

# **“A natural alliance”? The PAC’s changing perception of African American activists in the 1960s and 1970s. An analysis of the Azania News.**

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## **Abstract**

When the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa (PAC) was founded in 1959, it outlined its idea of a pan-Africanism which encompassed the entire continent. However, Africans in the diaspora were not mentioned and did not appear to play a role, albeit, pioneers of pan-Africanism, such as W.E.B. DuBois, had clearly included African Americans in their definition of the ‘African people’. Within a year of its founding and the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, the PAC was banned and had to re-establish itself in exile. At the same time, African American student activism was marked by an ideological turn towards Africa, most prominently known under the slogan ‘Black Power’. Based on analysis of the discourse in PAC publications, namely the Azania News, this article examines how, increased connections changed the PAC’s view of African Americans between the 1960s and 1970s, and seeks to identify obstacles that impeded such developments.

## Introduction

“Another thing about PAC: they were young and daring. They were also deeply involved with the Black Consciousness movement (...) [which] was almost identical—in its analysis, goals, perspectives, and rhetoric—with the Black Power movement in the States, we had firm common ground there. So it was a natural alliance” (Ture; Thelwell 2003: 638).

In these words, Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael)<sup>1</sup> describes his experience of meeting members of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa<sup>2</sup> (PAC) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1967. While he asserts that based on common political views and similar strategies the alliance between African American activists and the PAC was natural, I contend that such an alliance was not intrinsic and thus had to be built up despite obstacles on personal and structural levels. I will demonstrate this by examining logistical and political factors that formed the PAC’s relationship with African American activism.

In academia, South African resistance to Apartheid became a topic of discussion soon after the Sharpeville Massacre on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1960, a time when the PAC and the African National Congress (ANC) were forced into

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<sup>1</sup> As Kwame Ture still called himself Stokely Carmichael during the period I am examining, I will use his former alias in this article. Stokely Carmichael came to international fame when he, as chairman of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee), popularized the slogan ‘Black Power’ during a rally in 1966 (Joseph 2006: 142). While SNCC had embarked on a strategy that questioned the Federal Government and Democratic Party as allies and rather sought collaboration with African people in 1964 already (Wilkins 2007: 487), Carmichael’s call for ‘Black Power’ solidified and medialized this trend nation and worldwide. In the end of the 1960s, Carmichael went into exile in Guinea and changed his name to Kwame Ture.

<sup>2</sup> The PAC started referring to ‘Azania’, rather than ‘South Africa’ in the mid-1960s, refuting the ‘European name’ for the country. In this article, I will use the terms synonymously.

exile. Research focused largely on the success and ideological direction of the two major parties. Such works revolved around questions of internal conflict or the parties' outlook on “race”.<sup>3</sup> In the 2000s, the question of collaboration between African Americans and (South) African activists was extensively examined from an African American angle.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in recent years, there have been works that examine African host countries' views on either South African or African American activists, mostly under the aspect of the constraint of ideological devotion to the liberation struggle by diplomatic interests.<sup>5</sup>

Adding to these works on African trans-Atlantic collaboration, this article examines the extent of change in the PAC's perception of African American activists throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As the PAC, rather than the ANC, sought contact and collaboration with African American activists (Morgan 2009: 297), I will focus on the PAC. Here, I contend that direct contact between exiled PAC members and African Americans was crucial when building a relationship between these activists. Despite the development of this relationship, however, obstacles remained at many levels. This aspect elucidates the PAC's connection to African American activists and I will therefore highlight obstacles such as personal or political conflicts inside the PAC, as well as diplomatic constraints. These dynamics will be illustrated by the depiction of the Afro-American struggle through the content and use of language in publications of the PAC.

This article mainly draws on publications by the PAC's leadership, namely the *Azania News* (1966-1968 in Zambia and 1969-1978 in Tanzania). The *Azania News* claimed to be the official organ of the PAC, yet the individuals behind the publications and articles are often unknown. While the *Azania News* was sold internationally (*Azania News* March-June, 1974: Front Matter) it addressed a South African readership when it was smuggled into

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<sup>3</sup> See for instance Gerhart (1978).

<sup>4</sup> See for instance: Wilkins (2001), Nesbitt (2004), Wood (2011), Martin (2013).

