

**THE REINTERGRATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL  
RETURNEES**

**BY**

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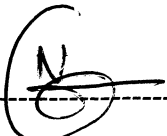
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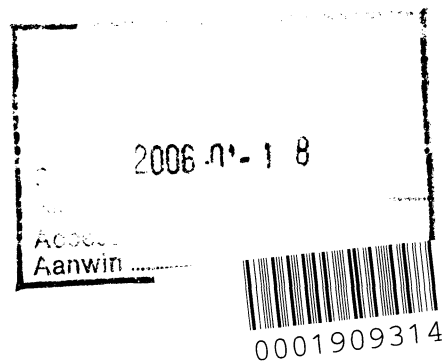
JUNE 2005

**DECLARATION**

I declare that THE REINTEGRATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL RETURNNEES is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

  
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NOKWANDA NCALA

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**SAUF**      **South African United Front.**  
**SOE**      **State of Emergency.**  
**SWAPO**   **South West African People’s Organization.**  
**UDF**      **United Democratic Front.**  
**UNESCO** **United Nations Education and Scientific Organization.**  
**UNHCR**   **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.**  
**UNRISD**   **United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.**  
**ZANU**      **Zimbabwe African National Union.**  
**ZANU–PF** **Zimbabwe African Nation Union – Patriotic Front.**  
**ZAPU**      **Zimbabwe African People’s Union.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**This study examines the reintegration of South African political returnees into South African society from a sociological perspective after the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1990. It specifically looks at the role of liberation movements, government, the International Organization For Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR) and the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in the pre- and post- 1994 period.**

**This study contends that for refugee reintegration to succeed, primary prerequisites include a relatively good and sustainable economy and, most significantly, positive governmental intervention. A central argument of the study is that the ANC-led government has played a significant role in the repatriation and long-term reintegration of political returnees. Of significance is the economic dimension of this process since it facilitates reintegration at the social level. The assessment of the role of the ANC-led government in the political returnee reintegration process is undertaken primarily through the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts of 1996 which constitute the focal point of analysis of this study.**

**The findings of this research are that the International Organization For Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees, the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, the South African Communist Party and the South African Council of Churches played a significant role in the repatriation and early reintegration of political returnees in South Africa in the pre-independence phase. In the post-independence period, the ANC led government played an important role in long-term reintegration through legislative means, namely, the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts of 1996.**

**The recommendations of the study are that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should continue conducting large scale political refugee repatriations because of its expertise in international repatriation, programmes and processes of this magnitude. More research on the long-term socio-economic implications of the refugee reintegration process needs to be conducted in view of the fact that this area of study has not been sufficiently problematized. Finally, from a policy perspective, there is a need for governments with returning refugee populations to be more proactive in addressing this problem through legislative measures.**

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

#### **1.1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the introductory aspect of the study comprising of the introduction, statement of the research problem, objectives, relevance and contribution of the study, assumptions underlying the investigation, delimitations, definitions of key concepts, methodology and organization of the dissertation.

The primary purpose of this research is to study from a sociological perspective the reintegration of political returnees into South African society after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and after the unbanning of the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC. The dissertation focuses on the institutions that facilitated the political returnee repatriation and reintegration process. More specifically, it looks at how the problem of returnee repatriation and reintegration was addressed, not only by government, but also by the liberation movements as well as international and non-governmental organizations in the early 1990s. Hence, the primary emphasis of the study is on the structural correlates of the political returnee reintegration process. In the pre-independence phase, the role of five organizations in the repatriation and early reintegration of returnees is analyzed. These include the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The post-apartheid phase focuses on the role of the ANC-led government through its Special Pension and South African Defence Force Demobilization Unit offices in the long-term reintegration of political returnees. The primary motivation for this study is to investigate how the political reintegration problem was addressed in South Africa and to identify key role players in this process. In analyzing reintegration, focus lies primarily on the

economic dimension of the process which, if not addressed, has the potential of exacerbating unemployment, the crime rate and political instability in the country. Of particular concern regarding the crime rate are unemployed political returnees who received military training in exile. Such people might feel that their expectations were not met after returning to South Africa, and subsequently decide to use these skills inappropriately (e.g. in criminal activities or military coups). The potential for political instability as a result of feelings of discontent amongst the military sector of the returnee population and the need to address this problem were captured in the media as follows:

“Former Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and Azanian People’s Liberation Army members who were not integrated into the South African Defence Force and are currently unemployed now have the possibility of joining the army reserve force”.

In a move aimed at addressing the plight of former MK and APLA members who have been unable to find employment since the country’s democratic dispensation, the SANDF announced on Friday that it has launched a recruitment drive for the reserve force. The announcement follows signs that there is a high level of discontent among former members of MK and APLA, especially those who were left out or unceremoniously dismissed by the military courts. The latter feel that they have been treated unfairly and that the political organizations that they once belonged to have not attended to their interests. Many of them have resorted to protest action – marches and stay ins at party headquarters – to draw attention to their plight” (*City Press, 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2004*).

In essence, a central issue for political returnees is access to the labor market which is contingent on the absorptive capacity and growth potential of a country’s economy.

## **THE RELEASE OF NELSON MANDELA AND THE UNBANNING OF THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE AND THE PAC**

Given the internal and external pressure that confronted the National Party-led government, it was only logical for this government to begin negotiating with the liberation movements, a process which began in the 1980s. This was during P. W.

Botha's term of office as Prime Minister. However, it was only when F. W. de Klerk took over that serious steps were taken to reform South Africa's political order. The apartheid government's acknowledgement of the need to include all races, including Africans, in the country's political process in order to stabilize it politically and economically culminated in its decision to participate in a transformation process aimed at attaining a democratic political order in South Africa. Although de Klerk's reform programme was initially met with resistance from some members of the National Party-led government, the majority supported him in principle. Despite these internal conflicts de Klerk nevertheless proceeded with its implementation.

One of the first steps taken in de Klerk's reform initiatives was his announcement in parliament on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1990 of Nelson Mandela's impending release from prison. Prime Minister de Klerk continued to state that:

“The prohibition of the African National Congress, Pan Africanist Congress and the South African Communist Party and a number of subsidiary organizations is being rescinded. People serving prison sentences merely because they committed some other offences which were in force, will be identified and released. Prisoners who have been sentenced for other offences such as murder, terrorism or arson are not affected by this.

Our country and all its people have been embroiled in conflict, tension and violent struggle for decades. It is time for us to break out of the cycle of violence and break through to peace and reconstruction. The silent majority is yearning for this. The youth deserves it.

I wish to put it plainly that the government has taken a firm decision to release Mandela unconditionally. I am serious about bringing this matter to its finality without delay” (Republic of South Africa, Debates of Parliament, Hansard, 2 February to 9 March, 1990, Vol 6:1241).

The release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the unbanning of formerly banned political organizations was a critical turning point in South Africa's history. By then the National Party-led government had, through Mandela's long-term incarceration, succeeded in making him one of the most famous political

prisoners in the world. Mandela, who undoubtedly has made an indelible mark on South African politics, history and the liberation struggle in particular, was subsequently released from Polsmoor Prison on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1990 (Coleman 1998:159). This was after serving twenty-seven years in prison for his relentless fight against apartheid. The proclamation was also extended to other political prisoners who, at the time, had also been serving long-term sentences on Robben Island and other prisons in South Africa.

On his release from prison, Nelson Mandela repeated the same declaration he made during the Rivonia Trial of 1964 at which he stated that:

“I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for which I am prepared to die”

[Http://1cweb2.loc.gov-frd@field docid+za0027](http://1cweb2.loc.gov-frd@field docid+za0027) May, 1996.)

As reflected in the above excerpt, Nelson Mandela's vision for a post-apartheid South Africa, had not changed dramatically over the years. He still believed in a democratic dispensation as the best form of government for South Africa, where its citizens freely participate in democratic general elections. Mandela also believed that a democracy prevails where there is equality for all people, regardless of race, gender and political affiliation, and where basic human rights are observed. He also assured his supporters that his release from prison did not involve a deal between the ANC-SACP alliance and the apartheid regime. At the same time, he also gave white South Africans the assurance that political reconciliation would play a significant role in the democratization of South Africa. On the renouncement of the armed struggle, Mandela expressed the view that it was, at that stage, too early to do so and neither was it the right time to urge the international community to lift economic sanctions against South Africa. Mandela and the ANC-SACP alliance made these decisions in view of the slow progress with the National Party-led government's reform programme.

In his determination to continue with the reformation process, de Klerk took this a step further by announcing the unbanning of the ANC, PAC and SACP in 1990 which had been banned since 1960. The exception was the SACP which was banned ten years earlier in 1950 (Coleman 1998:18). The unbanning of the ANC, PAC and the SACP resulted in an influx of political returnees to South Africa, people who had been in exile for extended periods of time ranging from one to thirty years.

The negotiation process resulted in an additional agreement, the "Pretoria Minute", which governed the return of political exiles. It stipulated that former political prisoners, exiles and formerly banned individuals would, as from the 1st October, 1990 be indemnified (Green 1990:32). Indemnity meant that political returnees could return to the country without fear of being arrested, detained or imprisoned. In other words, they would no longer be persecuted for political crimes they had committed under apartheid laws and were, therefore, free to return to South Africa from exile, be released from prison and have their banishment orders revoked. De Klerk's proclamation was, to some extent, in line with the USA's Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act preconditions for the lifting of economic sanctions against South Africa. These included the multiracial negotiations between the apartheid government and the exiled liberation movements, the unbanning of the PAC, ANC and the SACP and the lifting of the state of emergency in Natal (Coleman 1998:137).

Similarly, the Organization of African Unity adopted the Harare Declaration on the 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1986 (Coleman 1998:156) which was endorsed by the United Nations. This document stipulated four stages envisioned to bring about a peaceful political settlement in South Africa. The first stage involved the creation of a climate in which negotiations could take place which required the halting of repression by the government. The second stage emphasized the need for ceasefire negotiations between the two conflicting sides in order to achieve a suspension of hostilities. In the third stage actual negotiations could commence and these would address the principles and mechanisms for dismantling apartheid and for creating a new democratic order. The fourth stage required a transition process to be put

into effect under the supervision of an interim administration which would initiate plans for the general elections. These prerequisites were viewed as inseparable and important since it made no sense to release political prisoners while continuing to hold political trials. Nor could political trials be stopped without repealing the laws and measures which gave rise to such trials (Coleman 1998:156).

The Harare Declaration further stipulated that only after the adoption of a new constitution could the lifting of economic sanctions be considered by the international community. In essence, the Organization of African Unity like the United Nations viewed negotiations as the most viable solution to the apartheid problem in South Africa. The democratization of South Africa's political order was implemented through a four year negotiation process, namely the Convention For A Democratic South Africa (CODESA).

The first democratic general elections in the country were subsequently held in 1994 which were won by the ANC. Nelson Mandela once again made history by becoming the first democratically elected president in the country.

F. W. de Klerk's pronouncement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1990 brought joy not only to South Africans of all races but also to the international community. This coincided with the United Nations' declaration of 1990 as the decade of repatriations (Koser and Black 1999:20) when refugee population movements were comparatively higher (12 million) than in previous decades (Koser and Black 1999:3). Although de Klerk's pronouncement was welcomed by most democratic South Africans, it nevertheless, at the same time it created a new social problem for the country in that South Africa was suddenly confronted with an influx of political returnees. They comprised not only returned exiles, but also former political prisoners and banned political activists. The process was a daunting task, not only for the political returnees, but also for their families that had remained in South Africa, the liberation movements and the communities to which they were returning. It was problematic in that many returnees had spent extended periods of time away from the country and were now confronted with the task of finding ways of

becoming absorbed into the labour market. Furthermore, in terms of size, the returnees represented a large population estimated at 40,000 (Green 1990:33), excluding former political prisoners and formerly banned individuals. This estimated number was derived on the basis of doubling the ANC-SACP alliance membership numbers (Green 1990:33). Given the economic conditions that prevailed in the country at the time, it was also expected that the sudden influx of political returnees would exacerbate unemployment in the country. It was on the basis of these conditions that key role players in the political returnee repatriation and reintegration process acknowledged the urgent need to address the problem, not only for humanitarian reasons, but also for sustaining socio-political stability and reconciliation in the country. On finally returning to their respective communities in South Africa, the returnees were confronted with new challenges which differed fundamentally from those to which they had been accustomed in exile. They had to be reintegrated back into South African society. A major aspect of this study focuses on the structures that facilitated this process.

#### **1.1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

A predominant discourse in refugee repatriation and reintegration studies equates voluntary repatriation with the end of the refugee cycle (Black and Koser, 1991:16). Implicit in this assumption is that once refugees return to their countries of origin, the reintegration process proceeds with minimal problems since they are returning to their countries of origin. Repatriation to one's homeland is, in this context, equated with positive aspects of the process which includes being united with family and returning to a familiar social environment. It is subsequently assumed that uniting with family and familiarity with a social environment that political exiles left ten to thirty years previously will automatically facilitate reintegration, particularly at the social level. An important consideration in the refugee repatriation process is the distinction between "returning home" and "returning to one's country of origin" and its implications for political returnee reintegration. In other words, there is a difference between the conception of repatriation as a durable solution to the world wide refugee problem which the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees favours and the actual

experiences of refugees during repatriation to and reintegration within their countries of origin. As Wagner (1994:161) states, voluntary repatriation involves more than just returning to one's country of origin. Most significantly, it entails returning to a home and community. His conceptualization of "home" is where individuals belong to homogeneous groups in a particular physical place. Thus, political returnees associate a homeland with feelings of nostalgia and there is also the tendency amongst them to opt to return to their countries once conditions are conducive for doing so.

In essence, underpinning the process of "returning home" is the assumption that the adjustment of returning exiles is comparatively less problematic than that, for example of economic migrants who voluntarily emigrate to foreign countries. Experience however has proved this not to be the case as political returnees often face new challenges and problems as they adapt to life in their homelands. Rogge and Akol (1989) highlight the difficulties of the repatriation and reintegration process by stating that for many long-term refugees repatriation does not necessarily mean going home.

In some cases, on returning to their countries of origin, returnees go back to places or social environments that are different or which appear to have changed or, alternatively, where the resident population regard the returnees as strangers because of different customs and beliefs that they have acquired in exile (Rogge and Akol 1989:193). In many instances, political returnees often go back to environments that have changed, not only in terms of infrastructure, but also in terms of culture, since societies are dynamic. In essence, the repatriation and reintegration process is, in many cases, a new beginning for political returnees that have been in exile for extended periods of time and involves a complex and multifaceted process. Reintegration, as Rogge (1991:61) points out is, therefore, not a simple solution to exile. In essence, repatriation does not merely entail the transportation of refugee populations to their countries of origin, but also requires the creation of sustainable conditions designed to facilitate the refugee reintegration process there.



Hence, the perception of refugee repatriations as problem free is therefore a myth, since returning to one's country after a protracted period of time can be as problematic as going into exile (Akol and Crisp in Wagner 1994:161). This misconception, in addition to the perception of the refugee cycle as a non-recurrent problem, has contributed to limited research in this area of study (Koser and Black, 1991). In the 1970s, for example, approximately 3,5 million refugees in Africa returned to their countries of origin (Rogge 1994), and yet very few studies have been conducted on what happens to them after repatriation (Allen, Morsink, Rogge, Black and Koser in Wagner 1994:161). In essence, the process of refugee repatriation and reintegration has not been sufficiently problematized because of the assumption that the problem is solved once refugees return to their countries of origin (Hammond in Black and Koser 1999:233). This study makes a contribution in filling this gap. Existing refugee repatriation studies tend to focus more on the planning, transportation and reception aspects of the process, without giving consideration to its long-term socio-economic implications (Cuny, Stein, Reed, Rogge and the UNHCR in Wagner 1994:161). Other primary areas of focus in refugee studies include the motivation for fleeing one's country of origin, the legal aspects of becoming a refugee and refugee resettlement and adjustment to new environments (Rogge 1991:161).

It is evident that there is a need for more research on the refugee repatriation and reintegration process. This study focuses on the reintegration of political returnees into the South African society from a sociological perspective. The reason for stating that it is a sociological study is because it focuses primarily on human social life, groups and societies. In the context of this study, the emphasis is on the human social life of political refugees in exile and in their countries of origin during the reintegration process. In addition, political refugees are studied as a group that is differentiated from their non-returnee counterparts primarily on the basis of their past experiences in exile and in their homelands. Regarding the aspect dealing with society, the study concentrates on the experiences of South Africans as political refugees or exiles in foreign societies and as political returnees in the South African society. The dissertation also looks at how the political returnee problem was addressed by liberation movements, government

and other organizations prior to, and after, 1994. Hence, the emphasis is on structural correlates associated with political returnees or refugee repatriation and reintegration.

A principal assertion of this study is that for refugee reintegration to succeed a country has to have a relatively good economy and the government has to respond positively to the political returnee problem. In South Africa, when political returnees began returning to the country in the early 1990s, the economy was not conducive to positive or successful economic reintegration because of retrenchments and the unemployment rate at the time. To make matters worse, none of the liberation movements were in power when returnees began returning to the country and, these movements did not have access to the necessary political power and economic resources in order to effectively address the problem. This changed in 1994 when the ANC won the first democratic elections in South Africa and became the new government. This was four years after the formerly banned ANC, PAC and SACP began returning to the country from political exile. Unlike some of its counterparts, the ANC-led government was proactive in that it took the initiative to address the political returnee problem two years after it was voted into power. This initiative occurred primarily through the enactment and implementation of the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts of 1996. In essence, it took six years for the political returnee matter to be properly addressed in South Africa, an indication of the difficulties involved in trying to resolve this issue. This was understandable, given that at the time when former political exiles began returning to South Africa, the National Party was still in power. In addition, when the ANC finally became the new government, it had to transform itself from a liberation movement into a government, a process that is often characterized by pitfalls.

The central argument of this study is that the ANC-led government has played a significant role in the repatriation and long-term reintegration of political returnees. This applies particularly to the economic dimension of the process, since governmental assistance or intervention is provided in the form of short and long term financial assistance. An analysis of the ANC government's role in the

political returnee process is, therefore, undertaken primarily through the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts of 1996 which form the focal point of analysis of this study. An important consideration is the differences in the objectives of the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts, the former involving long-term financial assistance. Although from the ANC-led government's perspective, the rationale for the Special Pension Act lay in providing recognition of the sacrifices that political returnees (comprising former political exiles or refugees, political prisoners and formerly banned individuals) made in the liberation struggle, this study analyses its role in the political returnee reintegration process. The significance of full-time engagement in liberation struggle politics as an important criterion for a Special Pension grant is highlighted in the Special Pension Act (No. 99) of 1996. In other words, the act provides a legislative framework to deal with matters of compensation for political returnees. Although the act does not specifically highlight the disadvantaged position in which exile placed returnees it may be argued that long-term engagement in liberation struggle politics meant that political returnees occupied a comparatively disadvantaged position. This was when political activists began returning to South Africa from exile. The fact that they had not been working in the country for extended periods of time meant that they, unlike their employed non-returnee counterparts, were consequently deprived of the opportunity of accumulating a pension for retirement purposes. This, in most cases, placed them in a comparatively disadvantaged economic position in the long term. It was on the basis of these facts that the government introduced the Special Pension Act. The Demobilization Act, on the other hand, was enacted to facilitate the demobilization or disbanding of former APLA and MK cadres.

A principal contention of this study is that the Demobilization and Special Pension Acts have played and continue to play, a vital role in the political returnee reintegration process from both the short and long-term perspectives. Although the dissertation focuses specifically on political returnees, it is not intended to undermine or de-emphasize the equally significant role played by those who remained in the country. It is an acknowledged fact that non-returnees also made great contributions and sacrifices in the resistance and struggle against the

apartheid system. The significant role played by various groups in the liberation struggle is, for example, reflected in South Africa's democratically elected government that came into power in 1994. Members of parliament are drawn from former old guard political prisoners (e.g. Nelson Mandela, the first president of the new democratic dispensation in the country) political returnees (such as Thabo Mbeki, the current president) and internally based political activists. The latter group, for example, comprised trade union activists and internally based liberation movements (e.g. the Black Consciousness Movement, the United Democratic Front, the Azanian People's Organization. etc). Although former political prisoners and formerly banned individuals have, like their returned political exile counterparts, also benefited from and continue to receive governmental financial assistance, they are, however, excluded from this study. The reason for this is primarily because of fundamental differences that characterize experiences of exile, imprisonment and banishment. While the study's principal focus is specifically on South Africa, it also draws on the experiences of other countries. The rationale for conducting this research nine years after political exiles began returning to the country is to ensure that it complies with an appropriate time-frame for assessing the role of government in addressing the refugee reintegration problem. Consideration of an appropriate time-frame was particularly pertinent in the South African context since none of the formerly exiled liberation movements were in power when returnees began returning to the country. Of additional significance is the fact that it takes time for any country to transform itself politically and for a new government to be in a position to enact and effect policy changes and to establish structures designed to address the political returnee problem. This certainly was the case in South Africa.

### **1.1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- a) To examine the role played by selected organizations in the political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process in South Africa prior to 1994.

- b) To study the role of these organizations in facilitating the repatriation and early reintegration of political returnees in the pre-independence era.
- c) To analyze the ANC-led government's role in addressing the political returnee reintegration problem from both short- and long-term perspectives during the post-apartheid phase.

#### **1.1.4 RELEVANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The following points highlight the significance of the study:

##### **a) Relevance for society**

Political returnees, like their non-returnee counterparts, have made significant contributions to South African society. The reason for this is that, as members of the exiled liberation movements, they played a critical role, particularly at the international level, in mobilizing support against the apartheid government. In the long-term this contributed to the democratization of South Africa's political order. It is precisely for this reason that the role of these and other organizations in the political returnee repatriation and reintegration process needs to be researched and documented, since they form an important phase of South Africa's liberation history. Moreover, it was difficult to conduct research on these organizations during the exile phase of the liberation struggle since documents on these political structures were inaccessible in the country.

The confidential nature of these documents also made this process difficult. In addition, the National Party-led government's official documents on the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC were largely misinformed (Lodge 1985:296). Other governments that are confronted with similar refugee repatriation and reintegration problems in the future can draw on the experiences of South Africa. This will not only assist them in addressing refugee reintegration more effectively, but also in formulating appropriate state policies designed to solve refugee repatriation and reintegration problems.

### **b) Relevance For An Understanding Of Refugee Repatriation and Reintegration**

As highlighted in the previous section refugee reintegration as a field of research, is still in its infancy. This study makes a contribution by partly filling in this gap.

### **c) Relevance For Sociological Theory**

This study makes a contribution to theoretical studies on refugees by applying them to aspects of this study where applicable.

### **d) Contribution To Research**

It is evident that political returnee/refugee studies are very limited in number, in fact they are almost non-existent in South Africa with the exception of a few (Majodina 1999, 1995 and HSRC and the Pretoria Returnees Committee Project 1994) and, hence, the reason for this research. Moreover, not much research has been conducted on the impact of the state and state policies on returnee reintegration (Tapscott 1991:253).

## **1.1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Regarding the delimitations of the study, its main focus is specifically on structural correlates of positive reintegration. Interviews of a sample of returnees were, for example, not included since it lay beyond the scope of this study.

## **1.1.6 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS**

The key concepts employed in this study are defined as follows:

### **Apartheid**

“Apartheid” an Afrikaans word coined by the National Party during Hendrick

Verwoerd's presidential term of office (Magubane 1990:236), refers to South Africa's institutionalized state racist policies which justified white minority economic and political domination over the majority African population. As an ideology, apartheid embraced a socially created misconception of race where Africans and other black people were perceived to be comparatively biologically inferior to their white counterparts.

### **Demobilization**

Demobilization refers to "the disbanding of members of the former non-statutory forces who do not enter into agreement for temporary or permanent appointment with the South African Defence Force, as contemplated in section 236 (8) (d) of the Constitution (The Demobilization Act, No. 99 of 1996:1075).

### **Formerly Banned Individuals**

Formerly banned individuals are those people who had banning orders imposed on them by the apartheid criminal justice system. These included the imposition of restrictions on their freedom of movement, speech, association, employment, pursuing higher education and membership of banned political organizations. In some cases, banned individuals were forcibly moved to specified remote areas as a means of ensuring that they strictly complied with the banning orders. In addition, they were, in some instances placed under house arrest, while others had to report to the nearest police station twice a day. Banning orders were designed specifically to neutralize engagement in liberation struggle politics and activities. In terms of duration, the banning orders ranged from one to five years, while others extended to twenty six years (Coleman 1998:14) and, in some cases, for an indefinite period.

### **Nationalism**

Nationalism is defined as "a set of symbols and beliefs providing the sense of being part of a single political community. Thus, individuals feel a sense of pride

and belonging in being “British”, “American” or “French’. Probably people have always felt some kind of identity with social groups of one form or another – for example, their family, clan or religious community. Nationalism, however, made its appearance only with the development of the modern state. It is the main expression of a feeling of identity with a distinct sovereign community” (Giddens 1993:311).

### **Political Returnee**

Political returnees are people who were “outside their country, owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (Black and Robinson 1993:7).

### **Voluntary Repatriation**

Voluntary repatriation, which applied to South African political exiles as they returned to the country, refers to “a process of return and arrangements for integration made immediately after arrival in the country of destination” (Quick et al in Allen and Morsink 1994:250). Pertinent to this definition is the voluntary nature of the process as highlighted by Ziek (1997:429), one which he conceptualizes as involving a situation where “refugees have finally and definitely and in complete freedom, and after receiving full knowledge of the facts including adequate information on the circumstances in their countries of origin, decide to return to their country” (Ziek 1997:429).

### **Integration**

In describing the adjustment of South African political returnees, reintegration, as opposed to integration is utilized, since it is assumed that those who left the country were integrated members of South African society prior to their departure.



Integration, which is a multifaceted, dynamic and complex process, is, in this study, conceptualized in terms of its social and economic dimensions. At the social level, integration is defined as “the ability of individuals and groups to interact cohesively, overcoming their differences without a breakdown of social relations and conflict” (Preston 1993:6) in their home environments. This conceptualization of integration also applied to the type of adjustment that is typical of the reintegration process. Economic integration or reintegration is, on the other hand, defined as the capacity to secure employment and to become part of the labour force in any given society.

### **1.1.7 METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative research techniques were utilized in this study, since the research involves the non-numerical assessment and interpretation of observations designed to identify meanings and patterns of relationships. In sociological terms the emphasis in qualitative research is on norms of behaviour (Babbie,1998: 297). Relevant institutions that played a significant role in the repatriation and reintegration of South African political returnees were first identified based on a comprehensive literature review of the topic. Preliminary visits were made to some of the establishments as part of the initial stages of the research process. Interview schedules were structured for data collection purposes which involved in-depth interviews of key respondents from a number of institutions and organizations. Finally, qualitative data analysis methods were used to analyze the collected information which is discussed in detail in the data analysis section of this study.

### **1.1.8 THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

The dissertation is organized in terms of the following chapters:

**Chapter 1** comprises the general introduction and statement of the research problem where the main focus of the study is presented.

**Chapter 2** contextualizes the reintegration of political returnees into South African society by discussing the circumstances which led to their flight to exile and their subsequent return to their country. It first presents a political background to the study by focusing on the formation of the apartheid system and on the political returnee population as a manifestation of that apartheid system. It also looks at anti-apartheid resistance movements and their role in the liberation struggle.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the exiled liberation movement and the political returnee community in exile. It discusses the role of the liberation movement, particularly in the international arena, in mobilizing international support in the fight against the apartheid system. Of sociological significance is the role of the liberation movements as support structures for political exiles and as facilitators of the perpetuation of a South African cultural and national identity outside the country. The repatriation and reintegration aspects focus on the role of the UNHCR, the liberation movements and other organizations in this process.

**Chapter 4** provides an overview of relevant literature and research that has been conducted in this area of study and also on the limitations of such research. It also highlights the reasons why more research has not been conducted in this field.

**Chapter 5** presents key concepts and theories in refugee studies and migration theory since the movement of refugees involves a migration process. In addition, it also discusses the relevance of these theories to the study.

**Chapter 6** deals with the methodology of the study where the primary data collection instrument and the rationale for its preference is discussed. This is followed by a presentation of the preliminary stages of the data collection process prior to a discussion of the actual implementation of the research.

**Chapter 7** analyses the role of selected organizations in the political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process prior to 1994. Finally, data relating to

the role of the ANC-led government in the post-apartheid phase after 1994 is investigated.

