Introduction

As a region, southern Africa presents a critical discursive pedestal from which to explore manifestations, victories, prospects and challenges of Pan-Africanism on the African continent. This is so on account of three basic reasons. First, southern Africa can be considered a region of the continent which, compared to others, benefitted immensely from Pan-African praxis in the unfolding of its anti-colonial struggles from the 1950s to the 1990s. Home to no less than five countries (Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe) in which liberation wars had to be fought in order to dislodge colonialism, the region owes its anti-colonial success story to Pan-Africanism as inspired by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its African Liberation Committee (ALC). From other southern African countries such as Botswana, Congo, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia, anti-colonial movements fighting for the liberation of Angola (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola – MPLA, National Liberation Front of Angola – FNLA and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola – UNITA), Mozambique (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique – FRELIMO and Comite Revolucionario de Mocambique – COREMO), Namibia (South West African People’s Organization – SWAPO and South West African National Union – SWANU), South Africa (African National Congress – ANC and Pan-Africanist Congress – PAC) and Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe African National Union – ZANU and Zimbabwe African People’s Union – ZAPU) obtained financial, military and diplomatic support indispensable to the pursuit of the agenda of liberation in the region. Thus, there exists a sense in which southern Africa of the 1950s–1990s is exemplary in its representation of Pan-Africanism as a consciousness with the capacity to inspire agency beyond specific national priorities. To be sure, this is not to imply that Pan-African solidarity as forged and experienced in southern Africa was a perfect affair that did not have its share of challenges. Indeed, a compendium of challenges obtained, but it has to be noted that these have been so emphasized that it now appears as if Pan-Africanism is the reason why Africa is struggling to realize the onward movement of its people in what touches economic development,
social security, political stability, industrialization and cultural decolonization. Yet it stands to scrutiny that the story of the role played by Pan-Africanism in ushering Africa into independence on the basis of the agency and commitment of African people (Asante 1998, 2007; Karenga 2008) is yet to receive the celebration it deserves. In much the same way that Du Bois (1996, vii) bemoaned the fact that “[s]ince the rise of the sugar empire and the resultant cotton kingdom … it is almost universally assumed that history can be truly written without reference to [African] people,” narratives on southern African anti-colonial struggles tend to write Pan-Africanism out of history through, among other things, the placement of emphasis on the role of the Cold War as singularly instrumental in creating the auspicious context for decolonization in Africa. Mazrui (2002) is one of many proponents of this view. The other tendency, best represented by Appiah (1993, 2018) and Ekpo (1995, 2010), is to indict Pan-Africanism for supposedly failing to weld African people into perfect unity. This chapter addresses the challenges attendant upon these perspectives through deliberate payment of homage to Pan-Africanism as “the idea and movement” (Esedebe 1994, 1) without which the liberation of southern Africa from colonial rule would be difficult even to imagine.

Second, discussing the manifestations, victories, prospects and challenges of Pan-Africanism on the African continent using southern Africa as an analytical vantage point is critical in light of the realization that the region is still largely governed by political parties that functioned as anti-colonial movements and were exemplary in their deployment of the Pan-African idea in the quest to dismantle colonialism. Except in Malawi and Zambia where Kamuzu Banda’s Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and Kenneth Kaunda’s United National Independence Party (UNIP) have since been toppled, ANC, BDP (Botswana Democratic Party), CCM (Chama cha Mapinduzi – birthed from the merger of Tanganyika African National Union – TANU, of mainland Tanzania and Afro-Shirazi Party – ASP, of Zanzibar), FRELIMO, MPLA, SWAPO and ZANU (now ZANU-PF (Patriotic Front) – after the 1987 merger with ZAPU), are still in power. This makes it worthwhile for scholars to begin to explore if these anti-colonial movements have maintained their founding in, or strayed, from the principles of Pan-Africanism and its emphasis on commitment to the revolutionary development of the region, and the continent, that inspired them when they fought to end the aggravation visited upon African people by colonialism. A cursory look at this question reveals that almost all these anti-colonial movements have thrived by paying lip-service to Pan-Africanism, abusing and misrepresenting it in the process. Meanwhile, the bulk of the scholarship that explores southern Africa’s post-independence challenges explains them as indicative of the failure of Pan-Africanism (Bond and Manyanya, 2002; Hammar et al. 2010; Mhanda 2011; Bratton 2016). In such scholarship, the attempt is hardly made to explore the ways in which Pan-Africanism can be re-centered as the receptacle of socio-economic, cultural and political values that can take Africa into the expansive future that its people desire. This chapter brings the accomplishments of the golden age of continental Pan-Africanism (1950s–1990s) into sharp focus with a view to arguing that if African people reconnect with the consciousness inspired by Pan-Africanism as was the case in the unfolding of anti-colonial struggles in southern Africa, it will be possible to achieve the kind of development that ensures, for instance, the security of the continent’s resources from exploitation by non-African interests (Nkrumah 1965; Turok 1987).

