CHAPTER 5

NON-AFRICAN MEMBERS AND SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUES IN THE COMMONWEALTH

While the role of the African countries and Britain on the issue of South Africa in the Commonwealth, have already been examined. This chapter looks into the role of other countries in the Commonwealth. The Asian and the Caribbean countries have always criticised South African government as they have been against racialism and colonialism. The role of old Commonwealth Countries, which had a closer relation with South Africa, needs special attention.

The countries Australia, Canada and New Zealand had close historical and commercial relations with South Africa. For a long period, Australia and New Zealand did not join the African countries on the issue of South Africa, while, Canada from the beginning acted as a bridge between the African countries and the white Commonwealth countries. All the three, however, were against the exercise of sanctions on South Africa. But at a crucial juncture realising that they had to take a stand all three had stood with the Afro-Asian countries thus isolating Britain in the Commonwealth. The identification was so much so that Kaunda praised the Prime Ministers of Australia and Canada for their solidarity with black Africa calling it a demonstration to Afrikaners that racism need not exist. He also suggested a three-nation directorate to mount international pressure on white minority and proposed Australia, Canada and India. This showed the important role that the leaders of these countries had played.

Asian countries like India, Malaysia, Singapore from the beginning has stood with the Africans. India has played a major role in the fight against apartheid. Before the independence of the African countries, India had put the limelight on South Africa. India was the first country, which brought the issue in the United Nation. An idea about the basic policy of the different countries is given before moving on to the issues.
BASIC POLICIES

Asian Countries

With the inclusion of Malaya in 1960, the Commonwealth had four Asian countries: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Malaya (Malaysia). Later Singapore and Bangladesh joined but in 1972 Pakistan withdrew from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Conference has taken place in Singapore, which was the first to host the conference outside London in 1971, India in 1983 and Malaysia in 1989. The Asian countries have always been with the African countries in the struggle against apartheid. If India was the first to raise the issue in the UN in the Commonwealth it was Malaysia that raised the issue.

The first the Commonwealth meeting Malaya attended was the 1960 meeting. All respective parties in Malaya condemned South Africa's racial policy.1 The Sharpville incident hardened Malaya's stand. Tunku wrote on 25 March 1960, to Harold Macmillan suggesting that this matter should be taken up at the forthcoming the Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting in London on 3-13 May 1960. However Macmillan dissuaded him with the non-interference excuse. The Malayan political parties gave the Tunku a mandate to raise the issue at the meeting. At the opening of the meeting Malaya being the newest member was given the honour to reply first to the address of welcome by Macmillan. He went on to suggest that South Africa should be discussed in the Commonwealth. In 1961 Tunku played an important role in the withdrawal of South Africa. With South Africa departure, Tunku imposed a complete Malayan boycott on South African goods and severed all contacts. While other Asian countries were also against apartheid India has been a major player and needs more study.

1 The country became independent in 1957. The 1959 manifesto of Alliance (comprising of three ethnic political parties) of which Tunku Abdul Rahman the first Prime Minister was the leader stated, On Apartheid, the Alliance is determined to uphold UN charter which calls for respect for human rights and contains freedom of all without distinction of race. The policy of South Africa's government in this respect must be condemned. Mohammad Muda, Malaysia-South Africa Relations and the Commonwealth, 1960-1995", The Round Table (London), no. 340, 1996, pp. 424-425.
India

In the early years after independence the Commonwealth was a significant element in India’s foreign policy. Economically it was of value to India in firms of markets, aid and the sterling area. At the political level the Commonwealth prevented India from being completely isolated in a bipolar world without committing her to a power bloc and it bolstered India’s aspiration at a time when it sought an international role. By the early 1960’s the value of the Commonwealth for India started declining because of the emergence of a multi-polar world. Moreover due to changes in India’s foreign policy priorities.

India’s position has been strong in all the issues of racism and has been a strong supporter of anti racial struggle. India has been fighting against apartheid from the time of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa. He first experimented the non-violent struggle in South Africa which he later put into practise in the Indian independence struggle. Another important fact is that it was India, which projected initially with regard to the treatment of Indians in South Africa that racial discrimination couldn't be confined to state boundaries. This had become more relevant in the 1980’s with the destabilisation policy of South Africa.

India was the first country to break economic relation with South Africa. As early as March 22, 1945 the Central Legislative Assembly of Pre-Independent India adopted a motion demanding the imposition of economic sanction and recall of Indian High Commissioner from South Africa. In April 1946, India served the required three-month notice to South Africa regarding their termination of trade agreement. South Africa retaliated by notifying that goods entering South Africa from India will be subject to maximum duty rates. At the termination of the three-month notice period on July 11, 1946 the government of India announced the severance of trade relations with South Africa with immediate effect. In 1946 in view of the continued discrimination against Indians in South Africa the interim government of India had imposed an economic boycott against South Africa and recalled the Indian High Commissioner.

After the defeat in 1962 an emphasis was on security and cultivation of close bilateral and multilateral international role.

At the time of breaking diplomatic relations South Africa was India’s dominant trading partner in Africa. It accounted for 22 percent of India’s total trade with the African countries and 5 percent of India’s total international trade.\(^4\)

In the Commonwealth, India had not raised the issue following the Commonwealth policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. With the independence of African States matters changed. Although the pioneering role in the cause for anti-racialism and colonialism was taken up by the Africans India has been a major player on the issue. In the 1961 Commonwealth Head of the Governments Meeting (CHOGM), Nehru played a decisive role in demonstrating the incompatibility between apartheid and the principle which the Commonwealth was to embody.

After Nehru there was a decline in the Commonwealth importance in India and a belief that Mrs Gandhi is personally against the Commonwealth.\(^5\) This feeling developed as Mrs Gandhi attended only one of the four Heads of Government Meeting and it was after many smaller countries hosting the Commonwealth Conference that India offered to host the meeting.\(^6\) This however didn't mean that India’s commitment to anti-racialism was in any way marginalised. India has been an active player in the world scene on the issue of South Africa. Its anti-racial foreign policy plank gave the issue a leverage.

India’s position in the UDI crisis was that it was legally, morally and constitutionally the responsibility of Britain. India urged Britain to impose a stronger measure in the form of mandatory sanctions.... Since selective sanctions proved ineffective. It also urged Britain to use all means including force to end the illegal racist minority regime.\(^7\) There


\(^6\) Mrs. Gandhi attended only the Kingston meeting in 1975. She did not attend the 1971 Commonwealth conference held in Singapore even after request from African and Asian leaders to attend the Conference. This was the first time that the Conference took place in Asia.