**Chapter 8** focuses on the results, conclusions, recommendations of the study and proposed areas for further research.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the context in which South African political exiles fled and returned to the country after the unbanning of the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC. It presents a political background to the study by focusing on the formation of the apartheid system. The second part addresses the creation of a political returnee population as a direct manifestation of the apartheid system. It also looks at anti-apartheid resistance movements, historical events that contributed to the flight of South African citizens out of the country, developments in neighbouring countries that had an impact on South Africa's liberation struggle and salient internal and external factors that played a decisive role in the dismantling of the apartheid system. The inclusion of these contributory factors in the dismantling process is important since they paved the way for the final return of political exiles to South Africa.

#### THE APARTHEID SYSTEM

The formation of the apartheid system in South Africa is contextualized in terms of the growth of capitalism in Europe, since racist ideologies like apartheid were a product of capitalist expansionist policies of conquest and exploitation (Magubane 1990:3). These policies were motivated primarily by economic factors, as articulated by Cecil Rhodes, owner of the De Beers diamond and gold empire in South Africa, in the following excerpt:

"I was in the east of London yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed, I listened to the wild speeches which were just a cry of "bread", "bread" and "bread". On my way home I pondered over the same and became more than over convinced of the importance of imperialism... My Cherished idea is a solution for our social problem, i.e., in order to

save the 40 million inhabitants of the UK from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population to provide new markets for the goods produced by them in the factories and mines. The Empires as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid a civil war, you must become imperialist”  
(Rhodes in Magubane 1990:58).

In line with the expansionist policies of capitalism, Europeans ventured on voyages of discovery in search of wealth in South Africa and other parts of the world. This occurred particularly during the mercantile and capitalist revolution (Magubane 1990:1). Once areas rich in minerals and raw materials had been identified, conquest by military force of the indigenous inhabitants was inevitable in order to facilitate the expropriation of these resources to Europe. As European-owned mining, agricultural and other industries developed, the labour demands increased to such an extent that they were forced to rely on African labour.

Amongst the first Europeans to settle in South Africa were the Dutch of the Dutch East India Company and the English in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively (Magubane 1990:1). Early Dutch settlement in South Africa is associated with Jan van Riebeeck and his crew who established a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 en route to India as part of the spice trade. At the time, land and cattle which were owned predominantly by the indigenous Khoikhoi and San, played a significant role in the country’s economic development. Power struggles for control of these economic resources culminated in the dispossession of the Khoikhoi of their land and cattle and the gradual extermination of the San (Marx 1992:4). The second group of imperialists were the British who forcibly took the Cape in 1806 and succeeded in colonizing it in 1914 (Magubane 1990:11) the same year that the National Party was formed in South Africa.

The discovery of gold and diamonds in 1886 and 1887 respectively (Magubane 1990:19) culminated in South Africa’s accelerated economic development. The extraction and expropriation of precious minerals and raw materials from South

Africa did not involve a democratic trading process, in that the indigenous people did not receive any compensation for the mineral resources expropriated from their land. With time, and as the country's economy developed, it grew to have the biggest and richest European population in Africa (Marx, 1992:4).

To ensure the long-term monopolization of the country's economic resources, European imperialists consolidated their political domination of South Africa by forming the Union of South Africa in 1910, a British dominion (Magubane 1990:17). Louis Botha became its first Prime Minister, while Jan Smuts was his deputy. Those responsible for formulating South Africa's constitution structured it in such a way that the policy-making body was restricted to white parliamentarians only.

Capitalist expansionist policies and imperialist claims to South Africa's and the Southern African region's mineral wealth in general did not occur only during the pre-colonial and colonial eras. This was evident as recently as 1986 when, for example, the USA's president, Ronald Reagan, highlighted the USA's dependency on Southern Africa and South Africa's mineral wealth by stating that:

“Southern Africa and South Africa are (the) repository of many of the vital minerals –vanadium, manganese, chromium, platinum – for which the West has no other secure source supply. If this rising hostility in Southern Africa between Pretoria and the front-line state explodes, the Soviet Union will be the main beneficiary. And the critical ocean corridor of South Africa and the strategic minerals in the region will be at risk” (President Reagan's Peace Plan For South Africa, USIS Special Report, July 22, 1986 in Magubane 1990:168).

Prior to the decolonization process in Africa, European colonialists ensured that South Africa's gold and other mining industries were linked to the world economic order which was dominated by Britain at the time (Magubane and Mandaza 1988:16). This was designed to ensure unrestricted and long-term access to the country's mineral wealth.

Regarding the evolution of racist ideologies which were, as mentioned earlier, a product of capitalist expansionist policies of conquest and exploitation (Magubane 1990:3), such ideologies were created to neutralize the continuous economic exploitation of specific regions of the world and its inhabitants.

In line with capitalist policies, the predominantly Afrikaner National Party-led government in South Africa also used a racist ideology, apartheid, to rationalize and neutralize the continuous exploitation of the country's economic resources and inhabitants. This was after the National Party, which was formed in 1914 (Magubane 1990:168), was elected as the new government in South Africa in 1948 in an electoral process that excluded Africans. The election of the National Party to government was conducted undemocratically since it excluded the participation of its African citizens.

From an objective point of view, race is a biological category, but the need to rationalize the continuous exploitation of South Africa's economic resources and its inhabitants compelled, first the colonialists, and later, the National Party-led government, to transform race into a social category (Magubane 1990:16). In essence, apartheid was a continuation and variant of racist ideologies that existed long before its formation during the pre-colonial and colonial eras.

Some of the legislation that was enacted and implemented during the pre-National Party led government era include the following:

- a) The Mines and Works Act of 1911 and 1926 which ensured that white employees were given preference in job allocations (Magubane 1990:124). They thus had access to comparatively more skilled and better paying jobs than their African counterparts.
- b) The Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911 that regulated labour relations between predominantly African employees and European employers. It, for example, prevented African employees from breaking a contract, participating in

strikes and other actions perceived to be disruptive to the normal functioning of these industries ([Http://1cweb.loc.go-bin/quety/cstd@fieldDOCID+za0027](http://1cweb.loc.go-bin/quety/cstd@fieldDOCID+za0027)).

c) At the social level, the Dutch Reformed Church Act of 1911 ensured the exclusion of Africans from the Dutch Reformed Church ([Http://1cweb.loc.go-bin/quety/cstd@fieldDOCID+za0027](http://1cweb.loc.go-bin/quety/cstd@fieldDOCID+za0027)).

d) The Native Lands Act of 1913 and 1936 that gave Europeans preference in land allocations in both urban and rural areas (Lodge 1983:2). It also legitimized the dispossession without compensation of Africans of their land upon which they relied for subsistence farming. They were forced instead to move to rural reserves which culminated in Africans being allocated only 13% of land in South Africa ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)). The Native Lands Act resulted in the destruction of African peasant producers, compelling them to seek work in European-owned mines, farms and other industries. The ironical aspect of this legislation is that while Africans constituted two thirds of the South African population, they were restricted to approximately only 7.3% of the total land in the country (Magubane 1990:81).

In the rural areas, the Native Lands Act also enforced a system where African cattle-owners and subsistence farmers were forced to give half their harvest to European farmers. This was in exchange for grazing their cattle and for living on European-owned land. Africans who did not own cattle were not permitted to farm there and were subsequently forced to seek work in the mining, agricultural and other industries in order to earn a living (Lodge 1983:2). Hence, the proletarianization or transformation of the African peasantry from subsistence farmers to wage earners was a product of the mining industries which resulted in the destruction of the pre-capitalist rural areas.

e) The Native Affairs Act of 1920 (Magubane 1990:83) that enforced the disenfranchisement of Africans in the Cape.

f) The Native Taxation and Development Act of 1922 which declared that all



African males between the ages of 18 and 65 should pay a poll tax. Additional tax had to be paid for the occupation of a hut in the reserves. These tax obligations forced Africans to seek paid employment in the mining and agricultural industries (Magubane 1990:83).

g)The Urban Areas Act of 1923 (Magubane 1990:83) that regulated the mobility of Africans in urban areas. A key strategy utilized to facilitate this process was the enactment and implementation of the pass law system. This legislation required Africans to be in possession of a special identity document at all times in order to legitimize their presence in designated white areas at specified times.

h) The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, the Wage Act of 1925 and the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 which were extensions of laws that ensured that white employees received special privileges at work ([Http://lcwe.loc.gov-bin/query/cstdy:@fieldDOCID.za0027](http://lcwe.loc.gov-bin/query/cstdy:@fieldDOCID.za0027)).

i)The Native Administrative Act of 1927 excluded Africans from the general rule of law that applied to the white population. This act was enforced through the authority of the governor and officials of the Native Affairs Department. African chiefs were placed as heads of the Native Affairs structures, which basically involved implementation of an indirect form of administration commonly used by the British during the colonial era (Magubane 1990:84).

j)The Immorality Act of 1927 which prohibited inter-racial sexual relations and which was extended in 1950 ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

k)The Riotous Assemblies Act of 1930 that empowered the Minister of Justice to ban and control public meetings at his discretion (Magubane 1990:284).

l) The Native Laws Amendment Act of 1927 which enforced the extension of pass laws that were in existence at the time ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

The above Acts imposed unnecessary restrictions on various spheres of the African population's lives by dictating, amongst other practices, place of residence, type of occupation, political rights, land ownership and social interaction on the basis of race. From the above, it is evident that a polarization of South African society on the basis of race had been systematically entrenched prior to 1948 when the National Party-led government was voted into power.

Increasing labour demands in the mining, agricultural and other industries forced European capitalists to rely increasingly on cheap African labour which constituted the primary labour force in the country (Lodge 1983:32).

Pertinent to the economic development of South Africa under apartheid rule was the migrant labour system, a variant of forced labour, designed to regulate the mobility of African labour in the country. The creation of this system was essentially a reflection of the contradictions of the apartheid system. The reason for this is that while European industrialists acknowledged the need for African labour in the country's industries, at the same time they preferred to have minimal interaction with them and, hence, the introduction of the migrant labour system. This involved the cyclic migration of African workers between urban areas (which European administrators viewed as white creations) and rural-based African reserves.

Hence, Africans were permitted to live temporarily in cities in order to enable them to meet their employment obligations in urban-based mining and other industries. They were forced to return to their rural homelands during holidays and in cases where they were unemployed. In essence, therefore, the migrant labor system had a dual function, namely, to maximize industrial production while simultaneously minimizing interaction between Africans and Europeans at the social level.

As the apartheid system developed, it became one of the most autocratic and repressive structures in modern history. It used its criminal justice system to suppress the activities of its opponents, many of whom were, for example,

detained without trial regardless of age and gender. Detention without trial entailed being detained for extended and, in some cases, indefinite periods without being charged, as well as being denied access to a lawyer and relatives. Other acts of repression included being forced to serve life-long term jail sentences, while others had no option but to flee the country or were, in some instances, killed.

In retrospect, the formation of the apartheid system was a tragic development in the evolution of South Africa's history. The reason for this is that Africans were oppressed over the past three centuries through a historical combination of racial discrimination and national domination and economic exploitation (Marx 1992:5). In addition, while other African countries were in the process of being decolonized, as early as 1957 in the case of Ghana, for example, South Africa was ironically regressing into more brutal forms of oppression which ended only in 1994. The apartheid system was undoubtedly racist and undemocratic since it served the interests of only 13% of the South African population (namely the whites) at the expense of 87% (Coleman 1998:7) which represented the African, and, to a smaller extent the Coloured and Indian population.

The National Party-led government succeeded in sustaining apartheid from 1948 to 1994 and in creating a powerful, repressive military structure in the process. A key strategy employed by the apartheid regime, one which was designed to sustain apartheid, was its continuous enactment of a host of discriminatory legislation aimed at consolidating its control of the African population. The National Party-led government was responsible for implementing harsh forms of discriminatory legislation which imposed restrictions on the lives of the African population in the country. Some of these laws were:

- a) The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 which banned all inter-racial marriages ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).
- b) The Population Registration Act of 1949 that enforced the racial classification of South Africa's population in official data relating to the country's population

statistics. It also regulated the movement and allocation of labour in the country (Magubane 1990:132).

c) The Group Areas Act of 1950, an extension of the original 1913 Native Lands Act that dictated ownership of land on the basis of race (Magubane 1990:135). Furthermore, it also empowered the apartheid regime to forcibly move Africans from their land without any form of compensation.

d) At the political level, there was the Suppression of the Communism Act of 1950 designed to suppress the growth of communism in South Africa (Coleman 1998:96).

e) The Immorality Act of 1950 which banned intimate relations between people of different races (<http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm>).

f) The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 that enforced the establishment of regional and territorial-based authorities in different regions under the Group Areas Act (Magubane 1990:87). The Bantu Authorities Act empowered the National Party-led government to appoint “authorities” from the ranks of chiefs and headmen and also transformed African “reserves” into homelands or Bantustans.

g) The Pass Laws of 1952 which restricted and regulated the movements of Africans and prevented them from securing the best jobs (Magubane 1990:132). This legislation required every African to be in possession of a special identity document which they were expected to produce at labour bureaux for employment purposes. The bureaux would then direct them to relevant employers. Variants of pass laws can be traced back to 1760 when they were introduced in the Cape Colony in order to monitor the movements of slaves. In 1809, for example, the Khoikhoi were forced to have them in their possession at all times, particularly when moving from one area to another (Magubane 1990:133). In his study, Greenberg (1980:153) writes:

“When Africans began moving into white settler areas

of the Eastern Cape, the pass laws were extended to them as well. In some areas the pass laws helped the colonial administrators to monitor the number and movements of Coloureds and Africans, while serving the labour control requirements of white slave owners and farmers”.

The control mechanism described by Greenberg (1980) was the historical precursor to the even more punitive and draconian influx control measures of the post-1948 era. In the early years, the pass laws constituted the primary mechanisms for controlling and monitoring the working lives of African labourers. These laws were designed to facilitate the identification of employed and unemployed Africans in cities. The latter group were, according to apartheid law, not permitted to be in cities and were consequently sent back to the reserves.

h) The Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952 (Sparks 1992:196) that minimized the urban rights of Africans by placing restrictions on their rights to live in urban areas. Exceptions included individuals in cities and those who had retained the same job in towns for ten years or more. Those who did not meet these criteria were forced to move to rural-based Bantustans and were permitted to enter urban areas only as migrant labourers on a six-month or one-year contract (Sparks 1990:196).

i) The Public Safety Act of 1953 which empowered the National-Party led government to declare states of emergency (SOE) in cases where it was deemed necessary. These declarations became more frequent, particularly from the mid 1980s, when states of emergencies were declared in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 (Coleman 1998:14), an indication of the extent of the political crisis in the country at the time.

j) The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953 that imposed strict penalties for engaging in political protests or incitement to protest ([Http://www.geocities.com.vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

k) The Reservations of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 which enforced the segregation of such facilities as, for example, parks and buses on the basis of

race ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

l) The Bantu Education Act of 1953 which ensured the provision of a comparatively inferior or sub-standard education for Africans. This was in terms not only of the curriculum, but also in terms of resources, facilities and government funding for African education. The latter point is evident in, for example, the government's allocation of 180 and 25 dollars per white and black child respectively (Sparks 1998:196).

m) The Natives Resettlement Act of 1954 which empowered the National Party-led government to forcibly move and resettle Africans in alternative areas without their consent or any form of compensation ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

n) The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 that gave the Minister of Labour discretionary powers in dissolving multiracial trade unions and in the allocation of jobs on the basis of race ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

o) The Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Act of 1956 which ensured the exclusion of Coloureds in the Cape from the common roll, thus forcing them to elect white representatives only ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

p) The Explosives Act of 1956 (Coleman 1998:77) which was designed to curb the military or guerilla activities of the exiled liberation movements and internally based political activists.

In September of 1958, Hendrick Verwoerd was elected Prime Minister of South Africa (Coleman 1998:10) and, in his determination to continue perpetuating and sustaining the apartheid system, he imposed restrictions on the flow of Africans into urban areas. He also restored African traditional systems from a National Party-led government perspective and ended the development of an emerging Black intellectual elite which he referred to as "the Black Englishmen". The

rationale for ensuring that Black education remained comparatively inferior was to make it compatible with the apartheid government's perception of what it viewed as appropriate African education and expectations for occupational and social mobility under apartheid rule. These strategies were a reflection of the apartheid government's perceptions of progress in Black education as a potential threat to its capacity to continue sustaining the apartheid system.

Some of the legislation that was enacted during Hendrick Verwoerd's term as prime minister included the Extension of the University Act which was designed specifically to impede the growth of the black intellectual elite (Sparks 1998:196). This act prevented them from pursuing tertiary education at such universities as Wits, Cape Town and Natal which had comparatively better curricula, resources and facilities. The creation of barriers in the form of access to tertiary education for the African population by the National Party-led government impeded the long-term occupational, economic and social mobility of Africans. The Promotion of the Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 was also implemented during Verwoerd's term of office. It enforced the removal of the few black representatives in parliament and the formation of separate black homelands (Magubane 1990:87). In addition, it reinforced the polarization of South African society on the basis of race and the disempowerment of the African population at the political level. An additional Act was the Bantu Labour Act of 1964 that empowered the Bantu Labour Boards to control farm labourers, domestic workers, labour tenants and squatters. In addition, it also controlled the size and composition of labour on farms (Magubane 1990:144). This Act effectively gave the government more power in controlling African labour in South Africa.

In 1966, Hendrick Verwoerd was assassinated and was succeeded by John Vorster (Coleman 1998:10) under whose premiership the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act of 1970 was enacted. This ensured that every African automatically became a citizen of a homeland on the basis of ethnicity ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)). This act was designed to reverse the urbanization of the African population, a trend which was evident as early as the 1950s. This legislation, which did not involve a democratic consultative process automatically declared

every African a citizen of a homeland or Bantustan. In essence, urban-based Africans were not given the opportunity of deciding whether they wished to live in rural traditional or urban structures. As a result, many Africans who had migrated and settled in urban areas were forcibly moved to arid rural areas. This version of social engineering involved the creation of superficial “independent states” or “homelands”, each led by a president. The Transkei was formed in 1976, Bophutatswana in 1977, Venda in 1979 and Ciskei in 1981. Other areas that were to gain full independence included Kwazulu, Kwandebele, Gazangulu, Qwaqwa and Kangwane. As a result, approximately eight million urban-based Africans, who were either born, or had migrated to, and settled in, cities were forcibly moved to impoverished rural areas. Although these geographical entities were referred to as independent states by the National Party-led government, a perception it tried to reinforce within the international community, these states were, in actual fact autocratically administered by the government.

The Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act was designed primarily to impede the urbanization of the African population which had grown to such an extent that between, 1939 and 1951, it had almost doubled due to industrialization and rural-urban migration, a result of poor socio-economic conditions in rural areas (Lodge 1983:12). In addition, the act was aimed at consolidating the apartheid government’s control over the supply of African labour, which constituted the primary labour force in the country for the mining, agricultural and other industries. It was also created to ensure the entrenchment of apartheid in South Africa’s political and socio-economic system in general, and to suppress the growth of nationalism amongst urban-based Africans who had, over the years, become homogeneous as a result of inter-ethnic interaction and marriages. In the long-term, this Act deprived the African population of the right of choice of residence.

The implementation of the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act consolidated control of the migrant labour force. This meant in effect that Africans were permitted to be in cities only in cases where they were on a six-month or one-year contract



(Sparks 1990:183). This was not a new development in South Africa, as Lodge (1983) observed that:

“The process set in motion in the 1950s in the western Cape was now enacted on a national scale. Over one million labor tenants and farm squatters and 40,000 city dwellers were resettled in Bantustans; the population was increased by 70 per cent in the 1960s. In addition, 327,000 people were brought directly under the control of the Bantustan authorities as a result of the townships being incorporated within the boundaries of the reserves neighboring them. Nearly two thirds of the country’s African townships declined in size. Movement between the towns was further controlled after 1968 with the completion of the rural bureaux system. As official regulation of people’s lives became more and more severe, so the prison population rose. By 1970 it was nearly twice what it had been in 1960 (outstripping an overall population growth of 25 per cent). All these changes helped to break down existing networks of social solidarity and hamper the creation of new ones. They also contributed to the atmosphere of fear and insecurity which perpetuated political apathy “(Lodge 1983:32).

The Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act thus contributed not only to the polarization of South Africa on the basis of race, but also on the basis of ethnicity. The fact that the implementation of this legislation involved brutal force is an indication of the fact that it was not a natural developmental process. It automatically created conditions conducive to consistent resistance against it by the African population. The implications of this legislation on the urban African population included the destabilization of their communities. Family life disintegrated because spouses and children were prevented from living together in male urban-based hostels. In addition, it also resulted in overcrowding because of the small size of the land that had been allocated to Africans.

The implementation of this act was undoubtedly undemocratic since urbanized Africans were forced to move to rural traditional structures to which they were not accustomed. In essence, urban-based Africans were not given the opportunity of deciding on whether they wished to live in rural traditional or urban structures. As a result, many Africans who had migrated and settled in urban areas were forcibly moved to arid rural areas. Ideally, citizens of democratic states, which

are typically characterized by both traditional and contemporary structures and cultures, have the freedom to decide in which of the two they prefer to live. Deprivation of such fundamental rights is likely to generate continuous resistance by those deprived of these rights. In the long term, the apartheid regime's attempts at social engineering failed, due to consistent internal resistance and a failure to gain the international recognition it sought for the homelands.

Also enacted during Verwoerd's premiership was the Constitutional Act of 1983 which is discussed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter. It enforced the establishment of a tricameral parliament comprising separate parliamentary chambers for whites, Coloureds and Indians ([Http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no.apartheid.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vegar-no.apartheid.htm) ).

## **ANTI-APARTHEID RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS**

In this section, Tom Lodge's (1983) time-frame is utilized in analyzing the evolution of key anti-apartheid resistance movements and historical events associated with their formation.

## **BLACK POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT PRIOR TO 1950**

### **1912: THE FORMATION OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC)**

Ethnic opposition to discriminatory legislation and practices on the basis of race existed prior to the formation of the ANC in 1912 (Sparks 1990:6). However, it was only when the ANC was formed that African engagement in politics became more prominent in South Africa. This was particularly evident in the Cape where Africans participated in the electoral process. The voting criteria included ownership of "appropriate" property and educational qualifications. This, in effect, gave Africans the opportunity of standing for office and being voted into parliament. With the inception of the Union of South Africa in 1910, however, this privilege was taken away from them, and this was one of the reasons for the

formation of the ANC in 1912. Its formation was also in response to legislation which excluded Africans from the common roll, created segregated political institutions, white parliamentary Native representatives and Advisory Native Representative Councils for Africans, and reinforced the unequal distribution of land in the country (Lodge 1983:11).

A meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1912 in Bloemfontein (Lodge 1983:1) marked the formation of the ANC, where John Dube, a school headmaster, Solomon Plaatje, an editor, and Pixley Ka Izaka Seme, a London trained advocate were elected as president, secretary and treasurer respectively (Lodge 1983:3). Given that the ANC's efforts in South Africa aimed at democratizing the country had so far proved futile, the organization sent a delegation to Britain in 1914 (Lodge 1983:2) to seek British intervention. They were, however, unsuccessful, due to the British government's perception of the matter as a domestic issue that had to be solved by colonial administrators in South Africa. The ANC was subsequently forced to devise alternative strategies in their fight against the apartheid system.

### **1921: FORMATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY (SACP)**

The primary activities of the ANC in the 1920s revolved around anti-pass campaigns, addressing public meetings and supporting industrial strikes, particularly between 1919 and 1920 (Lodge 1983:1). Of significance in the developmental phase of the ANC was the formation of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921 (Lodge 1983:7) which was later re-named the South African Communist Party (SACP). The organization established an alliance with the ANC after its formation which is still in existence today. One of the primary objectives of the SACP, amongst others, was to reinforce working class unity amongst South African workers regardless of race. Twenty nine years after its formation, the SACP was banned by the National Party-led government in 1950 when the government enacted the Suppression of Communism Act (Lodge 1983:87).

## 1949: THE ANC'S PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The 1940s were characterized by a rapid increase in the expansion of the black labour force in urban areas, particularly in the manufacturing industry. Other developments included the reactivation of trade unionism and increased awareness of class consciousness (Lodge 1983:1). These factors played an important contributory role in the radicalization of black politics, as manifested in industrial action and community-based political protests like boycotts and civil disobedience.

Also of significance in the developmental phase of the ANC was its 1949 Programme of Action campaign which outlined activities to be conducted by the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), Coloured People's Organization (CPO) and the Congress of Democrats (CD) in the struggle against apartheid (Lodge 1983:83). A principal demand contained in the Programme of Action document was the need to gain freedom from the apartheid regime and to democratize South Africa's political order. Paragraph three of the charter stipulated the following functions of the council of action which was responsible for the implementation of the programme:

“... appointment of a council of action whose function should be to carry into effect, vigorously and with utmost determination, the program of action. It should be competent for the council of action to implement our resolve to work for (a) the abolition of all different political institutions, the boycotting of which we accept and to undertake a campaign to educate our people in this issue and, in addition, to employ the following weapons: immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-cooperation and such other means as may bring about the accomplishment and realization of our aspirations, (b) preparation and making plans for a national stoppage of work for one day as a mark of protest against the reactionary policy of the government” (Magubane 1990:298).

## **THE CREATION OF A MASS MOVEMENT: STRIKE AND DEFIANCE**

In contrast to the 1940s when the ANC leadership was more conservative, predominantly comprised of churchmen, doctors and businessmen (Lodge 1983:74), in the 1950s it consisted of mainly younger leaders who came primarily from legal and trade union backgrounds. By December 1952, Chief Albert Luthuli had been elected as the president general of the ANC (Lodge 1983:68). Ideologically, he was relatively more moderate in that he advocated for African participation in the government as opposed to taking control of government. It was also during this era that the Suppression of Communism Act was enacted and implemented in 1950 (Lodge 1983:33).

### **1952: THE ANC'S DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN**

Of significance in the 1950s was the ANC's Defiance Campaign of 1952 which, according to Tom Lodge (1983), was one of the ANC's most successful anti-apartheid campaigns. Defiance activities included, amongst others, using whites only facilities, transgression of pass laws and work boycotts. The ANC's campaign activities against apartheid were comparatively fewer in number between 1953 and 1954 (Lodge 1983:68) than they had been in previous years, which can be attributed partly to the banning of some of its leaders at the time.

### **1955: THE FORMATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (SACTU)**

The ANC's successes in forming alliances with other organizations in the country were not confined only to political organizations, but also included trade unions. This is evident in its formation of an alliance with the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in 1955. In its alliance with the ANC, SACTU played an important role in the drafting of the ANC's Freedom Charter. By 1959, the organization had 46,000 members and 35 affiliates (Baskin, 1991:13), an indication of its successful recruitment drive at the time which was advantageous

to the ANC in that it partly contributed to the consolidation of its power base in the country.

### **1955: THE ANC's FREEDOM CHARTER**

The 1955 "Congress of the People" multiracial gathering comprising the ANC, Coloured Peoples Congress, the South African Indian Congress and the South African Congress of Trade Unions was a significant event in the developmental phase of the ANC. The focal point of discussion at this meeting revolved around the ANC's Freedom Charter which articulated the organization's vision for a post-apartheid South Africa. Highlighted in the charter was a society where the basic rights of citizens are respected and where there is racial equality, multi-racialism, equal trade, the lifting of labour restrictions, free and compulsory education, unemployment benefits, minimum wages and equitable welfare provisions for pensioners and children (Lodge 1983:71).

### **1959: THE FORMATION OF THE PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS (PAC)**

Although the ANC was the largest political organization in terms of membership, the Pan Africanist Congress proved to be its biggest rival in the monopolization of political protest, particularly in the 1960s (Lodge 1983:86). Dissatisfaction with the ANC's tolerance of the increasing role of the communist sector of the ANC-SACP alliance as well as its multiracialism stance which was viewed as reinforcing dependency on whites, along with its lack of spontaneity in anti-apartheid campaigns and activities, compelled some of its Youth League members to leave the organization in 1958. These included, amongst others, Potlako Leballo, Zeph Mothopeng and Peter Raboroko (Lodge 1983:80). This move signified an Africanist dissension within the ANC which culminated in the formation of the PAC in 1959. Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, a former key figure at the Fort Hare university-based ANC Youth League, who was at the time a Wits University African languages lecturer, was elected as the first president of the PAC in 1959. Other leadership members included Potlako Leballo, Zeph Mothopeng and Peter Raboroko (Lodge 1983:80). Although the PAC was

Africanist ideologically, contrary to popular belief, it was not racist, as illustrated by Sobukwe's call for sympathetic whites "to adjust their outlook in such a fashion that the slogan 'Africa for Africans' ... could apply to them even though they were white" (Lodge 1983:84). In essence, the PAC stressed the need to maintain a positive, as opposed to the negative, African identity which the apartheid government propagated at the time. In line with its Africanist ideology, the PAC favoured a more black leadership for its organization. An additional and important PAC objective was the repossession of the land that was forcibly taken away from sectors of the African population in the country.