The third reason why southern Africa presents an important discursive pedestal from which to explore manifestations, victories, prospects and challenges of Pan-Africanism on the African continent has to do with the region’s developing identity as a hub of political contradictions that will either expedite or delay the realization of the continent’s cherished dreams. With the advent of Julius Malema’s Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in South
Africa and its self-construction as a vibrant Pan-Africanist organization, the rise of neo-liberal politics signaled by the victory of Frederick Chiluba’s Movement for Multi-Democracy (MMD) in Zambia’s 1991 elections, the triumph of Bakili Muluzi’s United Democratic Front (UDF) in Malawi’s 1994 elections and the narrow margins by which ZANU-PF has had to survive Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) electoral challenges in Zimbabwe, it is critical to look back in order to make sense of the present and determine the best way into the future. This is especially important, considering the array of ways in which both old and new imperialists are not only tightening their grip on the region but also doing so with the blessing of both emerging neo-liberal political parties and erstwhile liberation movements that presently hold power.

Taking the foregoing into account, this chapter discusses the manifestations, victories, prospects and challenges of Pan-Africanism in southern Africa from the 1950s to the 1990s. It achieves this through focusing on the revolutionary praxis of anti-colonial movements in this region and the commitment of independent African countries to the emancipation of fellow Africans in the settler-colonial states that would morph into Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe with the advent of their independence. The focus of this chapter is informed by the recognition that while Pan-Africanism is indispensable in the unfolding of the African quest to self-reconstruct and emerge into full significance in world affairs, it has also been disfigured in southern Africa by politicians vying to maintain their hold on power. Meanwhile, the rise in Afrophobic violence in South Africa over the past decade also makes it pertinent that questions be raised about the ways in which historical amnesia and narrow conceptions of southern African issues could be considered instrumental in framing the region’s contemporary conversations with Pan-Africanism. This makes this chapter’s focus on Pan-Africanism in southern Africa timely in that it speaks directly to the need for an empowering appreciation of Pan-Africanism in the broad context of the continent’s visions of the future as framed in Agenda 2063. As the African Union’s (AU) plan of action in which it is envisaged that by 2063, Africa will have realized the founding fathers’ dream of a United Africa, peace and stability by 2020, agricultural modernization and poverty eradication by 2025 and consensus on the nature of continental unity and its underlying institutions by 2030, Agenda 2063 is premised on the hope that the continent will return to the solidarity that underpinned the struggle for freedom from colonial rule. In terms of this plan of action, it is critical that as African people work toward the materialization of the continent’s founding fathers’ dream of a culturally, politically and economically integrated Africa, the idea by which this reconstruction agenda will be realized has to be availed for deeper appreciation. This is vital, given the upsurge in scholarship that chastises Pan-Africanism for Africa’s challenges. As noted earlier, such scholarship does not endeavor to disentangle authentic Pan-Africanism from its distortions championed by African elites immersed in the struggle to retain political power (Gwekwerere and Mpondi 2018) at any cost. Thus, this chapter eschews the easy option of discrediting Pan-Africanism and embraces the responsibility of liberating the idea in order to bring into view the limitless range of possibilities that it embodies for an authentic African reconstruction quest (Momoh 2003; Adogamhe 2008; Gwekwerere and Mheta 2012; Gwekwerere 2014).

