CHAPTER 3

AFRICAN MEMBERS AND SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUES IN THE COMMONWEALTH

INTRODUCTION

Since 1960, African political issues engaged the attention of the Commonwealth. Of these, South Africa and Rhodesia dominated and were the preoccupation of the African countries. Their dominance had been so much that it was even said, “South Africa is the reason for the Commonwealth existence.” The controversies about South Africa even threatened the existence of the Commonwealth. The issues of political change in South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia were interrelated. Recognising this, the Commonwealth Sanction Committee was renamed as the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa in 1977. It was understood that only with change in South Africa could the situation in Southern Africa improve. The Lusaka Declaration of the Commonwealth on Racism and Racial Prejudice provided a linkage between the Rhodesian issue and South African one, by way of racism. The problems of Rhodesia and Namibia were considered peripheral to the real crisis area in the region the Republic of South Africa. At the 1973 Commonwealth summit President Nyerere called the problem of apartheid in South Africa “the hardest nut to crack.”

However, this study does not deal with the Rhodesian or Namibian issue; but, only looks into the issues of South Africa like arms sale, sports, of destabilisation and of sanctions. In the Commonwealth, there were fifteen African countries before the inclusion of Namibia and South Africa. To study these issues, the African countries are divided into

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1. This only shows the misgiving of many that Commonwealth was pre-occupied with South Africa. Dennis Austin, “Birds of a Feathers? The Commonwealth and South Africa 1985”, The Round Table (London), no. 297, 1986.


SADCC Countries and others. Under Southern African Countries Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe are included. Tanzania could however act more independently than the others in the SADCC who were landlocked and dependent on South Africa. Moreover with the independence of Mozambique it was not bordering any white ruled state which would make it an easy target of military action.

In the early 1960's the African countries had thought that a rapprochement could be brought about with South Africa. Thus South Africa was invited to the first conference of independent African states in Accra in 1958. But South Africa refused on the grounds that colonial powers like Britain and France should also be invited. In 1962 Nigerian Prime Minister Balewa offered to visit South Africa and exchange ambassadors but South Africa considered him presumptuous. Ghana under Nkrumah had also offered to exchange High Commissioner, which was not taken up. Even Zambia prior to independence in 1964 had indicated its willingness to establish diplomatic links with South Africa. However South Africa response was negative.4

This behaviour convinced many African leaders that South Africa's policy was adamant and could not be changed with interaction. African leaders were convinced that racist arrogance and the desire to perpetuate white rule in Africa motivated it. This was further confirmed when South Africa actively assisted Portugal and Rhodesia against African liberation movements. This behaviour of South Africa was to an extent the reason for the failure of Prime Minister Vorster's Outward movement (1967-1970) and détente policy (1974-1975). In Africa also there were talks of dialogue from some and in November 1970, Ivory Coast made a major diplomatic thrust in favour of dialogue with South Africa. Of the Commonwealth African Countries, Lesotho, Malawi, Ghana and Uganda supported the idea.5 However, the majority of OAU were against dialogue.6

6 The eighth summit conference of the OAU in 1971 adopted a Declaration on the Question of Dialogue. This condemned the initiation of dialogue and engagement in any dialogue as an act that would undermine the OAU charter. Amare Tcelke, "The Organisation of African Unity at Twenty-five Years: Retrospect and Prospect", Africa Today ( ), vol. 35, no. 3/4, 1988, p. 58.
The African countries attempted to use the Commonwealth as a forum for the continuation of the struggle for the total liberation of Africa, independence of colonial territories and the eradication of Apartheid in South Africa. African countries wanted to secure the diplomatic and economic isolation of the Republic of South Africa, which practised apartheid. For the African states, the Commonwealth was also a forum to exert pressure on Britain. At the second meeting of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, the African members of the Commonwealth were specifically asked to raise certain matters at the Commonwealth conference and to use their influence with Britain on the Southern Rhodesia Question. With the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, South Africa was the major political issue in the Commonwealth. Further, the Commonwealth being based on the principle of racial equality, racist policies of South Africa were condemned.

ATTITUDES OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

The newly independent African states considered it their responsibility to fight for other African states. In the Commonwealth Ghana and Nigeria were the first countries to get independence. Dr. Nkrumah declared in the national assembly that “whether we like it or not, history has assigned to us a great responsibility and we must not fail all the millions of this continent who look to us as a symbol of their hopes in Africa.” In January 1960, the Nigerian Prime Minister Sir Abubakar told the House of Representatives that “after independence, Nigeria would have a wonderful opportunity to speak for Africa.”

In Nigeria it was after the military coup in 1966 that the opposition to South Africa intensified. The participation of the white racist regimes on the side of Biafra during the civil war (1967-1970) brought home to the Nigerian leaders that these regimes posed a dangerous threat to the security and survival of Nigeria as a united country. The

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Ibid., p. 74.

government took the view that not only were these states out to work against Nigeria they were also anxious to fan any flames of crisis in black African states in hope of creating instability in latter and in the process diverting attention from the more pressing problems of decolonisation in Southern Africa. In 1979 it had nationalised the assets of the British Petroleum Company in Nigeria to pressurise Britain on Rhodesia. Nigeria provided direct material, military and financial aid to the liberation movements in South Africa. However in Ghana after Nkrumah, situation changed to an extent that Dr. Busia was even prepared to visit South Africa. On 10 December 1970, Dr. Busia, the Prime Minister of Ghana declared, “dialogue with South Africa was another weapon for the elimination of apartheid and the creation of multi-racial society in South Africa”.

In Tanzania, President Nyerere has been a spokesman of Africa in mobilising world opinion. Tanzania has given refuge and assistance to more liberation movements than any other country in Africa. The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) stated, “the responsibility of the party is to lead the masses in the effort to safeguard national independence and to advance the liberation of Africa.” Nyerere declared that “discrimination against human beings because of their colour is exactly what we have been fighting against. This is what we formed TANU for.”

In Zambia the policy of Humanism sought to re-establish the right of black people to be, to belong and to have. Of all the injustices Kaunda was more angered by the racial one.

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11 President Shagari in 1980 pledged that Nigeria would continue to assist, encourage and support the struggle for independence in Namibia and the elimination of apartheid system in South Africa with all our might and resources. He said, “We must not relent in our struggle against the forces of apartheid. We should reaffirm the legitimacy of the struggle of our oppressed brothers in South Africa by giving our full material, diplomatic and moral support to the national liberation movements as well as those Front-line states under South Africa attack and harassment.” Dauda Abubakar, “Nigeria, Southern Africa And The Major Powers”, Indian Journal of Politics (Alligah), vol. XXXI, no.1-2, March-June 1987, p. 32.


Humanism helped him claim that apartheid as practised to the south of us... is in direct contradiction to humanism. Further the Zambian leaders believed that their country was the main target of the triple alliance of Portugal, Rhodesia ad South Africa. In particular they feared that their state might be the prime pawn of South African apartheid, whose objective is either the incorporation of this landlocked but strategic state into South Africa’s orbit or its destruction. Consequently they believed that Zambia’s safety would not be assured until apartheid in South Africa was brought to an end and independence secured for other minority white governed areas.16

However the Attitude of the states differed according to their ability to withstand South African pressures. The ability to allow freedom fighters to cross the borders and enter South Africa depends not only on the political will but also the ability to resist military and economic reprisals from the racist regime. At independence itself all parties in Countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland readily accepted that they would have to play a very minor role in the Pan-African campaign of coercing South Africa to abandon apartheid by isolation, boycotts and even violence. Experience had also clearly indicated in the run up to independence that South Africa would never allow them to harbour people suspected of revolutionary political activities in South Africa.17 President Seretse Khama further clarified this.18 President Mugabe at the time of independence said, we must accept that South Africa is a geographical reality and as such we must have some minimum relationship with it.

Even then they felt certain obligation towards their South African compatriots and what other African states expect of them in the region.19 This was especially in the case of

18 “If we appear reluctant to play an active and prominent part in the struggle for majority rule throughout Southern Africa, it is not because we are unconcerned about the plight of our oppressed brothers in the white ruled states of our region.... We want to see majority rule established throughout Southern Africa... and we are determined to contribute towards the achievement of that noble goal. We are however aware that there is a limit beyond which our contribution cannot go without endangering our very independence.” Jack Halpern, “Botswana”, Africa South of Sahara 1978-1980 (London, 1980), p. 185.
19 One of the aides of Seretse Khama said. “We don’t think it would be good for our reputation with other African countries to be going hat in hand to an apartheid government. We very much care about our reputation in Africa.” Kenneth W Grundy, Confrontation and Accommodation in Southern Africa (Berkeley, 1973), p. 137.
Zimbabwe. In their struggle for independence whole of Africa had rallied behind them. States like Zambia and Mozambique had sacrificed or delayed their own development as a contribution to Zimbabwe's liberation. Zimbabwe was conscious of this and felt it had an important responsibility in continuing the struggle for total liberation of Africa. Mugabe after independence said,

We have a moral and political obligation to the people of Namibia and South Africa. We uphold the right of Namibians to fight for their liberation... Similarly we uphold the right of the people of South Africa to establish a democratic system in their country. We will assist if we can... at international forums where we hope to play an active part in obtaining the objectives of liberation in those countries.\(^{20}\)

Yet one country which has always distanced itself from other countries and tried to steer a course between South Africa and others have been Malawi. Malawi in 1967 established diplomatic relations with South Africa, which infuriated his fellow black African leaders. Moreover President Kamazu Banda visited Pretoria in 1971. This was diplomatically important to South Africa, as it could claim that it was not totally a pariah state as other African countries had accused it to be. Banda had adopted a policy of co-operation with South Africa, as he believed that this would bring about change rather than isolation and boycott.\(^{21}\)

The attitudes of countries differed among themselves but how did they react to the issues in Commonwealth is now to be looked into. One of the first issue concerning South Africa after its withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961 was the issue of arms sale to South Africa by Britain.

**ARMS SALE TO SOUTH AFRICA AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

A serious issue that concerned the Commonwealth was the decision of Britain to resume her arms sale to South Africa on July 11, 1970. The British Prime Minister Edward

\(^{20}\) Sesay, n. 16, p. 36.