### **1960: THE SHARPEVILLE DEMONSTRATIONS**

The Sharpeville demonstrations of the 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1960 stand out as the most significant historical event associated with Robert Sobukwe and the PAC. Although the ANC had also been in the process of planning an anti-pass demonstration, the PAC scheduled theirs for the 21<sup>st</sup> March of the same year hence, the reason for the perception of the incident as a PAC initiative. Prior to the protest march, Robert Sobukwe wrote to the chief of police informing him of the impending demonstration and assuring him that it would be conducted peacefully (Magubane 1990:312). Protest strategies employed by the PAC leadership included boycotting work, encouraging their members to leave their passes at home, and reporting to the nearest police station in order to be arrested. Initiating one's arrest was aimed at overcrowding police cells as part of the destabilization process. Underpinning this action was that it would make sectors of the country ungovernable and have a negative impact on the economy, particularly on the commercial and industrial sectors.

The large crowds that participated in the demonstrations took the police by surprise hence, their over-reaction which resulted in the death of approximately sixty-nine protestors (Lodge 1983:210). Many of the victims had been shot from the back, a probable indication of their adherence to the PAC leadership's call for a non-violent protest (Lodge 1983:204). An unanticipated outcome of the police action was the ripple effect it produced leading to country-wide demonstrations

which ultimately forced the National Party-led government to declare its first state of emergency in the country (Coleman, 1998:14). This was an indication of the seriousness with which the apartheid regime viewed the incident. The demonstrations also succeeded in focusing the international media on the apartheid government's repression against the African population. As a result, international investors lost confidence in the apartheid government, culminating in the gradual withdrawal of investors from the country (Lodge, 1983:225). After the Sharpeville incident, Robert Sobukwe, Potlako Leballo, Zephania Mothopeng and Phillip Kgosana were arrested for their role in organizing and participating in the demonstrations. The violent manner in which the police responded to the protest forced the PAC to form its military wing POQO (pure or genuine) (Lodge 1983:24) which was later renamed the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA).

The success of the PAC initiatives in organizing the Sharpeville demonstrations may partly be attributed to its organizational skills and, most significantly, to the socio-economic conditions that Africans were forced to endure under apartheid rule. The demonstrations resulted in the apartheid government's intensified suppression of liberation movements, trade unions and other anti-apartheid organizations. This was aimed at consolidating its control over dissenting forces in the country. The PAC and ANC were subsequently banned in 1960 under the Unlawful Organizations Act of 1960 (Lodge 1983:209) and were, as a result, forced to operate from exile. The Sharpeville demonstrations were, undoubtedly, a critical turning point in South Africa's liberation struggle, in that they had far reaching implications for the PAC and the ANC-SACP alliance and other resistance movements in their fight against apartheid. In the long-term, exile undoubtedly proved to be a difficult phase of the liberation struggle for the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC due to their lack of proximity to South Africa. They were subsequently forced to depend on internally based political activists to conduct some of their activities in the country on their behalf. Although the exiled PAC and ANC-SACP alliance differed ideologically, they nevertheless shared a common vision based on the need to abolish the apartheid system and to replace it with a democratic political order. Ironically, the common vision they shared was



not strong enough an incentive for them to forge an alliance in their fight against apartheid. Earlier attempts in this regard in the 1960s had also proved futile (Lodge 1983:297).

From a comparative point of view, the ANC was more moderate and conservative than the PAC in that it had, for a long period of time, advocated for passive resistance and non-violent strategies in its struggle against apartheid. But, given the level of violence meted out to the 1960 Sharpeville demonstrators, it was subsequently forced to change its strategies in its struggle against the apartheid system.

The military wing of the ANC-SACP alliance, Umkhonto we Sizwe, was subsequently formed in 1961 (Magubane, 1990:28). In its efforts to mobilize support for their cause, some members of the ANC leadership, which included Nelson Mandela, travelled to selected African countries where they received military training. On their return to South Africa, Mandela and other ANC-SACP alliance members were arrested at Lilliesleaf Farm in Rivonia on the 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1962. They were subsequently prosecuted and sentenced to long-term imprisonment in 1963 (Lodge 1983:237). In the light of these developments, the ANC elected Oliver Tambo as its leader in exile to continue with the struggle against apartheid. From a comparative point of view, the military wing of the PAC, POQO, was initially more violent in its sabotage activities in the 1960s than other liberation movements were (Lodge 1983:241), as illustrated in the following excerpt:

“In mid 1964, the Minister of Justice confirmed that 202 POQO members had been convicted of murder, 12 of attempted murder, 395 of sabotage, 126 of illegal departure from the country and 820 of other offences relating to membership of an underground organization. POQO was the first African political movement in South Africa to adopt a strategy that explicitly involved killing people and it was probably the largest active clandestine organization of the 1960s” (Lodge 1983:241).

In May, 1963 when Sobukwe, who had been sentenced to three years in jail for his role in the Sharpeville demonstrations, was about to be released from prison, the apartheid government passed a special law specifically designed to extend his incarceration. His prison term was subsequently extended to nine years (Sparks 1990:243).

In the light of these new developments, Potlako Leballo was, as recommended by Sobukwe, elected as the president of the PAC in exile. The PAC's headquarters were initially based in Lesotho from 1962 to 1964 (Lodge 1983:344), but were later moved to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. On his release from prison, Sobukwe was placed under house arrest in Kimberley where he later died of lung cancer in 1975 (Lodge 1983:243).

Sobukwe's death created a leadership vacuum in the PAC which was subsequently filled by Potlako Leballo who was continuously confronted with resistance to his leadership by some members of the PAC. The conflicts continued and intensified, particularly in the 1960s compelling the Organization of African Unity to suspend financial aid to the organization temporarily. Leballo was later forced to resign in May 1979 (Lodge 1983:344). A three-man presidential council comprising David Sibeko, Vusi Make and Elias Nthloedibe was elected to replace him. A change in leadership still failed to resolve the organization's internal conflicts which culminated in the assassination of David Sibeko by three APLA members in June 1979 (Lodge 1983:304). The PAC's incapacity to retain its leadership on a long-term basis can partly be attributed to its internal conflicts. Of the original eight members of the PAC leadership after it was banned in 1960, for example, six were expelled during the organization's exile period, whereas the ANC was successful in retaining its original leader, Oliver Tambo, for the duration of its exile period. By 1964, the apartheid regime had succeeded in suppressing the activities of the liberation movements. Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other ANC leaders were tried and sentenced to life imprisonment. Albert Luthuli, who was a recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize, was restricted to his rural home in Zululand where he died in 1976.

The Sharpeville protest and the subsequent banning of key liberation movements in 1960 culminated in the first major exodus of South Africans from the country into political exile. Five years after the banning of the ANC and PAC, Ian Smith made matters worse for the liberation struggle in South Africa by unilaterally declaring the then Rhodesia an independent state in 1965. While these new developments were advantageous for the apartheid government, in that they automatically acquired a new political ally along South Africa's borders, they were, however, disadvantageous for the anti-apartheid liberation movements in that they created a new enemy for them.

To further curtail the activities of the banned organizations and the internally based anti-apartheid political structures in the 1960s, the apartheid government enacted the following acts:

- a) The Sabotage Act of 1962 which empowered the government to prosecute individuals accused of sabotage (Coleman 1998:10). This act was defined in such way that it also included industrial strikes (Lodge 1983:328), a strategy designed to consolidate the apartheid regime's control over dissenting forces in the country.
- b) The General Law Amendment Act of 1963 that gave the state security police the power to detain people for ninety-days without charging them. In addition, they were denied access to a lawyer and no court could order their release with the exception of the Minister of Justice ([Http://rainbow-revolution.com/page/resources/general/historydates.html](http://rainbow-revolution.com/page/resources/general/historydates.html)).
- c) The Terrorism Act Of 1967 which made it illegal to engage in activities perceived to be acts of terrorism by the apartheid regime (Coleman 1998:77).
- d) The Arms and Ammunition Act of 1969 (Coleman 1998:77).
- e) The Affected Organizations Act of 1974 which made it illegal for anti-apartheid organizations to receive financial aid from foreign donor agencies (Coleman 1998:14).

f)The Internal Security Act of 1982 that was permanently in force, empowered the National Party-led government to detain people without trial and impose banning orders on them. It also included the banning of gatherings and publications(Coleman 1998:41).

g)The Public Safety Amendment Act of 1986 which enforced the declaration of specified areas as unrest areas (Coleman 1998:14).

The banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960 created a vacuum that had to be filled in order to meet the political aspirations of internally-based political activists. This inevitably culminated in the emergence of complementary political organizations and trade unions, established specifically to continue with the liberation struggle in the country. These included the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), United Democratic Front (UDF), Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Although COSATU was, unlike the BCM, UDF and AZAPO, a trade union movement, it extended its mandate to include liberation movement activities. Industrial strikes by trade union members, for example, contributed to the destabilization of the apartheid government, since it had a negative impact on the country's economy.

### **1972: THE FORMATION OF THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT**

The Black Consciousness Movement, which was the most popular anti-apartheid political organization in the country in the 1970s (Marx 1992:7), was formed in 1972. Its formation can be traced back to the inception of the South African Student Organization (SASO) in 1969 (Lodge 1983:322). After the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960, university-based students gradually converged on the multiracial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in order to fulfill their political aspirations. With time, however, they became increasingly dissatisfied with NUSAS, culminating in the formation of the South African Student's Organization (SASO) in 1969 (Lodge 1983:322). This was due to the fact that there was growing concern among African students that NUSAS was no longer in a position to pursue their

interests as African students, a probable reason being John Vorster's ruthless crackdown on opposing forces in the country. Steve Biko was elected SASO's president.

The following comments highlight the organization's policy manifesto:

“SASO is a Black students organization working for the liberation of the black man first from psychological oppression by themselves through an induced inferiority complex and secondly, from physical oppression accruing out of living in a white racist society. SASO upholds the concept of Black Consciousness awareness as the most logical and significant means for ridding itself of the shackle that binds it to perpetual servitude” (Marx 1992:52).

In essence, SASO's objective was not only to conscientise black communities in order to emancipate them from psychological oppression, but also to reinforce pride in traditional indigenous cultural traditions. The Black People's Convention (BCP), which was later renamed the Black Consciousness Movement, functioned as an umbrella organization. It consisted of over seventy black organizations for the followers of black consciousness and was, to a degree, comparable to the PAC and AZAPO in that it adhered to an Africanist ideology (Lodge 1983:322). As a political organization, it emphasized an inclusive identity made up of Africans, Indians and Coloureds. In addition, it also emphasized the need to end its reliance on sympathetic whites. Aspects of the Black Consciousness Movement philosophy included the fact that blacks had to run their own organizations, reject the second-class status accorded to them by the apartheid regime, promote African consciousness, pride and self-reliance and reject violent forms of protest adopted by the PAC and the ANC-SACP alliance (Lodge 1983:84).

The Black Consciousness Movement had a great impact on African students and youth in general in that it increased their level of militancy in the form of university-based strikes. The significance of these activities is, for example highlighted in the apartheid regime's 1977 parliamentary minutes (*Sunday Times*, 22 October, 2000:22) which partly attributed the 1976 Soweto uprisings to Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement and the ANC. It was, therefore, not

surprising that a year later in 1977, the state security police detained, tortured and killed Biko (Lodge 1983:84).

### **1976: THE SOWETO UPRISINGS**

Events that characterized the period prior to the Soweto uprisings in 1976 include South Africa's economic recession, the development of a more politically assertive and aspirant petty bourgeoisie and increasing labour unrest in the country (Lodge 1983:328). The dominant ideological influence, particularly amongst the youth at the time, was Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement.

Increasing youth militancy and engagement in the liberation struggle in the 1970s resulted in the 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1976 Soweto uprisings, involving approximately fifteen thousand school children (Lodge 1983:322). Prior to the demonstrations, there had been indications of impending conflict if the apartheid regime proceeded with its proposal to impose Afrikaans as a medium of instruction for arithmetic and science at African schools (Lodge 1983:328). This is reflected in the following extract, a speech by a member of parliament in 1976:

“Ever since early 1975 there have been reasons why, in its opinion the department has been enforcing the system of English and Afrikaans on a 50:50 basis and extending it with the 12 year structure. What is important, is that enforcing this, the honorable Minister and Deputy Minister have decided to do it in defiance of the homeland leaders themselves. They've decided to do it in defiance of the wishes of the teachers, school committees, parents and scholars. They have done it deliberately, despite the warnings which were deliberately given, warnings that the enforcement had created deep resentment and that it could result in an explosive situation. The hon. and the Deputy Minister have their reasons, but these are facts” (Republic of South Africa – House of Assembly Debates (Hansard), 1976, 7 June to 25<sup>th</sup> June, Vol. 63, Tuesday 17, June, 1976:9634).

The killing of some of the protesting children by the state security police, ultimately forced parents to join forces with their children. As tensions intensified, government buildings were set alight, resulting in the apartheid regime's declaration of a state of emergency in the country.

The political crisis that confronted the apartheid government in the 1970s is partly revealed in the following excerpt reflecting aspects of the 1977 parliamentary minutes:

“More significantly, P.W. Botha, then Minister of Defence, reported steps that he was taking to deal with a budget shortfall, which would include drastic reductions of troops in SWA ... It was only when regular Cabinet meetings resumed in August that the full extent of this crisis appears to have dawned on Vorster and his colleagues. In the section devoted to Jimmy Kruger, the Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons, the minutes record on August 10: “Unrest in Soweto continues, The children of Soweto are well trained ... the basic danger is growing black consciousness, and an inability to prevent incidents which show military precision”.

“... Kruger reports at a later meeting that the situation in Soweto is “serious and is becoming worse due to an intensification of urban terrorism and infiltrations from Botswana. The Cabinet approves the declaration of a state of emergency in certain areas, as long as it is absolutely necessary. In such case, the press will not be allowed to report on events in those areas or comment on them”.

--- Perhaps the most direct indication of how seriously the situation was not being taken was Vorster’s warning (“There are icy winds ahead, economically and politically – Ons dry yswinde ekonomies en politis vanvoor. We must not panic or take crisis decisions”). The comment foreshadowed the statement he was to make in his 1977 New Year address: (“the storm has not struck yet. We are only experiencing the whirlwinds that go before it”). Surprisingly, the international situation seemed to weigh more heavily on the Cabinet’s mind than the continuing uprising in the townships. There was increasing pressure for independence in South West Africa and a settlement in Rhodesia, as they were then known. The minutes also clearly show that they saw South Africa’s failed adventure in Angola--- when it launched an ill-fated bid to help UNITA and FNLA to take power in Luanda in 1975 as a major factor in the crisis.

Foreign Minister Hilderard Muller told his colleagues that the International scene “looks gloomy for South Africa at the moment. Circumstances favour the communists, who lost respect with

intervention in Angola. The action is now seen as justified in Africa. The situation is serious". As a result of the Angolan failure, South Africa's rule over South West Africa was under additional pressure. P.W. Botha told his colleagues that SWAPO camps had been established just inside Angola and Zambia. Using the opportunity to press for more money, he said a shortfall of at least R120 million in his budget might make a military withdrawal from South West Africa unavoidable.

"As for Rhodesia, if that country falls into enemy hands, South Africa will have additional defence problems with lengthened Borders that have to be defended" he said.

It was left to M.C. Botha, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and Bantu Education to raise the domestic crisis. It was his decision to enforce the use of Afrikaans in Black school that sparked the Soweto uprising .... "the ANC is the core which is organizing the revolt, as well as layabouts", he claimed "It is not possible lock up all the leaders .... A total initiative must be taken against the idea of black power ....

A number of ministers expressed the need for some kind of internal settlement, notably P. W. Botha. But in concluding the debate, Vorster ... who would be ousted by Botha in the wake of the Muldergate scandal two years later ... could offer only one solution: play for time.

Withdrawal from South West Africa was impossible, he said. "If we abandon SWA, our position will become untenable in the eyes of the outside world as well as the people of South West Africa and South Africa. "There should be no further Sowetos", said Vorster. If his government could keep things on an even keel for six weeks to two months, further action by the United Nations might be avoided. In the meantime, adjustments could be considered to the way in which policy was implemented: "If we make adjustments to our policy ... from a position of strength, we will get support", said Vorster (*Sunday Times*, 22 October 2000:22).

The above quotation illustrates the increasing external and internal pressure with which the National Party-led government had to contend with in the 1970s which ultimately forced it to opt for a negotiated settlement with the ANC-SACP alliance.



Also of significance in the above quotation is the National Party-led government's perception of the ANC having played a significant role in the Soweto uprisings, which highlights the important part played by exiled political organizations in the liberation struggle. While it is true that exile restricted the activities of the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC, this did not, however, stop them from continuing with internal and external activities designed to dismantle apartheid. In other words, despite their lack of geographical proximity to South Africa, they were nevertheless able to influence events in the country. This is, for example, evident in the apartheid regime's concerns and assertions of "infiltrations from Botswana" and "well trained children that conducted their activities with military precision" (*Sunday Times*, 22 October 2002:22). Both points indicate the success of exiled liberation movements in training internally-based political activists for sabotage and other related activities in the country. In its attempts to contain the situation created by the 1976 Soweto uprisings, the government banned all internally based Black Consciousness Movement affiliated organizations resulting in another flow of South Africans out of the country into exile. This time the process was characterized by a predominance of youth, many of whom joined the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance in exile. This resulted in an intensification of sabotage activities in South Africa, as indicated by Lodge (1983:340) thus:

"A chronology of guerilla activity made in 1981 records 112 attacks and explosions between October, 1976 and May, 1981. In March, 1978 it was reported that one explosion a week had taken place since the previous November. In contrast to the first Umkhonto campaign, the targets, particularly in the 1980 – 1981 phase have often been of considerable strategic or economic importance. They have included the synthetic oil refinery at Sasolburg" (June, 1980), power stations in the eastern Transvaal (July, 1981) and Voortrekkerhoogte military base (August, 1981). Police stations have been a favorite target especially those in or near townships; Germiston, Daveyton, New Brighton, Chatsworth, Moroka, Soekmeaar and Booyens police stations were all subjected to grenade rocket or bomb attacks between 1977 and 1980. As well as this, a number of African security policemen have been assassinated" (Lodge 1983:340).

### **1978: THE FORMATION OF THE AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION (AZAPO)**

The Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), which was formed in April 1978 (Lodge 1983:344), aligned itself with the Black Consciousness Movement. It was to a certain degree, comparable to the PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement in that it adhered to an Africanist ideology hence, Tom Lodge's description of AZAPO as "the most influential vehicle for the political tradition represented outside South Africa by the PAC" (Lodge 1983:344). Its Africanist orientation is also reflected in its decision to adopt "Azania" as part of its name viz the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. One of its principal objectives, amongst others, was to politicize the black working class and to liberate South Africa.

### **1983: THE FORMATION OF THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF)**

In the 1980s, internal and external pressure for political change in South Africa intensified and proved to be a problematic era for the apartheid government. This is evident in the government's declaration of a series of partial states of emergency in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 (Coleman 1998:13), a year prior to Nelson Mandela's release from prison and the unbanning of the exiled PAC and ANC-SACP alliance. A basic assumption is that these declarations were a result of high levels of anti-apartheid activities designed to dismantle the system. Also of political significance in the 1980s was F. W. de Klerk succeeding P. W. Botha as Prime Minister in 1989.

In the 1980s, the United Democratic Front (UDF), an internally-based political organization, was arguably the dominant anti-apartheid movement in the country. It was formed in August 1983 (Coleman 1998:14) and played an important role in South Africa's liberation struggle. Regarding its political affiliation, it was closely aligned to the ANC-SACP alliance, as demonstrated by its decision to adopt the principles contained in the ANC's Freedom Charter. As an umbrella

organization, it comprised various groups ranging from trade unions to sporting bodies. Of significance in the UDF's contribution to the liberation struggle was its role in resisting the implementation of the Constitutional Act of 1983 which enforced the implementation of the tri-cameral parliamentary system was restructured on the basis of racial categories ([Http://www/geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www/geocities.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)). Additional activities by the UDF included opposing black municipal councils located in townships, which it viewed as part of the apartheid structures designed to sustain the system. Prior to the implementation of the Constitutional Act, the National Party-led government conducted an all-white referendum designed to elicit the views of its constituency on the proposed incorporation of Coloureds and Indians in South Africa's parliamentary system. The referendum results supported the proposal and, hence, the formation of the tri-cameral parliamentary system ([Http://www/gepcotoes.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm](http://www/gepcotoes.com/vegar-no/apartheid.htm)).

The motivation for the apartheid regime's decision to implement the Constitutional Act was due to increasing internal and external pressure for political transformation in South Africa. It subsequently embarked on its own version of reform. To the extent that these political machinations did not address the problem of the African majority the apartheid regime failed to gain international support.

#### **1985: THE FORMATION OF THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS (COSATU)**

As labour unrest intensified in the 1980s in South Africa, the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) led by Cyril Ramaphosa merged with other non-racial trade unions in December 1985 to form the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (Baskin, 1991:54). COSATU served as an umbrella organization of the constituent member trade unions. Cyril Ramaphosa articulates the organization's vision and role in liberating South Africa:

”The formation of this Congress represents an enormous victory for working class in this country. Never before have workers been so powerful, so united and so poised to leave a mark on society ... We all agree that the struggle for workers on the shop floor cannot be separated from the wider political struggle for liberation in this country. If workers are to lead the struggle for liberation we have to win the confidence of other sectors of society. But if we are to get into alliances with other progressive organizations, it must be on terms that are favorable to us as workers. When we do plunge into political activity, we must make sure that the unions under COSATU have a strong shop floor base not only to take on the employers but the state as well ... In the next few days ... we will be putting our heads together not only to make sure we reach Pretoria but also to make a better life for us workers in this country. What we have to make clear is that a giant has risen and will confront all that stands in its way (Baskin 1991:54).

As reflected in the above quotation, COSATU did not confine its mandate to fighting only for the rights of workers, but also extended it to activities designed to liberate South Africa. It was, therefore, not surprising that COSATU formed an alliance with the ANC and SACP and played a significant role in the fight against apartheid through its trade union activities. These primarily involved industrial strikes which not only destabilized the National Party-led government, but also had a negative impact on the country’s economy.

## **HISTORICAL EVENTS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DISMANTLING OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM**

In the proceeding section, significant events associated with the creation of a South African political exile and, later, returnee population is discussed. Outside the country, the majority of political activists were members of the banned liberation movements of the PAC and the ANC-SACP alliance.

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

### **THE ROLE OF THE INTERNALLY BASED LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND TRADE UNIONS**

Coordinated strategies in South Africa by the banned ANC-SACP alliance and internally based liberation structures aimed at destabilizing the apartheid government included sabotage of urban-based strategic infrastructures in the country, and anti-homeland political protests in the Bantustans. These also included intensification of township-based conflict involving the harassment, intimidation and, in some instances, killing of black policemen and councillors in the townships. These officials were targeted for their perceived role in assisting the apartheid regime to sustain security and administrative structures in the townships. Sabotage activities, which the National Party-led government found increasingly difficult to contain, played an important role in destabilizing the regime. Once again, the apartheid regime acknowledged the role of the exiled ANC-SACP alliance in these activities. The state identified the ANC as a major player in the conflict. The National Party made overtures for negotiations due to widespread unrest experienced in the country.

## **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

### **THE POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE OF NEIGHBOURING STATES ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE**

In Portugal, increasing political opposition to the Portuguese government's active military engagement in Angola and Mozambique culminated in the overthrow of Premier Marcello Caetano on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1974 (Coleman 1998:129). This in turn led to the withdrawal of Portugal's administrative structures from Angola and Mozambique in 1975 (Black and Robinson 1993:49) which subsequently led to the political independence of the two countries. South African soldiers invaded Angola in 1975, but were forced to retreat after Angola received military assistance from Cuba.

### **RHODESIA**

The intensification of the armed struggle in the then Rhodesia involving the joint military forces of Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo against Ian Smith's army culminated in a negotiation process in 1979. The Lancaster House agreement signed in 1979 paved the way for the democratization of Rhodesia (Barbero-Baconnier 1993:607). A year later, in 1980, Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the Zimbabwe African Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU – PF) won the general elections. Robert Mugabe became the first democratically elected president of the new Zimbabwe.

## **NAMIBIA**

Namibia, which was formerly administered by South Africa, gained political independence in 1990. The South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) won the first democratic elections in Namibia, and Sam Nujoma became its first president. As mentioned earlier, the political independence of South Africa's neighbouring states had a negative impact on the apartheid regime's capacity to continue sustaining the apartheid system. The reason for this is that as South Africa's neighbouring states gained political independence, the apartheid regime's position of strength in the southern African region decreased. In addition, its security became increasingly vulnerable as its allies along its national borders diminished. The apartheid regime was, as a result, forced to deploy more military personnel along its national borders, resulting in additional expenses being incurred in the process. The political independence of these countries proved, on the other hand, to be advantageous for the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance in that they automatically acquired new allies along South Africa's borders. This was not surprising, since these countries, like their South African counterparts, had, prior to their political independence, also experienced similar levels of repression under foreign rule.

In the light of these developments, the apartheid government intensified its destabilization campaign in neighbouring countries. This included military attacks and blocking access to South Africa's ports and harbours (Magubane and

Mandaza, 1988:vii). The latter strategies were designed specifically to prevent these countries from exporting their goods through South African ports, with the intention of negatively affecting their economies by forcing them to seek expensive alternative routes. The destabilization campaign was aimed not only at discouraging these countries from supporting the exiled liberation movements by granting their members political asylum, but also at destroying liberation movement bases in these states. Military attacks were aimed at facilitating the kidnapping and, in some cases, the assassination of exiled South African political activists. These efforts were, however, not always successful, as evidenced by the apartheid regime's failed attempt to assist UNITA and RENAMO in overthrowing the pro-ANC-SACP alliance Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government, an ally of the ANC and SACP, which received military support from Cuba (Magubane 1990:xi). This demoralized the apartheid government, since it weakened its position in the southern African region, resulting in a crisis in South Africa.

The National Party-led government's destabilization programme was an indication of its perception of the exiled liberation movements as a threat to its capacity to continue sustaining the apartheid system. This is substantiated not only by its military actions but also by its public pronouncements, as reflected in a speech given by P. W. Botha, the then Minister of Defence:

“The process of ensuring and maintaining the sovereignty of a state's authority in a conflict situation has, through the evolution of warfare, shifted from the purely military to an integrated national action .... The resolution of conflict in these times in which we now live demands interdependent coordinated actions in all fields - military, psychological, economic, political, sociological, technological, diplomatic, ideological, cultural. etc. We are today involved in a war whether we like it or not. It is, therefore, essential that a total strategy be formulated at the highest level” (Coleman 1998:9).

## **THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

The 1970s and 1980s were relatively different to the 1960s primarily because of growing support from the international community. The hostility of the outside

world to the apartheid government and the economic sanctions that it had imposed against South Africa made it increasingly difficult for the National Party-led government to continue to pursue its policy of apartheid. The United Nations, which represented international community sentiments on apartheid, played an important role in exerting pressure on the apartheid regime to begin negotiating with the exiled liberation movements. Key role-players in influencing the United Nations and the international community were the exiled ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC.

Representation at the United Nations, Organization of African Unity and other international organizations provided them with an international platform where they could publicise the injustices of the apartheid system. In addition, it also enabled them to mobilize sufficient support for their cause. The strategy was not new, since both the PAC and the ANC had attempted to persuade the international community to impose economic sanctions against the apartheid government as early as June 1960 (Lodge 1983:322).