<sup>5</sup> See for instance: Mbughuni (2006), Ahlmann (2011).

South Africa (Supreme Court of South Africa, February 1978: 78) and not only frequently presented opinions of PAC leaders on the resistance in South Africa, but also published articles on international politics and national liberation movements in other regions of the world. The newspaper serves as an indicator of the PAC's perception of African Americans. However, the materials can only reflect the perspective of the authors and editors. Furthermore, for the time span following the Sharpeville Massacre until 1966, there are no PAC publications and, for 1971, there are no issues available of the Azania News. The remaining period is well-documented, even though there are missing fragments such as in the issues from December 1967 and fall 1968. Therefore, interviews, African American newspapers, autobiographies, and research will be interpreted to complement the analysis of the discourse in the Azania News and the Africanist in the period up to 1975. The Azania News volumes 10-13 are only available in fragments and will not be considered in this examination.

After introducing the historical context and the main agents' mutual relations, I will offer a periodization of the portrayal of African Americans in the above mentioned publications of the PAC leadership and suggest interpretations for the dynamics. In the end of this section, I will focus on the development of expressions used to depict African Americans, as this angle allows us to uncover perceptions and influences that are not overtly talked about in the sources. In the second section, by closely examining three examples, I seek to assert the findings of the first section, and highlight further factors that contributed to the PAC's relation to African American activism.

### **Pan-Africanism and the liberation struggle of the PAC**

Only few ideologies are as thoroughly a product of migration and mobility as Pan-Africanism. At its core, it deals with the problem of a racist world-society. It assumes that European dominance established itself over non-

white people through slave-trade and colonialism. In response to this, people of African descent should unite in order to become independent, as pioneers of Pan-Africanism like W.E.B. DuBois or George Padmore articulated. While these original ideas of Pan-Africanism were developed in the African diaspora in the early 20th century, academic elites from Africa, like Kwame Nkrumah, picked up these ideas and introduced them into their political works on the African continent (Biney 2011: 26f).

In the late 1940s, members of the Youth League of the ANC referring to themselves as ‘the Africanists’ challenged the senior leadership of the party. The struggle between the Africanists and ANC leadership resulted due to the line of alliances with whites and the Communist Party. The Africanists argued that this alliance led to a domination of the liberation struggle by whites whose allegiance was not to Africa but the Soviet Union or Europe (Gerhart 1978: 76). Attempting to avoid domination from either block in the Cold War, the Africanists followed Pan Africanism as a guiding ideology. After a decade of dissent, the Africanists founded the Pan Africanist Congress in April 1959.

The Africanists’ interpretation was only influenced by Pan-Africanist pioneers to a limited degree as, according to leading activists, the writings of such pioneers were hardly available in South Africa.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the PAC mostly focused on issues inside South Africa and expressed a strong notion of non-alignment, criticizing the Soviet Union in particular (Leballo 1956: 9). African Americans were not mentioned in any publication of the Africanists or the PAC prior to the party’s exile. Only once, in 1949, did Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, who was later to become the first president of the

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<sup>6</sup>An interview conducted in 1970 with Ashby Peter Mda, a further leading member of the Africanist Section of the ANC underlines the findings. Here, Mda states that the Africanists’ ideology evolved as ideas reached its members in South Africa. For example, ideas of George Padmore had only reached him in small fragments prior to the late 1950s. From his point of view, a significant turning point in this respect was the All-African Peoples Conference in Accra in 1958. (Mda; Gerhart 1970: 17).

PAC<sup>7</sup>, acknowledge the common cause and struggle of Africans both on the continent and in the diaspora (Sobukwe 1979a: 11). The PAC's silence on African Americans prior to its exile thus seems to reflect the lack of direct and indirect contact between agents from both countries. As the agents were not able to bridge the geographic obstacles between each other, they were not able to articulate the commonalities in their struggles or to even collaborate.