\(^7\) India, Lok Sabha, Debates, Series 4, Session 4XV of 1968, p. 43-44.
was even talk of quitting the Commonwealth on this issue. On May 1965, India became the first country to break off its diplomatic relations with Rhodesia and was one of the firsts to impose total embargo after proclamation of UDI. The decision to break off diplomatic relations was taken even before the declaration of UDI.

The changes of government have not affected the country's commitment to support all anti-colonial and anti-racial forces in Africa. Prime Minister Morarji Desai and the External Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee attended the 1977 Commonwealth conference. Vajpayee reiterated the country's commitment to racial dignity and said that its commitment predates even its own independence struggle. At the foreign ministers Commonwealth conference Vajpayee declared that India would definitely consider any request for arms made by guerrilla's fighting against the white minority regime in South Africa.

With the return of power of Mrs Gandhi showed more enthusiasm for the Commonwealth, which led to hosting the Commonwealth conference in 1983 at New Delhi. Mrs. Gandhi at the 1983 meeting asked the Commonwealth to give Namibia the central place that Zimbabwe was accorded at Lusaka. She said that the 1979 Summit at Lusaka was decisive in laying the basis for the transition for Zimbabwe's independence and hoped that New Delhi would be that for Namibia. She said, "the Commonwealth as it is now is the product of decolonisation, and cannot ignore the struggle and suffering of our sisters and brothers in Namibia, the last major bastion of colonialism." She accused that the Western Contact Group was being used to delay the movement for Namibian independence. She called for the unequivocal rejection of the so-called linkage or

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8 A resolution in the Lok Sabha urging India to quit the Commonwealth in view of the inaction of the British government against the illegal minority regime of Ian Smith was rejected by a narrow margin. Ibid.,


10 Vajpayee said "We have always believed that our freedom cannot be considered fulfilled until we have redeemed Gandhiji's pledge to end racial inequality in Southern Africa... Whether it is from the stand point of decolonization, self determination principles of human rights, racial equality or just the several international obligations of peace and co-operation, it I incumbent on us to persuade if possible and throttle if necessary the white minority regime and to do so quickly. J A. Naik ed., India in Asia and Africa Documents: 1976-78 (Maharashtra, 1981), pp. 506-509.

parallelism between Namibian independence and the presence of foreign troops in Angola. However it was under Rajiv Gandhi that India played a prominent role at a crucial juncture.

'Old' Commonwealth Countries

The old Commonwealth includes countries, which were the members of the Commonwealth before the independence of the Asian and the African countries. These were Australia, Canada and New Zealand. South Africa was a member of the old Commonwealth until its withdrawal in 1961. The relationship between these countries and South Africa was familiar. They were found on common historical experience, similar institutions, on interest and outlook shared by the old dominions and on trading and financial links. Though all three of these countries were against sanctions until mid 1980’s they have had different attitudes towards the issues involved. Even the active roles they have played after accepting that sanctions were inevitable have been through the Commonwealth. For these Countries the Commonwealth offered opportunities of role playing on the international stage with spin-offs in publicity and prestige.

Canada

As a middle power the Commonwealth helped Canada to project its national image, transcend the regionalism of North America, demonstrate its independence and maintain economic and political links with the third world countries. It has been observed that the “Canadian Prime Minister exert more of a direct policy making influence in his Commonwealth negotiations than in any other area of foreign policy.” This meant preserving the Commonwealth as a viable transitional multiracial institution, which could be instrumental in enabling Canada to achieve its other foreign policy aims.

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12 Ibid.
14 According to Don Jamieson, Secretary of State for External Affairs in 1978, “the Commonwealth is Uniquely able to bridge wide diversities between governments and peoples, North and South, rich and poor. We want to preserve its unique qualities, to encourage active participation in it by its members at all levels, and enhance its role as an instrument for greater co-operation in the World community. Richard J. Payne, “Canada, South Africa and the Commonwealth”, International Perspectives (Ontario), July/August 1987, p. 10.
significantly increased Canada’s sensitivity to racial discrimination in general and apartheid in particular.

Canada from the beginning have played an active role in supporting the Afro-Asian countries on the issue of racism i.e. on South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia. Canada enjoys a reputation as a friendly and responsive power in Africa. The relationship between Canada and South Africa were close. In the early days Canada had little interest in Africa. But the emergence of new independent African countries, Canada was propelled into the involvement in the affairs of African continent.

Until the Prime Ministers conference of May 1960, successive Canadian government had adhered to the time-honoured policy in the Commonwealth relations of non-interference in the domestic affairs of member nations. In the 1960 Conference Canadian Prime Minister Diefenbaker made it clear that Canada disapproved of South Africa’s racial policy but stressed that the spirit of the Commonwealth denies that the Prime Minister Conference should in effect become the judge and jury on the actions of other members of the Commonwealth. Even after the meetings, he maintained his stand “on the inviolable rule of non-interference by the Prime Minister in the internal affairs of other Commonwealth would not accept decisions of the majority”.

The government’s policy in 1971 was:

The reaction of Canadians (to the South African problem) has two main characteristics. One is a broad revulsion against the racial discrimination... and a general agreement that self-determination for African’s is a principle that cannot be denied... The other is the reaction of businessmen who see better than-normal, opportunities for trade and investment... The Canadian Government’s attitude can be seen as reflecting two policy themes which are divergent in this context (1) Social justice and (2) Economic Growth... The Government has concluded that Canadian interest would be best served by maintaining its current policy framework... Which balances two policy themes of importance to Canadians.

This divergent link was conceded by many but even then Canada was acceptable to the Africans. Nyerere conceded this economic and cultural links between Canada and South

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15 Peter Hametty, “Canada, South Africa and the Commonwealth”, *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* (Leicester), vol. 11, 1963-64, p. 36.

Africa and yet went on to profess a belief in Canada's ability and desire to build bridges across the chasm of colour.  

Throughout the 1970's it became clear that South Africa, as an issue was not going to abate. During the Trudeau government, Canada was consistent in both its denunciation of apartheid and expressed hope that South Africa would move to abandon institutionalised racism. But it proved unwilling to take any action for economic sanctions which disrupts economic relations. From 1970-1977 Ottawa justified its decision to maintain economic links on the grounds that trading in peaceful goods with all countries and territories regardless of political considerations was a fundamental tenant of Canadian foreign policy.