**Independent African states, anti-colonial movements and Pan-Africanism**

With the benefit of hindsight, it can be argued that anti-colonial Pan-Africanism of the 1950s–1990s represents the golden age of Pan-Africanism in Africa, particularly in southern
Africa. To begin with, anti-colonial Pan-Africanists correctly identified the responsibility of their generation as that of liberating the continent from colonialism. They accepted this responsibility and successfully ushered in the continent’s political independence (Wa Thiong’o 2010, 2016). In ways that resonated with the realization that “each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity” (Fanon 2004, 145), anti-colonial Pan-Africanists of the 1950s–1990s demonstrated, through the organizations they formed and the movements they started, that they understood that “there [wa]s work to be done … tears to be wiped away, inhuman attitudes to be fought, condescending ways of speech to be ruled out, men to be humanized, houses to be built, schools to be opened, roads to be laid out, slums to be torn down, cities to be made to spring from the earth, men and women and children to be adorned with smiles” (Fanon 1964, 16). They distinguished between immediate and international obstacles to the emancipation of the continent (Achebe 1988) and resolved, as Nkrumah (quoted in Esedebe 1994, 168) would enjoin, to “seek the political kingdom first,” in hopes that all else would follow. The resolve of this generation of continental Pan-Africanists to rid the continent of colonial rule is manifest in countless areas, but the resolutions of the 1945 Pan-African Congress are outstanding:

If the western world is still determined to rule mankind by force, then Africans … may have to appeal to force in the effort to achieve freedom, even if force destroys them and the world. We are determined to be free. We want education. We want the right to earn a decent living; the right to express our thoughts and emotions, to adopt and create forms of beauty. We demand for Black Africa autonomy and independence … We are unwilling to starve any longer while doing the world’s drudgery, in order to support by our poverty and ignorance, a false aristocracy and discarded imperialism … We will make the world listen to the facts of our condition. We will fight in every way we can for freedom, democracy and social betterment.

(Asante & Abarry 1996, 520)

The militancy of the resolutions of the 1945 Pan-African Congress found immediate manifestation in the Kenya Land and Freedom Army’s struggle against the British in Kenya in the early 1950s, risings against the French in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Cameroon and Madagascar, and armed liberation movements to dislodge the Portuguese in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, the British in Zimbabwe and the apartheid system in South Africa and Namibia (Gwekwerere 2014). What is enlightening in the development of these anti-colonial struggles and movements is that “while anti-colonial African nationalist movements may have received material and financial support from the former Soviet Union, China, Yugoslavia, Cuba and other socialist countries, the realization of the urgency of African freedom is entirely an African realization” (Gwekwerere 2014, 38). The pursuit of this realization from a Pan-African standpoint would be inspired by an equally important understanding of the African challenge of the time as one that impacted all African people and required them all to think in terms of solidarity and collective action, as Fanon (2004, 150) explains:

Colonialism, little troubled by nuances, has always claimed that the “nigger” was a savage, not an Angolan or a Nigerian, but a “nigger”. For colonialism, this vast continent was a den of savages, infested with superstitions and fanaticism, destined to be despised, cursed by God, a land of cannibals, a land of “niggers”. Colonialism’s condemnation is continental in scale. Colonialism’s claim that the precolonial period was akin
to a darkness of the human soul refers to the entire continent of Africa. The colonized’s endeavors to rehabilitate himself and escape the sting of colonialism obey the same logic.

Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Sekou Toure (Guinea) and Modibo Keita (Mali) understood this more than all the other African leaders of their time, particularly Nkrumah, given his view of the independence of Ghana as meaningless unless all of Africa was free. History is witness to his leading role in convening the Accra Conference and the All-African People’s Conference (AAPC) in 1958 and his contributions towards the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The Accra Conference became “the first time that African cooperation was discussed at government level and the first that African governments had in concert called on the colonial authorities to apply the principle of self-determination to their African possessions” (Esedebe 1994, 167). On the other hand, the AAPC brought together over 200 leaders and representatives of over 62 nationalist organizations and liberation movements fighting to put an end to colonial domination in various African countries. The birth of the OAU and the key role it would eventually play in seeing to the emancipation of the entire African continent has to be traced back to these conferences and the painstaking struggles of Nkrumah, Toure, Keita, Nyerere, Lumumba, Nasser, Kaunda, Khama, Selassie and other Pan-African leaders of the time.