### The PAC in Exile

On the eve of the Sharpeville Massacre, Peter Molotsi and Nana Mahomo were the first leading PAC members to leave South Africa in order to build up an international network for the PAC. Initially, they established missions in various African and European countries. Later, Mahomo became the party's first representative in Great Britain, and Molotsi in the United States, respectively (Kondlo 2003:87). In Africa, Ghana and Tanzania turned out to be of particular importance. Until 1966, Ghana was seen as a haven for the liberation struggles, and rather the PAC than the ANC forged a close relationship with the political leadership (Ahlmann 2011: 34). However, after the coup d'état against Kwame Nkrumah in 1966, Ghana's dominant position in the liberation struggle diminished and Tanzania, governed by Julius Nyerere's *Tanganyika African National Union* (TANU), assumed the leading role as host for Southern African liberation movements. Furthermore, in the same period, both countries became hubs for African American activists (Markle 2011: 82ff).<sup>8</sup>

In 1962, after being released from prison, Potlako Leballo moved to Lesotho and took over as the acting president. His presidency was soon questioned

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<sup>7</sup> After the Sharpeville Massacre, he was first imprisoned on Robben Island and put under house-arrest until his death in 1978. Nonetheless, his speeches and writings were formative for the PAC and frequently quoted in its publications.

<sup>8</sup> In 1964, the PAC had already moved its headquarters from Lesotho to Tanzania.

by other party members, particularly those active overseas. The backgrounds of these internal conflicts have been discussed in many works with some suggesting Mahomo and Molotsi’s unwillingness to give up funds and political power to the central leadership as the cause, while others assumed Leballo’s personality to be a main reason. In any case, both Molotsi and Mahomo were expelled from the party, even though both were admitted into the party once more by 1967 (Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa 1967: iii).

While both Molotsi and Mahomo were in the United States in the early 1960s to raise funds and to publicize the message of the PAC, it is unlikely that they devoted much attention to special relations with African American activists. Rather, the focus lay on searching for allies in the American government (Mbughuni 2006: 168). This dynamic, however, was to change in the second half of the 1960s.

### **Depiction of African Americans in the Azania News**

In 1966, Matthew Nkoana, Nana Mahomo’s successor as the London representative, wrote an open letter to Leballo in which he, amongst other things, criticized the leadership’s attitude towards international allies:

“You yourself (...) give emphasis to this impression, seeing the CIA in everything American. (...) we also recognise as allies all anti-Imperialist forces in the world (...) including the USA where there is at this moment a great turmoil affecting the social conscience of young America, characterised by massive student demonstrations against American policy on Vietnam and by the Black Power movement”(Nkoana 1969: 35).

This letter shows that by 1966, African Americans had become a matter of interest, at least to members of the PAC residing overseas. Yet, according to Nkoana's letter, the acting president Leballo mistrusted African Americans as political partners.<sup>9</sup> Assuming that this attitude was known among the PAC editors in the *Azania News*, they would have been hesitant to write broadly about African Americans as potential allies.

Furthermore, I contend that the strained relations between the acting president and the PAC's representatives overseas had a significant impact on the depiction of African Americans in the *Azania News*: Either any contacts with African Americans made by Molotsi or Mahomo were probably not reported to the PAC's leadership in Tanzania or the leadership would not have forwarded such information to the editors of the *Azania News*. These personal and political conflicts were crucial obstacles to a closer connection between African Americans and the PAC. Given these basic assumptions, I will periodize the dynamics of the African American portrayal in the *Azania News*. Lack of an active connection between the PAC and the African American struggle is characteristic of the period 1966-1968. This disconnect ended in the period 1969-1975 when the *Azania News* moved to Tanzania.

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<sup>9</sup> Leballo's alleged anti-Americanism could have been part of a larger historical tension between African American and African intellectuals, which is pointed out by July. He argues that African and African American delegates clashed over questions such as the role of African culture and the usefulness of Western cultural achievements for Black liberation at the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists in 1956 (July 1987: 25ff). However, there is no evidence of any close links between Leballo and Congress, making it unlikely that his apparently strong resentments against 'anything American' came out of a broader historical development. Therefore, Kondlo's argument that Leballo's anti-Americanism was a cover up for his work for the U.S. consulate in Johannesburg in 1958, seems more convincing (Kondlo 2003: 158f).