However with the Soweto incident, the death of Steve Biko, the new emphasis placed on human rights by the Carter administration in the United States and Canada’s election to the United Nations Security Council the Canadian government went in for a policy review. Canada in December 1977 phased out all its government sponsored commercial support activities in the Republic including the withdrawal of commercial councillors from Johannesburg and Cape Town. Ottawa also withdrew all Export Development corporation government account support. These initiatives have been of little consequence as it was "business as usual" on the economic front. But policies changed with the change of government.

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17 Nyerere is 1969 said: "And if Canada cannot support our struggle, will it least be able to refrain from giving comfort and help to those who would deny out freedom and dignity. For the sake of Tanzania and for the sake of Africa and the further relations between men of different colours. I hope Canada will be able to give attention to these problems. John P. Schelegel, "Ottawa's Achilles Heel", The Round Table, no. 274, April 1979, p. 147.


19 In 1977 Canada acknowledged that the systematic denial of rights on the basis of skin colour was a case unique in the international system, and thus business as usual could not be justified on the grounds that South Africa was just another state with which Canada disagreed. Kim Richard Nossal, "Canadian Sanctions against South Africa: Explaining the Mulroney Initiatives 1985-1986", Journal of Canadian Studies (Ottawa), vol. 25, no. 4, 1990-1991, p. 19.

Australia

South Africa had much in common with Australia. 21 Australia under the leadership of Robert Menzis was closely tied to the old Commonwealth bond. But his interest diminished with the entrance of developing countries and mainly African. He did not like the fact that countries, which are Republic, could be Commonwealth members. 22 According to him, the right to vote was related to the capacity to vote. 23 For a person with this opinion it was difficult to understand the attack on South Africa by other members of the Commonwealth. The issue of South Africa to him was a domestic one and not to be judged by the Commonwealth. He was against the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth and felt that it would be the beginning of the disintegration of the Commonwealth.

Australia sided with Britain on almost all the issues and was commented to be more British than the British. Australia did not attend the 1966 Lagos Conference, which was arranged to discuss the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by Rhodesian whites. Menzis said that they regarded the UDI as illegal. But the majority of those attending would demand force and we could never accept force and it seems to us (the cabinet) that the Lagos Conference could do was to record differences. 24

With the coming of labour government in 1972 under Whitlam situation changed. Till then Australia had played a role in African affairs that was unquestionably supportive of Britain. Central to the foreign policy of the Labour government was its desire to remove

21 European pioneers in a vast, temperate land in the Southern Hemisphere with a Westminster form of government and until 1960, a common head of state. South Africa was also a fellow dominion at imperial and Commonwealth conferences.

22 According to him “when we were all related by a common allegiance, our relationship was organic and informal, it still is for most of the old members. But for the Republicans the relationship is in a sense functionally and certainly external”. Robert Gordon Menzis, Afternoon Light: Some Men And Event (London, 1967), p. 188.

23 “In British democracies universal suffrage and universal education go hand in hand. ... A basically uneducated community will mean a basically uneducated electorate, in which case there will be a dictator or a small oligarchy. Freedom will not result.” Menzis, n. 22, p. 191.

24 Menzis said that, “My government has consistently opposed the giving of any Commonwealth orders to Britain as to how she should exercise that authority and discharge that responsibility. To have her in effect attacked and threatened at a special conference would be a grave departure from proper practice in a Commonwealth gathering.” Olusulo Akinrinade, “Africa and the Commonwealth: The Impact of an International Organisation on Foreign Policy Making” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, London, 1988), p. 222.
Australia's perceived racist image. This brought about a sharp change in Australia's attitude towards the Commonwealth, as Whitlam perceived it as a vehicle for enforcing Australia's anti-racist image. He recognised the good will that Australia would gain from supporting the developing nations in their battle against the two major affronts to their dignity—racial discrimination and colonialism.

Thus in 1973 Australia for the first time associated itself with the black African cause on Rhodesia. Whitlam referred to the leaders of South Africa and Rhodesia as being “as bad as Hitler”. Vorster, the South African President retaliated by saying that he would still be in power “when Mr. Whitlam is only an unpleasant memory in Australia.”

The Labour government placed a ban on all South African racially selected sporting teams and refused to give visas to South African sportsmen wanting to stop off in Australia. In 1975 the Labour government committed to give $1 million in food aid to Mozambique as compensation for costs incurring in enforcing sanctions against Rhodesia. He also supported the use of force against the Rhodesian whites, which the Africans had for long demanded.

The election of Liberal Party under Malcolm Fraser into power it was regarded that a redirection of Australia's policies may take place. This had emerged as Fraser had criticised the policies of the previous administration towards Africa and was openly critical of the Labour government's provision of humanitarian aid. However he made known that the policy wouldn't change with an attack on racism as an offence to human decency and a scourge to the dignity of man.

He was also a strong supporter of the Commonwealth. Fraser considered the Commonwealth as an effective forum for dialogue between developed and developing world, a forum where Australia could expect to exert some influence. Moreover a strong and undivided Commonwealth was seen as a way of preventing the spread of soviet influence in the third world.

Soon Australia started taking the position of Asian and African countries in the Commonwealth. At the 1977 Commonwealth conference Fraser established himself as a

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27 Ibid.
third world man by strongly opposing apartheid and racism and stressing the importance of helping the third world to get better deal from the international economic system. In the 1977 Conference Fraser excoriated apartheid in all its forms and warned of blood baths unless race supremacist policies were abandoned and called for the establishment of majority rule as quickly as possible in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Fraser helped in the drafting of the Gleneagles agreement and Australia strictly adhered to the agreement. All this resulted in an invitation from Nigeria to attend the international Conference for action against racism and apartheid held in Lagos in 1978. Unable to attend personally he sent his foreign minister Andrew Peacock.

Fraser became the first Australian Prime Minister to visit black Africa when he visited Lagos on his way to the Lusaka Conference. In the Lusaka Conference Australia became the necessary bridge between Britain, Nyerere and Kaunda. Before the meeting in Lusaka, Fraser had visited Lagos, Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock went to Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi and a team of Australian diplomats specially placed in Lusaka made their own contacts with patriotic front and the Zambian government. They also consulted Nigeria and advised Britain. It was the Australian initiatives, which were the key to the Lusaka declaration on racism. Though a shift to the Africans occurred under Fraser Australia was still against sanctions.

New Zealand

In 1960s, New Zealand rarely supported anti-South African resolution. It preferred abstention to out right opposition. New Zealand was always against the idea of the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth. However Sir Keith Holyoake, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, unlike Menzis did not feel that this would disintegrate the Commonwealth. He said that he believed "that by its determination to stand for the principle of racial equality, the Commonwealth far from beginning to disintegrate, has demonstrated its strength and its capacity to serve great and worth while ideas". With

28 In a speech to the Royal Commonwealth Society in London in June 1977 he said, Policies based on the false and pernicious premises of one race's superiority over another are the most fragrant violation of fundamental human decency. David Goldsworth, "Australia's Southern Africa Policy" World Review (St. Lucia), vol. 17, no. 2, June 1978, p. 54.

the withdrawal of South Africa some trade preference was withdrawn from South Africa in 1961.

