sup>686</sup>Peter Dewah and Feni-Feti: 'Issues and prospects of digitizing liberation movements' archives held at the University Of Fort Hare, South Africa', paper presented at the International Conference on Liberation Archives at the International Convention Centre in East London held on 31 October to 2 November 2012. David Larson also presented a paper in this conference entitled 'Digitizing the ANC Archives'. See the video of his presentation, <http://vimeo.com/53312810>, accessed on 31 December 2012, <http://heritage.blogs.africamediaonline.com/>, accessed on 12 May 2013.

lecturers were often nowhere to be found for consultation, and these academics did not use the liberation archives. Other academics lived in Hogsback and at Fort Beaufort, both 30km from Fort Hare, and did not engage extensively with students or the archives.

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In spite of the achievements of the archive project, it was engulfed in difficulties. The effects of Bantu Education came close to crippling the work of the archives, for the oppressive legacy of apartheid remained in spite of the efforts of the university in the early 1990s. As demonstrated in the thesis, the lack of capable researchers on campus prompted Fort Hare to train their own so as to benefit from the archives initiative. Apart from developing the SOMAFCO writers, achievements were minimal. Academics in such departments as History and Political Science were not grounded in research, and their endless promises to undertake archival research got nowhere. Some incompetent academics took administrative posts. After their administrative tenures had lapsed, they came face to face with the archives once more. Though the idea of boosting the archives remained in Fort Hare's strategic documents, their use was not incorporated in the University curriculum. Only recently has a programme in archives study been introduced by the Department of Library Science, thanks to the efforts of Khayundi, who left the CCS to launch it.<sup>687</sup> Also, an African Studies Center has been established at Fort Hare Social and Economic Research Institute, and one of its major fields is Liberation movements and training to use the archives. To this day the liberation archives remain used mainly by outside researchers, not by Fort Hare academics or students.

For the archives division, the lack of relevant skills on campus put pressure on a capable few. In addition to this, living conditions in Alice were not at par with other university towns. The

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<sup>687</sup> Interview with Khayundi.

town had no decent places of refreshment or other facilities that might be expected in a university town and this added to the stress on University employees, some of whom ended up taking to drink. The archivists were overworked, as the liberation movements put pressure on the university to process archival material speedily. Kukubo worked tirelessly and for long hours but could not go on leave due to work pressure. The stress showed further when Kukubo and Maamoe downed tools in early 1995 until their deployment status at the CCS or University Library was clarified. Ultimately, Kukubo remained at the CCS and Maamoe joined the Library as an archivist charged with processing and preserving the ANC archives.<sup>688</sup> Many who left for better jobs tended to be nostalgic, as memories of Fort Hare remain etched in their minds, but they resisted returning to the university due to the unappealing and difficult working conditions. The idea of producing knowledge for the sake of it was in stark contrast to the socio-economic conditions of black graduates at Fort Hare and elsewhere, many of whom had to meet the demands of extended families whilst struggling to balance their budgets. Thus many ended in well-paying jobs in government and the private sector. Fort Hare's revival coincided with the renewal of the country and qualified blacks were sought after in high positions partly to address past imbalances in the work place.

The problems bedeviling the liberation archives were just one aspect of those affecting the South African heritage landscape as a whole. When the ANC assumed power in 1994 apartheid symbols peppered the country. The absence of monuments to black leaders such as Sobukwe and Biko was no coincidence as the apartheid regime wished to suppress black history and heritage, or at least to sideline it in a neo-traditional form to the homelands, in an effort to perpetuate the status quo and sideline African nationalism and as far as possible

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<sup>688</sup>Interview with Mzamane, Maamoe.

render it invisible.<sup>689</sup> While the democratic government may have had noble intentions about transforming the heritage sector to reflect the country's struggle history in general, it is argued here that it has turned away from this course, with most heritage sites and monuments erected in post apartheid South Africa a reflection and celebration of ANC history and heritage. This includes the process of changing the names of towns, institutions and streets which is skewed towards the ANC. This has led to an outcry from some members of the public who are either not aligned to the ANC or are critical of the way the process has been handled. Some of these critics include academics.<sup>690</sup>