\(^{21}\) According to Banda, "I sincerely believe that we, the African states and leaders in independent African states, have a much better chance, much better opportunity and hopes of converting South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique to liberation, towards our fellow Africans in those countries by adopting a policy of co-operation and understanding towards them rather than by boycott and isolation." Carolyn McMaster, Malawi: Foreign Policy and Development (London, 1975), p. 88.
Heath sent a letter directly to the Commonwealth Heads of Governments referring to the Simonstown agreement and saying that a statement of specific intention would be made within ten days to keep in check the wilder speculation.22 This was met with regret and anger from African States, of which, many promised drastic actions. The first overt diplomatic move came from Kaunda.23 He send a letter in June 1970, to Britain indicating that he might economically retaliate, possibly by cutting copper exports and nationalising the British companies and assets. He pointed out that selling of arms to South Africa would be in defiance of Security Council resolutions.24 On 11 July 1970, he sent messages to all the Commonwealth Heads of Government expressing his grave concern. He expressed his apprehensions about the British government proposal. He pointed out that it was necessary that all Commonwealth Countries come together.

The Africans in the Commonwealth argued that relaxation of arms embargo will have the effect of legitimising South Africa’s policies and the means employed to enforce them. Also closer military co-operation between west and South Africa would represent a tactic admission of the former interests in preserving and protecting the integrity of the Republic. They argued that South Africa was looking for an expression of a deeply felt aspiration to acquire a degree of both military and political responsibility in the eyes of the west. This argument was first forwarded by Nyerere that South Africa did not need British arms for defence but for political purposes, South Africa was being given a badge of responsibility. Milton Obote of Uganda said that British proposal to resume sales would directly link Britain with the apartheid policy that was being ruthlessly carried out by the government of South Africa. He warned that Britain couldn’t be


23 He said “We will not stand idly by and watch the West arm the South Africa’s who have made their intentions known to us. They have not only threatened to attack they have in fact encouraged others to do so. Britain and West must in their interests, choose between South Africa and the rest of Africa in terms of investments now and in future. They must also choose between South Africa and the rest of the continent in terms of what they consider to be their strategic interests their, now and in future.” B. Vivekanandan, The Shrinking Circle (New Delhi, 1983), p. 179.

seen in any other light except as an effective collaborator in the pursuance of that heinous policy. 25

They argued that Britain was trying to counter the Soviet build up with a move that risked alienating all those states bordering the Indian Ocean. Obote remarked, “We want to be non-aligned, but British military co-operation with South Africa would create strong public pressure on us to tilt towards the Eastern Bloc.” 26 This view was presented by the Commonwealth Secretary General also. The Commonwealth Secretary General Arnold Smith made it clear that the security of east and west coasts of Africa depend primarily on political attitudes within Black African States and the proposed British action could mean they would find it more difficult not to lean towards Eastern Moscow or Peking. 27

The Africans leaders pointed out that South Africa an arms manufacture in its own right was already the most powerful country economically and militarily in Africa and was producing all the arms it needed. The sale of arms would not assist the cause of liberation movements, as they would be used against the domestic opponents of apartheid and South Africa’s neighbours who opposed it. 28 In Nairobi, The Kenyan Foreign Minister Dr. Njoroge Mungai, asserted on 17 July that not only would any resumption of arms supplies to South Africa undermine the African liberation movements it would also violate decisions taken by the United Nations. He then announced that Kenya intended to appeal to all Commonwealth countries to try to dissuade Britain from selling arms to South Africa. 29

The initial reaction prompted a rethinking on the part of the British government. Britain was to make a statement about its definite decision on 20 July. Julius Nyerere sent a

26 Smith, n. 22, p. 217.
27 Ibid., p. 207.
28 Obote said that South Africa would use the arms received by it, not to deter or beat back external aggression, but to suppress the Africans at home and to browbeat black African neighbours. Uganda he noted, was in modern warfare conditions a neighbour of South Africa. He implied that by deciding to supply arms to South Africa Britain was indirectly helping a process, which could pose a threat to the security of Uganda. Vivekanandan, n. 23, p. 180.
timely message on July 18 to the British Government saying he would withdraw from the Commonwealth if Britain went ahead with its announcement of a definite decision to resume arm sale. On the day the letter was received, British Prime Minister Heath and Sir Alec conferred with top officials about the statement to be made on July 20. All these concerns seemed to have worked as, on 20 July, Alec-Home made a statement in the House of Commons, saying other Commonwealth States could influence the British Government before any final decision was taken. Further he made a differentiation about arms for internal repression and maritime defence. The reactions from African States were, (a) they would break off relation with the Britain (b) they would themselves leave the Commonwealth (c) they would expel Britain from the Commonwealth.

Among the Southern African Countries Lesotho and Malawi, had no objection to the arms sales while others objected. The Zambian Cabinet saw the British Governments action and its policy on Southern Africa in general as motivated by racial and financial factors without regard to the fundamental principles of the United Nations and those on which the Commonwealth developed. Tanzania said: If Britain does not see the contradiction between an alliance with South Africa and the membership of the Commonwealth, she does not believe in the sort of the Commonwealth of which we in Tanzania wish to belong. Therefore, Tanzania’s choice will be inevitable.

Malawi, which had diplomatic relations with South Africa, came out to support Britain and President Banda expressed approval of the sale of arms. He said that it was "nonsense to suggest that South Africa would use British submarines and aircraft’s for internal suppression or external aggression; South Africa did not want to add one inch

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30 We should be ready to consider within Simonstown Agreement applications for the export to South Africa of certain limited categories of arms so long as they are for maritime defence directly related to the security of the Sea Routes. In no circumstances would there be sales to South Africa of arms for the enforcement of the policy of Apartheid or internal repression. It is on this basis that the Government has naturally been concerned to consult with the Commonwealth Governments and to discuss these matters with them. The Government proposed to complete these consultation and discussion before decisions are finally taken. *Africa Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series* (London), vol. 7, no. 7, 15 August 1970, p. 1824.

31 Ibid., p. 1825.
territory to her borders". In effect, he was saying that other African leaders were simply spreading lies about South Africa.

Among other African countries many threatened to quit or warned of actions against Britain. Nigeria hinted that they might cut off oil supplies to Britain and threatened that it would switch arms purchase from Britain if it continued the arms sale. Moreover Nigeria’s call was different. Ammukano, the Nigerian minister for Communications, called on African Countries to put a stop to threats and resolutions over arms sale to South Africa and set up a continental government and military command instead.

However a notable difference of attitude came from Ghana. Though Mr. Owasu, the Foreign Minister of Ghana said it is not possible to differentiate between external and internal arms it was not unduly against Britain.

When African countries were threatening to quit the Commonwealth in order to pressurise Britain Dr. Busia said that there is no question of Ghana quitting the Commonwealth even if Britain resumed arms sale. This change in attitude was, as many Ghanaians believed that the economic and financial difficulties that Ghana faced between 1964 and 1966 was due to Nkrumah’s over extended commitment abroad. So the country preferred a low profile in foreign affairs. Further they didn’t want to scare off

\[32\] Banda said, “If it is a choice between Britain’s supply of arms to South Africa in order to make the sea route from Britain to the east safe and secure and letting that body of water from Gibraltar in the west to Bombay in the east become a private swimming pool of a hostile power then I would rather see Britain supply arms to South Africa.” V. P. S Malik, “South Africa in Southern Africa: A Case Study of Malawi”, in Uma Shanker Jha ed., *South Africa in Prospect and Retrospect* (New Delhi, 1996), p. 150.

\[33\] “Should it be the final decision of Her Majesty’s government to sell arms of any description to the government of the Republic of South Africa, the government of Uganda would find it difficult to justify to the people of Uganda. Uganda’s continued membership of the Commonwealth.” Vivekanadan, p. 180. Sierra Leone warned that it would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to continue with the membership of the Commonwealth if the supply of arms to South Africa became effective. Kenya threatened to nationalise British Companies and assets. *Africa Research Bulletin*, n. 30, p. 1825


\[35\] “An African military command culminating from an African continental government cannot be so important as to be unable to knock off 100,000 South African military personnel.” *Africa Research Bulletin*, n. 30, p. 1825.

\[36\] Mr. Owasu, the Foreign Minister of Ghana said that they found untenable the assertion that arms could be divided into those for defence and those for offence and hoped that Britain would not reach any decision without due consultations with the rest of the Commonwealth. Ibid., p. 1825.

the western countries that might be interested in helping them out of the economic difficulties. Moreover out of twelve Western Countries to whom Ghana's owed short term debts over forty percent was to British firms. To Ghana this was more important and Dr. Busia stated this.\textsuperscript{38}

In a bid to find a common policy the foreign ministers of Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya met on 23 July in Nairobi. A Second Foreign Ministers meeting took place in Nairobi on 5 August. The Presidents of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia met in Dar-Es-Salaam and expressed their view on the situation to the British High Commissioner of Tanzania, Mr. Horace Philips.\textsuperscript{39} Many of the African Commonwealth Leaders met Mr. Heath in October. However the matter further deteriorated with the meeting of the OAU delegation\textsuperscript{40} headed by Kaunda with Mr. Heath. Kaunda argued that by giving South Africa arms, she was also being given a badge of responsibility. Heath on the other hand, tried to convince them that the enemy was not White South Africa but Russia and said that their belief that a race war in Southern Africa was inevitable was giving way to a council of despair.\textsuperscript{41} This led to a war of words. Kaunda said, “Britain must be sacked out of the Commonwealth while Heath insisted that people were trying to push him around.\textsuperscript{42}

In the Singapore Heads of Government meeting, doubts were raised about British government’s claim that it was legally bound under the Simonstown agreement to supply arms.\textsuperscript{43} African leaders wondered that if the trade routes were indeed threatened why the previous labour government did not consider it necessary to protect this route for British

\textsuperscript{38} In a press statement in London Dr. Busia said that although he discussed the question of arms sale to South Africa with Heath, his government's pre-occupation was how to settle its debt. \textit{West Africa} (London), 24 October 1970, p. 105.

\textsuperscript{39} Obote President of Uganda said to the British High Commissioner “You have engaged the Wrong Policeman”. Smith, n. 22, p.