With the establishment of the OAU also came the African Liberation Committee (ALC) through which the OAU sought to expedite the liberation of African countries that were still under colonial domination. Apparently, most of these were in southern Africa and as noted earlier, five of them had to fight wars of liberation to achieve freedom from colonial rule. On account of its standing as “an independent state with relatively stable political conditions” (Yousuf 1985, 56) and proximity to Angola, Mozambique Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe where armed liberation struggles had to take place, Tanzania was selected to host the ALC. Although the ALC was hamstrung from the onset by recurrent budgetary challenges and contending approaches to liberation among African leaders in the OAU where some preferred gradualism and negotiated settlements with the colonial powers while others like Nkrumah, Toure and Keita advocated a radicalized approach to decolonization, it is exemplary in its personification of African people’s commitment to the liberation of their countries. Among other responsibilities, the ALC had to see to the mobilization of financial and material resources as well as international sentiment in favor of the liberation of the continent. As a result of the agency of the ALC, southern African liberation movements such as ANC and PAC (South Africa) and SWAPO (Namibia) earned recognition and observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN). Other organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) also recognized southern African liberation movements on the back of the diplomatic exertions of the ALC. From its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, the ALC identified liberation movements that the OAU needed to support in various African countries. It also “sought to reconcile differences among national revolutionary groups so as to unify their forces” (Yousuf 1985, 58) with a view to empowering them to present a united front against colonialism. The merging of Mozambique African National Union (MANU), Union Democratica National de Mozambique (UDENAMO) and Uniao Africana de Mozambique Undependente (UNAMI) to create FRELIMO occurred in the context of this spirit. Following this merger, Tanzania provided FRELIMO with bases from which to launch the armed struggle for the liberation of Mozambique. It also ensured that over the years, FRELIMO received most of ALC aid earmarked for the struggle in Mozambique, largely because it was seen as more proactive in waging the struggle compared to
COREMO, for instance. In Zimbabwe, however, the ALC met with insurmountable challenges in the quest to unify ZANU and ZAPU. In large measure, these challenges had to do with ZANU claims, on the one hand, that it was doing most of the fighting and ZAPU’s tendency, on the other, to look at ZANU fighters as inadequately trained. The two movements also differed in terms of ideology. Given that ZANU enjoyed Chinese support while ZAPU was backed by the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the ideological contestations between the two benefactors reflected in the nature of relations between ZANU and ZAPU. In Angola, the ALC managed to bring the FNLA and the MPLA in a short-lived 1972 union that excluded UNITA. Eventually, the ALC and the OAU decided on “supporting the idea of a government of national unity, accepting MPLA, FNLA and UNITA as genuine nationalist movements entitled to a place in such a government, recognizing the country’s geographical integrity (including Cabinda) and opposing any external intervention” (Yousuf 1985, 63).

It is remarkable that as the home of the ALC, Tanzania would also serve as the major pedestal for the armed liberation of the entire southern African region. The liberation movements that eventually emerged victorious in Namibia (SWAPO), South Africa (ANC), Zimbabwe (ZANU), Angola (MPLA) and Mozambique (FRELIMO) were each, at one point or the other, hosted in Tanzania, then under the leadership of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. It is also worth noting that even liberation movements that did not eventually manage to take over from the colonial powers were also hosted in Tanzania in the unraveling of their struggle to free their countries from colonial rule. Joshua Nkomo’s ZAPU, Holden Roberto’s FNLA and Robert Sobukwe’s PAC are good examples. Indeed, it is incredible that with the end of British rule on December 9, 1961, Tanzania took less than a year to start setting up military training camps for freedom fighters from Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The first of these military training camps was Kongwa. As a pioneering camp, Kongwa hosted all the liberation movements that sought Tanzanian assistance in the early 1960s. With the deepening of the anti-colonial onslaught in the various southern African countries, Tanzania established more camps to cater for the increasing numbers of recruits as well as refugees fleeing destruction wrought by war in their countries, particularly after the Sharpeville Massacre (1960) and Soweto Uprising (1976) in South Africa. Among some of the training and refugee camps that came after Kongwa were Mgagao, Morogoro, Bagamoyo, Itumbi and Nachingwea. Itumbi and Mgagao were set aside for recruits and refugees from Angola, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe while Nachingwea hosted Mozambican recruits and trainees. In the ensuing years, PAC, for instance, would establish more camps at Masaguru, Msungura, Kitonga and Pongwe while ANC settled down at Mbeya, Bagamayo and Morogoro. ANC also received 250 acres of land at Mazimbu where it built an educational institution that has since been renamed the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. Mahlangu was an Umkhonto we Sizwe (military wing of the ANC) combatant who was hanged by the apartheid regime of South Africa for treason. In addition to these training camps, Tanzania provided office space in Dar es Salaam and security details for the leadership of the various liberation movements of southern Africa.