The efforts made by the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance became more evident when the United Nations began taking action against the apartheid system by suspending the National Party-led government from the United Nations General Assembly in 1974 (Magubane 1990:x). At another level, continuous engagement and interaction between the liberation movements and Western and Eastern member states of the United Nations and other international organizations gradually resulted in the forging of closer alliances. This is, for example, evident in the efforts made by these states (e.g. the Soviet Union and Scandinavian countries) in independently exerting additional pressure on the apartheid regime to begin negotiating with the exiled liberation movements. International community strategies designed to force the National Party-led government to reconsider its position on apartheid included economic sanctions against South Africa. As anti-apartheid sentiments increased in the USA and Europe, the international community's disinvestments campaign against the apartheid government simultaneously intensified. Economic sanctions in the form of trade embargoes involving the banning of essential goods and services, thereby denying South



Africa access to long term loans to which it had, over the years, become accustomed, had a devastating impact on the country's economy in the long term. This was not surprising, since foreign investments are vital for any country to sustain its economy. Examples of international community strategies included the withdrawal in 1984 of forty, followed by fifty, United States companies. In July 1985, Chase Manhattan Bank caused a major financial crisis in South Africa by refusing to provide South Africa with short-term loans to which the country had, over the years become accustomed. Other international banks soon followed suit. In October 1986, the United States Congress implemented mandatory sanctions against South Africa. This included the banning of all new investments and bank loans, termination of air links between the United States and South Africa and the banning of many South African imports. As a result, South Africa experienced an economic crisis in the 1980s (Coleman 1998:154) and accumulated an international debt that is still being serviced by the ANC-led government.

At the socio-political level, South Africa was progressively being marginalized by the international community, a strategy designed to force the apartheid government to democratize South Africa. On the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1973, for example, the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 3068) adopted the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crimes of Apartheid (Coleman 1998:2). This resolution effectively declared apartheid "a crime against humanity", as illustrated in the following quotation:

"Article 1

1. That State Parties to the present convention declare that inhuman acts resulting from the politics and practices of apartheid and similar policies and practices of race segregation and discrimination as defined in Article II of the Convention, are crimes violating the principle of the Charter of the United Nations, and constituting a serious threat to international peace and security.

2. The state Parties to the present Convention declare criminals those organizations, institutions and individuals committing the crime of apartheid (Coleman 1998:2).

From the above excerpt, it is evident that apartheid was perceived not only as a crime against humanity, but also as a threat to international peace and security. The validity of the latter point is substantiated by the fact that the conflict had progressively begun to involve other countries (e.g. Cuba, the Soviet Union, the Front Line states of southern Africa and the Organization of African Unity member states. In addition to the United Nations Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of Crime of Apartheid of 1973, other United Nations initiatives included the expulsion of South Africa from the Olympics in 1970 and from the United Nations' General Assembly in 1974 as well as the United Nations' Mandatory Arms Embargo Against South Africa in 1977 (Coleman 1998:2). Other international community initiatives culminated in South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961 and the USA's adoption of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) (Coleman 1998:10).

This chapter concentrated on the flight of South African political exiles from the country and their return after the unbanning of the PAC and the ANC-SACP alliance. The political background sketched by the study focused more on the creation of the apartheid system and the response to its development by sectors of South African society, particularly anti-resistance movements. It also looked at key historical events in the country that contributed to the creation of a South African exile community dispersed in different parts of the world. The impact of political transformations in South Africa's neighbouring states was also considered, and how this impacted on the apartheid system's capacity to continue to sustain itself. Finally, it also analyzed the internal and external factors that played a vital role in the dismantling of the apartheid regime. The findings of this chapter are that the primary motivation for the creation of the apartheid system was the quest for economic wealth. This inevitably required the monopolization of economic resources in the country through political and military force. Economic strategies were, in turn, utilized by anti-apartheid resistance movements through the mobilization of support from the international community in dismantling the apartheid system.

1967 Protocol. The UNHCR's mandate also includes ensuring that states with refugee populations have an obligation to protect them. Host nations are, therefore, not permitted forcibly to return refugees to their countries of origin without any evidence of positive political transformations in these countries. Apart from assisting refugees in their countries of asylum, the UNHCR is also responsible for repatriating refugees to their countries of origin when it is safe to do so. The UNHCR ensures that the repatriation process is voluntary and is conducted in a safe and dignified manner. The UNHCR is also obliged to create conditions conducive for the safe return of political refugees to their countries of origin. This entails engagement not only with the refugees, but also with the governments in their homelands. Once agreements have been finalized, the refugee repatriation process is conducted in accordance with international standards. Other UNHCR responsibilities include the raising of funds from donor communities in order to assist governments during the repatriation process. In addition, the organization also monitors the status of repatriation processes in countries of origin, and intervenes on behalf of returning refugees where necessary. An additional responsibility in this regard is ensuring that returnees are granted full status as nationals of their countries of origin. The UNHCR also acts as a catalyst for medium-and long-term rehabilitation assistance provided by non-governmental organizations, specialized development agencies and bilateral donors (UNHCR 1993:26).

From the UNHCR's perspective, durable solutions to refugee problems include voluntary repatriation, local integration in a host country, or resettlement in a third country. Of the three options, the UNHCR views voluntary repatriation as the best solution to refugee problems. This is based on the fact that, from the UNHCR's point of view and based on UNHCR experience in dealing with refugees, most refugees generally opt to return to their homelands once it is safe to do so. In line with the UNHCR's view, a basic assumption of this study is that most former South African political refugees who were based in such countries as Zambia and Swaziland, for example, chose to return to South Africa on receiving assurance that it was safe to do so. The reason why refugees generally prefer to return to their countries of origin can partly be attributed to the restrictive nature of their

refugee status. As a refugee, one is effectively rendered temporarily stateless for the duration of one's political exile. To make matters worse, the refugee status also prevents political refugees from applying for citizenship in many countries of asylum, and this impedes occupational and social mobility in the long term. In cases where South African citizens chose to remain in exile after the unbanning of the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC, it is assumed that they had acquired citizenship and had probably been economic, as opposed to political, exiles.

Registration with the UNHCR in exile protected South African political refugees from being forcibly deported to South Africa where they risked being detained, imprisoned or killed. The UNHCR also provided them with UNHCR travel documents to facilitate international travel, access to scholarships on a competitive basis, as well as a monthly allowance for unemployed refugees who were unable to obtain financial assistance from their liberation movements or other sources. This applied particularly in cases where they were not accommodated in UNHCR refugee camps. The assistance was necessary since many political exiles were unemployed either for part or for the entire duration of their exile period. The UNHCR also provided free accommodation in refugee camps for those who required it and rendered assistance during the repatriation and early reintegration process. This support included transportation costs, reception at airports in their countries of origin, provision of temporary accommodation and an allowance during the initial stages of the reintegration period. From a UNHCR perspective, this assistance is perceived as being part of the whole repatriation exercise. As far as this study is concerned, however, the aspects involving short-term financial assistance, the provision of temporary accommodation, and support in securing employment for refugees and places for their children in schools are primarily a part of the early reintegration process.

Despite the fact that the UNHCR has often expressed concern at international forums regarding the reintegration of refugees in their countries of origin, the UNHCR mandate on the refugee repatriation programme still continues to focus primarily on transportation, reception and short-term financial assistance. In some instances, the UNHCR has taken this process a step further by funding income-

generating projects in both countries of asylum and the countries of birth to which the refugees finally return. These initiatives are designed to facilitate the reintegration of refugees within the economies of their countries of origin, and to encourage self-reliance which, in turn, can also minimize the dependency syndrome which is common amongst some returnees.

A growing school of thought advocates for the extension of the UNHCR's mandate on refugee repatriation programmes to accommodate more income-generating projects in the refugees' countries of origin (Simmance, in Rogge, 1987:9). Hence, emphasis is placed on the economic dimension of reintegration as a significant variable in UNHCR refugee repatriation programmes. Despite these concerns, however, the UNHCR has not, up until now, extended its mandate to include returnee reintegration on a broader scale. This is, to some extent, understandable, given that the UNHCR has limited resources for dealing effectively with the world-wide refugee problem which involves the challenge of protecting and sustaining refugees in their countries of asylum, but also repatriating them to their homelands. From the UNHCR perspective, the long-term reintegration of refugees should be the responsibility of the governments in the nations to which they finally return. In the case of South Africa, the ANC-led government was proactive and addressed the returnee reintegration problem by enacting and implementing the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts in 1996, Acts which are discussed in detail in chapter eight.

Although the UNHCR's role in its assistance to refugees is generally commendable, given its own funding restrictions and the scope of its projects, a problematic aspect of this assistance is that its support for income-generating activities in the countries of origin of refugee populations is offered on an ad hoc basis. In other words, these developmental projects aimed at making returning refugees economically independent are still in an experimental phase, since the UNHCR does not apply the same rule to all countries for returning refugees. These initiatives on the part of the UNHCR are an indication of the significance of the economic dimension of the reintegration process, particularly from a long-term perspective.

Regarding large-scale refugee repatriations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is responsible for this task at an international level. In the case of South African and Namibian political refugees, the UNHCR played a significant role in the refugee repatriation process. At the same time, however, the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC also participated in this exercise. Delays in the official UNHCR and liberation movement repatriation process, and impatience on the part of certain returnees compelled some refugees to opt for self-repatriation.

From a UNHCR perspective, there are two types of repatriation, namely that which is voluntary and more organized and that which is spontaneous. Organized repatriation involves the resolution of the conflict that caused the political refugee problem. It also includes repatriation agreements between the countries of asylum and countries of origin and the UNHCR, the registration of returnees by the UNHCR, and their transportation back to their countries of origin by the UNHCR as part of the repatriation process.

Spontaneous repatriation, on the other hand, is characterized by the return of refugees without any formal agreement between governments and the UNHCR prior to the cessation of hostilities. In such instances, the political returnees go home without being registered with the UNHCR and without any international assistance (UNHCR Training Manual 1993:1).

Of the two types of repatriation, voluntary repatriation applied to returning South African political exiles, since many of them returned to the country only after **being granted amnesty by the National Party-led government and after registering for repatriation with the UNHCR.** Prior to the actual implementation of the repatriation of South African political refugees, negotiations involving the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the National Party-led government were convened, negotiations which lasted for sixteen months. The South African government granted the UNHCR a significant role in funding the repatriation process.

### **The ANC-SACP Alliance and the PAC Exile Community**

The South African community of exiles comprised a wide spectrum of people differentiated by political affiliation, as well as racial, gender, educational and socio-economic attributes. Because of South Africa's demographics, the community of political exiles was predominantly African comprising members of the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance. At the political level, the initial stage of the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance's adjustment to life in exile and sense of solidarity with liberation struggle were indeed difficult. The leadership had first to initiate and establish diplomatic ties with other countries. In addition, they also had to raise funds for their political organizations in order to sustain their liberation struggle activities both outside and inside South Africa. In South Africa, they had to reactivate their internally-based activities by relying on political activists residing in the country who travelled in and out of South Africa without being detected by the state security police.

Exile was one of the most difficult phases of the liberation struggle for the PAC and the ANC-SACP alliance since they were, as a result of their banning in 1960, "removed from the arena of conflict" (Lodge 1983:296). They were subsequently disempowered, in that they were deprived of the opportunity of direct engagement in political protests and other liberation struggle activities in South Africa. Whilst it is true that the internally-based liberation movements were comparatively better positioned strategically in the struggle against the apartheid regime, the banned liberation movements also played a crucial role in coordinated efforts aimed at dismantling the apartheid system. Their representation at the United Nations, Organization of African Unity and other international organizations facilitated their capacity to mobilize international support for their cause at the international level. This finally led to the imposition of economic sanctions and the isolation of South Africa by the international community.

A common objective that the ANC, SACP and the PAC shared was the need to liberate South Africa and, hence, their decision to prioritize political agendas. Although they were, to a great extent, successful in reinforcing unity amongst

their members as separate political organizations, they were unable to form a united ANC-SACP alliance and PAC front in their common struggle against the National Party-led government in the country. Attempts at forging a tripartite alliance shortly after their banning in South Africa resulted in the formation of the South African United Front (SAUF). This alliance was, however, short-lived, since it lasted for only eighteen months due, according to Lodge (1983:297), to the PAC's hostility to the alliance.

Of sociological significance was the role of the liberation movements at the social level, not only in providing vital support structures for the exiled community, but also in reinforcing the perpetuation of a South African national and cultural identity in exile. This was despite the lack of proximity of the refugees to South Africa and the fact that members of the exiled liberation movements converged on these organizations on a regular basis during meetings and other social events facilitated this process. Other ways in which the liberation movements played an important role in sustaining a South African national and cultural identity amongst their members in exile included the use of South African indigenous languages for communication purposes. These languages played an important role in uniting them, since language is a vital integrating mechanism at the social level. In addition, it also plays a significant part in the socialization process which involves the transmission of culture from socialization agencies to children. A basic assumption of this study is that the capacity to speak an indigenous South African language facilitated reintegration at the social level, particularly when political refugees began returning to the country. Other integrating mechanisms included participation in South African cultural and national celebrations, keeping exiles updated on the latest political and other developments in South Africa, and emphasis placed upon South African nationalism.

The liberation movements succeeded in creating a network of structures world-wide to accommodate their exiled nationals. While they prioritized political agendas, they also rendered essential material assistance to their members where possible. This was particularly true in instances where they had sufficient economic resources, as was the case with some of the liberation movements who



were able to provide members with free accommodation, weekly food provisions from their farms, access to scholarships, employment on farms, as well as in furniture shops, clinics and offices that were owned by the liberation movements. Military training was also offered to those who preferred this option, or who had no alternative means of employment.

## **REPATRIATION**

Ideally, repatriation is supposed to be a voluntary process on the part of returning political refugees. This is, however, a misconception, because former political refugees do not freely opt to return to their respective homelands in all cases. In some instances, they are literally forced to leave their countries of asylum by host governments which sometimes also instigate and reinforce feelings of animosity amongst their nationals against local refugee populations. This is particularly true where there is growing impatience with a perceived lack of progress in the refugee repatriation process. From a host government's perspective, such actions and attitudes are rationalized on the basis of indications of positive political transformation in the refugee populations' countries of origin, transformation which is supposed to pave the way for the return of exiles to their homelands. Host governments subsequently see no reason why the impending repatriation processes should be prolonged. It is under such circumstances that refugees are literally compelled to return to their countries without adequate information regarding the security situation there, which has the potential of endangering their lives. In other instances, home governments may not be welcoming, particularly if they perceive political returnees as former or potential adversaries with hidden political agendas. This can make returnee reintegration problematic in the long term. Although some returned exiles experienced minimal repatriation and early reintegration problems, there were others, who encountered difficulties.

## **REINTEGRATION**

In describing the adjustment process that returnees experienced on returning to South Africa, the term "reintegration" as opposed to "integration" is utilized since,

it is assumed that those who left the country as adults were, prior to their departure, integrated members of South African society. In this study, “integration” refers specifically to the stage that follows repatriation sequentially. In other words, it focuses on the resettlement of returnees in their countries of origin. Although some political returnees succeeded in being reintegrated into their societies, especially in instances where they had acquired higher educational qualifications in exile, there are others who were not as fortunate. The following excerpt describes some of the problems that confronted certain political returnees, particularly during the initial stages of the reintegration process:

“I experienced some kind of culture shock – I felt as if I didn’t quite belong ... We were very homesick – but when you spend such a long time far away from your home, you adopt the countries you stay in as your home and the exile community becomes your family. So being in exile changed the meaning of “home”. Our understanding of the term is not the same as it is for a person who has never been in exile. That is why we found on our return that our real homes had become foreign to us”  
(Majodina 1995:49).

The above quotation depicts a paradoxical aspect of the reintegration process. After years of nostalgia for home and having, over the years, formed idealistic perceptions about their homeland, some returnees ironically experienced culture shock and alienation from their communities and society. This applied particularly to returnee children who were born in exile, or who left South Africa at a very young age, and also to parents who had been absent from their country of birth for twenty to thirty years. Their families in their countries of origin and those who had become their adoptive families in exile, played an important supportive role during the reintegration process. The following excerpt illustrates the integration and reintegration problems that the children of returnees experienced in their countries of asylum, and of origin, respectively. For many of the children, the experience of being an outsider did not end on return to their homeland, but having grown up elsewhere, in many cases, having integrated into that society, many now felt more like outsiders than before their return:

“I am a stranger in Malawi not in Zambia because nobody knows me here, in Zambia many friends have known me since I was born”. The anguish involved in many of the returnees’ attempts to establish their identity is just one aspect of acculturative stress; other aspects including the lack of resources, lack of schooling and employment opportunities, and so on” (Cornish, Peltzer and Maclachlan 1999:264).

The children’s’ experiences were not surprising since, culture shock is a normal aspect of the early stages of adjustment to any new social environment.

In this chapter, a brief history of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its obligations in protecting and rendering assistance to refugees was presented. There was also a focus on the problematic aspects of becoming a refugee and the restrictive nature of refugee status which tends to reinforce the need to return to one’s country of origin. Also highlighted in the chapter was the dependency syndrome which often results from long-term dependency on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This is a situation which tends to have negative implications on the capacity of refugees to seek employment or to engage in other economically self-sustaining activities during the reintegration process in their countries of origin. At the same time, efforts by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at circumventing this problem through income-generating initiatives in refugee camps was also highlighted. Furthermore, there was a discussion of calls for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to extend assistance to include income-generating projects on a broader scale in refugees’ countries of origin, designed to facilitate long-term reintegration. This study justifies the limited role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the refugee reintegration process in view of the fact that the organization is under-resourced economically due to its already over-extended international assistance to refugees: hence, the reason for its decision that governments should be responsible for their returning refugee populations.

This chapter also focused on difficulties the ANC, PAC and SACP encountered in adjusting to their struggle for liberation far away from South Africa in their countries of asylum. It also looked at how they gradually adjusted to life in exile

and continued with their struggle, despite their physical absence from the country. Strategies utilized by these organizations internationally and within South Africa aimed at dismantling the apartheid system were also discussed. Of sociological significance was the role of these organizations in perpetuating and reinforcing a South African national and cultural identity in exile.

A principal finding of this chapter is that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees generally plays a significant role in assisting political refugees during the exile, repatriation and reintegration phases of the refugee cycle. Limited resources understandably prevents the furthering of its assistance aimed at facilitating and enhancing the long-term reintegration of refugees in their countries of origin.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter four presents an overview of relevant studies of refugees in Africa, as well as their major themes and weaknesses. In addition, it also focuses on possible reasons for the limited research in this area. The chapter discusses why some African countries are reluctant to grant political asylum to large refugee populations, and the types of refugee settlement schemes they tend to adopt for their refugee communities.

#### 4.1.2 REFUGEE STUDIES IN AFRICA

Involuntary migration in Africa is not a new social phenomenon and was evident prior to colonialism. It occurred, for example, during ethnic political conflicts in the pre-colonial era, forced labour practices during colonialism and at times natural disaster (Rogge 1981:195).

Studies that focus on African refugee populations tend to concentrate on the provision of political asylum and protection in accordance with international law (Aiboni, Melander and Nobel in Bernard 1973:77). They also tend to focus on the allocation of resources in refugee communities (Christensen in Bernard 1973:77), the status of spontaneous settlement of refugees (Chamber in Bernard 1973:77) and the economic viability of organized rural land settlements (Kibreab in Bernard 1973:77).

Generally, refugee populations tend to be cyclical and occur simultaneously in different parts of Africa (Rubin in Rogge 1985:195) and at different times. Examples include the 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s during which African countries granted political asylum to citizens of, for example, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia due to political conflicts in their countries. Today, there are refugee populations from Ethiopia, Sudan, Zaire and Sierra

Leone dispersed in different parts of Africa, which is also a result of political conflicts in their countries of origin.

Despite the Organization of African Unity's resolution that all member states share Africa's refugee burden, particularly in the granting of political asylum to refugees, some countries have taken on a larger part of the responsibility. These include, for example, Uganda, Tanzania and Sudan. West African countries have, on the other hand, not shared a similar proportion of the refugee burden (Rogge 1981). Some countries prefer not to grant political asylum to large refugee populations because this has the potential to exacerbate their unemployment rates, often forcing them to adopt employment policies specifically designed to ensure that their citizens are given preference in job allocations. In addition, many host governments prefer to accommodate refugee populations in camps located far from urban areas. These strategies by host governments are understandable, given that some refugees are willing to work harder and for much lower salaries than their local counterparts, thus tempting local employers to recruit them as opposed to the local inhabitants. Host governments also avoid dispersing refugee populations into various parts of their countries and, particularly, not close to the borders that they share with the refugee populations' countries of origin. The reason for this is to minimize the potential for military conflict between the locally based refugees and regimes in their homelands. Furthermore, in many instances, host countries do not perceive refugees as permanent residents; hence, the reason for not involving them in activities that would facilitate their permanent settlement there. Accommodating large refugee populations can also over-burden the infrastructure of host countries as they have to share their resources with refugees. This has the potential of increasing food and land shortages due to the establishment of refugee camps or agricultural rural settlement schemes (Rogge 1981:195).

Regarding refugee settlement schemes, some African host countries prefer establishing refugee camps where food, medicine and other basic necessities are provided for the refugees. These, unlike rural settlement schemes, tend to be temporary solutions since host governments generally perceive their refugee

populations as temporary residents in their countries. Other countries of asylum opt for rural settlement schemes such as those which have been established in countries like Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda, for example. Although the establishment of these schemes tends to be costly initially, they are nevertheless a more viable solution in the long term (Rogge 1981:200). In addition, they can also contribute to reinforcing economic self-sufficiency amongst refugees, thus minimizing a dependency syndrome in the process.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees supports rural settlement schemes for refugees, as evidenced by its decision to include them as a component of its aid programme in some countries. Some prerequisites of rural settlement schemes include availability of land, water, capital planning and administrative skills. The disparity between the refugee and local population also has to be taken into account (Rogge 1981:200). These are necessary preconditions for the viability of these projects. Of significance, however, is the willingness and capacity of host governments to provide land, while the UNHCR funds the agricultural projects.

In the southern African region, countries that played a significant role in accommodating large refugee populations from South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s include Zambia and Tanzania, where the ANC-SACP alliance and PAC headquarters were respectively based. Zambia's perpetuation of this role even after the repatriation of South African refugees in the 1990s is illustrated in the following quotation:

“Zambia has seen a surge in the number of run-awa people enter the country recently, thanks to the intensification of war in Angola and the DRC. About 35,000 Angolans and 30, 000 Congolese have been forced to seek protection in Zambia since late 1999, bringing to 250,000 the number of refugees in the country.

Close to two thirds of the entire refugee population in Southern Africa now resides in Zambia. Their humanitarian needs are provided for by the UNHCR and partners such as the Lutheran World

Federation, while the government provides land and security around the camps.

Zambia has been a haven to refugees from about 1966 when the country began to accommodate Angolans fleeing the civil war. Since then South Africans, Zimbabweans Mozambicans, Ugandans, Somalian and Congolese have flocked there to seek refuge from conflict in their countries.

Strong ties between former President Kenneth Kaunda and Southern Africa's liberation movements undoubtedly helped establish Maheba is the largest increased by 100 square km to The steady influx also led to the opening of two new camps last year. Kala, with 11,000 Congolese refugees and Nangweshi with 12,800 Angolan refugees. Ukwimi, which used to host Mozambican refugees was reactivated and now houses 847 refugees (*Sunday Times, 21 January, 2001:17*).

From the above excerpt, it is evident that Zambia, which has been accommodating refugee populations since 1964 when it gained independence, continues to go out of its way to welcome refugees from different countries. Regarding the favoured countries of asylum amongst South African political refugees who tended to use Botswana as a transit route, Zambia and Tanzania were the most popular destinations (Zetterquist 1992:19). Probable reasons for this were that the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC headquarters were located in Zambia and Tanzania respectively as well as the warm reception given to incoming refugees by Zambians and Tanzanians.

The findings of a comprehensive survey on refugee repatriation literature in developing countries conducted over a decade, and commissioned by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (Crisp 1987), indicated a predominance of such themes as international law, political motivation and logistics. International law emphasizes the need to recognize the basic rights of refugees. In addition, it also stresses the responsibility of organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in ensuring the protection of refugees in host countries, and also in voluntarily repatriating them back to their countries of origin when conditions are conducive to do so. In so far as political motivation is concerned, the point articulated stresses the degree to which



repatriation sometimes serves the interests of those who are promoting it rather than those of the refugees themselves (Crisp, Harrel- Bond, Altrows and Recitor in Crisp:1987:77). As mentioned earlier, there are instances where refugees are literally forced to leave their countries of asylum, regardless of whether they are ready to return to their homelands or not. In such instances, forced repatriation has the potential of endangering their lives, particularly in the absence of indications of any positive political transformation in their homelands. Regarding the logistical aspects of the repatriation process, the focus usually tends to be on the funding and organization of specific operations relating to repatriation (Crisp 1987). In as far as research commissioned by the UNHCR on refugees is concerned, this is usually aimed at facilitating UNHCR operations, particularly in providing protection for refugees in their countries of asylum, as well as ensuring the provision of material and other forms of assistance and repatriation.

As highlighted in chapter one, refugee reintegration studies are still in their infancy hence the need for more research in this area. A comprehensive review of weaknesses in research and literature in this field reveals that, despite the fact that literature and research on refugees exists, it tends to be limited in scope and depth, focuses more on such operational activities as repatriation, relocation and early reintegration of refugee populations in their countries of origin. Most studies are fragmentary, and focus more on problems relating to settlement in host countries: general epistemological approaches are also limited (Bulcha 1988:77). Detailed scholarly work is minimal (Crisp 1987; Coles 1985), and there is a lack of in-depth analyses of large-scale repatriation, experiences of returnees and the long term socio-economic dimension of the process (Allen and Morsink 1994). There is also a need for more research on refugees in Africa and other non-Western countries, since refugee studies and research have traditionally tended to focus more on western countries (Dona and Barry, 1999).

Refugee reintegration research is rudimentary because, in the post-exile phase, returnees tend to be dispersed in various parts of their countries, often making it difficult and expensive to locate them for research purposes. As mentioned in chapter one, and of particular significance to this study, is the fact that the socio-

economic implications of reintegration cannot be adequately assessed within a short-term perspective. The reason for this is that successful reintegration takes time, since returnees have to secure employment, schools for their children and appropriate accommodation for their families. In addition, they also have, in some cases, to literally undergo a re-socialization process. This is particularly true in instances where the returnees left their countries of origin at a very young age or were born in exile. This also applies to some adult returnees who spent twenty to thirty years outside the country. At a political level, and in cases where the government's response to its political returnee population is positive, it also takes time for a government to be in a position to establish structures and to enact policies designed to address the returnee problem. Although the consideration of an appropriate time-frame of up to ten years increases the validity of the study's results, the waiting period can, however, discourage researchers. In some instances, a war situation in a returnee's country is more than likely to create obstacles for research (Allen and Morsink 1994:2). Another reason for limited research in refugee repatriation and reintegration is that the process is usually perceived to be a localized and non-recurrent social phenomenon and, hence, the lack of interest in this aspect of refugee studies (Bulcha 1988:77). From a national perspective, the perception of the repatriation and reintegration process as being localized and non-recurrent is a valid point. The reason for this is that once refugees return to their countries of origin, it is assumed that they will not be refugees again in the near future. In essence, a basic assumption is that repatriation automatically renders the process non-recurrent from the viewpoint of key role-players in the management of world refugee populations. From an international perspective, the refugee problem is cyclical in that it occurs simultaneously in different parts of the world and at different times. More research needs to be conducted in this area, since the results of such studies can enlighten organizations like the UNHCR and government officials of countries with refugee populations on how to deal with refugee reintegration problems. In other words, they can learn from each others' experiences in addressing their own problems.

### 4.1.3 A BRIEF REVIEW OF RELEVANT STUDIES

#### **Together Let's Move Forward: Pretoria Returnees' Needs Assessment Study**

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Pretoria Returnees' Project Committee study (1994:8) was designed to elicit information on the needs experiences of a sample of 414 South African political returnees. Regarding employment, the study found that the political returnee repatriation process had been inadequate or incomplete, since many returnees had joined the ranks of the unemployed. Implicit in this conclusion is that an important prerequisite for reintegration is the capacity to secure paid employment. This point highlights the significance of the economic variable in the reintegration process. Lack of accommodation forced some returnees to live in informal settlements or to seek temporary accommodation with relatives or friends. This often caused unanticipated conflict, particularly where the required assistance was needed for an extended period of time. Unemployment also made proper medical care unaffordable for many returnees. Others suffered from post-traumatic stress disorders and required counselling at the time of the study, something which they could not afford. In addition, extended periods of absence from South Africa, in some cases for up to thirty years, had a negative impact on people's capacity to sustain social networks in the country. Appendix 2 provides a more detailed illustration of the problems that political returnees encountered on returning to South Africa.