\textsuperscript{40} The OAU delegation consisted the Foreign Ministers of Algeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Mali and the Secretary General of the OAU.


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 1891.

in the same manner. Instead it had maintained the arms embargo. The Africans wondered why if there was a legal obligation the previous labour government never felt bound by it. And if there was an obligation they thought there was no point in Britain consulting its Commonwealth partners before taking its final decision. They also failed to understand why if there was indeed a Soviet threat, both US and other NATO allies had not taken an active interest.\footnote{West Africa (London), 18 July 1970, p. 789.}

At the meeting the Africans made known their strong feeling but at the same time acknowledged that Britain had the right to take its own decisions. Nyerere sensed that a strong mood of tiredness existed in Britain about the Commonwealth a feeling of being besieged and needing to assert themselves. He wrote in pamphlet “South Africa and the Commonwealth”, which was distributed in the Singapore, that Tanzania did not want to push Britain around, that Tanzania recognised the Sovereign right of Britain to make its own security decisions and did not accuse its government of Racism. But he said that every member had an obligation to pursue its interest in such a way that that its actions will not adversely affect others basic interest.\footnote{Arthur Gavshon, Crisis in Africa: Battleground of East and West (Harmondsworth, 1981), p. 198.}

He further wrote, “if we are not opposed to racialism, we have no business sitting down together in an association, which consists of representative of all the racial group in the world.” He wanted “Britain should combine its interest with those of free Africa and those members of the Commonwealth who share our bitter hostility to racialism and colonialism.”\footnote{Nyerere said, “While every Commonwealth member has complete freedom to make its own decisions, each nation has also by its membership accepted an obligation to try to the best of its ability to pursue its own interest in such a manner that its action will not adversely affect basic interests of other members”. Julius K. Nyerere, South Africa and the Commonwealth (Dar-es-Salaam, 1971).} Edward Heath warned Nyerere “if you persist in your attitude, we [the British] will drop Africa and you will never be able to put it together again.”\footnote{Ibid.} Mauritius Prime Minister S. Ramgoolam offered naval facilities to Britain as a substitute to Simonstown. This offer was lauded by all African’s but Heath turned it down.
A study group consisting of India, Malaysia, Australia, Britain, Nigeria, Kenya, Jamaica and Canada was set up by the Commonwealth to study the defence of trade route in the Indian ocean and the Southern Atlantic and report not later than the middle of July 1971. Though Britain had kept certain conditions to join the study group others felt that there was an understanding that Britain would not take a decision to sell arms before the study group submits its report. Nigeria made it clear that in the light of the reservations outlined by Heath, its participation in the study group could only be guaranteed as long as the group remained relevant.

The assumption in the Commonwealth was that the basic concept of membership was racial equality. The fact that Britain a leading member could contemplate of arming the racist regime threw this assumption into doubt. This provoked Kaunda to draft a Declaration of Commonwealth Principles as he felt that the Commonwealth should define what it stands for. It should declare what we believe in and what we are determined to work for or to work against. The Declaration recognised racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil of society and racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness. It said that all regimes that practise racial discrimination must be denied by all Commonwealth countries the assistance to strengthen the system. This was aimed at barring Britain from providing arms to South Africa. Britain however suggested some modifications and the paragraph was amended as all regimes that practise racial discrimination must be denied by all Commonwealth countries the assistance which in its own judgement directly contribute to the pursuit or consolidation of the system.

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58 Nyerere said, "Either the study group means something relevant... Or it is irrelevant. If it is relevant, one expects that one will give it an opportunity to complete its work. It would be really ridiculous if in the course of that study, Britain decided to sell arms to South Africa. African Recorder (New Delhi), 26 February- 12 March 1971, p. 2756.


50 "We recognise racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil of society and racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness threatening the healthy development of the human race; we, therefore, seek every means of combating these evils: We shall deny all regimes, which practise them assistance which could consolidate or strengthen them. " The Times (London), 9 January 1971.

51 "We recognise racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness threatening the healthy development of the human race and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil of society. Each of us will vigorously combat the evil within our own nation. No country will afford to regimes, which practise racial discrimination assistance, which in its own judgement directly contributes to the pursuit or consolidation of this evil policy." "The Declaration Of Commonwealth Principles", Africa South Of Sahara (London, 1996), p. 105.
However even before the study group was constituted Sir Alec announced on February 25, 1971 its decision to supply arms to South Africa. The Africans considered it as a slap in their face. General Gowan of Nigeria condemned the decision as a total disregard of African opinion. On February 26, Nigeria announced its withdrawal from the study group. There followed a meeting between the High Commissioner Alhaji Sule Kolo and Arnold Smith where Kolo reiterated his government’s position. Later Malaysia and India withdrew from the study group.

This was an issue where the African countries could have stayed united to pressurise Britain. But African opinion was not all the same. Many African leaders expressed their strong views on the sale of arms but the differences among themselves did not make matters easy. In southern Africa Lesotho did not oppose the sale, as it was the phase when it was still on friendly terms with South Africa. It was from 1972 that Chief Jonathan became openly critical of South Africa. This was after he realised that grassroots sentiment was against South Africa. But the case of Malawi was different. While Zambia, which was in the same position as Malawi took a tough stand, Malawi supported the arms sale. The difference in attitude of these two countries showed the important role that leaders could play in the policies of a country. Dr. Banda considered South Africa as a preferable alternative to the socialism of his neighbours.

While among other countries Ghana’s change was striking as under Nkrumah it had broken its relation with Britain on the Rhodesian issue. Another change that came about after the Conference was that of Uganda. Under Obote it had been a strident critic of the issue. But Idi Amin captured power in a coup while Obote was still in Singapore. This led to a reversal in Uganda’s policy with it supporting the sale, as Amin needed the recognition for his government from the British. These differences helped Britain from cancelling the sale, further, Britain had other reasons to continue with the sale. Another

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52 Aluko, n. 8, p. 96.
54 With the declaration of UDI the African countries in an OAU meeting passed a resolution to sever relations with Britain. But most African leaders themselves were not ready to implement the resolution. Zambia whose foreign minister had sponsored the resolution was themselves not ready to implement it. Ultimately only Ghana and Tanzania broke relations with Britain but they also remained in the Commonwealth.
issue where the African Countries could have stayed united without having to lose anything was Sports.

SPORTS AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The Political influence of sports in the international level can be seen clearly in connection with South Africa. Sports have been used as a great psychological weapon against South Africa. The arenas of sports have also been a battleground for the African countries to show their opposition to apartheid and South Africa.

Nigeria, among the African Countries, has been giving the lead in the area of sports boycott. It gave the lead for the boycott of 1976 Olympic games by African Countries in retaliation against the New Zealand sporting contacts with South Africa. Fear was also there that they would boycott the next Commonwealth games to be held in Canada in 1978. This led to the Gleneagles Agreement of 1977, by which all the Commonwealth Countries agreed to sever sporting relations with South Africa. But even after the agreement, New Zealand allowed its sportsmen to travel to South Africa as individuals and regroup there as a team.55

The Nigerian government was of the opinion that not enough was being done to deter individuals from New Zealand to visit the racist Republic. In October 1977, Nigeria gave Canada, where the 1978 Commonwealth games was to take place, time till 31 March 1978 to expel New Zealand from the games. The deadline passed without any action. This led to talk of Nigerian boycott. The game was scheduled for August. But even on July 21, the Nigerian President of the Supreme Council for sports in Africa (SCSA) Mr. Abraham Ordia stated that despite the presence of New Zealand, the Commonwealth games are safe. But Nigeria decided to boycott the games and the decision was made public on 26 July. The Nigerian Minister of External Affairs said that sporting links help foster understanding between countries therefore any country which maintains sporting

relations with South Africa is guilty of giving indirect encouragement to the policies of South Africa.  

This surprised many other countries as by then many countries had already reached Canada. The Nigeria leaders seemed to have deliberately held off a statement on the boycott until it was too late for other countries to support it nor was any other country informed prior the Nigerian boycott. The boycott gave the message that Nigeria remained fully committed to the fight against racism in South Africa. It was a bold move as it made Nigeria to be seen as the defender of the oppressed in Africa. But this incident also showed the lack of co-ordination among African countries.

Another incident in which sports were used to register the protest of African countries was by the boycott of the Commonwealth games of 24 July 1986. This was in retaliation against the British government’s opposition to economic sanctions against South Africa. This time also it was Nigeria who led the boycott. However this time it was not only African countries that boycotted, Asian countries also joined. The immediate reason cited however was the inclusion of two South African born women (Zola Budd and Annette Cowley) in the England team. Their inclusion had been considered valid by the England team selectors on grounds of claimed residency or chosen domicile. Nigeria asked the Commonwealth Games Federation to investigate the eligibility of two South Africa-born women to be included in the England team.

The Africans argued that Britain has breached the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement. Nigeria was the first to boycott on July 9 followed within hours by Ghana. Uganda followed them on July 11, Kenya on 12 and Tanzania on 13. The Commonwealth federation, which was supposed to meet on July 19, prompted by the boycotts met on July 13 and announced the ineligibility of the two women as they did not meet the federations constitutional eligibility. But the Africans continued with their boycott.

The philosophy that sports and politics should not mix is specious and hypocritical one. Sporting achievements today are used as a measure of the country’s greatness. Sporting links foster development and understanding between counties. Therefore, a country, which enjoys maintaining sports relations with South Africa, stands guilty of giving indirect encouragement to the inhuman policies perpetrated by South Africa.... It would be illogical in the extreme, therefore, if Nigeria were now to participate at the Edmonton Games, because these are to be held under the auspices of the Commonwealth when the reason for her boycotting of the Olympic games remain unchanged.