In the case of the BCM for instance, the narratives of most of the country's struggle exhibitions tend to omit the movement's role in the struggle against apartheid and that of its leading figure, Biko. People and organisations holding to BCM principles often have to put pressure on government and on heritage and curriculum experts to accord them their place in history and through organisations such as the Biko Foundation the Biko legacy and that of the BCM has been upheld and to some extent restored.<sup>691</sup> As a result, it has not been unusual for structures like museums to have to change exhibition panels in order to correct this 'mistake'. An egregious example is that in 1999 the University of Natal, now the University of KwaZulu Natal, renamed its School of Medicine after Mandela instead of Biko, though Biko

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<sup>689</sup> For some sources on the heritage in South Africa see, Annie Coombes, *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*, (Johannesburg 2004), Maaba, 'Challenges to Repatriation and Preservation of Tangible Heritage in South Africa', *South African Historical Journal*.

<sup>690</sup> For name details and challenges around renaming of South Africa's public spaces see, Mcebisi Ndletyana, 'Changing Place-names in the Post-apartheid South Africa: Accounting for the un-evenness', unpublished paper, Coombes, *History after Apartheid*.

<sup>691</sup> Xolela Mangcu is one of the leading adherents of the BCM ideology. Some of his columns in *Business Day* (newspaper) often criticized the government and the heritage sector to accord Biko and the BCM its role in struggle history. See also, Mangcu, 'Evidentiary Genocide' in Mangcu (ed), *Becoming Worthy Ancestors*, 1-16. Recently, AZAPO raised an issue with the Red Location Museum as its exhibition omitted the role of BCM in the struggle against apartheid. This was rectified following the complaints from AZAPO. Interview with Dick.

had been a medical student of the university in the late 1960s.<sup>692</sup> Similarly, those who have toured Robben Island will recall that for a long time Sobukwe's house was not really viewed as the main attraction on the Island. It was pointed out from the bus by a tour guide to tourists who were perhaps generally there to see Mandela's cell and knew little or nothing of an activist called Sobukwe who was kept in isolation on Robben Island. It was only after protests from the PAC and other members of the public that Sobukwe's house received the attention it deserved.<sup>693</sup> The house was renovated and visitors are now allowed inside.

Unfortunately archives in South Africa cannot escape such partiality. Since the early 1990s, the dominant discussion has been around the repatriation and preservation of the ANC archives, as though other struggle archives are irrelevant or non-existent. In fact, the battle for the control of the ANC archives has been so much in the foreground that observers would imagine that the ANC was the only force that liberated South Africa. A case in point, as demonstrated in the thesis, is the tussle between the universities of the Western Cape and Fort Hare over the ANC documents. To their credit, at Fort Hare, officials were concerned that the prestige associated with the ANC archives might make the public conclude that there was an attempt to marginalise the documents of other movements. One official report stated that:

We must unite the records of all the liberation movements. We cannot allow the impression to be created that the archives kept at the University are records of just one movement or organization. How sad it would be if visitors here would be to leave with the impression expressed by a recent visitor to the Archives of the ANC, a member of a school tour, who asked why the archives of the other movements were not accessible, and expressed the suspicion that this was a propaganda exercise by the ruling party, and a deliberate attempt to downplay the activities of other organizations in the struggle. We must not allow ourselves to fall into the trap of committing solely to a 'custodial mentality' where preservation takes an absolute

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<sup>692</sup> For the Legacy of Biko see, Steve Biko Foundation, *The Steve Biko Memorial Lectures 2000-2008*(Johannesburg, 2009).