#### **Exiles And Home Coming**

In a small scale study on returnees, Majodina (1996) identified such problems as different mind sets between non-returnee relatives and returnees due to their having grown up in different worlds and being compelled to adjust to high levels of crime in South Africa. Being married to a foreign spouse was, in some cases problematic, due to communication and other cultural differences. Returning to South Africa as pensioners often resulted in disorientation and social isolation. This applied particularly in instances where a pensioner had had no contact with

his or her children and relatives whilst in exile. Some non-returnees felt threatened, fearing that the best occupational positions would be given to returnees, since some of them already occupied high political positions in the new ANC-led government. Other political returnees were chased away by their families as soon as their repatriation grants had been used up while others required therapy and some experienced culture shock due to feelings of alienation.

### **Hard Home-Coming Problems of Economic Reintegration among Repatriated Namibians**

In a study on repatriated Namibians, Tapscott (in Allen and Morsink 1994) highlights the significance of the economy and a country's response to the refugee reintegration problem. His point of departure is that one of the most important prerequisites for successful reintegration is a viable economy that has the capacity to generate employment opportunities. An additional imperative is that the government be sympathetic to the plight of returnees to the extent that it initiates proactive strategies designed to address the problem.

In the case of Namibia, the United Nations Security Council resolution 4325 of April, 1989 oversaw the repatriation of approximately 45,000 Namibians (Tapscott, in Allen and Morsink 1994:251). This exercise was viewed as one of the most well-organized and orderly repatriation exercises ever conducted by the UNHCR. While the UNHCR was praised for conducting its Namibian repatriation programme efficiently, the reintegration exercise, according to Tapscott, turned out to be one of the most disappointing aspects of the Namibian independence process. Many political returnees returned to their homelands full of expectations for a better life but, to their disappointment, unemployment proved to be the main obstacle to achieving this goal.

An additional variable highlighted in the study is the significance of a family's socio-economic background in the reintegration process. A principal assertion of the study equated successful reintegration with a family's social class or socio-economic background and social networks, as opposed to a returnee's contribution

to the liberation struggle or other personal attributes. The results of the study validated this hypothesis. Although it is valid to conclude that a family's socio-economic background often facilitates their members' capacity to secure employment, there are instances where a political returnee's contribution to the liberation struggle can play an equally significant role. In some instances it plays a greater part than socio-economic background. There are cases where, for example, returnees from relatively poor family socio-economic backgrounds succeeded in occupational and social mobility after returning to South Africa, primarily because of their engagement in liberation struggle politics prior to 1994.

In so far as the role of the state is concerned, the Namibian government, unlike its South African counterpart, did not enact policies designed specifically to assist the political returnee population. The more mature and educated political returnees were, according to Tapscott (in Allen and Morsink 1994:251) comparatively more understanding regarding the government's position on the returnee problem. The youth, on the other hand, felt betrayed by the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO)-led government, which was the principal Namibian liberation movement during the liberation struggle. Their justification was that SWAPO had, prior to the youths' return home, promised them a better future in Namibia after attaining political independence. This was, however, not fulfilled. Regarding the government's reconciliation with its former adversaries, the less mature returnees perceived the process to have been more beneficial to former supporters of the South African regime that had, for many years, administered Namibia rather than to the returned exiles.

### **Evaluation of the Welfare and Future Prospects of Repatriated Namibians in Northern Namibia**

Tapscott and Mulongeni (1990) conducted a micro-level study on the reintegration of returned Namibian exiles a year after the UNHCR reintegration exercise. The objective of the research was to challenge the assumption that political returnees would be accommodated by their families who had remained in the country, and that the economically active would secure paid employment. Additional

assumptions were that Namibian residents who could not reconcile with the new political transformations in the country would emigrate to South Africa. A basic premise relating to this was that, through this process, vacant posts would be created for the returnees, thus facilitating their absorption into the labor market. In addition, it was assumed that returnees who had acquired higher educational qualifications and professional experience in exile would reintegrate at a faster pace than those who had not. The findings of the study were that returnees failed to secure employment because of their lack of knowledge regarding how to look for employment, as well as lack of access to different forms of media for information on employment opportunities and delays in reaching prospective employers due to distance. Other problems included a dearth of funds for transport to attend interviews, an inability to communicate fluently in English or Afrikaans, which were common languages in the business and government employment sectors and the non-recognition of qualifications from countries like Cuba and the Soviet Union. Rejection by conservative employment establishments because of the historical ties that political returnees had with SWAPO, which such establishments perceived as a former adversary, also posed a problem for returnees. Contrary to the study's assumptions, few people who had supported South Africa's apartheid regime emigrated to South Africa. Some former political returnees who had sacrificed their time and energy in the liberation struggle felt betrayed by their new government. Although the validity of the findings are not disputed, the fact that this study was conducted a year after Namibian political refugees began returning to the country, makes it more relevant to an assessment of early, as opposed to long-term, reintegration in their countries of origin.

Highlighted in the above studies is the significance of the economic aspect of the reintegration process and the role of government in addressing the political returnee problem which can have fundamental implications for political returnee reintegration. As highlighted in the HSRC study, some of the consequences of not being able to secure employment include not being in a position to afford medical services and problems relating to reintegration at the social level.

This chapter provided a brief introduction to refugee studies and predominant themes in this area of study. An interesting finding in this chapter is that the major aspects highlighted focus more on the operational needs of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The chapter also presented the limitations of refugee research in general and, of particular relevance to this study, established that there is a lack of research on refugee reintegration in their countries of origin. An overview of some relevant studies in this chapter highlighted economic problems as a key impediment to reintegration and emphasized the need for governmental intervention in addressing this problem.

This study addresses the weaknesses of refugee studies as identified in this chapter, and focuses specifically on the repatriation and reintegration of returning South African refugees. As mentioned in previous sections of this chapter, studies on refugee reintegration are limited. In so far as the repatriation process is concerned, this dissertation highlights the differential role of international and non-governmental organizations and liberation movements in refugee repatriation and early reintegration processes. Regarding refugee reintegration, a significant contribution that the study makes is its analysis of the role of government in the long-term reintegration of returning refugee populations within their countries of origin. The study highlights specifically how the South African ANC-led government addressed the long-term refugee reintegration process through legislative measures. Finally, the fact that this research was conducted in South Africa is a contribution to refugee studies in the African continent. Such studies are sadly lacking, since most work on refugees focus on Western countries.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 THE CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter five presents the conceptual and theoretical framework that informed the study. It focuses on key concepts, theories, debates, classification schemes and their relevance to this research. The presentation of the theoretical aspect of the chapter is organized in terms of selected themes. Although relevant concepts were briefly defined in chapter one of the study, this chapter presents a more detailed conceptualization and discussion of key concepts around which the study is built.

#### 5.1.1 Political Exile, Refugee and Political Returnee

A political exile or refugee, terms which are used interchangeably, constitutes one of the key concepts in this study; hence the need for a more in-depth discussion of these and other related concepts.

Exile, as a concept, is broad in scope, since it includes individuals who left their countries of origin for a variety of reasons hence the necessity for a classification of South African exiles. The concept is thus differentiated in terms of political exiles/refugees as well as in relation to voluntary political exiles and voluntary non-political exiles.

Generally, a common characteristic of these categories of exiles is that their motivation for leaving South Africa was the apartheid system which they viewed as undemocratic and oppressive. An important distinguishing attribute was their differential engagement in liberation struggle politics and activities, particularly during the pre-exile and exile phases of their lives. The distinction is significant in that in the long-term it played a critical role in determining their living conditions in exile. This included their residential status in their countries of asylum, their capacity to acquire the citizenship of these countries, their ability to visit South Africa periodically and their potential to secure paid employment in host countries.



The circumstances surrounding the departure of all three categories of exiles from South Africa differed and had long-term implications for the people involved. This was particularly so during the exile period. In so far as their engagement in political activities is concerned, what distinguished political exiles from the other two groups was their full-time and active participation in liberation struggle activities during the pre-exile and exile phases of their lives.

### **Political Exiles Or Refugees**

Political refugees or political exiles are individuals who are forced to flee their homelands due to persecution by the regimes in their countries of origin. They therefore do not leave their homelands for economic reasons. The political motivation includes, amongst other factors, engagement in anti-apartheid activities and membership of banned liberation movements. For the entire duration of their exile period, the regimes in their homelands also prevented them from visiting their countries periodically: hence, the reason for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees decision to repatriate refugees back to their homelands only once there are indications of positive political transformation there.

In exile, many South African political activists were registered as political refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in accordance with international law. This was necessary for legalizing their residence in host countries. Moreover, the fact that it is the United Nations that determines the criteria relating to the factors which constitute a refugee at the international level, this study will adopt the following UNHCR definition of a refugee:

“People who are outside their country, owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”  
(Black and Robinson 1993:7).

The above definition is broad in scope, in that it covers individuals who flee for a variety of reasons - namely race, religion, nationality, membership of certain social groups, political opinions and wars.

In line with the United Nations' definition of a refugee, South African political exiles fled their country primarily because of their political opinions which opposed the apartheid system and its policies. Hansen and Smith's (1979:209) definition of a refugee is comparable to a degree, with the United Nations' conceptualization of the term which they define as a "person who moves from his country to another against his own will. The push factor is very strong and in this case he lacks motivation to move and settle elsewhere. Hence, he is a sociological type whose situation is characterized by the immediacy of life-threatening compulsion deliberately exercised by some agent and the inability to rely on his government for even minimal protection" (Hansen and Smith 1979:209).

As reflected in the quotation, refugees are forced to flee their countries of origin due to circumstances that threaten their personal security since they are regarded as enemies by the ruling regimes in their countries. Of significance is the fact that under normal circumstances they would have preferred to remain in their homelands. This has become particularly evident during the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees repatriation programmes, when most refugees tend to opt to return to their homelands once conditions are conducive to do so. In essence, political exiles are individuals who are alienated from their countries of origin for extended periods of time. Alienation is, in this context, defined as "a process by which people feel estranged from other people and the basic character of their society" (Sanderson 1991:503).

Micheal defines South African refugees as people "who left for political and not economic reasons because South African security laws made their living conditions impossible – haunted by the police and if they wanted to return home, they would be arrested or detained under anti-terrorist security laws (Micheal 1986:94).

What is emphasized in the above quotation, and what is of particular relevance to this study is that South African refugees, like most exiles, did not voluntarily leave the country for economic reasons, but were forced to do so for political exigencies. Security concerns played a crucial role in the decision-making process on whether to leave the country or not. Of significance in their becoming refugees was the degree of force involved in this process. In contrast, economic migrants exercise a choice in voluntarily leaving their countries of origin to settle permanently elsewhere. In many instances, political activists flee their homelands with the intention of overthrowing the existing governments in their countries of birth. Examples include African refugees who formed liberation movements in the 1940s, as well as Latin American exiled groups (Bulcha 1988:1). The ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC are examples of such groups in South Africa. In essence, the process of becoming a political refugee, which South African political refugees or exiles also experienced, not only involves loss of citizenship, family, community, social networks, employment and security but is also characterized by a process of disempowerment.

### **Political Returnee**

Related to the concept of the political exile or refugee is the term “ political returnee” which refers to an individual who was a political refugee or political exile prior to returning to his country of origin. Hence, as a concept, it is applicable during the repatriation and reintegration phase of the refugee cycle. Allen and Morsink (1994:20) conceptualize a political returnee as “an ambiguous concept that implies a homeland and a shared value system in a population that may or may not exist”. Although the ambiguity of the concept is not clearly articulated, the point relating to the conception of a homeland that may not exist is, in some instances, a realistic perception of the situation. This applies particularly in cases where returned exiles left their countries two or three decades previously. On returning to their homelands, they are confronted with dramatic infrastructural and cultural transformations, often necessitating significant adjustment on their part. This is not surprising, since culture and society are not static, but dynamic.

### **Voluntary Political Exile**

What distinguishes voluntary political exiles from the other two types of exiles is the voluntary nature of their departure from South Africa. They, for example, did not participate in political activity, and neither were they members of any of the liberation movements prior to leaving the country. Their departure from South Africa can, therefore, not be directly attributed to active engagement in liberation struggle politics, as was the case with political exiles. In other words, exile was, in this instance, self-imposed, and did not involve immediate or anticipated danger that forced them to flee South Africa.

In many cases, the primary motivation for leaving was because they did not wish to continue living under what they viewed to be an inhuman and oppressive system like apartheid. As a socio-political system, it deprived them of basic human rights which citizens of other countries took for granted. Furthermore, it also impeded their occupational and social mobility in South Africa, a mobility many of them were eventually able to attain in foreign countries. This was possible in instances where they were registered as political refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in their host countries. Regarding the implications of the nature of their departure from South Africa, this played a crucial role in determining whether they could acquire citizenship in their host countries or not. Furthermore, it also determined whether or not they could visit South Africa periodically during the period in which they were in exile. In many cases, the active engagement of voluntary political exiles in liberation struggle activities began outside the country when they joined the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance. Their decision was made with the knowledge that this could endanger their lives if they were detected by the South African state security police on their occasional visits to the country. In essence, they initially left the country on a voluntary basis and were, therefore, classified as voluntary exiles. Their status took on a political dimension once they became actively involved in liberation movement politics in exile, resulting in their status changing from voluntary exile to voluntary political exile. An important point to emphasize is that their decision to engage in the liberation struggle did not affect their capacity

to acquire citizenship in host countries in cases where they had not applied for citizenship prior to engaging in politics. Furthermore, the voluntary nature of their departure from South Africa still distinguished them from the political exiles in that they could still visit their country on a regular basis. This was possible only for as long as the South African state security police remained ignorant of their engagement in liberation struggle politics.

Unlike in the case of political activists, the acquisition of new citizenship or, alternatively, the possession of a renewable South African passport, afforded voluntary political exiles the opportunity of visiting their homeland periodically. This placed them in a comparatively advantageous position in that they could interact with their South African relatives and friends on a regular basis. In addition, they also had the opportunity of attending their relatives' funerals, a significant aspect of African culture. The decision by voluntary exiles to become politically active in exile is one of the reasons why the ANC-SACP alliance decided to accommodate them in their repatriation programme after the unbanning of the formerly exiled liberation movements in 1990 and, later, in the current ANC-led government in South Africa. This strategy was also advantageous in that it increased the organization's membership, an important factor in any future presidential elections.

### **Voluntary Exile**

Voluntary exiles, like their voluntary political exile counterparts, also left South Africa because of the apartheid system. The nature of their departure from South Africa and its impact on their lives outside the country was comparable to that of voluntary political exiles. They, too, had the opportunity of acquiring the citizenship of their host countries and of visiting South Africa periodically, hence the reason why some children of former voluntary exiles chose not to return to South Africa because their educational and employment prospects were favourable in their adopted countries. This applied particularly to children who were either born in exile or who left South Africa at a very young age. The acquisition of citizenship by their parents, which the children automatically

inherited, ensured that they would not experience similar problems in their quest for economic and social mobility in their host countries, as was the case with the children of political refugees.

An additional and important consideration is that these children were socialized in the cultures of host-country cultures and subsequently identified with them. In such cases, limited exposure to aspects of their South African culture and environment meant that they did not have to have a strong enough incentive to make them want to return to their parents' country of origin permanently. Occasional visits to South Africa may, in some instances, have made them feel like foreigners in a place that they were supposed to regard as home, an attitude that is sometimes expressed by those South Africans who spent twenty to thirty years in exile. This is not unique to South Africa, since refugees and immigrants who spend protracted periods of time outside their countries of origin are likely to have similar experiences and to display similar attitudes.

### **5.1.2 Integration and Assimilation**

Integration and assimilation are sometimes used interchangeably - hence, the need for the inclusion of assimilation in the ensuing section. A basic assumption is that when migrants emigrate to another country they are either integrated within, or assimilated by, or alienated from the host country depending on the dynamics of the given society. The relevance of assimilation to this study is that there are instances where refugees become assimilated within the communities in their countries of asylum, thus making it difficult for them to want to be repatriated back to their countries of origin. This applies particularly in cases where they have been alienated from their homelands for protracted periods of time ranging from, for example, twenty to thirty years.

#### **Assimilation**

The use of assimilation and integration has been a contentious issue in scholarly debates and United Nations' conferences. Assimilation is defined as "a process of

change during which the immigrants seek to identify themselves with members of the host group to such an extent that they become less distinguishable from them in the process” (Bernard 1973:87). In essence, assimilation involves a situation where migrants choose and make a concerted effort to identify with the host society to an extent that makes it difficult to differentiate the two groups. Hence, in this context, the migrants shed their past cultural attributes and take on those of the host country. However, in reality this is not necessarily the one-way process that this conceptualization of assimilation implies. Bernard (1973:87) makes a valid point in criticizing this view, since it ignores the significance of cultural transmission which involves the transference of culture or aspects of culture from one group to another.

Other aspects of the transmission process include reciprocity or intersubjectivity, since members of society are reflexive beings. He correctly asserts that assimilation into a society should be viewed as a mutual or symbiotic process, particularly where a big immigrant population is involved. In such cases, it is likely that the immigrants will have an impact on some members of the non-migrant population, especially those who interact with them regularly. Examples of the cultural transmission process include, for example, aspects of the immigrants’ customs or value systems, music and mode of dress that are transmitted to the non-migrant group.

Problems relating to the conceptualization of assimilation finally culminated in the adoption of integration as a more appropriate concept in United Nations’ circles where members have vast experience in dealing with refugee populations. This was agreed upon at the United Nations Educational And Scientific Organization (UNESCO) international conference on immigration in Havana. It was resolved that integration be defined as “the merging processes in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic setting involving migrants and non-migrants” (Bulcha 1988:84).

### **Stein's Contribution to Assimilation Models**

Stein incorporates aspects of Milton Gordon's (1962) models of assimilation in American society. These models comprise of host or Anglo-conformity, merging to the native and refugee culture and cultural pluralism. In the context of American culture, assimilation refers to being absorbed within an Anglo-Saxon variant, since this is the dominant culture there and, hence, the use of the term "Anglo-conformity". Host-conformity, which is a more neutral concept because it does not specify a particular racially-based culture, is more relevant to the type of adjustment that South African political refugees experienced in exile. The reason for this is that, as refugees in their countries of asylum, their residence in these countries was temporary.

In the merging of native and refugee cultures, the result is a modified and better culture. In the context of refugee populations in host countries, this is in some instances impossible due to their confinement within refugee camps that are located far from urban areas. This obviously minimizes their interaction with the local population. According to this perspective, the attainment of a modified and better culture is impossible, particularly where the local population far outnumbered the refugee population.

In cultural pluralism, the migrants acculturate to the dominant culture for political, educational and employment reasons while still retaining their own culture. This, to some extent, is comparable to Bernard's (1973) conceptualization of integration which he defines as involving that state where "migrants become a working part of their adopted society, take on many of their attitudes but at the same time retain a measure of their cultural identity and ethnicity" ( Bernard, 1973:87). Hence, in such cases, refugees, who are also in actual fact migrants since they migrated from their countries of origin, acculturate for practical reasons, with the intention of finally returning to their homelands once it is safe to do so. Of the three types of adaptation, cultural assimilation is more relevant to the type of adaptation that many South African political exiles experienced as political refugees in their



countries of asylum. The restrictive and temporary nature of their refugee status made it virtually impossible for them to make long-term or permanent plans for the future. For practical reasons, however, they were forced to function in these countries, and hence they had to acquire the necessary attributes to facilitate temporary integration within those societies. These skills included learning and adjusting to the dominant normative structures and language, while simultaneously retaining their South African national and cultural identity. Hence, exiled South African political activists were integrated but not totally assimilated within their host country cultures so that they did not completely lose their South African national and cultural identity in the process. As illustrated in chapter three of this study, the exiled liberation movements played a vital role in reinforcing and sustaining this identity.

### **The Role of the Ethnic Community**

This aspect focuses on the role of the ethnic group to which migrants become attached and which provides significant support structures to assist the migrants in adjusting to their new social environments. The role of the ethnic community is, to some extent, comparable to the formerly exiled South African liberation movements of the PAC, ANC and the SACP. The reason for this is that these organizations played a crucial role in reinforcing the perpetuation of a South African national and cultural identity in exile. Stein (1981:32) analyzes the ethnic community role in terms a decrease in the danger of social and personality disorganization, provision of group identity, network relationships, association and institutions, allowing the refugee to function while being assimilated.

Regarding the ethnic community role in decreasing the danger of social and personality disorganization, a basic assumption is that ethnic communities in host societies played an important role in minimizing social and personality disorganization amongst newly arrived migrants. Similarly, the liberation movements of the SACP, ANC and PAC played a comparable role to that of ethnic communities, offering political structures upon which many exiled South African political activists periodically relied as members of these movements. On

fleeing South Africa in a state of panic due to life-threatening circumstances, it was these political structures which assisted these activists in exile. The liberation movements therefore played an important role in stabilizing incoming political activists both psychologically and socially. This applied particularly to the early stages of the reintegration process.

Insofar as far as the ethnic community's role in providing group identity, network relationships, associations and institutions is concerned, exiled South African liberation movements often introduced newly arrived refugees to people from fellow nations in countries of asylum, thus enhancing group, national and cultural identity in the process. At the same time, the political organizations also provided refugees with essential information regarding legalizing their residence in these countries. In other instances, they also assisted them in securing schools for their children, information on employment opportunities, as well as supplying food and other material provisions on a regular basis.

Regarding the ethnic community role in facilitating the refugee's ability to function while being assimilated into the host nation. Stein utilizes Eisenstadt's four stages of absorption in his analysis of assimilation. These include learning the host culture, language, norms, roles and customs, the development of a new country identity, status image, new values about self and personal adjustment and structural assimilation. South African political refugees were responsible for adapting to and learning the culture, language, norms, roles and customs of the communities in their respective countries of asylum. The liberation movements merely played a supportive role in this regard.

Milton Gordon (in Stein, 1981) refers to the above processes as behavioural assimilation or acculturation which basically refers to learning a new culture. As explained in the previous section, South African political activists were expected to take on the responsibility of formulating their own ideas and perceptions about the communities in their countries of asylum. In addition, this also applied to their personal identity, status image and new values about self and personal adjustment. The reason for stating that it was the individual's responsibility to adapt to the

above is primarily because acculturation involves psychological and social processes which are contingent on individual initiative. Although the PAC and the ANC-SACP alliance played a vital role in sustaining a South African national and cultural identity amongst the exile community, their role was more of a facilitatory nature in as far as psychological processes were concerned. Structural assimilation refers to absorption into primary group life involving inter-marriage, interaction in social clubs, churches, etc., adoption of a new identity, absence of discrimination and lack of value conflict. In this instance, the capacity to adjust at the primary group level was contingent primarily on the individual activist's interest and initiative. The exiled political structures again played an important supportive role in this regard.

### **Integration**

Integration, which was discussed in chapter one, is a basic and multi-dimensional concept commonly used in the social sciences. It involves a complex interaction of variables which include, amongst other factors, economic, cultural and educational dimensions. In terms of sequence, integration usually occurs prior to reintegration. Of particular relevance to this study is Bernard's conceptualization of integration which applied to exiled South African political activists in their countries of asylum. Bernard (1987:87) defines integration as occurring when "migrants become a working part of their adopted society, take on many of their attitudes but, at the same time, retain a measure of their cultural identity. Of particular significance to this study in the above quotation is the retention of original cultural identity and ethnicity. This mode of adaptation is a reflection of the intention of refugees to return to their countries of origin once there are positive socio-political transformations.

A basic assumption is that total assimilation automatically renders individuals at home in host societies, thus making it difficult for them to return to their countries of origin. By contrast, in integration, migrants or refugees choose to become a working part of their adopted society, while retaining their own cultural identity and ethnicity. This is reinforced by their refugee status which renders their

residence in countries of asylum temporary, thus making it difficult for them to make long-term plans. Regarding assimilation and integration in countries of asylum, their refugee status was problematic for South African political exiles because it impeded their occupational and social mobility, and it also prevented them from visiting their South African-based relatives and from periodically attending their funerals. In addition, it alienated them from their country of birth and culture for protracted periods of time, ranging from, for example, ten to thirty years. In essence, exile automatically deprived them of rights enjoyed by citizens of most democratic countries. These factors reinforced the need for South African political exiles to exert greater efforts in dismantling the apartheid system.

### **5.1.3 Theoretical Applications of Integration**

In the social sciences, integration is used differently depending on the theoretical framework that is being utilized. The following sections focus on these varied applications.

#### **Integration in the Context of Migration Theory**

In the context of migration studies, integration is conceptualized in terms of adjustment to new social environments, and the relationship that subsequently develops between the immigrants and non-migrants is stressed. At this juncture, it is important to point out that South African political refugees or political exiles were migrants, since they were forced to migrate from their homelands to countries of asylum. The migration process associated with political refugee populations is commonly referred to as involuntary migration.

#### **Marginalization Theories**

Although the following marginalization theories are more relevant to immigrants, aspects of such theories are pertinent to this study since it is assumed that some former South African refugees were marginalized from communities in their respective countries of asylum, particularly during the early stages of integration.

### **Parks's Contribution**

Marginality, which is the antithesis of integration, is associated with the work of Robert Parks. In his publication, *Human Migration and the Marginal Man* Parks conceptualizes the marginal man as one who shares the cultural life and tradition of two distinct peoples, but is unwilling to break with the past whilst at the same time being rejected by the new society (in Bulcha, 1988:84). Hence, marginalization involves attachment to one's original cultures, while simultaneously attempting to function in a new dominant and hostile host country.

Parks's analysis is partially relevant to this study since, some South African political exiles were marginalized in host communities. In addition, most South African political refugees shared two distinct cultures, namely that associated with a South African identity, along with the host to which they had to adapt. As discussed in chapter three of this study the exiled liberation movements played a critical role in facilitating and entrenching the retention of a South African cultural identity amongst its members. This was also reinforced by the restrictive nature of the exiles refugee status which impeded occupational and social mobility and automatically rendered their residence in these countries temporary. Insofar as hostility by host country communities towards former South African refugees is concerned, a basic assumption was that this was not a common phenomenon amongst many former political exiles from South Africa.

### **Merton's Contribution**

In his analysis on marginality, Robert Merton utilizes the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. Merton's analysis is comparable to Robert Parks's version of marginalization in that he conceptualizes marginalization in terms of alienation or estrangement from the dominant culture in the context of a host society. Of significance is the rejection of migrants by members of that society, a factor which is likely to enhance internal solidarity within the immigrant social structures. At the same time, however, it can also result in maladjustment amongst some migrants. This applies particularly in cases where they are isolated and not

attached to any immigrant support structures. In such instances, political refugees are likely to make efforts to expedite their return to their countries of origin.

The basic premises of Merton's analysis are that the host society lacks the capacity to absorb the immigrants and, as a result, decides to reject them. Secondly, Merton maintains that immigrants lack the appropriate cultural values, skills and motivation for participation in this social system (in Bulcha 1988:81). In terms of Merton's understanding, marginalization does not affect all spheres of an individual's life. Major areas of marginality that significantly negate the ability of immigrants to be absorbed into the dominant cultural and social system include economic, social and political marginality. Economic marginality involves marginalization from the production or labour sphere due to circumstances that are beyond the immigrant's control. A point that was highlighted in previous chapters and which is of relevance to this study, is that South African political exiles were often prevented from being absorbed into the economic production structures of their countries of asylum because of restrictive employment policies that favoured the nationals of those countries.

In social marginality, individuals are socially isolated. They are subsequently deprived of opportunities that would enhance their chances of attaining occupational and social mobility in that society through locally-based social networks that could facilitate access to employment opportunities. Inability to communicate in at least one indigenous language is likely to further impede this process. Social marginality applied to some sectors of the South African exile community, particularly to newly arrived South African political refugees, due to ethnic, educational and other differences. Political marginality, on the other hand, involves non-participation in the dominant culture and society. This applied to South African political refugees since they had to prioritize their own political agenda which was to dismantle the apartheid system in order to pave the way for their return to their country of birth.