In the New Zealand it has been under the labour government that some measures had been taken against South Africa. The Labour government, which came to power in 1972, began to vote in favour of UN apartheid resolution. The 1973 springbok tour to New Zealand was refused entrance visa by Norman Kirk the Prime Minister. Kirk also refused to confer ambassadorial privileges on South African consul, thereby restricting his access to civil servants rather than members of the government. The Labour government also removed the remaining preferential tariffs for South African goods. Even then during 1972-75 exports to South Africa increased from New Zealand $ 6.6 million to New Zealand 10 million and imports from New Zealand $ 4.4 million to New Zealand 9.7 million.30

The perception that New Zealand was moving against South Africa was undermined by the National Party, which won the 1975 election with its sports relations with South Africa. However change came with the Lange government of 1984.

Caribbean Countries

The Caribbean countries in the Commonwealth included Jamaica, Guyana, Bahamas, Antigua and St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. According to Ramphal who was from Guyana each person in the Caribbean has a moral compulsion to work against apartheid. The spirit of every slave worker beaten and degraded on West Indian sugar plantations, of every rebel against slavery hanged in the cause of freedom from Guyana to Jamaica rises up to demand abhorrence and resolve. This moral compulsion makes the West Indians to yield to none in abhorrence of apartheid and in resolve to stand against it.31 These countries have supported the African struggle all along. A major aberration was the cricket tour to South Africa by a West Indies team against which there was

criticism. They were however banned for life from the game in their respective countries.

Jamaica under Michael Manley was a member of the study group set up to study the security of the maritime trade route, was party to the drafting of the Lusaka agreement and Gleneagles agreement. The 1975 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting was held at Kingston, Jamaica where the main issue was Rhodesia. At this meeting the Jamaican government, after consulting President Kaunda of Zambia but with no prior notice to Britain, invited the senior officials of the African National Council (ANC) Bishop Muzorewa, Rev. Sithole, James Chikerema and Joshua Nkomo as its guest. Also present was Pat Bashford leader of Rhodesia’s multi-racial Centre Party who went on his own initiative to give whatever assistance is possible to ensure that the problems faced by the Rhodesians are properly understood. Mr. Manley also proposed that the Bishop be allowed to address the conference on behalf of the ANC. But there were objections to this as many felt dangerous precedents were being set. Eventually a compromise was reached with a procedural device whereby Muzorewa addressed the conference in an informal session.

This was agreed to in an entirely new departure at the Head of Governments meeting. Manley’s chairmanship also earned tributes from the participants. Mr Manley was also in the contact group set up to negotiate the Lusaka agreement. Later under Edward Seaga also it played a prominent role. At the Vancouver meeting it was Seaga who was given charge to prepare a paper on impact of sanctions on South Africa. Britain had believed that Seaga was in agreement that sanctions were not effective and even spread an understanding that the report would be in their favour. But the report produced by Seaga emphasised the effectiveness of sanctions to the disillusionment of Britain.

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32 Michael Manley called them traitors to the liberation struggle of the South African people. Ramphal said, it was an act of treachery to the black people of South Africa who cry out for help for relief from the indignities and suffering of apartheid and the repression’s of the regime which upholds it. Sam Ramsamy, “The Cricketing Mercenaries”, Sechaba (London), March 1983, pp. 30-31


It was at the Nassau Summit at Bahamas under the chairmanship of Lynden Pindling the Prime Minister, that the Commonwealth moved towards sanctions. Lynden Pindling said,

When this conference ends there should be no doubt what the collective Commonwealth position is on apartheid. He further called for a crescendo for negotiation and said that those who sought to make such a process impossible may have made violent revolution possible.\textsuperscript{35}

Even though it was at Nassau that important decisions were taken Bahamas have played only a supportive role in the Commonwealth.

Guyana under Shridath Ramphal as its Foreign Affairs Minister had played an active role. But after Mr. Ramphal became the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, their role diminished. He had played a prominent role in averting a crisis to the Commonwealth during the arms issue. Shridath Ramphal, then Foreign Minister of Guyana also advised Britain that it would be tactless for the British government to make a decision and simply inform the Commonwealth countries. He urged delay until consultations would take place and pressed Sir Alec Douglas Home, Foreign Minister of Britain, not to make any decision until after the Heads of Government Meeting in January 1971 at Singapore.\textsuperscript{36}

After looking into the basic policies of the Asian and the old Commonwealth countries a shift is being made to the issues.

\section*{MAJOR ISSUES}

\subsection*{Arms Issue}

In the arms issue all the Asian countries were against the deal, however at varying intensity. While Malaysia, Srilanka and India were against the deal, with the fear that India may withdraw from the Commonwealth, Singapore had slight difference. Malaysia stated that British government had been given a warning that the sale of arms would undermine the Commonwealth since such a step would reassure South Africa of British protection which would result in the perpetuation of apartheid. It was


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 206.
also a member in the study group but realising the futility after British decision to resume arms sale Malaysia withdrew from the group.

Sri Lanka circulated a memorandum to declare the Indian Ocean as a peace zone among the Commonwealth members and was discussed in the 1971 Commonwealth Conference. It expressed concern over the increasing naval presence of United States and the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean and said this would intensify the cold war politics. It pointed out the arms deal of Britain in this connection and said apartheid would tend to look more benign from the point of view of anti-Communism. The substance of the proposal was endorsed by all except Britain and Australia.37

It was Singapore’s Lee Kwan Yew in chair where the arms issue was discussed. He was against the arms sale but felt Britain should not be pushed too far. He warned that membership couldn’t be just on the basis of a donor and receiver relationship. If you are members just because you want gifts, aid and expertise, then you have got to give something in return.38

India played a more active role than the others. The Indian government expressed its concern to Britain and expressed the hope that Britain would desist from such sales to the racist regime to avoid escalation of tensions in South Africa and resentment outside.39 Swaran Singh India’s Minister for External affairs, said in the Rajya Sabha with all like minded countries of Asia and Africa to dissuade Britain from resuming arms supplies to South Africa. There were also fears that India would jump the gun. Arnold Smith reports that Mrs. Gandhi who was looking for a distracting issue on which to run for re-election might plunge ahead and announce India’s withdrawal before any British action. This would produce a chain reaction among African States.40