<sup>693</sup> Maaba, 'the repatriation of the Black Consciousness Movement Archives to Fort Hare'. Coombes, *History After Apartheid*,68.

priority over the much more important need to make these records and artifacts accessible to the people of South Africa and the world, so that they may be enabled to recover, and better understand their past.<sup>694</sup>

Sadly after 1994 no institution other than Fort Hare courted the BCM with the idea of archiving and preserving the organisation's material. Only DISA, which specialises in digital archives, approached AZAPO later proposing to digitise the BCM collection.<sup>695</sup> The battle for archives, in this case the ANC archives, also reinforces the long standing perception that history favours power. As mentioned earlier, the ANC was viewed as a government in waiting and its archives the kind of treasure that could bring prestige to any host institution and that could be used to leverage gain for their university or other such institution. Also it should be borne in mind that the manner in which consignments are cherry-picked to form part of an archive, ignoring others, is likely to influence the sources for and writing of struggle history strongly, influencing societies for years to come. So when those in the heritage sector play to the gallery they should bear in mind that their actions will have long lasting effects.

As the historiography of the liberation archives develops, historians run the danger of paying too much attention to the grandiose repatriation and preservation of ANC consignments while ignoring the fact that similar initiatives were undertaken by other movements such as the BCM and the PAC. This, for example, may create the impression that no significant lessons can be drawn from the repatriation of the BCM consignment to Fort Hare. This thesis has attempted to correct this and unravel the problems and challenges faced by the BCM and the PAC during the repatriation of their archival material to Fort Hare. This thesis in particular

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<sup>694</sup>UFH: University Library, Administrative Files, Report on Workshop on the liberation movement archives-library position-a summary.

<sup>695</sup> Interview with Kgokong.

illustrates the complex interaction between how citizens see the past of the country and the resources that are made available for academic historians and others to study and portray that past.

One problem faced by the archives at Fort Hare is the matter of embargo on archives records. All the collections from the various liberation movements were weeded before the public could engage with them. Many researchers know that sensitive records that could reshape aspects of struggle history have been kept in the ‘dungeons’ of the liberation movements’ headquarters. It remains necessary and important that these documents should be accessed, and that even if they are temporarily embargoed there should be plans for their ultimate release. Lacking such plans, many pertinent questions remain on the embargoed archives. For instance, when exactly will they be made public? Will they ever see the light of day? Could it be that they will disappear forever without trace? Answers from the liberation movements vary. Some think the records will, one day, be made public, while others are not certain about the future of these records, as there are no policies in place to end the embargo.

The Russian and German experiences offer other insights into archives in a transitional state and point to the problems and challenges they face, including issue of embargo on archives records. While United States institutions were viewed by some in the South African heritage community as imperialist, seeking to colonise the archives for their own benefit, one can ask whether Russian institutions would have been viewed in the same light had they made similar digitization requests. What if the Russians had built on Shubin’s *ANC: A View from Moscow*, which largely relied on the Mayibuye archives at the University of the Western Cape? The Russians could have claimed their pound of flesh by offering to digitize the ANC material for

the benefit of the Russian community. In the event, changing world geopolitics following the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union in 1989 influenced the Russians to prioritise other issues other than reaping the benefits that might have come through the alliance with their longstanding ally, the ANC.

After the fall of communism in Russia, the country's archivists - led by Rodolf Pikhov, the chief archivist - took charge of the once top secret archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, consolidating their control over the country's archives with the aim of making the material accessible to the public. The opening of the archives provided the public with an opportunity to understand the inner workings of the Soviet government and the ruthless operations of its leaders such as Joseph Stalin. For instance records which had been embargoed for long periods of time revealed that the 1 December 1934 death of Sergei Kirov, an outspoken member of the Politburo and leader of the party in Leningrad, was orchestrated by the dictator himself, Joseph Stalin. Kirov's death was used by Stalin to purge those who conspired to kill Kirov. Subsequently access to such archives was again restricted.<sup>696</sup>

The reunification of Germany in 1990 brought sweeping changes in the archives of the former East and West Germany. Former West Germany's Federal Archive and former East Germany's Central State Archives merged, with the National Film Archives and the Military Archives of East Germany forming part of this new initiative. In 1991 the former East German records became part of the Federal Archives and the very fact that the new archives building was in what had been West Germany signified the domination of former West

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<sup>696</sup>John Wolfe, 'Revelations from the Russian Archives', *World Affairs*, 98, 3,(1935), 176-179, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/intro.html>, accessed on 14 January 2013.