When Patrice Lumumba visited Ghana in 1960, he announced that Congo will come to the assistance of southern Africans fighting “in the Rhodesias, South Africa and Portuguese territories to attain independence” (Passemiers 2018, 1). Lumumba could not bring this vision to reality on account of his assassination in the very first year of his assumption of power in Congo. Yet it is encouraging to note that “for a moment, his successor, Cyrille Adoulla transformed Congo into a hub for southern African nationalists when he tried to create what has come to be called the Congo Alliance” (Passemiers 2018, 2). As Passemiers
notes, the Congo Alliance was the putative transnational alliance between the Frente National de Libertacao de Angola (FNLA), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) of South Africa, the South West African People’s Organization (SWAPO), the resurrected Uniao Democratica Nacional de Mocambique (UDENAMO) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) that lasted from 1963 to 1964. The major beneficiary of this alliance was FNLA, followed by PAC. Invited by Lumumba to launch its campaign from Congo, the FNLA “opened its official headquarters in the capital city, received permission to broadcast political messages from a Leopoldville radio station, and increased its production of propaganda material to be distributed in Congo and Angola” (Passemiers 2018, 6). When FNLA formed Angola’s Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE) in April 1962, Adoula availed it the permission to train its fighters at Kinkuzu – “making Kinkuzu the first camp to be opened by a southern African liberation movement in exile in a host country” (Passemiers 2018, 7). Indeed, Congo’s commitment to the liberation of southern Africa went beyond Holden Roberto’s FNLA. As Prime Minister, Adoula’s priorities revolved around “transforming Congo into a centre of African nationalism” (Passemiers 2018, 12). The prioritization of southern African liberation movements in Congo reflects in the fact that “Adoula also gave liberation movements permission to open offices at the appropriately named Maison des Nationalistes Africaines (House of African Nationalists) in Leopoldville” (Passemiers 2018, 12). In the House of African Nationalists, FNLA shared space with the PAC, SWAPO, ZANU, UDENAMO and Movimiento Nacional de Liberacion de la Guinea Equatorial (MONALIGE). Thus, regional anti-colonial dynamics in Congo of the early 1960s were such that Leopoldville momentarily became “a truly African nationalist centre” (Passemiers 2018, 14).

The commitment to anti-colonialism that Tanzania and Congo exemplified in the early 1960s is also manifest in Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique. With the advent of its independence in 1964 and the rise of Kenneth David Kaunda, Zambia availed resources to assist liberation movements in southern Africa. Major beneficiaries of Zambian assistance were ZANU and ZAPU (Zimbabwe), ANC (South Africa), MPLA (Angola) and SWAPO (Namibia). All these movements had office space in the precincts of the Liberation Centre in Lusaka. ZAPU, in particular, was able to establish training, transit and refugee camps in various parts of Zambia. The most significant of these included Freedom, Mkushi, Nampundwe, Mboroma, Mulungushi and Chikumbi camps. ANC underground radio station, Radio Freedom, operated from the Zambian capital, Lusaka. In addition to providing physical space, logistical and financial support, Zambia also spoke out strongly against apartheid in South Africa and colonial settlerism in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). In May 1986, for instance, President Kaunda threatened to withdraw from the Commonwealth if Britain resisted the imposition of sanctions on apartheid South Africa. Speaking in a telephone interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation, President Kaunda expressed dismay at the prospect of “sitting on the same table with Mrs. Thatcher … a fellow leader who says black life is cheaper than gold” (quoted in Good 1987, 508). He protested the United States’ volition to use aid as an instrument with which to impose silence over the system of apartheid in South Africa, drawing attention to the fact that:

There is no way I am going to change my thinking over the question of apartheid. Anybody wanting me to shut up is barking up the wrong tree. If President Reagan wants to withdraw aid from Zambia, he is welcome. He can go ahead.

(quoted in Good 1987, 509)
President Kaunda’s opposition to apartheid also manifested in the financial support that southern African countries channeled to the region’s anti-colonial movements. However, financial support to liberation movements was never adequate. Countries such as Malawi never contributed and others that had benefitted failed to plough back the assistance that had been availed to them. At the continental level, countries such as Chad, Ivory Coast, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Burkina Faso could not participate because they were steeped in their neo-colonial relationship with France. In southern Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Angola were outstanding while Algeria, Ghana, Libya, Mali, Guinea and Nigeria made the difference at the continental level.