### **Bulcha's Contribution**

Bulcha (1988:3) conceptualizes integration in terms of objective and subjective processes and economic (first phase) and social (second phase) dimensions of the process. The objective aspect emphasizes socio-cultural variables, while the subjective component stresses psychological adjustment to a new social environment. The economic dimension, which is the first phase, is the practical area of immediate basic necessity for survival purposes, and includes food, shelter and clothing. It highlights the significance of the economic dimension of integration or economic integration which refers to a "process of securing work and becoming a working part of the regularly employed labor force in a given society" (Bulcha 1988:3).

An important point that Bulcha stresses is that economic integration is not contingent on employment per se, but primarily on one's income. The validity of this argument is based on the fact that the type of employment that one enters into is a primary determinant of one's salary. One can, for example, be employed and not necessarily earn enough to maintain a reasonably good standard of living. This also highlights the notion of relativity, since satisfaction with one's standard of living is determined by socio-psychological or subjective processes that are contingent on people's feelings and perceptions about a given situation. Perceptions relating to satisfaction and high or reasonable standards of living will obviously tend to vary from one individual to another. This also applies to whether or not an individual feels integrated into a given society, since individual perceptions occur at a subjective and psychological level.

In terms of sequence, the provision of such economic-related factors as food, accommodation and clothing is most important, and should ideally occur during the early stages of integration or, in the context of this study, the early stages of reintegration. From a long-term perspective, a significant prerequisite in integration and reintegration is the capacity to secure wage employment, since this has implications for integration and reintegration at the social level. In other

words, economic reintegration should occur first in order to facilitate the process at the social level.

The social dimension, which is the second phase, emphasizes integration and adjustment at the socio-cultural and psychological levels. It basically emphasizes the social environment and interaction or “how one relates to the social environment”(Bulcha 1988:3). Important variables in this process are personal relations, marriage, participation in voluntary organizations and conflict.

Bulcha’s contribution to this study, is particularly relevant with regard to the fact that economic reintegration must occur first in order to facilitate integration at the social level. In the context of this study, a basic assumption is that, in South Africa, governmental intervention in the form of social grants (an economic factor) has to a great extent facilitated social reintegration.

#### **Bulcha’s Classification Scheme of Refugees**

Bulcha refers to political refugees as revolutionary activists, and classifies them in terms of their motivation for leaving their countries of origin. The term “displaced masses” refers to refugee populations that flee due to feelings of insecurity and war in their countries, while oppressed minorities are forced to flee due to oppression by the majority population. Opponents of change, on the other hand, migrate because they are unhappy with changes that have occurred due to a revolution or political transformation in their country. This group typically adheres to a conservative ideology. In the South African context, apartheid was a conservative ideology since it was outdated and isolated from more contemporary global political ideologies and practices. South African citizens who left the country due to a change in government are, to some extent, comparable to Bulcha’s opponents of change, the only difference being that they did not seek refugee status in the countries to which they emigrated. An additional category of refugees are the coup-makers who flee their countries due to their participation in a failed coup, and the revolutionary activists. Of particular relevance to this study are the revolutionary activists in that they are comparable to political refugees. They flee their homelands due to oppressive regimes and usually leave on their own, being joined by their families at a later stage. The decision to leave is



motivated primarily by anticipated or actual danger. They leave their homelands with the intention of overthrowing the regimes in their countries in the future. Examples include African refugees who formed liberation movements in the 1940s and Latin American exiled groups (Bulcha 1988:81). The formerly exiled PAC and ANC-SACP alliance are South African examples of such groups.

South African political exiles, like the revolutionary activists also left their country with the intention in the South African case of overthrowing the National Party-led government. They, too, were convinced that the majority of South Africans shared their sentiments in opposing the apartheid regime and system since it was undemocratic. In line with their revolutionary activities, South African political exiles allocated part of their time to integration within their host nations, but also of significance was their prioritizing of political agendas aimed at dismantling apartheid.

Although their refugee status protected South African political exiles, it also rendered them temporarily stateless, since the apartheid regime had, in effect, denationalized them by not permitting them to return or visit, their country prior to 1990. Unlike voluntary exiles and voluntary political exiles, political refugees could not apply for citizenship in their countries of asylum for the duration of their stay there. This applied in such countries as Zambia, for example, with Tanzania being an exception in this regard. The employment policies of these countries gave preference to their citizens, while non-citizens were employed only in cases where nationals of that state could not occupy a particular position. Given the over-extended economies of some of these countries, the implementation of these policies was in some cases understandable. The reason for this is that these countries were already offering assistance to the refugees by granting them political asylum for extended periods of time, during which host nations shared their resources. In addition, they also offered them protection from the regimes in their countries of origin and, in the process, exposed themselves to military attacks from these countries, as was the case with the apartheid government and the front-line states. In essence, refugee status automatically created long-term barriers for occupational and social mobility in countries of asylum which left refugees with no option but to accelerate their return to their homeland.

Regarding the children of South African political refugees who were not born in exile, these children automatically inherited their parents' refugee status and were subsequently also not permitted to apply for citizenship. Hence, the process involved a cycle of deprivation, in that such children first grew up as refugees in exile and, as adults, were prevented from applying for citizenship due to their refugee status. In addition, they, too, like their parents, were treated as second-class citizens in these countries, since they could secure wage employment only in cases where a national of that country was not available for a particular position.

It is, therefore, not surprising that, despite the fact that some of them were born in their countries of asylum or left South Africa at a very young age and were socialized in host nations, this was not a strong enough an incentive to compel them to remain in these countries once South Africa was liberated. Deprivation of opportunities for occupational and social mobility due to their refugee status thus played a crucial role in the decision-making process as to whether or not to return to South Africa. The temporary and restrictive status associated with being a refugee is one of the reasons why exiled South African political activists, like most refugee populations (Rogge, in Allen and Morsink 1994:209), prioritized political agendas designed to accelerate their return to their countries of origin.

### **Homan's Contribution**

George Homan's (in Bulcha 1988:81) understanding of social integration is that this is a process that begins with interaction between incoming groups who have always been part of a particular social environment. Through frequent interaction, barriers are gradually broken down resulting in the establishment of common interests. This also results in the parties accommodating one another. Accommodation, in this context, refers to each adjusting to the other. Hence, a basic assumption is that high frequency of interaction is likely to facilitate and accelerate adjustment to a new social environment. In the context of this study, this applied to South African political refugees in their countries of asylum as they integrated into host communities. This sometimes resulted in inter-marriage between South African exiles and locals.

#### 5.1.4 The Refugee Experience: Defining The Parameters of A Field of Study

Barry Stein's (1981:320) conceptualization of the refugee experience is relevant to former South African political refugees, since many of them also went through these phases of the refugee experience reflected in the following quotation:

“ ... perception of threat, decision to flee;  
the period of extreme danger and flight, reaching  
safety; camp behavior, repatriation, settlement or  
re-settlement, the early and later stages of resettlement;  
adjustment and acculturation; and residual states and  
changes in behavior caused by the refugee experience”

(Stein 1981:320).

Stein argues that the perception of the refugee problem as temporary, unique and non-recurrent is a misconception. Furthermore, he feels that it is precisely because of this misconception that refugee programmes are not evaluated on a regular basis thus resulting in inadequate preparations for the next influx or wave of refugees in other parts of the world. The validity of Stein's assertions is based on the fact that refugee problems are, from a global perspective, recurrent. From a national point of view, however, it is, to a certain extent, correct to conclude that since, for example, South African political returnees were repatriated back to their homeland, it is unlikely that they will become refugees again in the future. This does not, however, undermine the fact that refugee problems can occur elsewhere in the world, since it is a cyclical phenomenon that occurs at different times and in different countries.

Stein makes a valid point by stating that nations can draw on each others' experiences in dealing with refugee populations. This also applies to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other international organizations that render assistance to exiles. The reason for this is that there are similarities in the behavioural patterns of refugees when they are confronted with comparable conditions and experiences. Examples include flight from the country of origin,

life in refugee camps, integration in countries of asylum, reintegration in countries of origin, and the tendency of political refugees opting to return to their countries of origin once it is safe to do so. This also applied to South African political refugees.

Parameters that constitute Stein's conceptualization of the refugee experience include the perception of fear (of an anticipatory and acute nature), decision to flee, a period of extreme danger and flight, reaching safety, camp behaviour, repatriation and settlement or resettlement. Stein's model also involves the early and later stages of resettlement, adjustment and acculturation as well as residual state and changes in behaviour due to refugee experiences (Stein 1981:1). Stein utilizes Egon Kunz's Kinetic Model (1973), a migration theory. In his discussion on the flight and resettlement of refugees, Kunz stresses the push factor which involves migrants being pulled or attracted to opportunities that improve their standard of living. In contrast, refugees are literally pushed out of their countries of origin. Stein's analysis of refugee flight and settlement patterns is in terms of two kinetic types, namely, the anticipatory and the acute type. In the anticipatory type of flight, there is anticipation of impending danger or threat to one's personal security which forces the individual to flee his or her country. On the positive side, the fact that there is anticipation of danger affords them the opportunity of planning for their departure, despite the fact that their intention is to depart as soon as possible. They are usually able to leave with their families and some of their belongings. Regarding their socio-economic backgrounds, this category of refugees tend to come from relatively affluent socio-economic backgrounds. In contrast to the anticipatory type, the acute type leave either at short notice or instantly, due to impending danger which could be a result of, for example, a sudden political crisis or a war situation. Hence, the push factor is comparatively greater in this instance than in the anticipatory type of flight. These refugees subsequently arrive in a state of shock in the host country, inhabiting what Kunz refers to as a "mid-way to nowhere", since the departure did not involve any planning or psychological adjustments for the sudden change. Although both the anticipatory and acute types of flight applied to South African political exiles when they fled their country, the acute variant is substantially more relevant. The

reason for this is that many South African political activists fled the country in a state of panic because their lives were in danger. This resulted from the fact that many of them had seen their comrades being killed or arrested by the state security police. The anticipatory type of flight applied to South African political activists who anticipated danger and planned their flight from the country, being in many instances, joined later by their wives and children. Regarding repatriation, which is the most viable option from the UNHCR perspective, Stein contends that the longer the absence from one's country of origin the more difficult it becomes to reintegrate within or adjust to, life in one's country of origin. In the context of this study, Stein's assertion is validated by similar experiences of former political exiles in South Africa as they readjusted to life in the country (Majodina 1994; HSRC and the Pretoria Returnees' Committee, 1994).

### **5.1.5 Refugee Camps**

Apart from a few exceptions, in-depth studies of refugee camps are generally lacking (Houston and Houston and Jensen in Stein 1981:323) and those that do exist lack a detailed analysis of classification schemes and theoretical models relating to different aspects of life in refugee camps. One of the typical characteristics of refugee camps includes segregation from the host population, since refugees are usually located far from the main urban areas of host countries. This was the case with South African refugees who were accommodated in refugee camps. The reason for this is that host governments wish to prevent over-utilization of their resources in urban areas where their local citizens would be forced to share such resources with refugee populations. Secondly, it also facilitates the protection of their citizens' employment opportunities in their own country. In the case of South African refugees, this had a negative impact on their occupational and social mobility in these countries, as articulated in previous chapters. Additional characteristics of refugee camps include shared facilities, lack of privacy, over-crowding and limited and restricted living areas (Stein 1981:323).

A crucial point is that it is in refugee camps that refugees finally have the time to realize and reflect on what they have lost. This process includes a loss of identity,

as well as the relinquishment of a homeland and infrastructure often resulting in depression and apathy. Insofar as loss of a homeland and identity are concerned, the newly arrived refugees usually experience a disempowerment process, since they are transformed from citizens to refugees. The disempowerment process also entails dependency on the UNHCR, the acquisition of a limited and special status, and the refugees' sense of being controlled and disenfranchised (Stein 1981:323).

The following excerpt is an illustration of life in a refugee camp in Lusaka, Zambia in the year 2001:

“Although there are six refugee camps in the country, there is official policy of people of different nationalities having to live in different camps ... the identities of refugees simply indicate the proximity of their countries of origin to Zambia. Maheba, a home to refugees who have been there since 1971, is not a conventional refugee camp with tents, overcrowding and mass feeding schemes. It is more like a rural settlement with farming plots and small villages. The only tents there belong to newcomers who have not yet established themselves.

The ideas implemented there are progressive of necessity because, by emphasizing self-reliance, the tendency of refugees to depend on handouts is eliminated. Inhabitants of Maheba are often there for the long haul, being allowed to stay until peace is restored in their home countries. In Angola, such peace has been elusive for more than 30 years. Handouts would simply be unsustainable. Instead, refugees are each allocated a plot of land and provided with a tent, kitchen utensils, farming tools and seeds. Until the first harvest, they are also supplied with monthly food rations, but they are expected to grow their own food thereafter, says a UNHCR spokesman. Despite all attempts to make life as ordinary as possible, Maheba still experiences health problems common in many refugee camps. Malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia are the kinds of illness that local clinics and doctors attached to Medicins Sans Frontieres deal with daily.

Dr Irmela Heinrichs says doctors attend to 100 patients a day at the Sans Frontieres makeshift clinic at Maheba. The patients are mostly newcomers. Forty per cent have malaria and ten per cent have pneumonia. The clinic also sees up to 60 children a day suffering from severe malnutrition. Such problems tend to disappear with time.

The majority of refugees seem to have a positive life in Zambia and enjoy positive relations with the local population. Their excess agricultural production contributes to food production in the province, while refugee teachers and nurses provide their skills to local schools and clinics. Children from villages surrounding Maheba attend the school that was built by the refugees.

The emphasis on keeping refugees in designated areas has resulted in less integration into *Zambian* society than might have been expected. On the positive side, this has kept hostility to refugees low. Because refugees have their own facilities, they are not seen as competing with local for scarce government resources.

Life in Maheba is pretty routine. If people are not working on the plots cultivating cassava, maize or sweet potatoes, they can be seen around the *Medicins Sans Frontieres* clinic, where they go for medical attention. There is a tavern or social club, as locals know it, but is not busy because people do not have much money to spend on alcohol.

The UNHCR does its best to keep relations cordial between refugee and their host countries, urging locals in an information brochure to keep an open mind and give them a smile of welcome. It can mean a lot to a refugee” (*Sunday Times*, 21 January 2001:17).

From the above, it is evident that some refugee populations are able to adapt so that they are able to sustain themselves economically thus minimizing the potential for a dependency syndrome. This applies particularly in cases where their period of political exile exceeds twenty to thirty years, as is the case with the Angolans cited in the quotation. At the same time, the agricultural skills that the refugees acquire in exile could be beneficial, particularly during the reintegration process in their countries of origin. An additional positive aspect cited in the above extract is the capacity of refugees to supply local communities with agricultural produce and also to provide them with schools. South African political exiles also displayed comparable levels of economic self sufficiency. The ANC and SACP in Lusaka, Zambia, for example, owned farms which provided their members with weekly provisions of vegetables, fruits and meat. They also owned furniture manufacturing businesses which sold furniture for fund raising purposes.

#### **5.1.6 VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION**

Voluntary repatriation, which applied to South African political exiles as they returned to the country, refers to a “process of return and arrangements for integration made immediately after arrival in the country of destination” (Quick, et al in Allen and Morsink, 1994:25). Pertinent to this definition is the voluntary nature of the process as highlighted by Ziek where he conceptualizes a situation where “refugees have finally and definitely and in complete freedom and after

receiving full knowledge of the facts including adequate information on the circumstances in their countries of origin, decide to return to their country” (Ziek 1997: 429). This definition is an ideal conceptualization, because it is not in all cases that former political refugees return voluntarily to their countries of origin. In some cases, they are literally forced to leave their countries of asylum by host governments which do not see the need for further delays in repatriation processes once there are indications of what they perceive to be positive political transformation in the refugees’ countries.

### **5.1.7 REINTEGRATION**

The degree to which political exiles were integrated into host societies plays a critical role in the decision-making process relating to whether to return to one’s country of origin or not. A basic assumption is that a high degree of integration in a country of asylum is likely to minimize the decision to return to one’s country birth.

#### **Allen and Morsink’s Contribution**

Allen and Morsink (1996) analyze the reintegration process from a macro level perspective. They analyze it in terms of three phases. These include flight from country of origin, refuge in a host country and repatriation involving the rebuilding of a homeland (1996:7). These phases are relevant to this study in that former South African political exiles went through all three phases of this process. Although this study focuses on all three aspects, emphasis is more on the repatriation and reintegration stages.

#### **Rogge’s Contribution**

In his analysis, Rogge (in Allen and Morsink:34) stresses the economic dimension of the reintegration process in terms of the needs of returnees and the response to returnees by the government and community at large. Pertinent considerations in determining the needs of political returnees is the size of the returnee population, in that this determines the scope of the political returnee reintegration problem in a given society or country. A basic assumption is that the bigger the returnee



population the more difficult it is to solve this problem, particularly in cases where resources are limited. The exile period is also of significance since this has implications for reintegration. In other words, the longer the period of exile, the more difficult it is to reintegrate, particularly in the absence of relevant educational qualifications and in cases where a dependency syndrome is evident, since this negates the capacity to take the initiative to seek wage-employment in the post-exile phase of the refugee cycle. Another problem relating to reintegration is confinement to one host country and a lack of exposure to other cultural environments. This deprives individuals of the opportunity to learn to adapt to a variety of cultural environments. Levels of skills transferred from exile also help to determine the needs of returnees. As mentioned earlier, a lack of high educational qualifications and professional skills acquired in exile can impede full reintegration at the economic level. In the South African context, Green (1990) concluded that political returnees who left in the 1960s and 1970s were more likely to secure wage-employment, because many of them were already relatively educated by the time they left South Africa. In addition, they also had the opportunity of acquiring higher education qualifications in exile. Those that left in the 1980s were, on the other hand, more likely to encounter employment problems, since many of them were only semi-literate when they left the country. Although these assertions are valid to some extent, there are instances where exile could have had a counter effect in the sense that political returnees who left in the 1980s acquired higher educational qualifications outside the country. Economic independence or self-sufficiency is another important determinant of the needs of political returnees. A basic assumption is that economic dependency in exile contributed to a welfare syndrome which has the tendency of negating the capacity to attain economic independence in the long-term. Hence, those who were economically independent and successful in exile because of educational and other professional qualifications were likely to have experienced minimal problems in reintegrating. Employment and income-generating activities also play an important role in determining the needs of returnees. It is assumed that access to employment and income-generating opportunities increase the potential for positive or successful economic reintegration. As stated in chapter one, the South African economy could not absorb a large influx of political returnees into the

labour market when they began returning to the country in the 1990s. Individual commitment and the extent of disruption of home life also plays an important role in determining the needs of political returnees. Regarding individual commitment, a basic assumption is that one's commitment to seeking employment or finding a means of becoming economically self-sufficient will facilitate economic reintegration. However, disillusionment in this regard, despite high levels of commitment on the part of returnees, can minimize their level of enthusiasm and commitment. Insofar as the extent of disruption of home life is concerned, dramatic infrastructure and cultural changes in the respective communities of returnees after a twenty-to thirty-year absence can be destabilizing for such people. Finally, an additional determinant of the needs of returnees is the degree to which they voluntarily return to their country of origin. This obviously has implications for the reintegration process. If returnees were, for example, forced to leave their country of asylum, this would not have given them sufficient time to plan and to prepare themselves psychologically for their repatriation and reintegration. This can, in some instances, have negative implications for the reintegration process. Regarding governmental and community response to the returnee problem, important considerations include the returnees' demand for articulation, the local communities' receptiveness, the local government's resources and interests and the national government's sympathy and support for returnees.

The above points highlight significant variables in the economic reintegration process which is contingent on the active participation of returnees, local and national governments and the community at large. In South Africa, the exiled liberation movements, international organizations and internally based structures (e.g. non-governmental organizations) assisted returnees as they returned to the country. At a national governmental level, the ANC-led government was proactive in that it implemented policies, namely the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts of 1996 designed to address the political returnee problem. These two Acts undoubtedly facilitated the refugee reintegration process in South Africa. Rogge further contends that economic reintegration is often assessed too early thereby providing false conclusions. He emphasizes the point that such evaluations are

only viable when assessed from a long-term perspective. Rogge makes a valid point by stating that it is often assumed that the economic reintegration of immigrants may take ten to fifteen years, and yet returnees, who in many cases have been comparatively more traumatized than immigrants, are expected to successfully reintegrate within a short-time frame. This assumption is based on the fact that the returnees finally return to their countries of origin and, hence, there is an assumption that the reintegration process will be problem-free. Reality has, however, proved this to be a myth. Rogge stresses the fact that economic reintegration is a long-term process since it takes time to resettle in one's country of origin. In line with Rogge's views on an appropriate time-frame for assessing refugee reintegration, this study has taken the significance of the time period into consideration by utilizing a ten-year time perspective. This covers the period from which political refugees began returning to South Africa in 1990 to 2001, when the interviews of key respondents at selected organizations were conducted. Consideration of the time-frame is essential, in that it takes time to create structures and processes such as appropriate legislation designed to facilitate political returnee reintegration. In the case of South Africa, it took six years after political exiles began returning to the country before policies were formulated, enacted and implemented to address the political returnee problem.

### **Cornish, Peltzer and Maclachlan's Contribution**

Cornish, Peltzer and Maclachlan (1999) conducted a small-scale survey of 36 Malawian children who returned from Zambia where their parents had been granted political asylum as refugees. The findings of the study were that the children found Malawi to be lacking in resources and employment opportunities. Making new social contacts in Malawi was problematic, due, in some instances, to hostility towards returnees and the fact that some of the returnees, especially those who were born in Zambia, had acquired Zambian accents. The children also identified with Malawi, despite the fact that they had never been to the country before. A probable reason for this is because they had been regarded as foreigners in Zambia during their time of residence as refugees there (Cornish, Peltzer and Maclachlan 1999:271).

Donna and Berry's re-acculturation model was applied in the study of Malawian children. Acculturation in this context is conceptualized as referring to children "growing up with a feeling of otherness in their parents' country of asylum and identification with their parents' idealization of home in Malawi" (Donna and Berry 1999:280). The re-acculturation process, on the other hand, involves discarding the initial conceptions of otherness and of Malawi as the ideal home, adjusting to the poor living conditions in Malawi and the formulating of a different type of otherness that differentiates such children from non-returnee Malawians. Children of former South African political exiles probably also had to go through a similar re-acculturation process, particularly in instances where they were born in their parents' countries of asylum or had left South Africa at a very young age.

This chapter focused on relevant concepts and theories. "Integration", as a key concept in this study, was discussed in greater detail, not only as a concept, but also in terms of its varied theoretical interpretations and their relevance to the study. An analysis of the refugee experience, which basically articulates the processes involved in becoming a refugee, was also included while the section on refugee camps illustrated life in such a camp which many South African political returnees experienced. Chapter five also included a brief review of research on refugees and on problems of reintegration which generally highlighted the economic dimension of the process as being the most problematic aspect of reintegration. A principal finding of this chapter is that becoming a refugee is traumatic economically, politically and socially, in that exile not only disempowers the concerned individuals, but also denationalizes them for the duration of their lives in exile. This also applied to South African political refugees in their countries of asylum. Regarding reintegration as a process, the economic dimension, as stated in previous sections of this study, plays a particularly vital role. The ANC-led government concentrated on economic factors in addressing the political returnee problem in the country .

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.1 METHODOLOGY

Chapter six focuses on the methodology utilized in the study. Qualitative research techniques were used primarily since the principal data collection method was in the form of in-depth interviews of key institutional respondents. The preliminary phase focuses on the early stages of the data collection process prior to the implementation of the study. Problems encountered during the data collection process and how these were resolved are also highlighted.

#### 6.1.1 Preliminary Data Collection Phase

The initial stages of the preliminary fieldwork were conducted in conjunction with the literature review. Fieldwork included visits to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Pretoria which played an important role, particularly in the refugee repatriation and early reintegration process. In addition, visits were also made to the Special Pension offices of the Ministry of Finance and the Demobilization Unit of the Ministry of Defence which are also based in Pretoria. The primary objective of the visits was to access relevant documents for the preliminary stages of the research. Copies of the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts of 1996 were provided by the Ministry of Finance and Defence respectively. UNHCR standard refugee repatriation procedures and copies of other relevant documents were derived from the UNHCR offices.

#### 6.1.2 Data Collection and Analysis Phase

Regarding the data collection process, interview schedules, comprising structured and unstructured questions, were utilized for conducting face-to-face in-depth interviews of key institutional respondents in June and July of 2001. Representatives from the ANC-SACP alliance, the PAC, the International Organization for Migration on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the South African Council of Churches were interviewed. The interviews were designed to elicit information on their role in the repatriation and

early reintegration of political returnees in South Africa during the pre-independence phase which was the period prior to 1994.

For information relating to how the political returnee reintegration problem was addressed by the ANC-led government in the post-independence era after 1994, key respondents were interviewed at the Demobilization Unit of the South African Defence Force (SANDF) in Pretoria. Permission was granted by the Ministry of Defence for the interview. The second interview was conducted at the Special Pension Office of the Ministry of Finance where permission was granted by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry.

In cases where it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews due to distance, questionnaires were mailed to the respondents who returned them once they were completed. This method was used in the case of the ANC-SACP alliance and PAC representatives. In instances where additional information was required once questionnaires had been received, this information was derived telephonically. The attached institutional questionnaires provide more information on the type of data that was required and reflects the manner in which key variables were operationalized where applicable.

The interview schedule was the preferred data collection technique, because it tends to yield a comparatively higher response rate than, for example, mailed questionnaires. It also affords the researcher the opportunity of correcting misinterpretations of questions. The omission of questions by respondents can also be minimized and the researcher is also given the opportunity of observing non-verbal behaviour. Finally, unlike in the case of mailed questionnaires, supplementary information which was not initially included in the interview schedule can be gleaned during the face-to-face interview.

Regarding the data analysis aspect of the study, qualitative methods were utilized since the data was not quantified. The process of analyzing qualitative data entails separating research data into different elements or units so that they become manageable. In addition, the aim of the sorting process is to determine whether there are similarities and differences in the results. The objective of this process is to "assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion

(Jorgensen 1989:107). This method was applied to this study in that similarities and differences in the responses provided by key institutional respondents were recorded and analyzed.

This chapter focused on the methodological aspect of the study which basically explained how the research was implemented. It also looked at problems encountered during this process and how they were resolved.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **7.1 DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter focuses on the analysis of data derived from interviews conducted between the 1<sup>st</sup> June and the 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2001. The focal point of analysis in this chapter, which is sub-divided according to pre-and post-apartheid phases, is specifically on the role of selected organizations that played a significant part in the political returnee reintegration process. The pre-independence phase focuses on the role of the International Organization for Migration which was instrumental in the repatriation of South African political exiles on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the liberation movements (ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC) and the South African Council of Churches in the political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process. In the post-apartheid phase, the emphasis is on the response and role of the ANC-led government in relation to the political returnee problem. Of significance in this analysis are governmental interventions, namely the 1996 Special Pension and Demobilization Acts.

#### **7.1.2 THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS**

##### **THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE**

##### **A Brief Profile of the Organizing Committee for the Return of Political Exiles (OCRPE)**

The Organizing Committee for the Return of Political Exiles, an ANC-SACP alliance sub-structure, also played an important role in the political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process. The convener was Jackie Selebi (Mayekiso 1991:120). The assistance that OCRPE rendered to political returnees included securing indemnity for them in order to facilitate their safe return to South Africa. It also helped them secure wage employment and schools for their children. In addition, returnees were provided with a monthly allowance of R1500 per month and furnished accommodation for a period of three months only. Thereafter, the returnees were expected to fend for themselves.



According to the convener, the most difficult aspect of this process was securing wage employment for returning exiles, a problem which was exacerbated by the economic climate in the country at the time. This again highlights the critical role of the economic dimension of reintegration. It also validates Tapscott's (1991) contention that successful reintegration is contingent, not only on a government's response to the political returnee problem, but also on the economy of a country. In essence, governmental policies formulated and enacted specifically to address the returnee problem by providing some form of financial assistance play a crucial role in facilitating reintegration, particularly as far as the economic dimension of the process is concerned.

**a) Position of respondent during the repatriation and early reintegration phase.**

Administrative secretary in the ANC-SACP alliance's Organizing Committee for the Return of Political Exiles.