The front-line states met on July 18 in Harare and Zimbabwe and Zambia announced their withdrawals. The meeting noted the willingness of the front-line to reconsider their position should the British Prime Minister make a categorical statement before the start of the Games that the British Government would impose economic sanctions against the racist South Africa.\textsuperscript{57}

The African Countries pointed out that the action showed protest against British government and not the Commonwealth. They hoped that the boycott would consciences the British citizens of the strong feelings of the Africans towards apartheid. British reluctance to apply sanctions was deplored and Britain was accused of insensitivity to the feeling of Africans and of the international community. Britain was also accused of trying to dissuade other states from imposing sanctions.\textsuperscript{58}

The Nigerian Foreign minister Bolaji Akinyemi was praised in Nigeria for grabbing the initiative and the decisive action, which led to the boycott of many from the Commonwealth games of 1986. Nigeria was of the view that for now a complete African pull out from the Commonwealth games is an adequate response to Mrs. Thatcher’s antics. They argued that if Mrs Thatcher still doesn’t learn they would engineer a Nigerian led suspension of the Commonwealth membership.\textsuperscript{59} Thirty-one of the Commonwealth countries boycotted.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Kessing’s Contemporary Archives} (London), vol. XXXII, September 1986, p. 34650

\textsuperscript{58} Mr George Dove the Nigerian High Commissioner to United Kingdom said that Britain showed no sympathy for the feelings of Africans in the issue of apartheid. He hoped the boycott would bring home to the average citizen the strong feeling blacks have about apartheid. He defended the action taken by his government and said that it showed protest against Britain and not the Commonwealth. \textit{West Africa} (London), July 14 1986, p. 1456. The Tanzanian Foreign Ministry statement said besides opposing sanctions Britain had sought to dissuade other states from taking such measures. It also accused Britain of insensitivity to the feeling of international community. Announcing Uganda’s withdrawal the foreign minister dismissed as unacceptable Mrs Thatcher’s agreement that sanctions would hurt blacks. It attributed this stance to fear for loss of jobs at home and trade with South Africa. \textit{West Africa} (London), July 21 1986, p. 1508.

\textsuperscript{59} They felt that Mrs Thatcher has aided South Africa to circumvent all attempts to exclude her from the comity of nations ... lately Mrs Thatcher has introduced the red herring of South Africa’s indispensability to western defence and economic wellbeing. Mrs Thatcher is confident that African anger at her diplomatic dithering will not break the Commonwealth. If Mrs Thatcher misreads or is unwilling to learn the proper lessons from a successful boycott then a Nigeria led suspension of Commonwealth membership by the non-aligned members of the body will became inescapable. \textit{African Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series} (London), vol. 23, no. 7, 25 August 1986, p. 8172.
Even in the issue of sports there existed differences and lack of co-ordination. Among the Southern African countries Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania boycotted while Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland did not joint in the Commonwealth boycott. A reason for these differences was that there were economically dependent on South Africa and South Africa was using its policy of destabilisation and violation of the territorial integrity of these countries.

**INTERNAL ISSUES OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE COMMONWEALTH**

The African countries have united to condemn some of the internal issues that have come up. They have been the rejection of Bantustans, the rejection of violent methods of intimidation, South African troops in Angola and the issue of Namibia. They came together to denounce South Africa for its violent methods of intimidation like the Soweto incident. They also stood against the acceptance of the Bantustans: It is their credit that no country has recognised the Bantustans. An important issue that gained prominence was the constitutional reforms of South Africa, which led to the Tri-cameral Parliament.

In 1983, a new Constitution was adopted in South Africa in which a Tri-cameral Parliament was endorsed by an all-white referendum. The Constitution created separate white, Coloured, and Indian Chambers. No efforts were made to include Blacks into the Tri-cameral Parliament. The reforms were an attempt to reconstitute the means of domination on terms favourable to the ruling minority. By adopting the policy of cautious reform of the apartheid reform, PW Botha, the president of South Africa, unintentionally destroyed the moral legitimacy of the white rule and the certainty that the white supremacy would last indefinitely. The Whites could no longer count on their numbers or the feeling of superiority of their political, administrative and military powers. At the same time, they also understood that their power, whether in political or economic sphere was not limitless that even time was no longer on their side.

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The African countries rejected these reforms and said that apartheid cannot be reformed and can only be dismantled. The Africans warned that the reforms would lead to more violence and the only way to avoid this was talk to the African leaders in the jail. The Heads of Government of the front-line states including Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana rejected and dismissed with contempt the 'sham constitutional changes' in South Africa. The FLS expressed hope that the Commonwealth Conference to be held in India would give serious consideration on matters of peace and security in Southern Africa. The Commonwealth in 1983 summit with an overwhelming majority rejected the South African proposal for the Constitutional reforms because the African majority was “wholly excluded from their scope and the proposals were designed not to eradicate, but to entrench and strengthen apartheid”.

While Rhodesia was associated with South Africa by way of racism, Namibia was a direct aggression by South Africa. The Commonwealth, from its 1966 conference, expressed concern over the case of Namibia. In the 1975 meeting, concern was expressed over South Africa’s illegal occupation of Namibia. An invitation was also offered for Namibia to join the Commonwealth at the time of its independence. However, on Namibia, the Commonwealth offered no fresh solutions as it considered its solution to be based on the framework formulated by UN Security Council. The London Summit of 1977 called upon South Africa to act immediately to end its illegal occupation of Namibia, to release all political prisoners and in consultation with appropriate organs of the UN to transfer power within the principles established by UN resolutions.

62 Nigeria felt that a new constitution was a futile attempt to get the support of the Indians and Coloureds. Ghana rejected the reforms. Kaunda said that it was folly to talk of reforming apartheid. Sierra Leone introduced the resolutions condemning the reforms in the UN General Assembly. Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series (London), vol. 20, no. 11, December 15 1983, p. 7046.

63 Ibid., p. 7045.


SWAPO, the Liberation movement of Namibia, however, felt that the Commonwealth should concern itself with Namibia's independence. The Secretary General of SWAPO, Mr. Toivo Hermana Jatoivo said that the Commonwealth had a historical obligation to strive for Namibia's freedom. Secondly, Canada and Britain were members of the Contact Group, which had produced the UN independence plan, which made it Commonwealth's concern also. Further, he felt that since the members had been colonies in the past and were now members of NAM and OAU, these countries were in a better position to understand the plight of the people of Namibia.

The African members knew that if Britain could be pressured to take stronger actions against South Africa, this would lead to an early independence for Namibia. The Africans in the Commonwealth were able to get the rejection of the linkage theory with even Britain, member of Contact Group, agreeing to it. It asked the Contact Group to exercise the influence to secure the speedy and unconditional influence of Security Council Resolution 435. The African countries felt that the Commonwealth had a commendable record on Zimbabwe and it has an important role to play over Namibia.

In mid 1970's, with the independence of Angola and Mozambique, the confidence of white South Africa was shaken. The Soweto uprising of 1976 and the murder of Steve Biko in 1977 further accentuated this, leading to a substantial outflow of foreign capital. In United States the government under Jimmy Carter and the Labour government in Britain pushed for changes in apartheid. Moreover in 1977 the Labour government decided to implement the arms embargo against South Africa. White hegemony seemed under siege and as often the answer was to turn to military. Moreover P. W. Botha who had been the defence Minister since 1968 became the Prime Minister with Vorsters' resignation in 1978.

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66 At the 1987 Vancouver meeting he said that the League of Nations had given the UK the mandate to administer Namibia until independence. The British subsequently delegated this responsibility to South Africa. Since Britain was a leading member of the Commonwealth the Namibian problem was a Commonwealth problem. "Namibia—the Commonwealth's Forgotten Responsibility", SWAPO Information Bulletin (Luanda), October 1987. cited in R.K Anand, Problems Of Southern Africa and Role of the Commonwealth (Delhi, 1998), p. 126.

The new South African government argued that it faced a total onslaught from beyond its borders and must respond with a total national strategy. South Africa hoped to create a Constellation of States (CONSAS) linked to them by trade. The independence of Zimbabwe under Mugabe and the establishment of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) shattered this. The SADCC was set up on 1 April 1980 to minimise the Southern African countries dependence on South Africa. The members were the six frontline states (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland. The goal of SADCC was to "liberate our economies from their dependence on the Republic of South Africa, to overcome the imposed economic fragmentation and to co-ordinate our efforts toward regional and national economic development." The SADCC was a blow to South Africa as it showed that even the most conservative neighbours like Swaziland and Malawi showed that they thought apartheid a worse evil than socialism. South Africa had thought that at least Malawi and Swaziland would join the Constellation of States (CONSAS) proposed by it.

The fact that the Southern African countries though economically dependent on South Africa were still supporting the African liberation movements angered South Africa. Further with the independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975 and Zimbabwe in 1980 left the Republic vulnerable to infiltration on a wide front and the policy of destabilisation was formulated.

68 The total onslaught was seen as a specifically communist plot to overthrow white rule in South Africa. The total national strategy was to be a comprehensive plan to utilise all the means available to the state according to an integrated plan. To South Africa Mozambique and Angola were the main examples of the Communist thrust. Later with the victory of Mugabe in Zimbabwe and with the opening of Eastern Bloc embassies in Lesotho the idea gained momentum. Louis Nel who was later appointed Deputy Foreign Minister in a speech in 1982 said that, "The Kremlin has actively supported the Southern African Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movements in their quest for power in Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The Kremlin is currently backing SWAPO, The South African ANC and the South African Communist Party who operate against SWA\ Namibia and the Republic of South Africa, respectively." Hanlon, n. 53, p. 8.

69 CONSAS was to include the bantustans and the two states in which internal settlements had been imposed in 1978- Zimbabwe-Rhodesia under Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Namibia under the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance. South Africa also hoped that countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland who were members of the Southern African Customs Union and Malawi would join. Nigel Worden. The Making Of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid (Oxford, 1994), p. 122.

ISSUE OF DESTABILISATION BY SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa and the conflicts arising out of its destabilisation strategy agitated the Commonwealth meetings after the independence of Zimbabwe. South Africa pursued a deliberate strategy to destabilise the Southern African countries. The destabilisation policy had wide implications for the economies of all African countries. However for those countries neighbouring South Africa this was a critical issue of survival. There were basically two forms of destabilisation.

a) Direct political and military intervention as in the case of Namibia and Angola or through the military action against the South Africa national liberation forces or through the support of dissident groups, mercenaries and subversive elements in independent African countries.

b) Economic intervention through economic ties involving critical economic sectors.