37 *Asian Recorder* (New Delhi), vol. VII. no. 11, March 12-18, 1971, pp. 10047-10048
39 *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 4 July 1970.
40 From my first talk with Alec Home shortly after the elections, I have emphasised the danger of an irrational over-reaction by India. We are faced with the danger of India pumping the gun as she did last spring when she was the first government official to say that she would boycott the Commonwealth Games unless the MCC cancelled the invitation to the South Africa cricket team to play in England. The danger of the present situation is that... serious foreign policy decisions may be taken for... short-term reasons of domestic image making and posturing. Nehru, though shouldst be living at this hour. Arnold Smith with Clyde Sanger, *Stitches in Time* (London, 1981), p. 214.
However this did not happen and India was a member of the study group formed to look into the maritime. India made it clear that in the light of reservations outlined by Heath, its participation in the study group could only be guaranteed as long as the group remained relevant. It had supported the idea of setting up the group for the sake of maintaining the cohesion of the Commonwealth. The study group was yet to meet when Britain announced on 25 February 1971 its decision to supply arms to South Africa. On the same day the Indian Foreign Minister issued a statement which expressed regrets at the British Government's announcement and concluded, "in case the British Government's decision is final and irrevocable, it will in our opinion be an increase in futility for any study group to meet".  

The following day, the Indian High Commissioner in London Mr Apa Pant called a meeting of a member of fellow High Commissioners whose countries were members of the study group (with the exception of Australia and United Kingdom), together with Zambia, Tanzania, Ghana, Ceylon, Barbados and Canada. The atmosphere among African representatives at the meeting was one of bitterness and that of India and others were equally pessimistic about the future of the study group. On 26 February the Indian High Commissioner met with Arnold Smith and on 18 March Apa Pant wrote to the Secretary General giving formal notice of India's withdrawal.

While all the Asian countries were against Britain this was not the case with the old Commonwealth members. Canada's effort to head off a crisis on the arms issue was important. A strong private protest was delivered as soon as the British government announced its decision on arms sale. The Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Trudeau sent his assistant in the field of foreign affairs, Ivan Head, to talk to Nyerere and Kaunda and to persuade them to attend the Conference. The secretary-general himself a Canadian, through Charles Ritchie the High Commission in London urged Canada to try and restrain British action. On July 17, 1970 Pierre Trudeau sent Heath a letter expressing his own 'serious misgivings' about the British decision.

41 Arnold Smith Personal Papers, vol. 8/3, Diary February 1971 cited in Akinrinade, n. 24, p. 120.
42 Ibid.
43 Letter Reference Political 18-2-52 from Mr Apa Pant to Arnold Smith 18 March 1971, Arnold Smith Personal Papers vol. 8/5, Diary, March 1971, Ibid.
Trudeau conveyed that in spite of the careful definitions formulated by Britain to emphasise that arms suitable for internal suppression or for use against neighbouring African states would not be supplied he still feared that attention is more likely to be focused on the fact of the resumption of sales in the face of the 1963 Security Council resolution than on the nature of the supplies involved or the limitation you envisage concerning the purpose for which they could be used. He said that many Commonwealth governments were likely to interpret any arms sale as an implicit gesture of acquiescence in the policy of the South African government toward the African population and asked Heath to weigh carefully his views. 44

With Sir Alec's statement that no decision would be taken until the Commonwealth consultations were complete Canada's External Affairs Minister, Mr Mitchell Sharp said that this was an invitation to those who had already made their views known to repeat them more firmly. After the conference, Trudeau said that Canada had to be more active in the Third World not because it had some vague international role but because it is in our national interest that there not be a general racial war in Africa. 45

However New Zealand and Australia had different opinions. Keith Holyoake, the Prime Minister took the position that while New Zealand would not sell weapons to South Africa, the question whether Britain should do so was a matter for London to decide. 46

The Australian policy was that if South Africa is pushed by the west it would lose a vital strategic point on the Cape thereby greatly complicating the defence of the Indian Ocean which by inference meant the Australian trade routes. The policy was that Australia should co-operate with South Africa and Rhodesia. No support was to be given to African states and liberation movements, which seeks to overthrow the white rule in Southern Africa. The reasoning was that by supporting the Africans, Australia would lose trusted friends and secure bases on its trade routes to Europe and the Middle East.

44 n. 37, p. 208.
45 Bruce Thordason, Trudeau And Foreign Policy (Toronto, 1972), p. 70.
46 In a statement he said, "As in the past, New Zealand for its part will not sell arms or military equipment to South Africa and will continue to disassociate itself from South Africa's discriminatory racial policies."
Further it would witness the rise of Russian power in Africa and the Indian Ocean region.\textsuperscript{47}

This was the reasoning used in the arms issue. Australia's opinion was that the Russia's naval presence in the Indian Ocean was a threat to Australia as it has been friendly towards United Kingdom and United States.\textsuperscript{48} Prime Minister Gorton had no doubt that all that can be done to protect the sea routes is in Australia's interests and must be supported. To him Simonstown agreement served to protect the sea-lanes of the Indian Ocean and this protection also benefited Australia. Though Australia made clear that they wouldn't supply arms to South Africa there was talk of defence pact between them.\textsuperscript{49} All this led to Australia supporting Britain on the arms sale. The opposition party was against the sale but Australia supported Britain.\textsuperscript{50} At the Singapore Conference Gorton argued against the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles. He was of the opinion that the Commonwealth should not enshrine into the Commonwealth how these problems should be combated.\textsuperscript{51} Another issue where another old Commonwealth member stood out on South Africa was Sports.

**Sports**

Among the old Commonwealth countries Canada had stayed away from sports relations with South Africa, while Australia had sports relations until 1972. In 1971 it had accepted the tour of South African rugby tour into Australia and the tour of an Australia Hockey team to South Africa. But later Australia had adhered to the Gleneagles agreement. But New Zealand and South Africa have been connected with the controversy over sports relations. The 1977 Gleneagles agreement was a direct consequence of New Zealand's sporting relations with South Africa so much so that


\textsuperscript{48} Then defence minister Fraser said that Russia's design was to undermine the stability of governments that have been friendly to the great democracies. Kenneth Good, "The Intimacy of Australia and South Africa". The African Review (Dar Es Salaam), vol. 2, no.3, 1972, p. 427.

\textsuperscript{49} External Affairs Minister, McMohan said that "At the moment, as far as I can see there is no intention of entering into a defence agreement with South Africa... I wouldn't say we wouldn't welcome it." Ibid., p. 428.