### **The Azania News 1966 - 1968**

Throughout the first year of publication, the Azania News hardly ever mentioned African Americans. This is remarkable as the PAC regularly uttered its solidarity with Latin American, African or Asian liberation movements (e.g. *Make* 1966: 15). The apparent disinterest in African American affairs cannot be explained by a lack of information on African Americans. The African American struggle was well-reported on in Tanzania, where, since the Harlem riots of 1964, a very sympathetic position for the African American struggle was frequently identifiable in the TANU newspaper ‘The Nationalist’ (e.g. *N.A.* 1964: 1, 4).

The distant relation to African Americans can also be seen in the one article that did mention African American affairs in 1966. Revolving around Robert Kennedy’s visit to South Africa, it mentioned racism in the United States and suggested Kennedy should rather be concerned about the following:

“If he really wants to drink from the well of human inequality, let him lower his bucket where he is, right there in Watts, Los Angeles and Jackson, Mississippi. It is significant to note that the same day Senator Kennedy was delivering his anti-racial harangue in South Africa, James Meredith (sic) lay writhing in pain from the effects of a bullet of a white supremacist.” (*N. A.* 1966: 5)

The reference to James Meredith is particularly remarkable, as it demonstrates that the author was aware of a milestone in the African American struggle. James Meredith had staged a ‘one-man march’ in Mississippi and was shot by an assassin. Subsequently, Stokely Carmichael and Martin Luther King organized a broad continuation of the march, which was harassed amongst others by the police. In reaction to this, on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1966, Stokely Carmichael coined the slogan ‘Black Power’ during this protest march (Joseph 2006: 141f). Carmichael’s call for ‘Black Power’

had caused a dramatic change in the international perception of the African American struggle. The Tanzanian newspaper 'The Nationalist' discussed Black Power sympathetically a few weeks later (Pressman's Commentary 1966: 4). Thus, it is noteworthy that the Azania News mentioned the event of the assassination, but not the upcoming Black Power movement which stirred up the media just a few days after Meredith was shot. However, the aforementioned factors, Leballo's mistrust in anything American and a coinciding hesitance of the editors of the Azania News to oppose him would explain this gap.

In 1967, African Americans appeared in the Azania News more often. It seems characteristic that in these articles it is always African Americans articulating views on the commonality of the African and the African American struggle, while PAC members did not do so directly. One example is an article reporting on the Sharpeville Commemorations in New York City in 1967. The author, James Langer, describes how Dr. Cooper from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) urges

“the Afro-American and their black African brothers [to] work together” (Langer 1967: 18).

A year later, the Azania News published another African American call for such trans-Atlantic collaboration. This time a member of the Peace Corps<sup>10</sup> in Lesotho, Harold Brown, was quoted as saying:

“that his experiences in Africa had vividly impressed upon him the imperative necessity for the coordination of the

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<sup>10</sup> The Peace Corps was initiated by President John F. Kennedy as an organization to address the growing North-South tensions in the Cold War. Yet, in Africa, the organization was often perceived with suspicion and African Americans who sought a transnational racial identity did not meet the acceptance of Africans as they had hoped as they were rather seen as Americans (Borstelmann 2001: 142, 169).

struggle of the African people with that of the Afro-Americans” (N.A. 1968a: 7).

The issue related to Harold Brown stands out in the Azania News coverage on African Americans prior to the 1970s because it not only reports broadly on him and his views, but it also prompts a response in a later issue.<sup>11</sup> While the Azania News did acknowledge a commonality in the struggle of the African people and African Americans by publishing Brown’s view, it must be noted that it was not expressed by authors of the PAC, but by an African American.

While this passiveness of the Azania News indicates that the newspaper did not consider the struggle in the United States to be relevant or closely related to PAC’s politics, the pseudonyms used by authors of the newspaper demonstrate that African American activism did have an impact on them. Several articles were written under pseudonyms such as ‘Malcolm X’ or ‘Black Power’ (‘Malcolm X’ 1968: 5; ‘Black Power’ 1968: 13). Whether the African American struggle remained undebated in its content because of Leballo’s opposition or due to the authors’ inability to relate to the struggle remains unclear. Regardless, the authors of the Azania News did not respond to African American activism until the encounter with Harold Brown. However, while connections on an overtly political level were not made, images of African American personalities (Malcolm X) and slogans (Black Power) clearly made an impression on these authors and were able to subtly bridge political, personal, and geographic obstacles.