In the countries over which it had a strong economic hold destabilisation took the form of economic assault backed with military pressure. There had been a continuing raid attacks in almost all the neighbouring countries. In Angola and Mozambique South Africa helped insurgents to come up (UNITA in Angola and Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) in Mozambique). The escalating violence had damaged their economies so much so that both Angola on February 16, 1984 signed the Lusaka accord and Mozambique on March 16, 1984 signed the Nkomati accord with South Africa. However it was a Commonwealth country Swaziland that first signed a secret security pact with South Africa in December 1982. Later in 1985 it became the second African country after Malawi to allow South Africa to open a diplomatic mission.

The destabilisation strategy of South Africa was to use the neighbouring states in the defence of Apartheid. It needed neighbours as a barrier against guerrillas and it did not want its neighbouring states to give shelter to ANC refugees. Pretoria also wanted to use them as hostages to ward off international sanctions and as a useful export market in the region for South African industry. In other words South Africa was defending not only a set of racial taboos but an economic system as well.71 South African aggression meant

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71 The neighbouring states are of direct importance to South Africa. They are a useful source of foreign exchange as in 1982 the region imported goods worth $2400 million from South Africa. South Africa had a balance of payments surplus with the region of $1500 million a year and is 10 percent of its total export earnings. They are also a vital and captive market for South Africa's manufacturing sector. Hanlon, n. 53, p. 3.
that more revenue had to be diverted from the development process to defence. Moreover with Zimbabwe after independence achieving a good black-white relation it faced Pretoria with the problem of an effective multi-racial alternative society on its entrance. Too much success in Zimbabwe would undermine apartheid in South Africa. Further Mugabe was a highly articulate critic of apartheid. From 1980-84, the cost of destabilisation for the Southern African countries was $10,000 million. The Destabilisation Report published in 1989 put the cost of “minimum $45 billion since 1980, and some estimates range up to $60 billion at current rates of exchange.”

Other than Angola and Mozambique the rest of the SADCC was Commonwealth Countries. Of these Seven, other than Tanzania, all the rest were landlocked (Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland). SADCC dependence on South African and transport infrastructure - roads, railways and ports - for their overseas trade was most significant reason for their dependence on South Africa.

The regional transport route mainly railway that provide alternative to those running through South Africa have been major targets. In 1981, 50 per cent of the extra regional trade passed through South Africa and by 1985 it rose to 85 per cent. In 1985, three of the five SADCC railways were inaccessible to the ports of Lobito (Angola), Maputo and Nacala (Mozambique), primarily because of the South African policy of destabilisation. This forced the landlocked countries to use routes that passed through South Africa. This provided South Africa with money in payment for transit dues and pushed Zambia and Zimbabwe two very articulate countries against apartheid into greater dependence and therefore vulnerable to South African pressures.

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72 Of this direct war damage cost was $1610 million, lost economic growth was $2000 million, extra military expenditure $3060 million, higher transport and energy costs $970 million, smuggling $190 million, refugees $660 million, lost exports and tourism $230 million, boycotts and embargoes $260 million loss of existing production $800 million and trading arrangements $340 million. *West Africa*, September 9 1985, p. 1853.


74 The railways through Angola i.e. the Benguela line and in Mozambique the Nacala, Beira and Limpopo lines.

The disruption of the Beira corridor and Limpopo line to Maputo meant that Zimbabwe's shortest and cheapest routes to the sea were disrupted. In 1986, 90 percent of Zimbabwe's imports and exports used South African railway system and paid $50 million to South Africa on account of freight and insurance. Because of the sabotage of railway lines Zimbabwe's trade passing through Mozambique dropped from 53.9 percent in 1983 to 5 percent in 1986. To counter this disruption of railway lines Tanzania sent about 3000 troops while Zimbabwe committed 10,000 troops about one fifth of her army to Mozambique to guard the railways. However it was still obliged to use alternative routes through South Africa despite her calls for sanctions. The cost of the army was an added strain on its economy.\(^{76}\)

Nearly all these countries depended on the production and export of primary commodities. Consequently, the SADCC demand for manufactures has to be met with imports from South Africa and other industrialised countries. The SADCC's dependence can be seen from the Appendix 2. Moreover South Africa further controlled their transport routes. Only Tanzania and Angola had no economic dependence on South Africa. With this dependence on South Africa, the FLS and SADCC were not in a position of apply comprehensive mandatory sanctions.

The Commonwealth took a special interest in the case of SADCC states from the beginning.\(^{77}\) In 1977, the Heads of Governments condemned the repeated South African threats to violate the territorial integrity of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia and commended the front-line states for their resolute and determined efforts in advancing the cause of freedom and independence in South Africa. They called upon not only the Commonwealth countries but also the international community to accord them

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\(^{76}\) Between 27 February 1986 and 9 September 1987 the Beira railway line was sabotaged on average slightly more than once a week, while the cost of maintaining Zimbabwean troops in Mozambique was estimated at $1 million a day. Guy Arnold, *South Africa: Crossing the Rubicon* (London, 1992), p. 117.

\(^{77}\) As early as 1969 in the Prime Ministers Conference held in London the Communiqué issued stated that "the recent achievement of independence by many small states would bring home to the international community the need to introduce special and effective measures to guarantee their territorial integrity. "Final Communiqué, Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers" London, 1969, n. 2, p. 144.
full support and assistance.\textsuperscript{78} The Commonwealth in 1977 had also undertaken a study of the economic costs incurred by the front-line states.

The Southern African countries said that by appearing to comfort the white minority regime the West was alienating the Africans for the future. Lesotho, which under Chief Jonathan in the beginning had been a friend of South Africa but later, became a strident critic, warned the West about its attitude towards South Africa.\textsuperscript{79} In the 1979 Summit, the Heads of Governments stressed that the grave problems afflicting the Southern African regions stemmed from the racist policies of the South African regime embodied in the system of Apartheid.\textsuperscript{80}

In the 1981 summit in Melbourne, Zambian President Kaunda said, "In Southern Africa the ball was squarely with the west and if you do not take action soon, the French revolution will look like picnic."\textsuperscript{81} Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe’s Prime Minister, also attacked South Africa and its policies. Nigeria’s President Shagari felt that South Africa could not be trusted voluntarily to change their racial ways and that international opinions should be mobilised to keep on the pressure.\textsuperscript{82} In 1983 due to a request from Lesotho three-man team was send to examine economic and strategic consequence of these attacks.

In the 1985 Nassau Conference the Heads of Government condemned the continued aggression of South Africa against its neighbours that constituted a serious challenge to the values and principles of the Commonwealth. It also condemned Pretoria’s relentless


\textsuperscript{79} Kaunda wondered why the West did not recognise that by appearing comfort to the White minority regime in Southern Africa, it was alienating the Africans for the future. While Chief Jonathan said, "You are tinkering if you don’t deal with South Africa. I am appalled when I hear people talking of majority rule in Zimbabwe while, when discussing South Africa, they talk only of a relaxation of Apartheid. Derek Ingram, "Commonwealth Conference 1977" The Round Table, 1978, pp. 217-218.

\textsuperscript{80} "Final Communiqué, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting" Lusaka 1-17 August 1979. n. 2, p. 206.


efforts to coerce these neighbouring countries to enter into security pacts with it. It also condemned the South African regime's continued attack on its neighbouring countries and especially deplored the brutal attacks made on Botswana. The Heads of Government also welcomed the report on *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*. In its report the problems of Southern African countries were also studied. It stated that other than the general problems of others these countries faced added transportation and financial burdens because of the disturbed political situation of that region. It commented that taking advantage of its economic and strategic strength, Pretoria was trying to strangle the growth potential of its neighbours. It stated that the exodus of refugees from South Africa to these countries created not only economic imbalance but also provided it with an excuse for intervention.

At the Vancouver Commonwealth meeting of October 1987 Head of governments agreed to complement existing bilateral and multilateral assistance to front-line states by a co-ordinated programme aimed at the rehabilitation and physical protection of the crucial sectors of their transportation and communications system. A special fund to provide technical assistance to Mozambique was also made.

The frontline states however showed a growing solidarity on this issue. All countries had joined the SADCC and even countries like Malawi and Swaziland have hosted the SADCC conference. Malawi had infuriated others with his diplomatic relations with Pretoria followed a carrots and stick policy. To Swaziland it offered an amazing deal: transfer of land from South Africa. Swaziland had for long claimed parts of South Africa. It was offered a part of KwaZulu with which it would gain a link to the sea and in addition all of KaNgwane. But as soon as Swaziland signed the security pact South Africa's interest in the land deal waned. Botswana in spite of its geography had joined the SADCC and the headquarters of SADCC was in Gabarone. It also refused to sign any security pacts with South Africa. Botswana thus became a victim of numerous aggressions. On June 1985 South African commandos drove into Gabarone and killed twelve people. From 13 February 1985 to 14 February 1989 there were twenty direct South African defence force attacks or sabotages, thirty seven lesser incidents involving incursions or cross border shootings and twenty three known air space violations. Johnson, n. 73, p. 101.

The consultative group to look into this was set up in the 1983 New Delhi meeting. The report drew attention to the special problem of vulnerability of the land locked small countries due to their geographical situation. Under the heading of Characteristic of Smallness the group has entitled thirty-one countries in the category of small states and these include Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. It stated that, "apart from the general problems arising from excessive transit, transport and transhipment costs, these in South African have added transportation and financial burdens because of the disturbed political situation of that region.... For them the overwhelming physical proximity of South Africa is the dominant political reality in respect of their national security. " Cited in, Anand. n. 66, pp. 77-78.
South Africa and aggregated it when he allowed MNR to set up bases in Malawi to destabilise Mozambique. This made Mugabe, Kaunda and Machel to confront Banda in September 1986 and threaten to close the borders and overthrow Banda if support for the MNR continued. This and the closure of its six hundred-kilometre railway line from Blantyre to the sea at Nacala, which is Malawi’s shortest and cheapest import-export route by the destabilisation of MNR made it, reverse its stand on MNR and assist in the rehabilitation of Nacala. Moreover Malawi and Mozambique agreed to a joint security pact and in April 1987 Malawi committed some 300 troops to Mozambique. Thus even Malawi which had consistently opposed confrontation with South Africa was obliged to station troops along with Zimbabwe and Tanzania to oppose MNR and guard rehabilitating work along the Nacala line.