\textsuperscript{50} Gough Whitlam the leader of opposition party had said that the British proposal to sell arms to South Africa would have a very damaging effect on the Commonwealth and would affect Britain's prestige for years ahead. Ibid.

President Nyerere of Tanzania, tongue in check, congratulated New Zealand for providing an opportunity to demonstrate the weight of popular feeling against sporting links with South Africa.\textsuperscript{52}

Mr. Robert Muldoon, the leader of National Party had campaigned in the 1975 elections, against interference with the rights of sportsmen, and that his government would not interfere in sport. A proposed tour of New Zealand's All Blacks rugby team in 1976 also was given his blessings so much, so that he remarked that he himself would wish to follow the New Zealand rugby team to their tour planned to South Africa. The National Party government also gave on official fare well to the All Blacks team on their tour to South Africa. The African countries retaliated by boycotting the Olympic games and there was fear that the 1978 Commonwealth games would also be boycotted. International reactions made New Zealand retreat from a position of public encouragement and had helped secure a reduction in the number of high profile sports contacts; yet,

\begin{quote}
\textit{it still had not... asserted its support for the sports boycott, it countenanced individual and non-tour contact, it held out the prospect of "merit" team being acceptable from South Africa... it continued to subsidise sports contacts with South Africa through sports and recreation.}\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

This however was not acceptable to the Commonwealth. Shridath Ramphal in its report to the delegates for the 1977 Commonwealth Conference pointed out two pressing problems of the Commonwealth to be Idi Amin and the human right situation in Uganda and New Zealand's policy of sporting contacts with South Africa. This association was highly embarrassing for New Zealand.

The Commonwealth Prime Minister meeting of 1977 agreed to the Gleneagles agreement. The placed the sporting contact issues in a wider context. It noted that sporting contact between the Commonwealth nationals and the nationals of countries practising apartheid in sport tended to encourage the belief (however unwarranted) that they are prepared to condone this abhorrent policy. It also set as the urgent duty of each


member government to fight apartheid by withholding any form of support for, and by
taking every practical step to discourage contact or competition by their nationals with
sporting organisations, teams or sportsmen from South Africa. It also acknowledged that
each government had to determine in accordance with its laws the best way of
discharging its Commitments, but added that their non-fulfilment would threaten 'the
harmonious development of Commonwealth sports hereafter'.

But sports contacts between New Zealand and South Africa continued through the latter
months of 1977. Individual rugby players participated in world XV in South Africa and
South African squash players visited New Zealand. However, the question of sporting
contacts again came to the forefront with New Zealand's Rugby union's invitation to the
National South African Springbok team to tour New Zealand. Ramphal strongly warned
against the tour. The Commonwealth Southern Africa Committee, on behalf of all
commonwealth governments urged for the cancellation of the tour.

The government declared itself opposed to the tour, but refused to withhold visas from
the South African players. The tour went ahead amidst extensive protest and disruption.
It also led to a war of words between Muldoon and the Commonwealth Secretary
General. Muldoon in an article declared that the Gleneagles agreement had fallen on
evil times. He said that the agreement did not take away the freedom of the sporting
bodies to decide whom to play and whom not to play. To this Ramphal replied that
the issue facing the Commonwealth was to draw back from the commitment of
Gleneagles or to stand up for its principles. He wrote that the Commonwealth
governments were of the view that the New Zealand government was not doing its best
to discourage the tour.

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Commonwealth at the Summit: Communiques of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 1944-
55. He wrote: in Scotland in 1977, with little or no opposition we explained to our colleagues that to take
from our sportsmen and sporting bodies the right to make their own decision finally on whom to play
against or with was to take from them a freedom... with the concurrence and support of the
Commonwealth Secretary General, our colleagues of the new Commonwealth are trying to read the
Gleneagles agreement in a manner which suit their wishes. Robert Muldoon, "Why my small country
is now being rent asunder", The Times (London) 28 July 1981.
56. Ramphal replied: the issue facing Commonwealth was simple to draw back from commitment or to
stand up for its highest principles. Four Letters from the government to the New Zealand Rugby union
merely 'expressing concern' and asking it to 'weigh the consequence' of its invitation were reason
enough for Commonwealth governments to come to the view that this was somewhat less than
vigorous discouragement of the tour by all practical means. Shridath Ramphal, "How Muldoon Let the
Side Down", The Times (London), 5 August 1981.
The 1981 tour led to the transfer at short notice, the Commonwealth Finance Minister’s Conference to be held in New Zealand on August 1981 to Bahamas. This was done at the insistence of the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa. New Zealand boycotted the rearranged conference in the Bahamas and Muldoon declared that his country’s confidence in the Commonwealth’s way of doing things had been shaken by the decision to alter the venue. Warren Cooper, Minister of Foreign Affairs, publicly stated that the stage might be reached when New Zealand would have to reconsider membership of the Commonwealth.  

Later in 1985 Sports again surfaced its head with New Zealand’s Rugby union decision to tour Southern Africa. On 29 March 1985 Lange wrote to the union strongly urging it not to go to South Africa in the interest of rugby itself and in the wider national interest of New Zealand. On the same day the New Zealand Parliament, in an unanimous resolution warned that ‘An All Black tour of South Africa would seriously harm New Zealand interests at home and abroad and urged the union to reject the invitation to tour South Africa.’ Lange toured the Commonwealth African countries of Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe on 30 March 1985. He was the first New Zealand Prime Minister to tour Africa. This also helped him to counter adverse African reactions to the proposed 1985 rugby tour. This seemed to work as Mugabe said before the union’s decision was announced that Zimbabwe would not hold Mr. Lange to blame, for its actions. 

Lange also had several meeting with the chairman of the Rugby union and also a meeting with its council. But all these efforts proved futile. On 18 April 1985, New Zealand Rugby Football Union decided to send an All-Black team to South Africa in July. Ramphal described this decision as particularly distasteful one, as it comforted the rulers of South Africa at a time when the rest of the world was condemning them for their latest act of repression at home and their aggression in Namibia. He also said that it was wholly selfish and irresponsible, as it would damage New Zealand interest as well

as the cause of human freedom. On 26 April, the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa also deplored the decision and expressed the hope that it would reconsider it since the tour would inevitably give encouragement to the apartheid regime at a time when it stands increasingly isolated because of its repressive actions. The committee applauded the strenuous effort of the New Zealand government to prevent the tour.