### **The Azania News 1969-1975**

With the exception of an excerpt from Eldridge Cleaver’s ‘Soul on Ice’<sup>12</sup> (Azania News Apr.-May 1969: 19f) the Azania News’ passiveness regarding

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<sup>11</sup>The coverage on Brown will be discussed further on page 12f.

<sup>12</sup> Cleaver was a leading member of the Black Panther Party (BPP). The BPP was founded

reports on African American activism translated into a gap on reports about the topic in 1969. This coincided with a move of the place of publication from Lusaka, Zambia to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It is likely that organizational problems related to this move caused this gap, as in the whole period of 1969, only a total of three issues appeared at all. In any case, the Azania News did not connect the African American activism with the PAC's struggle.

In September 1972<sup>13</sup>, African Americans did reappear in the Azania News. However, the coverage in the early 1970s differs characteristically from the late 1960s as is seen in an article that examined potential strategies for the struggle in South Africa. Regarding the struggle's relation to minority groups, the author suggested drawing lessons from the "black experience in the United States of America" (N.A. 1972a: 12). According to the author, 'black Americans' were urged to rely on a powerful array of 'white allies'. The article further connected the 'black American' experience with the PAC's struggle in South Africa, quoting Robert Sobukwe's contention that there were Europeans intellectually sympathetic to the cause of Africans but whose material interests prevented them from committing fully to the struggle (N.A. 1972a: 12). This article exemplified how perceptions of African Americans' political significance for the ongoing struggle in South Africa changed in the Azania News. While from 1966-1968 the newspaper had only passively reported about the African American vision of a common struggle, the 1972 article marks a shift in the African American struggle being considered a role model for the PAC's combat. This new angle of portrayal points to a new active and reciprocal connection between African Americans and the PAC.

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in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. In its political program it emphasized defense against police violence and the political, social, cultural and economic empowerment of African American communities. (Self 2006: 39ff).

<sup>13</sup>No volumes for 1971 and April – December 1970 have been available to me, thus it is possible that coverage on African American activism started before 1972.

The extent to which the PAC’s view on African Americans had changed since the 1960s is most clearly demonstrated in the *Azania News* from 1973 to 1974. In these volumes, a ‘letter from America’, first published as a ‘letter from our brothers in America’ (N.A. 1973a: 17), appeared frequently. All of these articles emphasized the commonality in the struggle of ‘the black people’ and highlighted the contributions of the ‘black people in America’ to this struggle.

“BLACK people in America are beginning to move toward more concrete political identification with Africa. Generally this has taken two forms: material and financial support to the liberation movements, and domestic mass political action [...] The national chairman of the African Liberation Support Committee, Owusu Sadaukai, summed up the situation as follows: ‘We believe that because of this effort, more Black people are now aware of the existence of the struggles in Southern Africa, and can now connect up in a real way the relationship between what is happening there to what is happening to Black people here’” (N.A. 1973b: 18).

While this article focused on means of support for the struggle in Africa, other articles point out awareness raising educational programs for African Americans (N.A. 1973a: 17) or discussed the commonality of the African American struggle with that in Africa by arguing that African Americans were living in an ‘internal colony’ in the United States (N.A. 1974: 14). That the editors of the *Azania News* repeatedly exposed their readers to such articulations of African Americans seems to corroborate that they had actively started connecting the struggle in South Africa with the struggle in the United States by that time. From 1975 onwards, the ‘Letter from America’ was apparently no longer published, though there were further articles from authors of the PAC that claimed that “Black people everywhere were an oppressed people whether they were in the majority as

in South Africa (...), or as a minority as in the United States of North America" (N.A. 1975: 16).

Accordingly, these changing perceptions of African Americans were also expressed on a linguistic level. While in the late 1960s the articles would usually refer to 'Afro-Americans', in the 1970s they usually referred to 'black Americans' or 'black people in the United States'. This was clearly in response to the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in South Africa, which used the term 'black' in order to symbolically unify oppressed people worldwide. The Azania News discussed the BCM and surrounding questions broadly. For example, one article reported the decision of the Institute of Race Relations in South Africa to adopt the term 'black' instead of non-white (N.A. 1972b: 5f). Hence, the PAC adapted political ideas of the BCM and altered its connection with African Americans, perceiving them as part of the 'black people'.