**Pan-African alliances among anti-colonial movements**

Pan-African commitment of independent African countries also reflected in the alliances that anti-colonial movements created among themselves to wage the struggle for freedom in southern Africa more effectively. The alliances that brought together FRELIMO and ZANU as well as ANC and ZAPU are indicative of the ways in which the movements involved in the anti-colonial struggle understood the importance of Pan-African solidarity. In the early 1970s, FRELIMO, fighting from Tanzania, first under the guidance of Eduardo Mondlane and later Samora Machel, liberated Mozambique’s northern provinces and invited ZAPU and ZANU to utilize the provinces it had liberated to mount the struggle against Rhodesia. ZANU took up the offer to fight the Rhodesian regime from Mozambique’s Tete province while ZAPU decided to continue fighting from Zambia. In his discussion of ZANU’s external networks during the anti-colonial struggle, Mazarire (2017) explains ZANU’s cross-over from Lusaka to Tete against the backdrop of President Kaunda’s preference of ZAPU over the former. By the mid 1970s, ZANU had established training, transit and refugee camps at Chimoio, Nyadzonia, Tembue and other places in Mozambique. As Munguambe (2017, 163) argues, “Frelimo’s co-operation with ZANU was partly motivated by authentic solidarity with the cause of Zimbabwean liberation.” FRELIMO’s relationship with ZANU is significant on two accounts. The first is that FRELIMO could have easily worked with ZAPU since both were part of the so-called “Authentic six,” that is, African liberation movements that were supported by the former Soviet Union. The other liberation movements in this group included the ANC, MPLA, SWAPO and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape-Verde (PAIGC). Unlike FRELIMO, ZANU, like PAC of South Africa, was backed by the Chinese. It is instructive that FRELIMO considered these dynamics and committed to working alongside ZANU from a Pan-African point of departure. The fact that ZANU had splintered from ZAPU, FRELIMO’s fellow liberation movement in the “Authentic six” family, did little to deter FRELIMO from cooperating with ZANU. The second account on which this alliance is significant is that FRELIMO invited ZANU to fight from its liberated zones well before it assumed power in June 1975. This speaks to the sense of urgency with which FRELIMO, in much the same manner as independent Congo, Tanzania and Zambia before it, looked at the anti-colonial struggle in southern Africa. SWAPO, ANC and ZAPU also established the same kind of relationship with MPLA, but this was after Angola’s attainment of independence in 1975. This alliance saw SWAPO, for instance, moving its headquarters to Luanda, the Angolan capital, while accessing military, financial and technical support alongside ZAPU and ANC at a time when Cuba and the former Soviet Union were also deeply immersed in the region’s anti-colonial struggles following their successful intervention in Angola on the eve of its independence. Thus, Munguambe (2017, 162) emphasizes that:
Southern African liberation movements developed political and military co-operation with each other, establishing regional networks of patronage and dependence, fighting side by side, living in the same neighborhoods and camps, exchanging views and information, and hosting each other. It is in part because of this spirit of co-operation that the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) established political and military co-operation with the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in the early 1970s, to launch its offensive into Rhodesia alongside its own campaign in Mozambique. Following the dawn of Mozambican independence in 1975, FRELIMO allowed ZANU’s military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), formally to establish guerrilla bases on Mozambican soil.

The Pan-African appreciation of the anti-colonial struggle that FRELIMO and ZANU demonstrated through commitment to operating jointly is also to be observed in the ANC-ZAPU alliance that, in fact, pre-dated the FRELIMO-ZANU initiative in Mozambique. In 1967, ANC and ZAPU agreed to jointly deploy their fighting forces in Rhodesia. A number of factors necessitated this development. First, both movements realized that the apartheid regime in South Africa had chosen to take its war on ANC by deploying in Rhodesia in hopes of shutting out ANC militants before they could infiltrate into South Africa from Zambia and Tanzania. Second, for the ANC’s part, logistical considerations were paramount. As Thomas (1996, 16) opines:

One of the ANC’s military objectives was to open up a supply route into the country. Umkhonto needed to solve its logistical problems of getting equipment and personnel from its bases in Tanzania and Zambia into South Africa. Its attempts in 1965 had been a failure. The ANC believed this could be accomplished through greater cooperation between liberation movements. Contrary to expectations, once Bechuanaland became independent in October 1966 (as Botswana) there was even less of a possibility to infiltrate Umkhonto combatants into South Africa. The newly independent country recognized that it needed to remain on good terms with its powerful southern neighbor.