For the New Zealand government unlike earlier situation in 1972, when it was the question of withholding entry visa from South African sportsmen, this time it was the question of the right of the government to restrict the freedom of New Zealander to travel. The government resorted to moral persuasion but did not succeed. However the tour was cancelled. Mr. Justice Casey granted an interim court induction on 13 July that prevented the All Blacks departing while the case brought against the union was still being heard. Faced with this delay and the threat of persecution for contempt of court if the tour proceeded, the union abandoned the tour.

Among the Asian Countries in sports also India has been the first country to boycott participation even before the Gleneagles Agreement. Later with the boycott of African countries of the 1986 Commonwealth games India also decided to boycott the games. On 19 July Rajiv Gandhi had said that India would participate if the British government were prepared to give some assurance that it would countenance the adoption of effective measures at the mini-summit in London. However the next day the Indian Minister of State for Sports Mrs Margaret Alva announced India’s withdrawal. In the area of sports also among the Asian Countries Singapore stood out by participating in the 1986 Commonwealth games while all the other Asian countries boycotted the games.

60 n. 58, p. 15.
61 Ibid.
62 In 1974 India had reached the Davis cup final for the first time. But it had to play South Africa in the final. India refused to play and for the first time the final was not played and the cup was awarded to South Africa by default.
63 Mrs Alva said, “no gesture from Britain was forthcoming” Kessing’s Contemporary Archives (London), vol. XXXII, September 1986, p. 34650.
Sanctions

India

Rajiv Gandhi played an important role as the situation turned grave in South Africa and as the Commonwealth poised to take immediate retaliatory steps. As he had just came to the international scene, he also wanted to make his mark. In the Nassau Summit, Rajiv was very specific and said, "The Nassau Conference must demand comprehensive and mandatory sanctions". He argued that the question of sanctions cannot be differed anymore and that the Commonwealth should demand sanctions. He said let not the Commonwealth be charged with cowardice in action and bravery in words. Rajiv Gandhi along with Mulroney was appointed by their colleagues to bring Mrs Thatcher to their viewpoint. This further brought him to the limelight.

India was also represented in the Eminent Person's Group (EPG) and was one of the seven countries to meet together at London for the mini summit after EPG submitted its report. Swaran Singh represented India in the EPG and Moni Malhotra headed the delegation that was to help the EPG in South Africa. India made it clear that it was ready to play a more trident role with Indian officials raising the possibility of organising an emergency meeting in New Delhi in September 1986 if there was a failure to agree in the mini-summit. India also decided not to permit entry into India for South Africans of Indian origin found to be collaborating with the regime.

Before the mini-summit Rajiv Gandhi said that he was not going to Britain to issue threats but made it clear that implementing the sanctions mentioned in the 1985 communiqué is the bottom line. In London he met with Mrs Thatcher to arrive at a consensus on the issue of sanctions. He also met Kaunda, Mulroney, Bob Hawk, and Pindling. Later in an interview in BBC in London he accused that Britain in spite of

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65 Rajiv Gandhi said that sanctions was the need of the hour to relieve the agony of South African people and to calm the burning anger of freedom loving people all over the world against apartheid regime. The time has come when in one voice the Commonwealth should demand the application of sanctions. The question cannot be deferred any more. *National Herald* (New Delhi), 26 October 1985.

having made sacrifices for freedom today it was ready to put freedom in second place for material gain. 67

At the mini-summit Rajiv Gandhi made two suggestions. He proposed a mechanism in the countries to keep a watch on the implementation of sanctions to which all countries had committed themselves and to make its defaults public. He wanted another system to ensure that the Commonwealth countries helped one another in minimising the impact of sanctions. All others than Mrs Thatcher supported these. Bob Hawk formally proposed the suggestions for acceptance but Mrs Thatcher objected. She made it clear that she would never subject her country to outside monitoring. 68

Mr Gandhi was resolute in his decision for sanctions and was harsh on Britain for not going along with sanctions. 69 He took the view that Britain had compromised on basic values and principles for economic ends and suggested that if Britain cannot gauge the pulse of the Commonwealth it cannot retain the leadership. 70 He said after the mini-summit that Britain is not the leader in the Commonwealth any more. 71 However he agreed that without Britain the economic impact would not be as much as the Commonwealth would like it to be. But felt it still had substantial psychological impact. 72 In 1986 Rajiv Gandhi visited Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Angola and asked the leaders to impose mandatory sanctions against South Africa. This tour was reflective of a growing personal commitment to the struggle of liberation in that region. He pointed out that racist regime had displayed its defiance of international opinion by enhancing customs tariff and creating other difficulties for the Front Line States that were dependent on South Africa. He called for collective action in mobilising international support for the Front Line States in Southern Africa being subjected to

67 Rajiv Gandhi said, "Britain is a country that had fought two world wars. The British people have made great sacrifice for freedom. Yet today we find Britain is willing to put human rights and freedom in second place to material gain." Telegraph (New Delhi), 3 August 1986.

68 The Hindu (Madras), 5 August 1986.

69 In reply to her answer that she wanted democracy in South Africa but that sanctions would hurt the blacks. He said, "Britain was always telling others what was good for them. In the Indian subcontinent, it decided on its own what was good when it was partitioned. Similarly Britain was now prescribing for South Africa. Actually it should be left to the people of South Africa to decide what was good for them." Ibid.,


72 The Hindu (Madras), 6 August 1986.
threats of retaliatory action by the Pretoria regime. He hoped that other countries would follow the lead given by the Commonwealth.73

India adopted an increasingly action oriented stance and conveyed that it was considering plans to withdraw landing rights from British Airways even at the risk of losing Air India its route to Britain.74 This principled stand led to altered international alliances. It brought countries like Australia, Canada and New Zealand together. This was reflected in the statement of Bob Hawk during the visit of Rajiv Gandhi to Australia in October 1986 and in the decision of New Zealand to contribute to AFRICA fund set up by NAM.75

At Vancouver in 1987, India played a major role in rallying opinion in favour of the continuation of sanctions against South Africa. Rajiv Gandhi said, that the only way to destroy apartheid without a terrible blood bath is by imposing sanctions. He said that an impression has gained ground that apartheid has been put on the back burner, let Vancouver show that our loyalty to principles and to declared objective is not fickle, that our resolve to end racism in South Africa is not negotiable.76 India was also in the CCFMSA and played an important role in the CCFMSA. The Minister for External Affairs Natwar Singh in 1988 suggested that the Commonwealth should develop greater liaison with parliamentarian groups especially in Western Europe and the United States.