While the BCM shaped the Azania News portrayal of African Americans in this sense, it does not explain the renewed and heightened interest in African American activism per se. In this respect, the new dynamic in the Azania News notably coincided with the first major African Liberation Day (ALD) in American cities in May 1972, where tens of thousands marched in protest against Apartheid and colonialism. The first major demonstrations were organized around Owusu Sadaukei (mentioned in the quote on the previous page) who then founded the *African Liberation Support Committee* (ALSC), (African Activist Archive 2014). According to records of the FBI, an ALD demonstration was planned in Dar es Salaam for 1972. (Federal Bureau of Investigation April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1972: 13) and by 1973, the ALSC had established an office in Dar es Salaam (Acting Director, FBI Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973: 1). Particularly given the presence of the ALSC in Dar es Salaam and the magnitude of the African Liberation Days, it is fair to assume that these events bridged pre-existing obstacles and sparked the Azania News' interest in connecting with the African American struggle.

### **Personal encounters and diplomatic constraints**

The previous section demonstrated that the relationship between the PAC leadership in Dar es Salaam and the representatives overseas was also strained because of the lack of clarity on the role of African Americans. Therefore, these tensions may very well have been an obstacle to good relations between the PAC in Africa and African American activists. Furthermore, it strongly suggests that it was direct contact between PAC members and African Americans in Dar es Salaam that spurred a deeper interest of the PAC in African American activism.

Between 1966 and 1968 the lack of coverage on certain events and persons by the Azania News is striking, as the newspaper printed a surprisingly large amount of articles on others in comparison. Examining such contrasts in greater depth will shed further light on factors that were crucial in questioning what led to a certain perception of African American activism. In order to highlight the findings from the examples found in the Azania News, I will subsequently look at the relations between African Americans and members of the PAC overseas as they were expressed in other media.

### **Harold Brown**

The abovementioned statements of Harold Brown, the African American Peace Corps member from Lesotho who had resigned, were reported on about much more broadly than one might expect for such a local event, particularly given the very reluctant coverage on African Americans in the late 1960s in the Azania News. In June 1968, an extensive report appeared in the Azania News about an African American couple, Harold and LaVerne Brown, who had quit working for the Peace Corps in Lesotho. Azania News had acquired an interview with Brown and printed his entire farewell speech. In the article, the unnamed author also explained that Brown decided to quit the Peace Corps as he felt that it supported the very thing African Americans were fighting against in America (N.A. 1968a: 7).

On the last page of the same issue, the newspaper printed another statement of Brown's, which he had given prior to his departure from Zambia. Here he made three suggestions for the coordination of the African and African American struggles. His suggestions focused on potential contributions of African Americans to the struggle in Southern Africa (N.A. 1968b: 16). Additionally, in August 1968, a further article interpreted Brown's opinions and thereby compared and connected the African American struggle with the South African struggle. After referring to Brown's disappointment of being used as a Peace Corps member for the ambitions of the 'whiteman' in America, the author compares this experience with the attempts of South Africa to make Lesotho their 'black puppet' (N.A.1968c: 9). While other articles of or about African Americans in this period hardly covered more than a column and never called forth a further response, the events revolving around Harold Brown were not only broadly displayed in the Azania News, but they even provoked a published response in which the experiences of Blacks from both continents were put into the same context. The deciding difference between this and the other articles in the period from 1966-1968 was that in this case a direct encounter between the Azania News and Harold Brown had taken place in Zambia. It reaffirms the impression that while the PAC authors of the Azania News were interested in African American activism in general, they did not consider the African American struggle to be part of their own struggle. However, Brown's critical stance on the Peace Corps work in Africa probably sparked the Azania News' initial interest as it connected both struggles. This spurred a direct exchange in the form of an interview which resulted in a deeper reflection on their activism.

### **Stokely Carmichael in the "hotbed of international intrigues"**

While direct encounters between African American activists and members of the PAC explain the broad coverage on Harold Brown, it is nonetheless surprising how little attention the Azania News gave to Stokely Carmichael,

who was only part of one article in 1967. In the article, he explained ‘Black Power’, the slogan he had made popular during a march in Mississippi in 1966, as “the coming together of black people throughout the world...” (Azania News, Aug. 24th - Nov. 2nd: 3).<sup>14</sup> In 1966, Carmichael had already received broad international media attention as a chairman of SNCC. By 1967, he had become a symbol of ‘Black Power’ and went on a world tour that had led him especially to Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, Tanzania and Ghana, which brought him additional media coverage worldwide. In Tanzania, his world tour was reported about repeatedly and his visit to this country in November 1967 occasioned enthusiastic reactions in the TANU newspaper (e.g. Mponda, A. S. 1967: 4).