The alliance between ANC and ZAPU resulted in their fighters seeing action jointly in the Wankie (now Hwange) battle of August 13, 1967, in north-western Zimbabwe. As Thomas (1996, 16) further notes “the Wankie campaign was a disaster.” But this is beside the point. Even assertions to the effect that both ANC and ZAPU went into this alliance in order to outflank the PAC and ZANU do not take away the Pan-African consciousness of the importance of solidarity between liberation movements that manifests in ANC and ZAPU efforts to pursue joint military operations. Instead, it is instructive that in the late 1970s, ANC and ZAPU revived this alliance as Zimbabwe drew close to independence while the apartheid regime in South Africa sought to fortify itself as the last bastion of white supremacist power in the region. With the revival of the ANC-ZAPU alliance, “the expectation was that, once the MK soldiers had established themselves in Zimbabwe, military operations would resume with incursions into ‘northern Transvaal’, Soutpansberg and Venda” (MacMillan 2017, 183). Although MacMillan (2017) describes the relationship between ANC and ZAPU as “this unusual alliance between liberation movements,” he concedes that the infiltration of ANC militants into Rhodesia “began in early 1979 at the latest” and that “[i]t may indeed have been linked to what ZIPRA called the ‘Turning Point’, an intensification of military action that was officially announced in April 1979, but had begun in the previous year” (MacMillan 2017, 180). By the time the cease fire was announced to pave the way for the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in 1979, and
ZANLA and ZIPRA fighters started trekking into assembly points, ANC freedom fighters “had been fighting with ZIPRA forces throughout the year” (MacMillan 2017, 183), and Rhodesians had to send the hands of suspected ANC militants to South Africa “for fingerprint identification, as a way of confirming that MK cadres were fighting with ZIPRA – something that had been a closely guarded secret” (MacMillan 2017, 183).

Beyond the anti-colonial phase: Pan-Africanism in contemporary southern Africa

With the advent of independence in Namibia in 1990 and South Africa in 1994, southern Africa and the entire African continent closed the colonial chapter and eased into the age of self-determination. As the region extricated itself from colonialism, its independence also ushered in new dynamics that have greatly impacted Pan-Africanism. In large measure, the spirit of solidarity that presided over the unfolding of the anti-colonial movement still persisted. However, the erstwhile liberation movements that fought against colonialism and replaced the colonialists in the corridors of power became obsessed with maintaining themselves in power at the expense of deepening and solidifying the sense of solidarity that had been fostered by the decades of anti-colonial struggle in the region. In Zimbabwe, for example, ZANU’s military onslaught on ZAPU and the people of Matabeleland that resulted in the death of an estimated 20 000 Zimbabweans should not have been orchestrated by a ruling party that had itself benefitted from Pan-African solidarity during the years of the anti-colonial struggle. In South Africa, the aversion to Pan-African solidarity of the anti-colonial years is manifest in the ANC’s movement from radical deconstruction to democratization, centralization of the rainbow-nation concept, neo-liberalism and apparent trepidation in the face of racial inequality, white supremacy and the land question. Even more telling among the generality of the people in South Africa is the ease with which Africans from other countries are targeted and killed on the pretext that they are aliens who settle in the country to take the jobs that black South Africans are supposed to have. The characterization of these attacks as instances of xenophobia is misleading. South Africans who participate in these attacks seldom attack Europeans, Asians and other non-African people. Their prime targets are Africans from other parts of the continent. The dearth of Pan-African consciousness and memory of the contributions of other Africans to the success of the anti-colonial struggle in South Africa is clearly an important factor in explaining why black South Africans who engage in Afrophobic violence tend to direct their anger against Zimbabweans, Nigerians, Mozambicans, Malawians, Zambians, Somalians, Ethiopians and other African nationals living and working in South Africa. However, a glimmer of hope is furnished in South Africa by Julius Malema and EFF. EFF self-defines as a Pan-Africanist political organization and has been consistent, over the years, in its condemnation of Afrophobic violence and in reminding South Africans of their indebtedness to the entire African continent for their freedom. It has also been vocal in calling for a politically and economically integrated African continent and Pan-African institutions that will advance the progressive interests of all African people in authentic freedom and human dignity. EFF’s commitment to Pan-African principles goes beyond rhetoric. When the South African government sought to amend the country’s constitution in favor of compulsory land acquisition for black resettlement, for instance, EFF allied its vote with the ANC to empower the latter, as the governing party, to acquire the constitutional basis to compulsorily repossess land that was expropriated by white settler colonialists since Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape in 1652.
In the conduct of general elections, erstwhile liberation movements that are still in power in southern Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have tended to protect ruling parties that came out of the liberation struggle. This support has always been provided to former liberation movements now functioning in southern Africa as ruling parties without due regard of the voices of the millions who would have voted for political parties that supposedly lack Pan-African and liberation war credentials. This has not only enabled ruling parties of the region such as ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe to stay in power but also to misrepresent Pan-Africanism as an idea that works best only for political elites who possess liberation war credentials. Not surprisingly, generations born after the advent of independence in southern Africa tend to look at Pan-Africanism as an idea of the past. This is because the region’s ruling parties that emerged from the battlefields of the anti-colonial war have been inclined to concentrate on the creation of a black, elitist, propertied class that thrives on a sense of entitlement to political power on account of having participated in the anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s–1990s. Thus, it stands to reason that the resistance that Pan-Africanism presently encounters in southern Africa among the younger generations arises because former liberation movements that came to power following the demise of colonialism failed to revolutionize economic and political institutions inherited from the deposed colonial regimes while simultaneously identifying themselves as Pan-African revolutionaries. While erstwhile liberation movements that assumed power with the advent of independence have tended to rubber-stamp the political charades that elections have become in Africa, they have not spoken openly or taken concrete steps to support progressive programs in other countries of the region. Zimbabwe, for instance, received virtually nothing in terms of support from other countries in southern Africa when it decided, twenty years after independence, to repossess land for black resettlement. South Africa and Namibia are making inroads into that struggle but there is not a single country in the region that has spoken in support of their envisaged land reform programs. Presumably, this could be so on account of the region’s states being worried about maintaining good trading relations with Europe and America. Yet the fact of the matter is that with authentic Pan-African unity, none of the countries in southern Africa and indeed the entire African continent need Europe and America to survive. Thus, what is to be noted here is that contemporary southern Africa has strayed from the sense of Pan-African solidarity that drove Botswana, Congo, Tanzania, Zambia and, later, Angola and Mozambique after their independence in 1975, to support the region’s anti-colonial struggles and risk, in the process, economic asphyxiation and military attack by Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa.