Germany over the east. To this day, many in former East Germany continue to complain about being viewed as a lesser partner in the unification process. Problems were encountered when the records of former East Germany were separated from other archival material, resulting in an incomplete picture of what had taken place in the then German Democratic Republic.<sup>697</sup>

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In spite of the success in processing and preserving the liberation archives, the squabbles over the control of the ANC archives dented Fort Hare's image. As mentioned earlier, the ANC archives were viewed as a tool to leverage other advantages and this resulted in battles within the University. The archives programme might have brought very substantial benefits were it not for the catfight between the CCS and the library. Far from flourishing and surpassing expectations, the quarrel led to bad publicity for the University, disturbing potential funders and the liberation movements and watched with interest by academic institutions, particularly those that waited on the sidelines to host these contested archives. Had Fort Hare spoken with one voice, enough funds might have been secured for a well-oiled archives project. However, due to competitive egos the project was brought to its knees and the result was long lasting tension and resentment on campus. This really was a low point for the university, which had used its struggle credentials to secure the archives. The battle at Fort Hare did not, however, lead to the ANC archives being lost to another institution, as some feared it might. The struggle for the archives at Fort Hare formed part of the politics of domination that

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<sup>697</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German\\_Federal\\_Archive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Federal_Archive), accessed on 14 February 2013.

characterize many institutions. This complex has destroyed many institutions and in this case it reversed the gains made by Fort Hare as it emerged from apartheid.<sup>698</sup>

Fort Hare was open-minded on the archives issue as a whole especially considering that it also hosted the PAC and BCM material. Sadly, the University was notorious for internal feuding, which, though common in universities, was in this case, partly the result of new appointees jockeying for influential positions in the archives administration and other sectors of the university. The ANC, unlike the other liberation movements, imposed itself on the University, deciding, sometimes in a rather demeaning manner what should or should not happen to their archives especially in terms of how it is used after the material has been deposited, for example removing papers after being donated. But on the other, and in terms of prior stipulations; it is, after all, that the ANC as a donor has (assumed or legal) rights to stipulate various requirements for its records. This politically-charged environment created an environment in which the university leadership was unable to act effectively in the interests of the institution. The University was too dependent on its political connections and potentially too vulnerable to the loss of the archives that it was unable to act decisively in its own institutional and research interests.

In a dramatic twist, when many had begun to accept the archives status quo, with the ANC material under the Library and the rest of the liberation collection under the CCS, the ANC material was returned to its original custodian, the CCS, in January 2010. As shown in the thesis, over the years the Library had failed to secure funding for the extension of its building

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<sup>698</sup> On squabbles within South African institutions of higher learning see Malegapuru Makgoba, Mokoko, *The Makgoba Affair: A Reflection on Transformation*, (Johannesburg, 1994), Dani Nabudure, *Archie Mafeje: Scholar, Activist and Thinker*, (Pretoria, 2011).

to house the ANC archives in an appropriate space. The archives remained housed in hospitable but not suitable conditions, as concluded by independent assessors. University management did not succeed in raising funds for a separate archives building that would neither be controlled by the CCS nor by the Library. Something had to be done to ensure that a long lasting solution was found for the archives. But the ground shifted at the CCS. Sirayi, the Library's and the ANC's nemesis, left the University in 2002, paving the way for 'a new beginning'. The ANC would only transfer the archives to the Centre if it was renovated and internally redesigned. Vuyani Booii, the Centre's curator, became acting director until Cornelius Thomas took over as director in 2004. Thomas ensured that the necessary modifications were made to meet the ANC's expectations. Various rooms within the CCS were converted to store different forms of information. One office was changed to accommodate audio visual materials. A heating, ventilation and air conditioning system was installed in that room for climate control functions. This provided a temperature and relative humidity suitable to preserve different formats, including sound and video recordings, tapes, reel to reel, microfilm and records. Steel mobile shelving was installed in the archives, resulting in an increased storage space and enabling heavy items to be moved with ease. Other office spaces were adapted to a lecture room, fumigation and the processing room, while a fire suppression system with gas was installed in the strong rooms.<sup>699</sup>