**b) Current position in the organization.**

Card-carrying member of the ANC

**c) Whether the ANC-SACP alliance rendered assistance to non-ANC-SACP alliance members.**

Yes.

**d) Criteria utilized by the ANC-SACP alliance for selecting returnees who qualified for assistance from the organization.**

The principal criterion utilized by the ANC-SACP alliance for identifying individuals who qualified for repatriation assistance was determined primarily by their membership of the organization. There were, however, instances where it also rendered assistance to non-ANC-SACP alliance members.

**e) The role of the ANC-SACP alliance in the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The ANC-SACP alliance provided its Zambian and Tanzanian-based members for flights direct to South Africa. Political activists living in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other distant countries made their connecting flights from Lusaka, Zambia which was the ANC headquarters at the time. At a later stage, the ANC-SACP alliance centralized the repatriation process in order to maximize efficiency. Returnees based in different parts of Africa and the world were subsequently assembled in Lusaka, Zambia prior to being repatriated to South Africa. In the country, the ANC liased with the National Association of Taxi Operators (NATO) which it paid for transporting returnees from the Johannesburg International Airport to their destinations in Gauteng province. Returnees who were in transit to the Eastern and Western Cape, Kwazulu Natal and other parts of the country were provided with air tickets by the ANC for flights to their final destinations in South Africa.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The ANC-SACP alliance provided temporary accommodation for returnees who were on transit to other parts of South Africa at the Safari Hotel in Johannesburg. Those who were unable to contact or trace their families were temporarily accommodated at a guest house in Diepkloof, Soweto which had recently been bought by the ANC. Efforts were then made to locate the returnees' relatives. In instances where returnees failed to locate their families, the ANC provided them with building materials at their request for building houses at an informal settlement on Orange Farm. The National Coordinating Committee for Returnees (NCCR), a South African Council of Churches sub-committee and the UNHCR also assisted with temporary accommodation.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Two ANC members were assigned with the responsibility of assisting returnees to secure employment. They also provided them with referral letters, testimonials and, in some instance, mediated between prospective employers and returnees. In cases where returnees failed to secure employment, the ANC helped them gain

admission to colleges or vocational training institutions where they pursued welding, dress-making, driving and other skills programmes. On completing their vocational training courses, the ANC provided them with materials and machines in order to establish their own small businesses in the informal sector.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

A once-off payment of R2500 was given to returnees on arrival in South Africa in addition to an allowance provided by the National Coordinating Committee for Returnees (NCCR).

### **OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE**

ANC representatives met returning exiles at Johannesburg International Airport in order to ensure their security. This was to prevent them from being harassed or arrested by immigration officials.

#### **f) The organization's primary source of funding.**

The ANC-SACP alliance derived funding for its returnee assistance programme primarily from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the National Co-ordinating Committee for Returnees, a South African Council of Churches sub-committee and other donor agencies.

#### **g) The approximate number of political returnees who received repatriation assistance from the ANC-SACP alliance.**

Approximately 6000 political returnees received repatriation assistance from the organization with the assistance of the UNHCR. Those based in Europe, Canada, America and other distant countries received aid directly from the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees.

#### **h) Major problems encountered by the ANC-SACP alliance.**

### **Language**

The ANC-SACP alliance encountered problems in trying to assist foreign wives who experienced communication problems in South Africa. This applied particularly in instances where they could not speak any of the country's indigenous languages.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

Accommodation was particularly problematic in cases where returnees failed to trace their relatives. In such instances the ANC provided them with temporary accommodation. Volunteers also assisted in this regard in order to bolster the assistance that the organization was already receiving from the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees and the National Coordinating Committee for Returnees.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation problems were experienced by exiles who were scattered in different parts of the world. This complicated the repatriation process; hence, the reason for the decision by the ANC-SACP alliance to centralize the repatriation exercise. Returnees were subsequently assembled first in Lusaka, Zambia prior to travelling to South Africa. In addition, some of the flights arrived at two o'clock in the morning which made it problematic for ANC representatives to meet returnees at the Johannesburg International Airport.

### **ILLITERACY**

Illiteracy amongst some returnees made it impossible for them to complete official application forms, a factor which also contributed to their inability to secure wage employment.

### **DEPENDENCY SYNDROME**

The ANC encountered problems in cases where returnees were still suffering from a dependency syndrome. This had, over the years, conditioned them to take for granted the free provisions and services they had been receiving from the ANC-SACP alliance in exile (e.g. food, clothes, accommodation. etc).

## **FOREIGN SPOUSES**

Some returnees came with wives who could not speak any of South Africa's indigenous languages.

## **HOW THESE PROBLEMS WERE SOLVED**

The accommodation problem was solved through the assistance of volunteers that provided temporary accommodation for some of the returnees.

### **h) Organizations with which the ANC-SACP alliance liaised during the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

Organizations with which the ANC-SACP alliance liaised during the repatriation process included the South African Council of Churches which rendered assistance through its sub-committee, the National Coordinating Committee for Returnees. This committee, for example, provided political returnees with temporary accommodation, clothes and blankets and a monthly allowance for the first six months, as well as school fees for their children. The United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees assisted with the repatriation process in Europe, America, Africa and other parts of the world. It also provided returnees with UNHCR travel documents, visas, air tickets, transport and a short-term allowance on arrival in the country.

### **i) Assistance rendered by the National Party-led government.**

The National Party-led government assisted returning exiles by issuing them with South African passports and travel documents.

### **j) Assessment of the role of the ANC-SACP alliance in the political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process.**

The ANC-SACP alliance's role in the political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process was successful because the organization reunited returnees with their South African-based families who, in some instances, facilitated their reintegration into their respective communities in the country. It also assisted returnees with the identification of schools for their children and, in some cases, in securing school places for them. Regarding assistance with finding employment, a number of

returnees were, with the help of the organization, able to secure employment. Those who were unsuccessful were assisted in establishing their own small businesses in the informal sector.

**k) Assessment of the ANC-led government's Special Pension and Demobilization Acts in the political returnee reintegration process.**

The Special Pension and Demobilization Acts have made a positive contribution to the returnee reintegration process since they both involve financial assistance. At the same time, however, weaknesses have been identified in the implementation of the two acts. These include the Special Pension's minimum age requirement of 35 which excludes those below the age of 35. This is regardless of the fact that some returnees below the age of 35 spent most of their lives sacrificing and fighting for the ANC-SACP alliance in exile, while others were imprisoned or banned. In other instances, individuals who were never in exile have fraudulently been granted Special Pension grants. In addition, voluntary exiles who were neither ANC-SACP alliance members nor politically active, and who were employed in exile, have also been granted Special Pension gratuities. These anomalies were raised with the Special Pension Board but no action was taken. Regarding the Demobilization Act, former ANC-SACP alliance cadres who are currently employed by the SANDF are not eligible for a demobilization grant, while some individuals who did not qualify have received demobilization grants. The demobilization gratuity is also significantly smaller than the special pension grant.

**l) Recommendations on the implementation of the Special Pension and Demobilization grants.**

Application screening procedures should be improved in order to prevent opportunistic individuals from taking advantages of existing loopholes. These include, for example, providing special pension and demobilization boards with false information in order to enable individuals to gain access to these grants fraudulently.

**m) Lessons learned from the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

Lessons learned from participating in the repatriation and early reintegration process is that there is a need for counselling services, particularly for male political returnees married to foreign wives. These services are essential in order to avoid adjustment problems that male returnees sometimes experience on returning to their countries of origin. In South Africa, for example, some male returnees rejected and abandoned their wives once they were back in the country. This caused serious problems not only for the wives, but also for the children.

The refugee repatriation process is not an easy task and requires proper planning prior to the implementation of the actual repatriation process. Accommodation and other arrangements should be in place before transporting returnee populations to their countries. In the absence of careful planning, returnees are literally taken from their homes in exile to nowhere. Efforts should also be made to ensure that repatriation and early reintegration facilitators are patient, hard-working and committed individuals. Of significance at a psycho-social level, facilitators should ideally be caring individuals, particularly in cases where they have to look after disabled, HIV-infected individuals and those suffering from depression due to the prospects of an uncertain future in their homelands.

Finally, the provision of adequate manpower and financial resources is essential in order to enhance efficiency in the repatriation process. The ANC repatriation team comprised only ten facilitators which included the leader of the repatriation committees.

#### **n) Feedback from political returnees.**

Generally, there were complaints and no signs of affirmation of gratitude, particularly from returnees who were still suffering from a dependency syndrome.

## 2. THE PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS

### **a) Position of the respondent in the PAC during the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

Administrative Secretary of the PAC.

### **b) Current position in the organization.**

Member of the National Executive of the PAC.

### **c) Whether the PAC rendered assistance to non-PAC members.**

Yes.

### **d) Criteria utilized by the PAC in selecting returnees who qualified for assistance from the organization.**

The important criterion used for determining eligibility for PAC repatriation assistance was membership of a South African liberation movement, and evidence that a returning political exile left the country due to persecution by the apartheid regime.

### **e) The role of the PAC in the repatriation and early reintegration process** **Transportation**

The PAC centralized the repatriation of its members by assembling them in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania which was its headquarters at the time. This was prior to making arrangements with the UNHCR for their repatriation to South Africa. The PAC provided the UNHCR with a list of its members and the UNHCR then took on the responsibility of repatriating them back to South Africa. On arrival in the country, South African-based relatives met them at their points of arrival. In other instances, the PAC liaised with the South African Council of Churches and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist with transport.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The PAC temporarily accommodated its members who were in transit to South Africa in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In cases where returnees were still in the



process of tracing their relatives in South Africa, the PAC liaised with the South African Council of Churches to provide them with temporary accommodation.

### **TRACING OF RELATIVES**

The PAC assisted with the tracing of relatives prior to repatriating its returnees. In cases where this was not done prior to the departure of these refugees from their countries of asylum, South African-based PAC structures traced them on their behalf.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

The PAC played no role in assisting their returnee members with securing wage employment.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Returnees were given R4000 but this assistance was short-lived due to corruption by those responsible for the funds.

### **OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE**

These included facilitating the integration of the PAC's military wing or APLA cadres into the South African Defense Force and assistance with applications for Special Pension and Demobilization grants.

#### **f) The PAC's primary sources of funding.**

The PAC received funding primarily from the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization.

#### **g) The approximate number of political returnees who received repatriation and early reintegration assistance from the PAC.**

Approximately 10,000 returnees received assistance from the PAC.

#### **h) Major problems encountered by the PAC.**

These included distrust of the officials of the South African-led government which was still in power at the time when refugees began returning to the country. Airport immigration officials were also treated with suspicion - hence the reason for the PAC's decision to inform their members of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization of African Unity in ensuring their protection during the repatriation process. Other problems included rendering assistance to returnees who were married to foreign spouses, who had established their homes in their countries of asylum and who were having difficulty deciding whether to repatriate or not. In some instances, it was impossible for the PAC to trace the whereabouts of some of its exiled members. This applied particularly in instances where they had changed their place of residence frequently. Accommodation was another problematic aspect of the repatriation and early reintegration process in that some of the returnees' South African-based relatives, who had initially agreed to accommodate them temporarily found it difficult to continue doing so in the long-term. This applied particularly in cases where they themselves were struggling to survive. In such instances, the PAC had to rely on volunteers who were willing to assist with temporary accommodation. In addition, the PAC also liaised with the South African Council of Churches and other organizations for assistance with accommodation. In other cases, some non-returnee families were not willing to assist their returning relatives since they were struggling to survive.

**i) How these problems were solved.**

In as far as security was concerned, returnees who did not feel safe returning to the country were assured of the assistance of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization of African Unity in providing them with protection during the repatriation process.

**j) Organizations with which the PAC liaised during the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

The PAC liaised with a number of organizations which included the United Nations Commission for Refugees which assisted with the processing of travel and other documents. This body also played a significant role in the actual

repatriation of South African political exiles from their countries of asylum and in the provision of a short-term allowance during the early phases of the reintegration process. The South African Council of Churches rendered assistance with the tracing of South African-based relatives. In addition, it also helped returnees financially, but unfortunately the SACC gradually became sectarian in its assistance in the long-term. The Organization of African Unity also helped the PAC.

**k) Assistance rendered by the National Party-led government.**

The PAC did not receive any form of assistance from the National Party-led government, since the government viewed the repatriation process as the responsibility of the liberation movements and the UNHCR.

**l) The assessment of the role of the PAC in the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

The PAC's role was successful in that the organization played a key role in liaising with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Organization of African Unity and the South African Council of Churches. The PAC also facilitated the application and verification processes required for Special Pension and demobilization grants for its members.

**n) The assessment of the role of the ANC-led government's Special Pension and Demobilization Acts in the reintegration process.**

The special pension grants which came as a great relief to political returnees helped to facilitate the reintegration process. But, at the same time, there were cases where individuals who did not qualify for such assistance fraudulently gained access to a special pension grant. This was primarily due to the economic situation in the country (e.g. unemployment). Insofar as the demobilization grant is concerned, it was initially meant only for returnees in the military sector. At a later stage, however, all former exiles demanded it and many were successful in being awarded a grant.

**o) Recommendations on the implementation of the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts.**

The implementation of both acts should have involved proper planning prior to implementation. Instead the acts were brought into action too precipitately.

**p) Lessons learned from the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

Proper planning is essential, particularly with regard to setting up structures and services designed to assist incoming returnees. These include, for example, accommodation, transport and financial assistance.

**q) Feedback form returnees.**

The PAC received complaints, particularly from returnees who were disappointed because they thought that they would find a land of milk and honey upon their return to South Africa. Such complaints were not valid.

### **7.3 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **7.3.1 THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

##### **A Brief Profile of the Repatriation Committee**

The South African Council of Churches in conjunction with other organizations established the Repatriation Committee which consisted of representatives of AZAPO, the PAC, the ANC-SACP alliance, the End Conscription Campaign, trade unions, civil rights and professional groups, seventeen churches and other religious bodies (Green, 1990:32). Its mandate was to render assistance to returnees during the repatriation and early reintegration process. The criteria utilized in determining eligibility for assistance from the repatriation committee included membership of an exiled liberation movement, non-aligned groups, military personnel of the liberation movements, defectors (dissidents on the outside and askaris in the country), political prisoners, conscientious objectors and those who left for other reasons (Green, 1990:32).

##### **a) Position held at the South African Council of Churches during the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

Deputy General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

##### **b) Feelings expressed by returnees regarding their impending return to South Africa.**

The prospect of returning to their homeland elicited feelings of excitement, belonging, security and freedom amongst returnees.

##### **c) The role of the South African Council of Churches in the returnee repatriation and early reintegration process.**

#### **TRANSPORT**

The organization provided transport for returnees and was also responsible for the transportation costs in instances where such costs had been incurred by other organizations on behalf of the SACC.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The SACC provided returnees with a general grant to enable them to purchase food and other basic necessities.

## **TRACING OF RELATIVES**

The organization also assisted returnees with the tracing of relatives.

### **d) Major problems encountered.**

One of the main problems encountered at a psycho-social level was that the

SACC had to find ways of dealing with returnees who expressed anxiety at having to leave some of their relatives' graves behind in their countries of asylum since proximity to the graves of deceased relatives is of significance from an African cultural perspective. Other returnees encountered adjustment problems due to the fact that they left South Africa as children and were now returning as adults. Although they were returning home, it nevertheless felt as though they were returning to a foreign country where they had to adjust to a different cultural environment.

In some instances, pensioners returned to communities where they had no support structures, particularly in the absence of their children. This made the adjustment process even more difficult for them. In other cases, the returnees' inability to secure wage employment marred their initial excitement at finally returning to their country of birth. The SACC could not assist them in this regard, since such aid was beyond its mandate. An additional problem was the dependency syndrome amongst some returnees. This applied particularly in instances where they had become accustomed to being provided with free accommodation, food and clothing by the ANC-SACP alliance.

Some of the returnees' children who were born outside the country were unable to communicate in any of South Africa's indigenous languages: this created a communication barrier for them. Inadequate provisions for the disabled were also a problem, in addition to the tracing of relatives, particularly in cases where

they had relocated to other parts of South Africa or had been affected by force removals. Other problematic areas included illiteracy amongst some of the returnees, and difficulties emanating from divergent accounting procedures by the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees and the South African Council of Churches. In some cases, small, contracted organizations established primarily to help with the returnee reintegration process were closed down due to mismanagement of funds.

**e) Organizations with which the South African Council of Churches liaised during the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

The ANC-SACP alliance was one of the organizations with which the South African Council of churches liaised. After the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, the ANC-SACP alliance requested assistance from the SACC with the returnee repatriation and early reintegration process. A workshop aimed at discussing preparations for the impending repatriations was subsequently convened by the ANC-SACP alliance in Lusaka, Zambia, which the SACC attended. The organizations also held consultations with the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees prior to the repatriations. In addition, the SACC invited non-governmental organizations and trade unions to assist with the initial stages of the early reintegration process.

**f) The assessment of the role of the SACC in the early reintegration process.**

The SACC was generally successful in assisting with the political returnee reintegration process, since it liaised with the United Nations High Commissioner or Refugees, the liberation movements and South African-based establishments.

### 7.3.1 THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

#### **A Brief Profile of the International Organization for Migration**

The International Organization for Migration, an inter-governmental establishment was formed in 1951 as the culmination of a Belgian and USA initiative, the Provisional Inter-governmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME). Initially, it was established to render assistance to European refugees, displaced people and migrants who wished to settle overseas. As it developed, the organization became more globalized as the scope of its activities gradually expanded. In 1980, its name changed to the Inter-governmental Committee for Migration (ICEM) because of its increasing global role. In 1989, it again changed its name to the International Organization for Migration, which currently has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Its South African-based offices were established in 1990, the year which coincided with the unbanning of the ANC-SACP and the PAC. The International Organization for Migration is one of the leading international establishments working with refugees, migrants, the UNHCR, governments and other organizations in refugee-related activities. Its mandate is generally broad in scope but of particular relevance to this study, is its role in the repatriation of refugees for which it has world-wide operational experience. Although the organization is not part of the United Nations, it maintains close working relations with the structures and operations of the United Nations. In addition, it also has a wide range of other international and non-governmental organizations as its partners. At the request of governments, the International Organization for Migration processes refugees and migrants prior to their departure. It also provides them with transport and facilitates immigration procedures, including the preparation, examination and verification of documents. In addition, the IOM provides medical screening and treatment if required, HIV counselling, cultural orientation and a benefits' waiver of visas for those traveling under the auspices of the IOM.

#### **a) Position of respondent.**

Operations Assistant who was involved in the repatriation of South African Political returnees.



**(b) The role of the International Organization for Migration in the repatriation and early reintegration of South African political returnees.**

The organization was actively involved in the repatriation process, particularly, between 1990 and 1991. It was contracted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist with the South African returnee repatriation process. The UNHCR provided the organization with lists of names of South African political refugees who were to be repatriated from different parts of the world.

**TRANSPORTATION**

The International Organization for Migration utilized the lists of names provided by the UNHCR which also included members of the liberation movements who were not registered as refugees with the UNHCR. The organization repatriated them from their countries of asylum to South Africa on behalf of the UNHCR. It assisted them with airline reservations, the purchasing of air tickets, transport to the airport in countries of asylum, reception at the Johannesburg International Airport and transport to their final destinations in South Africa.

**ACCOMMODATION**

Returnees in transit to other parts of South Africa and those who could not locate their relatives were accommodated temporarily at a transit centre in Sebokeng and Kensington in Johannesburg. Those whose relatives were still being traced were permitted to continue staying there until their families were located.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Initially, the UNHCR gave the South African Council of Churches' National Coordinating Committee for Returnees (NCCR) funding to provide returnees with grants on arrival in the country. At a later stage the UNHCR requested the IOM to take over this responsibility.

**d) Organizations with which the IOM liased during the repatriation and early reintegration process.**

The organization did not liaise directly with any other organization apart from the UNHCR which had contracted it to assist with the repatriation process. The reason was because of the IOM's extensive international operational experience in refugee repatriation programmes.

**e) The major problems encountered.**

No major problems were encountered, since the IOM has extensive global experience in UNHCR refugee repatriation programmes.

**f) The assessment of the IOM's role in the returnee repatriation and early reintegration process.**

The organization was successful in its South African repatriation project on behalf of the UNHCR. This was primarily because of its experience in refugee repatriation as evidenced by the fact that the South African repatriation project was followed by a similar exercise in Mozambique.

**g) Lessons learned from the South African political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process.**

The establishment of cordial relations with airlines and travel agents is essential in order to facilitate the repatriation of large refugee populations. The organization had had, for example, to pay cash for airline tickets in the past but, with the establishment of good working relations with travel agents and airlines, IOM cheques are now without any problems.

## **7.5 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT**

### **7.5.1 THE ANC-LED GOVERNMENT THE SPECIAL PENSION ACT**

#### **Background Information on the Special Pension Act Number 69 of 1996**

The Special Pension Act was passed and signed into law on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1996 and became effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1996. The Special Pension Amendment Act Number 75 was passed in 1998 (Statutes of the Republic of South Africa – Salaries and Pensions, 1998:1595).

In order to ensure eligibility, political organizations or non-statutory political structures which were formerly banned had to have existed for at least five years prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 1990 and also have to have a permanent governing and executive structure. In addition, such organizations had to have been restricted in terms of particular laws or to have been declared unlawful in terms of specific laws (Special Pensions Act No. 69 of 1996:20).

#### **a) Position of respondent.**

Assistant Director of Special Pensions

#### **b) The objectives of the Special Pension Act.**

The objectives of the Special Pension Act were to give effect to section 189 of the Constitution; to provide for special pensions to be paid to persons who made

sacrifices or served the public interest in the cause of establishing a democratic constitutional order; to prescribe rules for determining which individuals were entitled to receive those pensions; to establish a Special Pensions Board and a Special Pensions Review Board and to provide for related matters.

#### **c) The criteria utilized in determining eligibility for a special pension grant.**

The eligibility criteria include those South African citizens who made sacrifices in the establishment of a democracy in the country, and those who were 35 years

of age on the commencement date of the Special Pension Act. In addition, individuals are also included who were prevented from working for a pension because, for at least five years prior to the 2nd of February, 1990, they were engaged in the service of a political organization on a full-time basis, were banned, imprisoned for political reasons, became disabled in the course of their political activities, were pensioners, or those who were surviving spouses of a deceased benefactor, or who were surviving dependants.

**d) Administrative structures and functions of the Special Pension Office.**

**The Special Pension Board**

With regard to its structure, the Special Pension Board comprises the Chairperson and four other members who are employed on a full-time basis. They are appointed by the Minister of Finance, in consultation with the President of the country, and are accountable to the Minister. The primary functions of the Special Pension Board include informing the public about application procedures and eligibility criteria, the processing of applications, the referral of applications to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, conducting investigations where more information is required and determining the amount to be paid to beneficiaries. Finally, the Special Pension Board also inform applicants about the right to appeal in cases where applications have been rejected.

**The Special Pension Review Board**

The Special Pension Review Board consists of a chairperson with an appropriate legal background and two other members, one of whom has to be an actuary.

**The Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer, who is accountable to the Minister of Finance, is appointed by the Special Pension Board. He or she is responsible for the management and administrative aspects of the functions of the Special Pension Board and assists the Board in performing its duties.

**e) Application procedures.**

These entail the submission of a certified application form prior to the deadline, and a biographical profile which is verified by a political party representative in the Special Pension offices.

**f) The year that the Special Pension office began receiving applications.**

Applications were first received in December, 1996. By the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2001, 29,766 applications had been received, and approximately 13,917 had been processed.

**g) Major problems encountered by the Special Pension Office.**

The main problems that have been encountered by the Special Pension Office are delays in the appointment of the Special Pension Board and Special Pension Review members. An additional problem is the time it took for members to familiarize themselves with the Special Pension Act and its rules prior to the actual implementation of the Act. To facilitate this process, the lawyer responsible for drafting the Act and the state law advisor assisted Board members with the interpretation of the Act. The fact that members, who initially comprised judges and professors, were employed on a part-time basis, was problematic in the long-term. This was resolved by amending the Act to include individuals with a legal background, whereas the original act had required the services of a high court judge. In addition, the amendment sought individuals who could be employed on a full-as opposed to a part-time basis.

Other problems included the provision of insufficient information by applicants regarding their political activities. Validation of information contained in the application forms was also a stumbling block. This was solved by requiring the submission of political biographies that had to be verified by political party representatives at the Special Pension Office. In addition, some members of the public who qualified for a grant were ignorant about its existence. Strategies designed to inform the public about the Act included field trips and road shows to different provinces by Special Pension officials. Illiteracy, resulting in the misinterpretation of the act by applicants and the receipt of applications from individuals who were under 35 years of age and did not qualify because of the age

## **7.5.2 THE DEMOBILIZATION ACT**

### **a) Position of the respondent at the Office of the Demobilization Unit.**

Chairperson of the Demobilization Committee.

### **b) The rationale for the Demobilization Act of 1996.**

The ANC-led government enacted the Demobilization Act in 1996 for MK and APLA military personnel who either no longer wished to pursue a military career, were disabled, or who did not meet the employment requirements of the South African Defence Force (SANDF). The interim constitution provided for the integration of statutory offices comprising the SANDF, bantustan structures and the non-statutory divisions of the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC. For this integration to occur, the names of individuals who qualified had to appear on the certified personnel register (CPR). Integration requirements included meeting the terms and conditions of the SANDF (e.g. military and health requirements).

### **c) The objectives of the Demobilization Act.**

The objective of the Act is to provide a demobilization gratuity for former non-statutory forces, to determine the requirements of the gratuity and to provide for related matters.

### **d) Whether the Demobilization Committee has been meeting its objectives.**

Yes, it has been meeting its objectives because of the commitment, not only of the committee members, but also of the Minister of Defence.

### **e) Reasons for the 1998 amendment of the 1996 Demobilization Act.**

The reason for amending the 1996 Act was primarily for extension purposes, in view of the fact that many eligible individuals failed to meet the deadline. Others were ignorant of the existence of the Demobilization Act and more time was required to inform the public about it.

### **f) Criteria utilized for assessing eligible applicants.**

The eligibility criteria include membership of non-statutory forces of MK and APLA, individuals whose names appear in the certified personnel register (CPR), those who are not temporarily or permanently employed by the SANDF, and those who wish to terminate their military careers or whose qualifications do not meet SANDF requirements. Also included are the dependants of deceased benefactors who are the surviving spouses or spouse of the deceased, dependants for whom the deceased was legally responsible for maintaining prior to his or her death, and the spouses or spouse of the deceased according to customary law, or whose marriage is recognized according to religious principles or rules.

**g) The administrative structures and functions of the Demobilization**

**Committee.**

The structure of the Demobilization Committee comprises a chairperson and not less than four other committee members. All the committee members are appointed by the Ministry of Defence and are employees of the Ministry of Defence. Regarding its functions, the Demobilization Committee processes applications, determines the amount to be paid to eligible applicants, ensures that benefactors receive their grants, and determines the validity of the mandate of an individual who applies on behalf of an applicant due to an applicant's disability (e.g. mental illness). An additional function is informing unsuccessful applicants in writing of its decision, giving reasons for the decision and informing them of their right to appeal in cases where their applications have been rejected. The Demobilization Committee also has the power to conduct investigation relating to information contained in the applications and to request any individual to appear before the Committee to present evidence or to produce the requisite documents. The committee can also conduct any other activities required for exercising its duties.

**h) Sub-structures of the Demobilization Committee.**

These include the MK and APLA offices which play a vital role in the verification of information contained in the applications forms. These sub-structures are housed in the Demobilization Committee offices. In some instances, applications

are submitted directly to the two offices and are then passed on to the Demobilization Committee. An advisory technical team also renders assistance to the committee.

**i) Application procedure.**

This involves the submission of a certified application form which is processed by the Demobilization Committee.

**j) The year that the Demobilization Committee began receiving applications.**

The committee initially began receiving applications in 1995. This function was then temporarily suspended and resumed in 1996 when the Demobilization Act was finally passed in parliament. The current estimated number of applications that have been received so far is 9600 comprising former MK and APLA cadres, political prisoners and formerly banned members, of the PAC and ANC- SACP alliance.

**k) Major problems encountered in the implementation of the Demobilization Act.**

Major problems included application forms that were lost in the mail, resulting in some of these being received long after the closing date.

**l) Assessment of the implementation of the Demobilization Act.**

The Demobilization Committee has generally been successful, as evidenced by the fact that there have been very few appeals from unsuccessful applicants.