More importantly, Carmichael was not only indirectly visible to the PAC via the Tanzanian media. After getting in touch with the PAC in Algeria, they invited him to come to the PAC office in Dar es Salaam and therefore he went directly there (Ture with Thelwell 2003: 632f). He stayed with David and Elisabeth Sibeko, as David was then the chief-representative of the PAC in Dar es Salaam, and describes their relationship as close –both at a personal level and in their political outlook. He states that the relation to the PAC grew even closer when his wife, South African singer Miriam Makeba, arrived at the PAC in Dar es Salaam (Ture with Thelwell 2003: 638). Thus, Carmichael was not only well-known through the media, but also because he had developed good relations with a leading PAC member in Dar es Salaam. In fact, in his autobiography, his entire recollection of his time in Dar es Salaam revolves around the PAC and the Sibekos and not on his discussion with students that were often reported in *The Nationalist*. The *Azania News*, even though published in Zambia, was certainly aware of the good relations of the ‘Black Power-leader’ with the PAC. Nonetheless, the events were not mentioned even once in the newspaper.

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<sup>14</sup> Like the other examples given in the preceding section, this is an example of an African American who articulated a position which calls for a unification of Africans in Africa and in the diaspora in their struggle. In the *Azania News* the PAC would report such a position but it did not articulate its own position to this question.

An explanation can be found in Markle's observation that the Tanzanian government had been reluctant to embrace Ture too closely as they wanted to avoid serious diplomatic tensions between themselves and the African governments that were severely criticized by Ture (Markle 2011: 107f). Carmichael himself states that Dar es Salaam was a "hotbed of international intrigues" in which he had made "many errors" preventing him from returning to Tanzania for many years (Ture; Thelwell 2003: 633). These developments strongly suggest that the PAC was reluctant to side with Carmichael openly in order to avoid any complications with the Tanzanian government, or that of any other African state. That aspect probably weighed even heavier as the PAC was watched closely by the Organization of African Unity due to the abovementioned internal conflicts in the party. In September 1967, the OAU's liberation committee urged the PAC to come together to a conference to mend these problems ('Nationalist Correspondent, Moshi' 1967: 1). Thus, being in a difficult diplomatic position itself, the PAC seems to have chosen not to publicize its good relations with the famous, but diplomatically dicey Stokely Carmichael.

### **The PAC in the United States**

Considering the significance of diplomatic tactics in Tanzania, it is worth contrasting the findings on the Azania News with articulations of PAC members that were outside the "hotbed of international intrigues". In the 1970s, David Sibeko, who had become the PAC's representative to Europe and the Americas, positioned himself very openly towards closer relations between African American activists and the PAC. The Black Panther Party mentioned Sibeko in numerous articles of its newspapers. In a 1972 interview with the Black Panther newspaper, Sibeko expressed that he considered African Americans as part of a Pan African Struggle:

"I [David Sibeko,] think there are many other avenues the very dynamic African groups which exist here can embark

on in a collective spirit to give support to our struggle. What we must acknowledge is the heightened consciousness about the struggle back on the parent continent. (...) And, we can only hope that these expressions of moral support will develop a much more effective way of mobilizing material support here for the National Liberation struggle” (Sibeko 1972: 14).

While the Azania News in 1972 would only consider the African American struggle as a role model for the PAC, Sibeko called for an active involvement of African Americans – a position the Azania News was to articulate more than a year later. This indicates that the lack of diplomatic constraints permitted PAC activists in the United States to engage more closely with their African American counterparts.

This is affirmed by another interview with Sibeko, published in the journal *The Black Scholar*. Here he argued that African Americans were contributing to the Pan African cause and underlined this by naming African Americans living and working in Tanzania. Additionally, he stated that the PAC had developed fruitful contacts with African American organizations such as “the Black Panther Party, the Republic of New Africa, the Pan African Congress, USA in Detroit, and so forth” (Sibeko 1973: 37). Sibeko’s second interview shows that the PAC overseas took a much stronger position towards African American activists and that it had indeed developed ties with African American organizations.