The drama surrounding the ANC archives may linger for decades to come. Just when it was thought that the ANC material had been successfully re-united with other liberation material, ending the archives saga in romantic storybook fashion, a story on illicit deals and fraud by

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<sup>699</sup> Author's Interview with Cornelius Thomas, Alice, 26 January 2010(Henceforth Interview with Thomas,) Author's Interview with Mark Snyders, Alice, 26 January 2010(Henceforth Interview with Snyders), Notes from Vuyo-Feni Feti, 14 May 2013.

ANC members committed in the 1990s made headlines in a series of articles which appeared in the *Sunday Times* in April 2010. The documents used for the story were acquired through the CCS, raising many questions. Firstly, why were the *Sunday Times* journalists given access to sensitive documents, especially considering such documents were, as dictated by ANC policy, expected to be on embargo? How did these documents reach Fort Hare, since it was the duty of the Archives Division at the ANC headquarters to vet and withhold sensitive material? These questions need further investigation. Whilst this drama was unfolding, the ANC closed its archives collection at Fort Hare until further notice.<sup>700</sup>

Some opposition parties took this opportunity to denounce the organization. Max Mahlati of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) asserted that it was unfair for the ANC to prevent members of the public from accessing the archives as a whole on account of a small number of confidential documents relating to the inner workings of the movement. This material, he said, should have been kept in the ANC headquarters instead of being brought to Fort Hare and kept in secrecy. Nkosifikile Gqomo of the Congress of the People (Cope) argued that by blocking access to the material, the ruling party was undermining the promotion of access to information.<sup>701</sup>

The archives were subsequently re-opened to the public in 2010, but what the ANC and Fort Hare agreed upon remains a mystery. Such are the intriguing politics of liberation archives. Should all such archives be sent to the state archives, thus putting an 'end' to such politics?

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<sup>700</sup>For coverage on the stories on corruption by ANC officials which led to the closure of the ANC archives see, *Sunday Times* of 25 April 2010 see, [http://www.archivalplatform.org/news/entry/letters\\_found\\_at\\_university\\_of\\_fort\\_hare](http://www.archivalplatform.org/news/entry/letters_found_at_university_of_fort_hare), accessed on 14 September 2012.

<sup>701</sup>Mayibongwe Maqhina, 'UDM and Cope protest at closure of archives', *Daily Dispatch*, 4 May 2010.

Not all documents in the National Archives are state related: some are from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), unions and other bodies outside the governmental mainstream. This could be a precedent for the deposit of the liberation movements' material, which is not governmental per se, but rather party records.<sup>702</sup> However, South Africa's National Archives are in chaos and possibly not in a fit state to receive large consignments of very important documents.

There is no guarantee that struggle records would be easily accessible if they were held by the liberation movements themselves. The ZANU-PF documents in Zimbabwe are a case in point. To this day, they are housed in the organization's headquarters in Harare and access is limited.<sup>703</sup> It should also be kept in mind that the priority of the political parties that are the direct successors of the liberation movements is the day to day politics of the country. In this situation, things like the preservation of documents, though important, tend to be marginalised and only attended to when there is pressure to do so. The challenge faced by the BCM movement in post apartheid South Africa is to survive the turbulence brought by the lack of funds. When the writer paid a visit to AZAPO headquarters in 2010, none of the officials, though they were keen to help, knew the whereabouts of material that could shed light on this work. AZAPO's filing system had collapsed. The ANC is another example. After the party's national conference in Polokwane in December 2007, the ANC archives at Fort Hare did not receive the kind of attention they once enjoyed. For a time there was a lull in the activities of the Archives Committee, some of whom had been in Mbeki's NEC and were ousted at the Polokwane conference. The Jacob Zuma camp that won the day focused

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<sup>702</sup> For more on the state of archives in South Africa see, Morrow and Wotshela, 'The State of the Archives in South Africa', in Daniel *et al* (eds), *The State of the Nation: South Africa: 2004-2005*, Saunders, 'National Archives are a National Disgrace', *Business Day*, 15 August 2011, Shula Marks, 'Do not let our archives turn to dust', *Mail & Guardian*, 29 June 2012.