**m) Whether the Demobilization Act has contributed to the reintegration of South African political returnees.**

From a short-term perspective, the Act has, to a certain extent, contributed to the reintegration of political returnees since it offers financial assistance.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **8.1 PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1.1 PRINCIPAL FINDINGS**

##### **Repatriation Criteria**

Regarding eligibility for repatriation assistance, differences were identified in the criteria utilized by the formerly exiled liberation movements. The ANC-SACP alliance restricted its repatriation assistance to its members only, while the PAC extended this aid to other exiled South Africans in addition to its members. This did not, however, mean that the ANC-SACP alliance had by then decided to exclude new members from joining their organization.

The criteria used by the PAC for repatriation assistance were the submission of sufficient evidence by political exiles that they left the country due to persecution by the apartheid government, and that they were members of a South African liberation movement. The UNHCR criterion on the other hand, was registration as a South African refugee with the UNHCR. In addition, the UNHCR also liaised with the liberation movements in compiling lists of names of returning exiles to be included in its repatriation programme. This was necessary since some South African exiles who were members of the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance were not registered as refugees with the UNHCR. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees contracted the International Organization For Migration (IOM) to assist with the South African political refugee repatriation process. It provided the IOM with lists of names of individuals who were to be repatriated back to the country.

##### **The Role of the UNHCR, IOM, ANC-SACP ALLIANCE, PAC and the SACC in the Early Reintegration Process**

Early reintegration in this study includes assisting refugees with arrival at airports, transportation within the country, provision of temporary accommodation, tracing

of relatives, provision of a short-term allowance, assistance with seeking employment, identification of schools, payment of school fees in some cases, funding small businesses in the informal sector, identification and admission into tertiary institutions and the provision of materials for building houses in informal settlements. Long-term reintegration, on the other hand, involves financial assistance on a semi-permanent or permanent basis as is the case in South Africa with the Demobilization and Special Pension Acts, respectively. In other instances, it entails the provision of funding by the UNHCR and donor agencies for long-term income-generating projects in order to assist returnees to become economically self-sufficient.

The UNHCR with the assistance of the IOM, the liberation movements and the SACC's National Coordinating Committee for Returnees (NCCR) played an important role in the early phases of the reintegration process. This included the transportation of returnees to various parts of the country and the provision of temporary accommodation where it was required. In addition to the assistance provided by the UNHCR and the NCCR, the ANC-SACP alliance was able to extend its accommodation assistance to its returning members. This, for example, included purchasing a house in Soweto and renting accommodation in order to alleviate the accommodation problem. The PAC, on the other hand, provided accommodation only in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where its headquarters were located during the exile period, since the expectation was that returnees would be accommodated by their relatives who would be meeting them at the airport as they arrived. In instances where accommodation and transport were a problem, the PAC liaised with the UNHCR and the SACC. Other areas where the ANC-SACP alliance was able to extend assistance to its members included reception of returnees at airports, hiring of buses and taxis for transportation purposes in the Gauteng province, provision of short-term allowances, payment of school fees, assistance with seeking employment, gaining access to tertiary institutions and the funding of small businesses.

Regarding the role of the UNHCR in the repatriation and early reintegration process, the organization met its standard refugee repatriation obligations providing transport, temporary accommodation and short-term allowances. From

a comparative point of view, the UNHCR played a greater role in the actual repatriation exercise while the liberation movements excelled in liaising with the UNHCR and other organizations in order to facilitate the process. This was understandable, since refugee protection and repatriations are the responsibilities of the UNHCR at the international level. Furthermore, the UNHCR has extensive global experience in refugee repatriations and has the required economic and human resources at its disposal to undertake a task of this magnitude.

### **Major Problems Encountered**

The International Organization for Migration encountered no major problems: this was due to its extensive experience in refugee repatriation programmes worldwide on behalf of the UNHCR. Problems that were experienced by other organizations included accommodation which was identified as a problem by the ANC-SACP alliance, the PAC and the SACC respondents. The PAC representative attributed this to the fact that South African-based relatives were often not able to assist their returning extended families on a long-term basis, since they themselves were struggling to survive. The tracing of relatives was also problematic in cases where returnees had lost contact with them. The inability to communicate in any of South Africa's indigenous languages and cultural differences were identified as problems. This applied particularly to foreign wives and to children who were born in exile, as indicated by the ANC-SACP alliance, PAC and SACC respondents. This may have been one of the reasons why some returnees abandoned their foreign wives when they returned to the country, an indication of the significant role of language and culture in the reintegration process. This applied especially in instances where returnees had been alienated from their country for protracted periods of time ranging from fifteen to thirty years which has fundamental implications for the social reintegration process.

The PAC, ANC-SACP alliance and SACC respondents indicated that the inability to secure employment was a serious problem due to South Africa's unemployment rate at the time that political exiles began returning to the country. As highlighted in earlier chapters, the capacity to secure employment plays a vital role in reintegration, particularly the economic dimension of the process. A basic

assumption is that the attainment of economic reintegration will more than likely facilitate the process at the social level. The ANC-SACP and SACC respondents also identified the dependency syndrome as a problem amongst some returnees, a factor which they attributed to their having taken free provisions which had been supplied primarily by the UNHCR and, in some instances, by their liberation movements whilst they were in exile.

### **Assessment of the Role of the Special Pension and Demobilization Grants In the South African Political Returnee Reintegration Process.**

#### **The Legislative Framework : Aspects of Statutory Interventions with Respect to the Returnee Reintegration Process**

The PAC and ANC-SACP alliance respondents' views on the role of the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts in the political returnee reintegration process were generally positive. However, political returnees had to wait for six years prior to receiving any governmental assistance. This meant that, in some instances, returnees remained unemployed for this period without any social security. Nevertheless, a point raised by the PAC respondent is that, although returnees had to wait for such a lengthy period before gaining reintegration aid from the government in recognition of their contribution to the liberation struggle, the grants still came as a great relief to returnees.

Regarding problems relating to the implementation of the Special Pension Act, the ANC-SACP alliance, the PAC and Special Pension respondents indicated fraudulent accessing of the Special Pension grant was a serious cause for concern. This included the grants being given to individuals who were not politically active on a full-time basis, as well as to non-members of the liberation movements and those married to non-South African citizens outside the country who could apply for citizenship in those countries. As citizens, they automatically had access to the benefits and rights accorded to nationals of these states. Other categories of South Africans who accessed the grant fraudulently were individuals who had been employed on a full-time basis in exile. Citizenship and employment made it possible for them to accumulate a retirement pension of which their refugee counterparts were deprived of in their countries of asylum.

In essence, the factors discussed above do not constitute examples of sacrifices as stipulated in the Special Pension Act, a point which validates the respondents' concerns. Attempts at alerting the Special Pension officials to these anomalies were, according to the ANC-SACP alliance respondent, futile. From the PAC respondent's perspective, the fraudulent accessing of Special Pension grants was unavoidable given the prevailing economic conditions in South Africa. In such instances, some unemployed non-returnees felt that despite the fact that they were not in exile, banned or imprisoned, they, too, suffered under apartheid and deserved some form of compensation. The children of former political exiles who, like their parents, were in exile for protracted periods of time due to their parents' liberation struggle activities, can also claim to have made sacrifices. The reason for this is that they were also deprived of the opportunity of ever returning to their country of birth and had similar experiences to their parents as political refugees in their countries of asylum when they became adults. In addition, their inability to live and work in South Africa also prevented them from accumulating a retirement pension. Similarly, the children of former political prisoners who were never in exile can also argue that they, too made sacrifices, since they were deprived of a normal family life due to the imprisonment of their fathers for extended periods of time.

Regarding the fraudulent accessing of the special pension grants, this can be attributed partly to the misinterpretation of the Special Pension Act by officials, particularly during the early stages of its implementation. The ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC respondents indicated the need for stricter processing procedures in order to avoid fraudulent cases in the future.

The minimum age criterion which restricts the Special Pension grant to those who are thirty-five years of age and above was identified as a problem, not only by the ANC-SACP respondent, but also by the Special Pension interviewee. A pension, which is usually accumulated during one's period of employment, is associated with retirement from employment due to old age, or in a case where an individual decides to take early retirement. This is why the word "special" was added, so as to accommodate political returnees who had not yet reached the retirement age of sixty. Initially, the Special Pension grant was restricted to pensioners of sixty

years of age and above, but the Act was later amended to include individuals who were thirty-five years of age and above, thus making it possible for more returnees to gain access to the grant. But despite this, many returnees below the age of thirty five who made great sacrifices in liberating South Africa have been excluded. This has the potential of generating feelings of animosity against the ANC-led government amongst members of this category of returnees.

### **Demobilization**

Insofar as the role of the Demobilization Act in the returnee reintegration process is concerned, while both the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance representatives' responses were generally positive, they nevertheless viewed the Act as playing a comparatively less significant role in the reintegration process than the Special Pension grant. The reason for this is that the Demobilization gratuity involves a once-off payment thus, making its contribution to reintegration a short-term one. Again, fraudulent accessing of the demobilization grant was identified as a problem by both respondents.

### **Analysis of the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts**

The enactment and implementation of the Special Pension and Demobilization Acts by the ANC led government is, to an extent, an indication of the continuity of the relationship that existed in exile between the formerly exiled liberation movements and their members. Continuity with this relationship or linkage is also evidenced by the existence of political verification units comprising of ANC-SACP alliance and PAC representation at the Special Pension and Demobilization unit offices which were established by the ANC-led government. From a governmental perspective, the rationale for the Special Pension Act was to compensate individuals who made sacrifices in the liberation struggle. In other words, the Act provides a legal framework to deal with matters of compensation.

The ANC-led government extended this assistance to other liberation movements in recognition of their contribution to the liberation struggle, which is a commendable gesture on the part of the government. In effect, the Act took cognizance of the disadvantaged position in which long-term engagement in the

liberation struggle had placed political returnees. This was particularly evident when they returned to South Africa from exile. The fact that they had not been working in the country for extended periods of time, unlike their employed non-returnee counterparts, deprived them of the opportunity of accumulating a pension for retirement purposes. This, in most instances, placed them in a comparatively disadvantaged position in the long term. A counter argument to this is that sectors of the non-returnee population were also disadvantaged by the apartheid system, which restricted their employment opportunities, resulting in their inability to secure employment prior to 1994. They, too, were deprived of the opportunity of accumulating a retirement pension. Although the validity of this point of view is not disputed, a critical consideration is the fact that political returnees were, unlike their unemployed non-returnee counterparts, deprived of the opportunity of competing for employment in the country.

Although the Special Pension Act does not specifically stipulate that its objective was to facilitate political returnee reintegration, it has nevertheless contributed significantly to this process. The reason for this is that the beneficiaries of the Special Pension grant receive a specified amount on a monthly basis in addition to an initial lump sum payment. In addition, the grant is paid to the beneficiary for the duration of his or her life. Its contribution to reintegration, particularly to the economic dimension of the process, is significantly greater than that afforded by the Demobilization gratuity. The reason for this is that the Demobilization gratuity offers short-term assistance. As highlighted in earlier discussions, a basic assumption of this study is that the attainment of economic reintegration is a vital precursor to facilitating the process at the social level.

As far as the dependants of eligible deceased or missing activists are concerned, they receive a once-off payment equal to the amount that the deceased or missing person would have received for two years had she or he still been alive. The inclusion of dependants by the ANC-led government was a good strategy, in that it minimized the perception that governmental assistance was restricted to the political returnee population alone. In essence, it minimized the potential for non-returnees perceiving such assistance as involving the preferential treatment of returnees by the ANC-led government. In addition, it also neutralized the potential

for animosity or resentment directed at the returnee population by non-returnees. Other neutralizing mechanisms included compensation for South African citizens who were never in exile, but who also suffered under apartheid rule. This included reparation for the victims of apartheid who testified at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as for victims of forced removals in places such as Sophiatown, and also the land restitution process that is still in progress. Disabled individuals, who sustained their disability during the course of serving in a full-time position for formerly banned organizations, are also eligible for a Special Pension grant. Although the Special Pension Act has undoubtedly facilitated the economic and social reintegration of political returnees, ambiguities relating to eligibility for a grant have been identified. These include full-time engagement in liberation struggle politics. Regarding the duration of participation in such activities, the requirement is a minimum of five years prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1990. Full-time engagement in liberation struggle politics automatically disqualifies former political exiles who were official members of the liberation movements, were registered with the UNHCR and who were employed on a full-time basis in exile. The reason for this is that full-time employment would have made it impossible for them to engage in liberation struggle politics on a full-time basis. An important consideration that was overlooked in the formulation of the Act was that some South African refugees or political exiles were employed on a temporary contract basis in their countries of asylum. The nature of their employment thus made it impossible for them to accumulate an adequate pension for retirement purposes, since they received a gratuity at the end of each contract. The only difference between them and their unemployed counterparts was that they lived under comparatively better economic conditions since they were employed. They, too, however could not visit South Africa prior to 1990. Of significance are cases where employed political activists made greater contributions to the liberation struggle than their unemployed counterparts. In other words, membership of a liberation movement and being unemployed did not necessarily imply full-time active engagement in liberation struggle politics. Employed political activists may, for example, have been involved in infiltrations into South Africa for sabotage purposes, or travelled to South Africa's neighbouring countries for the same purpose. In essence, the



operationalization of full-time engagement in liberation struggle politics is problematic, in that it is subject to different interpretations. The same applies to the concepts of “sacrifices”, in that there is no provision for the scope of activities that fall under this definition. Misinterpretations of the concept “sacrifice” could, for example, include the wife of a former political exile perceiving her role as involving a sacrifice, despite the fact that she was not politically active in exile. In addition, some non-returnees may, for example, feel that the fact that they were not in political exile, imprisoned or banned should not be a justification for their exclusion from receiving a Special Pension grant since they, too, suffered under apartheid rule.

Regarding the minimum age criterion, of concern is the fact that returnees who are below thirty-five years of age do not qualify for a Special Pension grant. An ironical aspect of the decision to exclude individuals below the age of thirty five years is that some of them may have made greater contributions to the liberation struggle than some beneficiaries who meet the age criterion. A problematic aspect in the implementation of the Demobilization Act is that some former political exiles who were not in the military wings of the ANC-SACP alliance and the PAC have also been granted demobilization grants, as articulated by the PAC respondent. This is not in line with the Demobilization Act.

Having highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the ANC-led government’s Special Pension and Demobilization Acts, a general conclusion is that, despite their limitations, these Acts have undoubtedly contributed significantly to the political returnee reintegration process.

Regarding feedback from the returnees on repatriation and reintegration assistance, although no systematic assessment was conducted, both the PAC and ANC-SACP alliance respondents indicated that the returnees with whom they had communicated were generally negative. The PAC respondent attributed this to their high expectations which were not met, while the ANC-SACP alliance representative blamed it on the dependency syndrome. These perceptions cannot, however, be attributed to the political returnee population in South Africa in

general because of the relatively small number of people with whom the respondents communicated.

### **8.1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study the recommendations of this research are that large-scale refugee repatriations should continue to be handled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. The reason for this is because of their extensive global experience and expertise in this area. The role of the exiled liberation movements should continue to involve liaising with these international organizations in order to expedite the refugee repatriation process, since many members of such movements are usually registered as refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. An additional recommendation is that proper planning is essential prior to the actual implementation of the repatriation process in order to ensure that the necessary structures are in place (e.g. temporary accommodation, funds, transportation. etc).

At a psycho-social level, counselling services should be established to assist returnees in need of counselling as they adjust to a different culture, particularly those political returnees who left their homelands at a very young age, or those who were born in exile. Counselling services may also be necessary for some male returnees returning to their countries with foreign spouses. In addition, prior to repatriating returnees, orientation workshops should be conducted in their countries of asylum in order to prepare them for their return and adjustment to their homelands. Returnees should be made aware of the potential for culture shock caused by cultural differences and different mind-sets particularly in instances where they have been away from their homelands for protracted periods of time ranging from fifteen to thirty years, or where they were born in exile factors which have serious implications for reintegration. Those registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should be sensitized to the fact that their refugee status will cease to exist once they return to their home countries. In addition, that this will also entail the cessation of long-term financial and other material assistance from the organization. Orientation workshops are

likely to assist them to disengage gradually from a dependency syndrome, and to prepare them psychologically for their repatriation. This may also contribute to their not having unrealistic expectations of either their governments or of the conditions of long-term reintegration in their countries of origin.

Regarding further research, there is a need for more micro-level research in the form of surveys on the actual experiences of refugees as they reintegrate into their respective countries of origin. Such research would highlight the dynamics of the process at a psycho-social level. Insofar as policy implications are concerned, governments of returning refugees should, like their South African counterparts, be proactive by responding positively to the political returnee problem through legislative processes. The reason for this is that political returnees often comprise not only returning political exiles, but also political prisoners and banned individuals, people who constitutes a relatively large proportion of a country's population. Support for returnees is essential, not only for humanitarian reasons, but also to minimize the potential for instability and a threat to national security, particularly from the military sector of the returnee population. At the same time, governments should also not be perceived to be giving preferential treatment to political returnees, and should therefore devise additional compromising strategies like the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, land restitution processes and compensation for property forcibly taken away during forced removals.

Further recommendations are that facilitators of political returnee or refugee repatriation and early reintegration processes should be well-trained, patient and committed to the task at hand. In addition, governments that are receiving incoming refugee populations should ensure that structures are in place to accommodate disabled returnees and pensioners, as well as other returnees who are unable to trace their relatives in their home countries. Finally, there is also a need to evaluate refugee programmes periodically in order to prepare adequately for future influxes of refugees in different parts of the world.

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1**

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

**POLITICAL ORGANIZATION**

1. Name of political organization.

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2. What was your position in the organization during the repatriation of South African political exiles ?

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3. What is your current position in the organization ?

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4. Did your organization render assistance to returning exiles who were not members of your organization ?

Yes                      No

5. What criteria did your organization use in selecting political exiles who qualified for repatriation assistance ?

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6. Can you give a detailed explanation of the role your political party played in the repatriation of exiled members of your organization in terms of the following categories:

**TRANSPORTATION**

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**ACCOMMODATION**

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**TRACING OF RELATIVES**

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**EMPLOYMENT**

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**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

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**OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE .**

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7. What were your primary sources of funding ?

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8. Approximately how many political returnees received repatriation assistance from your organization ?

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9. What major problems did your organization encounter during the repatriation and early reintegration process ?

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9.1 How were these problems solved ?

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10. With which establishments did your organization liaise ?

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10.1 In each case, explain what the liaison process entailed.

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11. Did the National Party-led government render any assistance ?

Yes                      No

11.1 If yes, elaborate.

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12. What is your assessment of the role of the ANC-SACP alliance in the repatriation and early reintegration exercise ?

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13. What is your assessment of the role of the ANC-led government's Special Pension and Demobilization Acts in the political returnee reintegration process.



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16. What lessons did you learn from the returnee repatriation and early reintegration process ?

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17. What feedback, if any, did you receive from political returnees ?

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

1. Position of respondent.

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2. Feelings expressed by returning political exiles about their impending return to South  
South Africa.

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3. What was the role of the South African Council of Churches in the repatriation and  
early reintegration process ?

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4. What major problems did your organization encounter during this exercise ?

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5. With which organizations did your establishment liaise during the repatriation and early reintegration process (provide details of what the liaising process entailed, where applicable).

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6. What is your assessment of the South African Council of Churches in the political returnee repatriation and reintegration process?

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**THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

1. Can you give a brief background of the International Organization for

Migration ?

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2. What was your position in this organization during the political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process ?

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3. Can you give a detailed explanation of your role during the repatriation and early reintegration exercise in terms of the following categories:

**TRANSPORT**

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**ACCOMMODATION**

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**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

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**OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE**

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4. What were the major problems that your organization encountered during the repatriation and early reintegration exercise ?

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4.1 How were these problems solved ?

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5. Did your organization liaise with other establishments ?

Yes                      No

5.1 If yes, identify them and in each case explain what the liaising process entailed.



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6. Was your organization successful in rendering assistance to political returnees ?

Yes                      No

6.1 Give reasons for your response.

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7. What lessons did you learn from your involvement in the repatriation and early reintegration of South African political returnees ?

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8. Do you have any other comments regarding the South African political returnee repatriation and early reintegration process ?

Yes                      No

8.1 If yes, can you elaborate ?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

**THE SPECIAL PENSION OFFICE**

1. What is your position in the Special Pension Office ?

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2. When did you start working for this establishment ?

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3. Why did the government enact the Special Pension Act ?

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4. What are the objectives of the Special Pension Act?

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5. Do you think that the Special Pension Office has been meeting these objectives  
so far ?

Yes                      No

5.1 Give reasons for your response.

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6. What criteria did your organization use in determining whether or not political  
returnees qualified for a grant?

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7. Can you give a detailed description of the functions and administrative structures of the Special Pension Office ?

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8. What are the application procedures for a Special Pension grant ?

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9. In what year did you begin receiving applications ?

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9.1 Approximately how many applications have you processed so far ?

10. What major problems did the Special Pension office encounter in the implementation of the Act ?

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10.1 How were these problems solved ?

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11. Why was the original Act amended ?

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11.1 Has the amendment process improved the implementation process ?

Yes

No

11.2 Give reasons for your response.

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12. Do you think there is still room for improvement in the implementation of the Act ?

Yes

No

12.1 If yes, elaborate.

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13. Do you think that the Special Pension Act has facilitated the reintegration of political returnees?

Yes      No

13.1 If yes, elaborate.

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14. Has an evaluation of the implementation of the Special Pension Act been conducted ?

Yes                      No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION



**THE DEMOBILIZATION OFFICE**

1. What is your position in the demobilization office ?

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2. Why did the government enact the Demobilization Act ?

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3. What are the objectives of the Demobilization Act ?

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3.1 Do you think that the demobilization office has been meeting these objectives ?

Yes            No

4. What were the reasons for the amendment of the original Act ?

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4.1 Has the amendment improved the implementation of the Act ?

Yes            No

4.1.1 If yes, elaborate.

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5. What criteria are used for assessing individuals who qualify for a demobilization grant ?

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6. What are the administrative structures and functions of the demobilization unit ?

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7. What are the application procedures for a demobilization grant ?

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8. In what year did you begin receiving applications ?

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9. What major problems has the demobilization unit encountered so far in implementing the Act ?

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10. Do you think that there is still room for improvement in the implementation of the Act ?

Yes            No

10. 1 Give reasons for your response.

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11. Has an evaluation of the Act been conducted ?

Yes            No

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **CASE STUDIES OF POLITICAL RETURNEES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **CASE 1**

##### **EMPLOYMENT: SEARCHING FOR WORK**

I am a woman of 29 years of age and I have three children who were born outside the country. I left South Africa in 1978 due to police harassment. I first went to Botswana and then on to Lusaka, where I received better housing and education. After completing my secondary education, I did a pre-school teachers' training course and performed very well.

My first job was in Tanzania where I did a second year of training, and then gained three years experience. During that time I used to attend workshops on early learning and education. This all came to an end in 1990 when our organization was unbanned and indemnity was granted by the South African government. It was the most confusing and happy time of my life. We returned home with high expectations, but things were not as we expected them to be.

I started looking for work, but I have found it very difficult to find employment. For two years I searched whenever I went to Johannesburg, but I was almost always told: "Sorry, no vacancy". At the two nursery schools where they did have vacancies, I was told that my qualifications were not accepted in South Africa.

Through my involvement in the local branch of my organization, I attended a workshop about community development and made contact with the manager of the company which sponsored the workshop. Later, I was called for a job interview and passed all the selection tests. However, I was not selected for placement because I was a political returnee who was regarded as a terrorist. The

manager who has befriended me says he will continue trying to find me work, but I feel that large businesses discriminate against returnees. I am still convinced that I will find employment soon, since I have the necessary qualifications and I have never lost hope.

## CASE 2

### EMPLOYMENT : A SUCCESSFUL CASE

Joseph was forced to leave the country in 1980 after becoming involved in the 1976 student uprising. He was twenty years old when he left for Botswana. He registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and stayed as a refugee at Dukwe camp. After joining the PAC, he moved to Tanzania. Initially, he had wanted to join the military wing to become a freedom fighter, but after hearing bad rumours about military life, he opted to study further. This has placed him in a very favourable position in terms of finding work.

He was sent to Zimbabwe where he did his GCE "O" and "A" levels, passing with exemption. Thereafter he studied Librarianship at a Polytechnic in England and worked in Zimbabwe from 1988. Joseph says that finding a sponsor for his studies, in his case the Lutheran World Federation, was the only way to survive in exile, since the organization was not able to provide its members with a stipend.

In 1990, Joseph married a Zimbabwean woman and they now have two children. His wife is a nurse, but still lives in Zimbabwe. Joseph's separation from his children is a source of great worry, and he looks forward to being united with them after the political situation in South Africa has been resolved.

He arrived back from exile in 1991 and has found a good job. This was possible because his English qualification is recognized here.



### CASE 3

#### CERTIFICATION PROBLEMS

I left South Africa for Mozambique in 1980, spent five years in the military and then studied as a paramedic in Tanzania. I qualified in 1988 and then worked in the ANC hospital in Mazimba until 1992, when I returned home with my wife and three children. I registered with the NCCR, but only received a grant twice before it closed down. We are now living in an informal area in Soshanguve.

With my qualifications I have started looking for work but, unfortunately, I did not have the R105, 00 that is needed to have one's certificates evaluated by the HSRC. I found work as a casual worker on a construction site for R20,00 per day, but this was not enough to meet the needs of my family.

I then approached one returnee who was able to assist in paying for the evaluation of my certificates, thus making it possible for me to register and then I was able to register with the South African Medical and Dental Council (SAMD). However, the SAMD downgraded my qualifications saying, that my training is not recognized in South Africa and that they regarded me as a paramedic. Since then I have been looking for work, while working on the PRPC brick-making project. I have completed employment forms at the Primary Health Care section of the Department of Health and Population Development and I am waiting for the panel to meet and discuss my application.

## CASE 4

### HOUSING – PRIVACY IS A DREAM

As a returnee, I came home with great expectations of becoming independent. I had acquired an education while in exile and I hoped to get a job and a house with ease. These expectations did not only come from myself, my parents who are pensioners thought that with my education I would find a job and be able to assist them.

Two months passed by and I could not find a job that would allow me to lead an independent life. I became a burden on my parents since I was an additional mouth to feed. This problem finally forced me to move from my parent's home and to seek shelter with my elder sister who has a steady job and housing.

Staying with my sister has created additional problems., I am sharing a bedroom with four of my nephews whose ages range between 12 and 18. For them I am an intruder, no longer their uncle. They do not understand the complexity of my problem, their freedom in their own bedroom has been disturbed by my presence. For me, privacy is still a dream, even though I am a man of 37 years.

## CASE 5

### HOUSING FOR MY FAMILY

It was not an easy decision for me to go into exile at my age. However, in 1980 at the age of fifty, I left for Mozambique, together with my twelve children. Everywhere we went we were well treated. My children and grand children have been given scholarships, clothing and food. I was staying in Zambia when the repatriation process began in 1991.

On the day of repatriation, everybody in Lusaka was so happy and excited to be going to the country of their birth being promised work, housing and schooling for our children.

The first problem I faced was to find accommodation. The house in which I stayed at first had been occupied by another family. We were told to go and locate our relatives. I was welcomed by the brother of my late husband, accommodating us was a heavy burden for him, since he had a large family. While staying there, I went to numerous individuals and organizations looking for help.

Through a priest, I was able to rent a house in Eersterust. I thought that with the grants from the NCCR I would be able to pay the rent until one of my children found work. However, the money from the NCCR dried up and we had no way of paying the rent let alone finding money to buy food. We were then forced to leave Eersterust. I resorted to piece jobs and gambling, but there were some days when we went hungry.

While looking for help, I met a woman who worked for a community development organization. She heard of my problems and offered me the use of a house in Mamelodi for two months while I looked for accommodation. Still I was not able to find an acceptable alternative, and so I was forced to move again, this time to Stanza Bopape shack settlement. Here, I had to erect a shelter using whatever scrap metal I came across in the street.

At that stage I had no money. My children were malnourished and we could not afford medical treatment. While at Stanza Bopape, I went to register as a pensioner, and with the small sum of money have been able to buy food for the children. At times I wish I had stayed in exile because of the problems I am facing. Although we were well received by our friends and relations, I am now having to face the problems of my family on my own.

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