Both interviews demonstrate that Sibeko had a much more pronounced stand on collaboration between the PAC and African Americans. It is likely that he was able to take such a strong position because he did not face the diplomatic constraints in the United States that he would have been confronted with in Dar es Salaam. It could moreover be argued that Sibeko emphasized the idea of trans-Atlantic Pan African collaboration because he was addressing an African American audience that was largely sympathetic

to Pan Africanism. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that he had developed close relations with African American organizations, which he publicly affirmed to be important partners. In this regard, his views did not only differ from his party members in Tanzania, but also from the various approaches taken by the PAC a decade earlier in order to gain the support of the United States Government.

## **Conclusion**

Even though Stokely Carmichael observed ideological proximity, similar approaches between the PAC and the African American movement, the examined developments do not permit one to infer a “natural alliance”. As this article demonstrated, any relation between the PAC and African American activists should rather be considered evolving from particular historical circumstances. Here, power relations inside and outside the PAC appear to have been a crucial obstacle to the rather coincidental opportunities of forging an alliance.

First and foremost, activists had to meet in person in order to relate to one another. Particularly in the 1960s, such opportunities largely arose by chance and not as a result of mutual approaches. This can be seen in the overall dynamics in the PAC publications. The Africanist section of the ANC Youth League did not relate to African Americans at all and focused on a continental Pan-African vision with a strong focus on politics in South Africa. Here, the activists faced mainly geographic obstacles as they had no direct connections to African Americans and hardly encountered any political writings of African Americans. This changed in the second half of the 1960s. However, in the first three volumes of the *Azania News*, most reports of African American activism remained isolated and did not reveal deeper reflection or commentary from the side of PAC authors in the newspaper. In that sense, it appears that the PAC did not relate to African American activism closely, even though some authors of the *Azania News*

were clearly attracted by ‘Malcolm X’ and ‘Black Power’. Yet, when authors chose such pseudonyms, they probably reflected the symbolic meaning of the slogan and activist rather than the PAC embracing African American activism.

A significant change can be observed in the event of a direct connection between authors of the newspaper and an African American in 1968. The ending of Harold Brown’s work in the Peace Corps would appear, at first glance, to be a minor incident. However, Brown’s direct exchange with the Azania News commanded a broad portrayal of his motives and background sparking further responses in the Azania News. The significance of connections can also be observed in the 1970s, when heightened Pan African ideological self-perceptions led to elevated African American activism in Dar es Salaam, which then again translated into broad and frequent coverage on African Americans in the Azania News.

Yet, even good relations with leading PAC members did not necessarily translate into an open alliance as the case of Stokely Carmichael shows. Here, diplomatic concerns contributed to the fact that he only appeared once in the Azania News, despite his claims to have experienced the PAC as a natural ally. This observation is supported by the interviews with David Sibeko in the United States, where he was more independent of such diplomatic constraints and able to articulate a much closer relationship with the African American activists.

Lastly, besides political considerations, personal relations as well as power struggles within the PAC impeded the process of building up mutual relations between the PAC and African Americans. In other words, the personal and political struggles between the PAC leadership in Tanzania and the representatives overseas stopped any political collaboration that might have developed overseas from crossing the Atlantic Ocean. This was additionally complicated by the skepticism of Potlako Leballo, the PAC’s Acting President, who suspected CIA activities behind ‘anything American’.

Nevertheless, in future studies, it would be interesting to examine whether the activities of David Sibeko account for a change regarding the structural shortcomings in the PAC's relation with African American activists. At least the coincidence between his interviews given to the *Black Scholar* and the *Black Panther*, and the changing narrative in the *Azania News*, speak in favor of this assumption. It may thus be argued that Sibeko's personal and political relations to African Americans facilitated an alliance with African Americans the same way in which it was impeded by Leballo. Yet, for this purpose, further sources would have to be uncovered that give insight into how and to what extent locally configured personal and political dynamics were responsible for the PAC's distinct attitude to African Americans in Tanzania and in the US.

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