By 1985 Commonwealth had gone through a programme of isolation, arms embargo and sports boycott. All that was left was to use force or sanctions. Force could be ruled out, as no western country would have supported it. In African countries there was now and again isolated voices calling for organising African forces against South Africa but it was never given serious backing. The next step was to call for sanctions. Moreover the deteriorating situation in South Africa gave an emergency to the situation.

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85 President Machel had accused South Africa of obtaining bases for MNR in a member state of OAU an oblique reference to Malawi. Arnold, n. 76, p. 65.


87 The Nacala line was Malawi’s shortest and cheapest import-export route and until its closure handled greater part of its trade. Its closure had forced Malawi to use the route across the Tete province of Mozambique and hence through Zimbabwe and South to Durban, adding 50 percent to her transit cost. Arnold, n. 76. p. 65.

88 The South African government introduced the new constitution on September 1984. This resulted in a massively attended non-white community demonstration against the proposals. The regime arrested many including some of the UDF leaders. The increase in rent and electricity charges arbitrarily imposed by the local council under the effective control of apartheid regime led to revolt in the black townships. The government sent in troops to put down the protest by the use of force. About 150 people were killed. The protest continued and on March 21, 1985 the police fired into a crowd of mourners in Langa killing over 20 people. By the end of June over 500 had been killed A state of emergency was imposed on July 21, 1985. Report of the Secretary General, 1985 (London, 1985), p. 14.
SANCTIONS

As early as 1964 the African members had called for sanctions against South Africa. Britain who had large-scale trade relations with South Africa was against it. Even when sanctions were applied against Rhodesia, Britain made it clear that it was not to be extended to South Africa. The African countries were of the opinion that Britain being a leading member of the Commonwealth and also one of the biggest trading partner of South Africa should lead the Commonwealth brigades for sanctions. However, Britain was against sanctions of any kind. Though the calls for sanctions have been a demand for a long time it was only in 1985 that it gathered urgency.

Those who favoured sanctions argued that South African government only understood the language of toughness and the only way of avoiding a racial holocaust was by hitting the country’s economy so hard and isolating it completely that it would be forced to submit to external force. Those who opposed the sanctions claimed that apart from the risk of permanently damaging the South African economy, the traditional siege mentality of the Afrikaners would lead them to behave more obdurately rather than become more flexible.

Sanctions, however, was not applied by the Commonwealth as a means of punishment. Sanctions were seen as complementary to the armed struggle. It was a means for weakening the South African government by generating pressure from inside. It aimed at providing that extra push needed for speeding up the events. The sanctions Report of the Commonwealth stressed that sanctions were an essential part of the negotiating process, not an alternative to it. Their objective was not to punish, but to facilitate and they were

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89 The 1964 Communiqué said, “The Prime Ministers reaffirmed their condemnation of the policy of Apartheid practised by the Government of the Republic of S. A. Some C. W. Prime Ministers felt very strongly that the only effective means of dealing with the problem of Apartheid was the application of economic sanctions and an arms embargo. “Final Communiqué, Meeting Of Commonwealth Prime Ministers”, London, 1964. n. 2. p. 87.

90 In 1977 the Commonwealth communiqué urged “the international community to take effective measures to compel South Africa to bring about majority rule.” But it had to wait till 1985. “Final Communiqué, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting”, London, 1977. n. 2. p. 188.

91 Anand, n. 66, p. 160.
not an end in themselves, the end being genuine negotiation in the context of the
dismantling of the apartheid.92

The 1985 Commonwealth stopped short of comprehensive economic sanctions
demanded by most. However some measures were taken.93 An Eminent Persons Groups
(EPG) was set up as a part of the compromise plan to prevent a split in the
Commonwealth on the sanctions issue. The group was to encourage through all
practicable ways the evolution of that necessary process of political dialogue leading to
the establishment of a non-racial and representative government.94

However EPG cut short its visit in protest against the raids on Zambia, Zimbabwe and
Botswana by South Africa on 19 May 1986. The demand for sanctions increased with
the raids. The raids were condemned world-wide.95 The front-line states at a crisis
meeting called to review the raids denounced the raids and called for international
economic sanctions against South Africa. Mugabe said that the international community
should now impose comprehensive mandatory sanctions to isolate South Africa.
President Kaunda also called for total economic sanctions against South Africa, saying it
was the only hope of averting bloodshed. He strongly condemned Western nations for
backing South African sadists with arms and investment.96 The Commonwealth
Secretary General, Shridath Ramphal issued a strong call for economic sanctions. But
even after the raids Britain and U.S. opposed economic sanctions by vetoing selective

93 A ban on air links, on importation of Krugerrands and government finance, of trade tours and trade
missions to South Africa, an arms embargo and a ban on exports of nuclear equipments and of
computers by military and police, a ban on all new government loans to South African government
Meeting 1985, n. 2, pp. 267-269.
95 The U. S. administration condemned the raids as 'outrageous'. The USSR official news agency
TASS partly blamed the US saying that Pretoria always consulted the White House on such
p. 8075.
96 Kaunda also said, "I am warning the West that their policy in Southern Africa will lead to hundreds
of thousands of lives being lost". Ibid., p. 8074.

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sanctions in the United Nations Security Council. The EPG report also supported the call for sanctions.97

Britain however continued to oppose sanctions and Sir Geoffrey Howe, the UK Foreign Secretary was send on an European Economic Community (EEC) peace mission to start an internal dialogue in South Africa. This increased the Commonwealth hostility to Britain as it was seen as an insult to the EPG. The African countries made known their displeasure at the Howe mission. Kenneth Kaunda alleged that the EEC mission was a conspiracy between British government and Reagan administration to support South Africa. Kaunda said that he would not have met Mr Howe had he come in his capacity as British Foreign Secretary. "It is only because you are here as the chairman of the EEC and I have respect for those leaders of Europe who act against South Africa that I am seeing you." 98 Mr Mugabe described the missions "reprehensible, futile and useless". 99

In the Commonwealth Mini Summit of August 1986, Commonwealth Head of Governments decided to sacrifice unanimity for credibility. Britain was isolated, as it was against sanctions. There arose a new alliance between leaders like Brian Mulroney, the Canadian Prime Minister, Bob Hawk of Australia, Rajiv Gandhi of India and their African colleagues, President Kaunda and Mugabe. The Commonwealth summit agreed on the Nassau proposal of sanctions and further measures like a ban on all new bank loans to South Africa both in the public and private sectors, a ban on the import of uranium, coal, iron and steel and withdrawal of all consular facilities in South Africa.

97 While we are not determining the nature or extent of any measures, which might be adopted, we point to the fact that government of South Africa has itself used economic measures against its neighbours. Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth Report (London. 1986), p. 140.
98 Kaunda remarked "for you people to kiss Apartheid with Reagan, I cannot accept that. My humble prayer continues to be that the British and the Americans will support the people of S. A. over and above the head of their governments. We can only depend for salvation on the people of Britain and United States, not on their governments." Africa Research Bulletin Political Social and Cultural Series, vol. 23, no. 7, 15 August 1986, p. 8169.
99 Another Zimbabwean politician said, "This man comes down here saying that he has the weight of three hundred million Europeans. What about nearly two billion people on whose behalf the EPG undertook its mission?" He continued, "Of course, most of them are black and do not matter to Thatcher." The Observer (London), 13 July 1986.
The Approach of African Countries on Sanctions

The African countries have always supported and called for sanctions. South Africa's racism was seen as the underlying cause of regional tensions and instabilities that resulted in the diversion of resources from development to defence. The front-line states at the Front Line summit on 15 February 1985 backed sanctions when they hailed increasing Western pressure on South Africa, including economic sanctions against the apartheid regime. They also called upon these and other countries to broaden and intensify the pressure. In the SADCC summit in Arusha on 9 August 1985 Nyerere made clear the support for sanctions in Africa. In 1985 Lesotho also supported the sanctions campaign and called on the international community to increase moral support to the SADCC states to cushion the indirect effects of sanctions on them. Malawi and Swaziland however did not support sanctions.

The Southern African countries made it clear that sanctions must be organised and applied by South Africa's main trading partners as the impact of sanctions will be greater than sanctions applied by the neighbours. Kaunda though committed to sanctions made it clear that they could not realistically act on their own. Nyerere warned that Commonwealth would be badly damaged if Britain refused to go along with others on economic sanctions. The Southern African countries felt that Commonwealth had a

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100 Nyerere said, "All the major non-white leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle demand that economic sanctions be imposed against the regime. They are not stupid; they know that among other things this means more unemployment for non-white workers. But they believe that sanctions will greatly weaken the apartheid system, which they are fighting with their lives and their freedom. Africa also calls for economic sanctions, and we are not stupid either. We know that South Africa's retaliation may well be directed against neighbouring African states. But we also know that our freedom and our economic development will remain under constant threat until apartheid is defeated." Hanlon, n. 53, p. 260.

101 King Moshosho II speaking at the SADCC summit on 9 August 1985 said, "Various sanctions against South Africa are but a reflection of international opprobrium against the policy of racial discrimination.... The effects of sanctions are very clear to us, and they will call for great sacrifices among our peoples. We cannot stand against the sanctions campaign, thus we call upon the rest of the world that, as it exercises what it feels to be a moral obligation, it should be cognisant that we are not a party to apartheid. We, therefore strongly elicit the international community to increase moral support to SADCC states so as to cushion the indirect effects of sanctions to us." Ibid., pp. 260-261.

102 Kaunda said, "without the major trading partners there are no sanctions at all. If Zimbabwe and Zambia tomorrow applied sanctions on their own.... It would be suicide on our part, it would be meaningless." Financial Times (London), 6 September 1986.

103 Nyerere also suggested ban on importation of agricultural goods from South Africa, on air communication and the banning of the purchase of Knigerrand. West Africa, 7 October 1985, p. 2079.
collective and moral responsibility to assist towards meaningful changes and called for sanction in the 1985 Nassau summit and warned of racial holocaust if sanctions were not applied. They were general feeling of agreement in the Commonwealth also. Before the Nassau summit Ramphal said that countries which maintain a high level of economic involvement in South Africa underwrote apartheid however much they dislike it.