<sup>703</sup> Personal notes from Ivan Murambiwa of the National Archives of Zimbabwe, 15 December 2012.

on 'correcting' the mistakes of the Mbeki government. It took the new NEC some time to place its fingers on the pulse of the archives. They then began to work closely with Fort Hare and an immediate result was the transfer of archives to the CCS, now NAHECS.<sup>704</sup>

In addition, tension between the roles of the state and the ANC has resulted in confusion about who really runs the country and its parliament. Mbeki was instructed by the ANC to step down as the President of the country, despite the fact that he was officially accountable to parliament. However in the ANC 'nobody is above the movement' and members of the organization in government are viewed as deployees of the movement. Considering the Mbeki case, if its archives had been lodged at the National Archives the ANC might have recalled them without following procedures required by government.<sup>705</sup>

However, from the onset in the early 1990s, the ANC ruled out the National Archives as a potential custodian. It was thought wiser to keep liberation material in institutions like Fort Hare, despite the problems. Considering the academic nature of universities, a lively discussion could take place between a donor and a custodian in a situation of conflict even though there were sharp disagreements over the archives at times. All in all, a university was

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<sup>704</sup> Notes from Mohammed Tikly 14 September, 2012. For more on the ANC under Zuma see, Mangcu: *The Democratic Moment: South Africa's Prospects under Jacob Zuma*, (Johannesburg, 2009).

<sup>705</sup> For details on the removal of Thabo Mbeki from power see, Frank Chikane, *Eight Days in September: The Removal of Thabo Mbeki*, (Johannesburg, 2012)

thought to be a much better place to store struggle records than the state archives of South Africa.

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This thesis has carved out a new niche in the historiography of the liberation archives. Hopefully more studies of this nature will follow soon, especially considering that the African continent is rich with the history of liberation movements but not with the historiography of liberation archives. In the case of South Africa, the dynamics and nuances around the repatriation of liberation materials to institutions such as Wits, UCT, Unisa and others remain vague. This comment should not be viewed as a criticism but rather as an effort to promote the new field of liberation historiography. This work should serve as a stepping stone to future studies of this nature. The problems, challenges and stress of organizing archives at Fort Hare are interwoven with the national discourse on archives.

Researchers in particular need to start thinking about the turbulent journey of documents to the archives and the politics thereof, instead of solely focusing on what is in the acid-free boxes. Not taking the repatriation process sufficiently seriously could result in failure to grasp and understand what archivists and their respective institutions go through in ensuring that researchers are introduced to properly organized and well-run archives. Also, the story of the documents is an intrinsic part of broader liberation history, and, once alerted to these issues, by this thesis and whatever similar studies may follow it, students of liberation history should be conscious not just of the specific content of the letters and memoranda and other documents on the desk in front of them, but also of the profile of and gaps in the record, the product of their often precarious route into the liberation archives. To understand the process of repatriation and preservation of archives in this broader sense one now has to read this

thesis. Researchers and others interested in the archives can, in that way, view the archives with a critical eye.

Most importantly, this work has critically outlined and analyzed the problems, challenges and dynamics of the liberation archives in South Africa, particularly with reference to Fort Hare, however bizarre, crude and chilling the situation there may often appear to readers. Relevant facts about the liberation archives at Fort Hare have been laid bare. It is to be hoped that government, policy developers, curriculum designers, archivists and historians will reflect on these matters.

University of Cape Town



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