**Conclusion**

South Africa and Rhodesia stood predominant as economic powerhouses of the colonial era in southern Africa. These countries were also militarily more powerful than their independent African neighbors in the region. The havoc they wrought in the region through the bombardment of ANC, ZAPU and ZANU refugee, transit and military training camps in Zambia and Mozambique, for instance, speaks directly to their might. Yet it is telling that independent African states in southern Africa were willing to expose their economies and their people to assault by apartheid South Africa and colonial settler Rhodesia to ensure the demise of colonialism. Historians have nuanced the problematic aspects of this commitment, but seldom the odds that independent African states had to contend with in taking up the responsibility to assist their neighbors who still had to deal with colonialism. Thus, while the nuances of this struggle have been highlighted, it needs pointing out that these are nuances
of a story that has barely been told. The economic toll that countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique had to contend with for assisting anti-colonial liberation movements has never been quantified. The sense of vulnerability and depths of psychological trauma that the citizens of these countries had to live with is yet to be assessed. Put differently, by emphasizing the problematic aspects of the relationship between and among African countries fighting for freedom in southern Africa and the independent African states that supported them, scholars of this history place the proverbial cart before the horse. They condemn narratives that celebrate the Pan-African sentiment that pervades the anti-colonial movement as instances of “patriotic history” (Ranger 2004, 1), notable for its perceived reluctance to question and complicate. While this emphasis is important, it has been presented as the only and indispensable perspective from which to see and interpret the past. Thus, what this chapter has done is to revisit the anti-colonial struggle in southern Africa and exhume the ways in which it speaks to the centrality of Pan-Africanism in Africa’s revolutionary struggles. Inter alia, the chapter also argued for the continued relevance and indispensability of Pan-Africanism in contemporary African struggles. The political forces that were assaulted by southern African liberations struggles relented and African countries transitioned into political independence on the back of Pan-Africanism. The struggle for industrialization and economic emancipation will need to centralize Pan-Africanism because Africa’s industrial and economic challenges are basically the same, from country to country, and so are the forces arraigned against its industrial and economic aspirations.

Notes

2 Ayi Kwei Armah, Remembering the Dismembered Continent: Seedtime Essays, (Popenguine: Per Ankh, 2010), 7–10.

Bibliography