African reactions to the 1985 Conference were mixed. While a section felt that at least some sanctions have taken place others felt that comprehensive and mandatory economic and military sanctions was the need of the hour. It was also said that British with the sanctions applied had legitimised its trade in South Africa. Mugabe said that Nassau Conference was satisfactory in the context of what it tried to achieve but felt it was a compromise. They felt that it was now for the Commonwealth contact group to salvage a bungled situation. It should recommend a stiffer and more comprehensive application of sanctions.

On the issue of sanctions also Africans Countries used the threats that they had used during the issue of arms. Some threatened to withdraw from the Commonwealth, some called for economic retaliation against Britain and of expelling Britain from the Commonwealth. Among the SADCC countries strong protest came from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Kaunda threatened to withdraw from the Commonwealth and said that action should be taken that will demonstrate our deep feelings at what

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104 Robert Mugabe said that Commonwealth had a collective moral responsibility to assist towards meaningful changes in apartheid South Africa. President Kaunda expressed the African bitterness when he said, “If the Commonwealth does nothing, the oppressors will say Britain has won, so we have nothing to worry about. And the oppressed will say we are now on our own. And the wrath you now see as little children face guns will reach the point of no return. Africa Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series, vol. 22, no. 10, 15 November 1985, p. 7808.


106 The Kenyan Daily Nation said that a good thing about Nassau package of sanctions was that it happened at all. But Britain the greatest single investor could not go on for long having its cake and eating it. The New Nigerian commented that the conference had failed to achieve anything concrete. It said it is beyond question that only comprehensive and mandatory sanctions can hurt the apartheid Republic enough to persuade it to dismantle this horrid system. The cosmetic concessions that Britain was forced to make will cost her a paltry half a million pounds in trade and in the process legitimise the rest of over two billion pounds worth of commercial trade ties with the racists. While Kenya Times said, it was amusing that Britain should be so sympathetic towards black South Africa’s when it came to the question of sanctions. Africa Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series, vol. 22, no. 10, November 15, 1985, p. 7812.

British government has been doing over South Africa. Mugabe said that he would also review his country’s relation with Britain. Tanzania called for comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions and said that the international community has the moral obligation to increase pressure on all fronts against the racist South Africa. Tanzanian government said that the situation in South Africa was fast getting out of hand and Britain was blamed for worsening the situation in South Africa.

Among the other countries Nigeria again came out strongly. Further the presence of General Obasanjo the former head of government of Nigeria as the co-chairmen of EPG made matters credible. He advised Nigeria to withdraw from the Commonwealth and suggested that another body should be formed to replace the Commonwealth. The African countries in the Commonwealth, led by Nigeria, boycotted the Commonwealth games held in Edinburgh on 24 July 1986 to protest Britain’s opposition to economic sanctions on South Africa. Nigeria said that it would suspend its Commonwealth membership if Mrs Thatcher does not change her stand on sanctions. This came to be known as the Nigerian Option.

Nigeria talked about possible economic measures against Britain and warned and reminded Britain that it has interests in African countries other than South Africa. There was a feeling in Nigeria that just as other countries boycotted (following Nigeria’s initial boycott) the 1986 Edinburgh Commonwealth games, if Nigeria pulls out of the Commonwealth many other countries will follow suit. Fearing that the Nigerian government may heed Obasanjo’s advice and sever relations with the Commonwealth, the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, M.K. Evans gave a list of economic sanctions

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108 He appealed to Britain think again and abandon its opposition and it was out of character for Britain to remain indifferent to this crucial matter of human rights and dignity. The Observer (London), 13 July 1986.


111 Nigeria’s leader Commodore Ebitu Ukiwa threatened the British government and said, “It would not be in the overall interest of Britain to ignore the black demands for action against South Africa because of its trade and investments in South Africa. We too have our interests and Britain has interest in other African countries The Guardian (Nigeria), 1 August 1986, p. 8.
imposed on South Africa by Britain. However, many others advised Nigeria not to quit the Commonwealth. Later, General Obasanjo stressed that greater pressure should be brought to bear on Mrs. Thatcher to make her relent, but he was no longer calling for withdrawal.

Nigeria's foreign minister Bolaji Akinyemi was the first from the African States to visit Botswana, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe after the raid by South Africa forces. Nigeria pledged N fifty million to the front-line states. The African countries tried to take common measures among themselves. Before the mini summit the officials from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana met in Harare to discuss about the possible closure of high commissions in London if Britain did not apply sanctions.

In the African countries, there was anger against Britain and Mrs. Thatcher. Mrs. Thatcher was accused of having acquiesced to apartheid South Africa for reasons of kith and kin. It was said that if it were the whites that were subjected to such a threat, Thatcher would have been the first to crush it. Ghana called for sanctions and condemned the South Africa regime. But its own economic problem was a constrain on them. In Nigeria, the decisions of the mini summit were endorsed and the Commonwealth was urged to take the lead with or without Britain or the US to end the scourge of our times. It was also suggested that Commonwealth leaders should

112 The list included sanctions on trade in armaments with South Africa, military co-operation, export of oil, export of sensitive equipment to South African police and armed forces, and on collaboration in nuclear development. It also stated that Britain has observed Gleneagle's agreement discouraging sporting contacts with South Africa, withdrawn its military attaches from South Africa, banned all new government loans to South African government and its agencies, taken measures to prevent the import of Kruger Rands, and stopped government funding of trade missions to South Africa. The Guardian (Nigeria), 1 August 1986, p. 8.

113 Chief Awolowa, a political leader called on all African governments to exercise caution in dealing with the issues of Apartheid and South Africa. Also an editorial of New Nigeria put out the reasons for not pulling out of Commonwealth. (a) the Commonwealth is no longer a British Commonwealth (b) Nigeria and others can influence Britain more by remaining in the Commonwealth. (c) Zimbabwe's independence was due to Commonwealth solidarity at Lancaster (d) OAU cannot do as much as Commonwealth in dismantling Apartheid (e) Withdrawal will not hurt Britain. New Nigeria, 2 August 1986.


impose these sanctions and picket those who want to break ranks by applying the same measures on them in recognition of the fact that the friends of our common enemy are of course enemies and should be so treated.\textsuperscript{118}

There arose a feeling that Britain had lost the right to take a moral leadership of the Commonwealth. This was made clear by Kaunda. He took the view that UK government now could not take the leadership role in the Commonwealth and proposed a three-member committee to co-ordinate the implementation of the Commonwealth measures. This did not include Mrs Thatcher, but, Bob Hawk, Brian Mulroney and Rajiv Gandhi. After the mini summit, Kaunda said that Zambia would not withdraw from the Commonwealth in response to the urgings of the queen, British church leaders and trade unionists and because he was heartened by the solidarity demonstrated by Australia and Canada. He said nothing could be expected from Mrs Thatcher.\textsuperscript{119}

In South Africa President Botha warned the Commonwealth that in digging a hole for South Africa they would harm themselves. He dismissed sanctions as senseless and pointed out that African countries that had called for sanctions would continue to trade with South Africa because they could not afford to.\textsuperscript{120} South Africa responded to the sanctions by implying that they will take economic action against Zimbabwe and Zambia. Pik Botha, the Foreign Minister of South Africa, said that a new system of levies would be imposed on all imports passing through South Africa from the neighbouring states. This was being introduced because of the sanctions threat and particularly because of the attitude of Zimbabwe and Zambia. He challenged Zimbabwe and Zambia to put their money where their mouth is and institute

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Africa Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series} (London), vol. 23, no. 8, September 15 1986, p. 8204.

\textsuperscript{119} He described Mrs Thatcher's position as very pathetic indeed and suggested that she was obsessed with gold, diamonds and Platinum. In Zambia it was advocated that Zambia should stay and a campaign should be made to expel the British government and to let the Commonwealth stand in that as Mrs Thatcher does not own the Commonwealth. It was advocated that nothing could be expected from her as long she is in power and her bosom friend, Ronald Reagan, was in charge in the United States. \textit{Kessing's Contemporary Archives} (London), vol. XXXII, September 1986, p. 34561.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Africa Research Bulletin}, n. 106, p. 7813.
sanctions. South Africa also threatened the African countries.121 Zambia and Zimbabwe had been in the forefront of those calling for sanctions. It was in retaliation that these measures were taken by South Africa.

Though Zambia and Zimbabwe were in the forefront calling for sanctions they themselves acknowledged the difficulties in this. Zambia acknowledged that the imposition of levies would have adverse effect on their economies and acknowledged that the sanctions that his country had fought before and during Zimbabwean independence struggle was nothing when it comes to thinking what South Africa can do to us. He said Zambia would fight back with everything that we have. But did not elaborate on how Zambia would fight.122

In Zimbabwe Mugabe emphasising the costs of destabilisation viewed the elimination of apartheid as fundamental for maintaining a non-racial society in Zimbabwe as well as supporting the pan African ideal of racial equality. He announced that Zimbabwe intended to implement the package of sanctions adopted at the mini summit and warned Zimbabweans to prepare for economic war against South Africa. Mugabe said that a comprehensive trade embargo against South Africa would be implemented. However, there was opposition inside Zimbabwe. The business community had been a major force in arguing against sanctions but it was muted, as they remained vulnerable to accusations of undue sympathy for white ruled South Africa.123

Mugabe was able to dismiss the economic concern of the business community but not that of his cabinet. Factionalism between the Pan-Africanists and the economic nationalists within the ruling party brought about a split. Such a split resulted in a high

121 The Defence Minister of South Africa, Magnus Malan, warned those of Africa who chant loudest in the chorus for sanctions and condemnation should take note that we have not even started to use our muscle and capabilities. African Recorder (New Delhi), September 1986, p. 7109.
123 The critics claimed that implementation of sanctions would lead to total collapse of Zimbabwean economy. Mugabe charged critics with defeatism for overestimating the costs and undervaluing the goal of defeating apartheid; in a particular attack against the business community he excoriated them for having ignored the governments urging ever since independence to develop new markets. In July 1986 the Confederation of Zimbabwean Industries (CZI) said that it now supported comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. They proclaimed that apartheid was inimical to economic progress. Audie Klotz, “Race And Nationalism In Zimbabwean Foreign Policy”. The Round Table, no. 327, 1993, pp. 269-270.
rhetorical profile on sanctions but without corresponding actions. After the cabinet meeting of July 31 1986, his decision to implement sanctions was reversed. An official statement announced that Zimbabwe would continue its programme of reducing dependence on South Africa.\(^{124}\) Later South Africa revealed that Zimbabwe had renewed a preferential Trade Agreement first negotiated in 1964.\(^{125}\)

The Economic sanctions against South Africa touched the vital interests of all its nine neighbouring countries, of which six were the Commonwealth member’s countries that advocated economic sanctions. Their economies were heavily dependent on South Africa. Simply by closing its borders, South Africa could effectively put a blockade against the land locked countries. It was a blockade of 1986, which took only ten days to topple the Jonathan government in Lesotho. The Zimbabwean economic minister acknowledged their difficulties when he stated,

> If the sanctions were comprehensive or total... this would automatically affect Zimbabwe in a devastatingly massive manner, unless the Maputo line and the Beira lines were open. Equally, if South Africa reacted by closing its borders... the impact would be equally sharp on Zimbabwe.\(^{126}\)

The cutting of air links would have a drastic effect on Zimbabwe. South African flights accounted for 17 percent of its passenger traffic and 80 percent of its regional traffic. Any comprehensive mandatory sanctions would have meant frontier closure. The ANC themselves were apprehensive of this, and they admitted, “we would be driven right back to Addis Ababa.”\(^{127}\)

Though the African countries were asking for comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions from the international community, differences continued to exist among

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124 The Pan-Africanists called for stronger sanctions while the economic nationalists cautioned restraint. Ibid., p. 271.

125 Mr R. FBotha said that Zimbabwe had not only renewed the agreement but had included important additions, which amounted to asking for preferential treatment for their goods. In response Mugabe said that a Commonwealth decision to impose further sanctions would override the trade agreements, but in the event no action was taken. Barber, n. 86, p. 172.


127 Ibid., p. 326.
themselves. Sanctions would have affected the neighbouring countries more than the others. Mugabe and Kaunda crusaded for sanctions despite the problems for their countries. To them, sanctions were a moral and political obligation for majority ruled countries, to assist the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. They also spoke of sanctioning Britain and referred to the forthcoming front-line states meeting in Luanda as a forum in which discussions on this will take place. Kaunda suggested that members would work out a one-point stand for sanctions, including cutting air links with South Africa. But the FLS summit in Luanda on 22 August 1986 could not reach a compromise. The six frontline states are known for their generally hard stand but a split occurred among them and the communiqué merely commended the tough sanctions package reached by Commonwealth and hailed Zambia and Zimbabwe for their tough sanctions stand. The Communiqué further recommended adoption of measures not only to the rest of the Commonwealth countries but also to all peace and freedom loving countries.

The SADCC Summit which includes other than the frontline states, Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland which are even more tightly tied to South Africa’s economy resulted in an even weaker sanction stand. The Head of Governments of Swaziland and Malawi sent their representatives and did not attend the summit themselves. Although there were strong anti-apartheid speeches, which attacked the Botha regime, no sanctions were taken. The communiqué said that neighbours vulnerability to South Africa’s economy should not be used as an excuse by others for not imposing sanctions and SADCC countries will do nothing to undermine the effectiveness of sanctions imposed on South Africa by the international community.

Moreover the Contingency Committee of Kaunda and Mugabe met only after the mini summit of the Commonwealth. Both of them entered into a commitment, which they could not keep. The other countries, realising this, disassociated themselves from any

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128 West Africa, 11 August 1986, pp. 1660-1661


130 President Quett Masire of Botswana, the SADCC Chairman said, "The Pretoria government is casting about its eyes and aiming its guns around the region, looking for scapegoats for its internal problems and taking measures which will involve the rest of the region in conflict." Ibid., p. 8208.
intention to engage in any action against South Africa. The FLS countries were concerned more with defending their own neutrality and not with assisting the struggle in South Africa. Soon Zimbabwe and Zambia also toned down their call for sanctions. President Kaunda, at the 1987 Vancouver Commonwealth summit, said that they had to accept Britain's right to be wrong and his speech did not even mention sanctions. It is also important to note that Mrs. Thatcher complemented Mugabe on the measured manner in which he had opened the discussions on Southern Africa. Moreover some African members of SADCC actively sought investment from South Africa.

By 1989 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth meeting, there seemed to be a reversal of roles with African countries becoming restrained in their comments while Australia and Canada were more blunt and outspoken. The Africans seemed to feel that they have more pressing issues than sanctions. Kaunda did not talk of sanctions. The Nigerians thought that sanctions have become a sterile debate and Ghana was more anxious to talk about its programme of economic reconstruction. The African countries had to worry about their own economic difficulties, which led to their own dilemmas.

**DILEMMA OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

African states have used the forum of the Commonwealth to highlight issues of South Africa and the elimination of Apartheid. They have tended to use extreme language of intimidation at every point of conflict. On Rhodesia, the arms issue and sanctions, they tended to use threats of leaving the Commonwealth, expelling Britain from the Commonwealth or of taking economic actions against Britain. But differences among themselves and the incapability to take united action made others to take them less seriously.

This first difference came to the fore in the Rhodesian issue after the declaration of UDI. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), at an extraordinary session of the council of...
ministers met on 3 December 1965 at Addis Ababa. It decided that all countries were to sever relations with Britain if by 15 December it had not crushed the rebellion in Rhodesia and restored law and order preparing for majority rule. But when the time came, out of the Commonwealth Countries in the OAU, only Tanzania and Ghana broke off their relations with Britain. The fact that the African countries did not implement the decision taken by OAU on Rhodesian issue harmed their cause.

The differences can be further seen in the arms issue also. While Malawi and Lesotho supported the sale among the SADCC states, Ghana and later Uganda supported from the others. Later the division could also be seen in the question of dialogue and sanctions. The fact that the Africans were not able to take united actions exposed their vulnerability to the British. The threat that they may withdraw from the Commonwealth was their strength. But once they were exposed, their capacity to influence British position suffered. The fact that the African countries did not apply even decisions taken in the OAU exposed their vulnerability to act. Mazrui reflects this aspect on the Rhodesian issue, which is applicable on other issues as well.\footnote{There is little doubt that the possibility of African states embarking on a precipitate action on the issues of Rhodesia and perhaps collectively breaking off relations with Britain, was one important consideration which determined the shape of Harold Wilson's response to Rhodesian declaration of independence. Yet this consideration was at its most effective when it was relatively a vague fear. The element of uncertainty as to what the Africans might do probably contributed towards Wilson's toughness. But when the OAU removed the uncertainty by proceeding to spell out a specific ultimatum to Britain, the cause of African influence on British policy suffered a setback. Mazrui, n. 7, p. 5.}

The relation between the west and South Africa have rested on the belief that white minority rule was the basis for a stable business and political environment. South Africa tried to perpetuate this belief by its destabilisation strategies but it got a lot of assistance from the African countries themselves. The fact that in many of the African countries political instability, corruption, mismanagement existed and that they could not manage their own affairs but, went on complaining worked against them. Claude Ake remarked that, Africa is not so much marginal as irrelevant; at any rate, relevant only as a nuisance—a nuisance for ever complaining about being exploited, for ever
begging for help, constantly making a mess of its own affairs and looking to others to clean it up. This assumption about Africa also harmed their cause.

Although the African countries called for sanctions their economic dependence on South Africa prevented them from implementing it. South African strategy of destabilisation to intimidate her neighbours also contributed to their hesitation on implementing sanctions. Moreover the fact remained that it would be more pragmatic for Western Countries which had a high economic clout in South Africa to apply sanctions first. Without the support of the main trading partners of South Africa their implementation of sanctions would not be of much effect. However, the moral intention of the African countries is not to be questioned. The frontline states did try in many ways to be independent of South Africa. But the destabilisation strategy and their over-dependence on primary commodities made it difficult. It was an accepted fact that the frontline states will have difficulties in implementing sanctions but the rhetoric by them made them vulnerable to questions. Britain could turn back and ask why should they strictly impose sanctions, which the African countries could not themselves impose when Britain had nothing to gain but only to lose.

A glaring contradiction was the policies of Malawi under President Banda. In all the issues under the study Malawi differed from others. These differences among themselves made co-ordination difficult. African countries were divided among themselves, with some supporting dialogue with South Africa and other opposing it. On sanctions also diverse opinions existed. Though Zambia and Zimbabwe were arguing for sanctions the SADCC and the frontline states meeting decided against it. However there arose a growing solidarity among the Southern African countries to deal with the destabilisation strategy of South Africa. Even Malawi, which had consistently opposed confrontation, was forced to join with the others and station troops in Mozambique.

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135 General Olusegun Obesango, the former Prime Minister of Nigeria, brought this forth in 1988. He said that Africa was no longer the ‘Dark Continent’, but it had certainly taken on the notoriety of being the continent of drought, debt, desertification, disease and death. Denis Venter, “An Evolution of the OAU on the Eve of South Africa’s Accession”, *Africa Insight* (Pretoria), vol. 24, no. 1, 1994, p. 48.
However the African states were able to mobilise international organisations to focus their attention on apartheid issue. To the Africans racialism was the greatest evil transcending other forms of injustice. They felt that Britain on moral grounds should support and help those who want to bring down the system of apartheid. But to them Britain always seemed to be reluctant to support the downfall of the system of apartheid in South Africa. Had the African countries been able to stick together and implement their resolutions and make a leverage out of their minerals and raw materials, things would have been pre-eminent.

Despite the shortcomings it was their refusal to abandon their opposition to Apartheid State and their efforts to draw attention to what they felt was betrayal from the more developed countries that kept the focus on South Africa. It also prevented a largely indifferent West from otherwise coming to an accommodation with South Africa, which would have given South Africa another lease of life. It was the pressure from African countries and the Commonwealth that specially restrained Britain and forced it to apply some economic sanctions. South Africa even with its destabilisation policy was not able to mute their opposition to apartheid. One Country in the Commonwealth, which had economic and trade relations with South Africa and could have made the dismantling of apartheid faster was Britain. It was however reluctant to apply sanctions. The reason for this and Britain’s position in many of the issues in which it had a hand is studied in the next chapter.