In the early years India had given importance to the role of United Nations in the struggle for liberation. But in the 1980's India seemed to have come to appreciate the role of other organisations like the Commonwealth and NAM better than that of the United Nations. The United Nations was heavily criticised by the Indian representative at the UN in 1986. He referred to the role of United Nations in relation to South Africa as

74 Ibid., p. 174.
75 Bob Hawke said that, “Though Australia and India do not have identical foreign policy perception we do share the firm belief that major powers alone are not to be the arbiters of the world’s destiny and that others have a constructive role to play.” Times of India (New Delhi), 17 October 1986.
a chronicle of failure and the vetoes applied by United States and United Kingdom was criticised.  

Canada

It was the conservative government of Brain Mulroney that made serious changes in Canada's policy. The general belief was that his government would not make any effective changes in the existing policy. Shortly after the victory of the Progressive Conservative Party in September 1998 a general review of foreign policy was carried out. Only one paragraph was devoted to Southern Africa and did not indicate the new governments thinking on the issue of South Africa. However confounding the fear that government will follow the policy of Reagan administration or that of Mrs Thatcher the government began to formulate a policy of what might be called constructive disengagement. There was a determination to signal Canada's assessment of the importance of this issue. A special task force was set up in the Department of External Affairs.

The government brought forward a new sanctions policies and sided with the third world African states in opposition to the US and British policies. This was due to the pressures from international and domestic side and the expectations created by the sympathetic diplomacy on the part of the Canadian governments over several decades of the South African problem. The pressure for more decisive action also came from Bishop Desmond Tutu who made two highly publicised trips to Canada in December 1985 and May 1986. He publicly called for the termination of all economic links between Canada and South Africa. Also the South African policies of destabilisation and the ruthless repression of the civil unrest inside South Africa reinforced the concern of the Canadian government. The government policy also reflected the personal antipathy of the Prime

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77 He said that never have beliefs universally cherished and respected been so easily flouted by a small coterie of entrenched interests. *Times of India* (New Delhi), 20 June 1986.
78 A green paper on the directions of Canada's international relations was published in May 1985.
81 The pressures from the domestic side came from the Christian Churches and the Canadian Labour Congress. In the international arena there was frontline states. The liberal government under the leadership of Pierre Trudeau had reviewed its policies towards South Africa on two occasions in 1970 and 1977. The Mulronny government after two years in office had moved through four phases in its motion towards South Africa was a testimony to the turmoil in the area and the fluidity of the political situation. Clarence G. Redekop, “Sanctioning South Africa, 1980’s” in Don Munton and John Kirton ed., *Canadian Foreign Policy: Selected Cases* (Scarborough, 1992), pp. 249-340.
Minister towards the system of apartheid. Moreover public opinion was also for actions against South Africa.

In June and September 1985 the Canadian government to indicate the level of Canada’s concern announced a series of trade restrictions and other measures against South African government together with support for black organisations, Unions and families of detainees and political prisoners. Most importantly the government broke with the position of all previous administrations by declaring that it accepted the case for a total economic and political break with the Republic if moves to dismantle apartheid was not put into motion. Joe Clark stated that the government was prepared to undertake the full disruption of economic and diplomatic relations with South Africa if lesser measures proved ineffective in bringing about meaningful change.

The strong pro sanctions stand from Canada enhanced its standing in the Commonwealth and fuelled expectation in the Commonwealth circles. The Prime Minister sent personal representatives to the leaders of the Commonwealth front-line states prior to his first CHOGM in Nassau. In the Nassau Summit Mulroney and Rajiv Gandhi were called upon to play key mediator roles to persuade Mrs Thatcher to change her mind about sanctions.

At the Nassau Summit, Mulroney said that the Commonwealth must respond to the quickening pressure for change in South Africa. All of our governments have taken steps to counter apartheid. In the present crisis it is imperative that we all signal together that

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81 Canada’s new activist stance was first articulated by Mulroney Oct. 1985 at a speech in UN General Assembly. Mulroney threatened comprehensive sanctions and a breach of diplomatic relations unless rapid changes was forthcoming from South Africa. Bernard Wood, “Canada and Southern Africa”, The Round Table, no. 315, 1991, p. 287.

82 According to a poll conducted on the Canadian awareness and preference for policy towards South Africa about 53 percent in July 1985 said that Canada should maintain relations with South Africa while urging them to abandon their apartheid policies. This however declined to 40 percent in June 1986 and the strategy that Canada should condemn and cut all relations with South Africa gained preference. It was 19 percent in 1985, 26 percent in September 1985 and 35 percent in June 1986. Don Munton and Timothy Shaw, “Apartheid and Canadian Public Opinion”, International Perspectives, September/October 1987, p. 11.

83 Munton, n. 80, p. 341

84 In September 1985, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark acknowledged, “that Canada has a responsibility to provide both moral and practical leadership and that the government of South Africa should have no doubt that Canada will invoke full sanctions unless there is tangible movement away from apartheid.” John p. Schlegel, “Twenty Years of Policy Evolution”, The Round Table, no. 301, 1987, p. 45.
there will be Common Worldwide and sustained pressure against Apartheid-until apartheid is ended.\textsuperscript{85} He also commented that Canadians well understand the anguish of 25 million blacks oppressed by the inhumanities of apartheid in South Africa because 25 million was all the people of Canada, which earned him appreciation from Kaunda.\textsuperscript{86} Mulroney also called on Britain to change its position of opposing sanctions and exert moral leadership enabling the Commonwealth to rise above balance sheets and commercial trading matters.\textsuperscript{87} Archbishop Edward Scott, the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, represented Canada in the EPG. The government argued that the sanctions policies of Canada were taken to maintain the effectiveness of the Commonwealth and to keep Canada in the forefront of those who oppose apartheid.\textsuperscript{88}

The 1987 CHOGM at Vancouver made Canada the first country outside Britain to host a CHOGM for the second time. Mulroney called on Britain to change its position of opposing sanctions and exert moral leadership enabling the Commonwealth to rise above balance sheets and commercial trading matters.\textsuperscript{89} Canada proposed the formation of a CCFMSA and Mulroney considerably pushed through the steps for CCFMSA. Canada was made the chair of the committee, which gave Joe Clark the leadership of the CCFMSA. This made the Canadian official’s claim that Canada had assumed the moral leadership of the Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{90} Canada played an important role in not just taking a principled stand but also in encouraging negotiations for political reform and in allocating manpower and financial resources to assist victims of apartheid.\textsuperscript{91} Canada was the second highest contributor to the Commonwealth Secretariat Britain being the first.

\textsuperscript{88} The External Affairs minister stated, “What we are doing is designed to maintain the effectiveness of a Commonwealth we value and to keep Canada in the forefront of those who oppose apartheid. These measures do not rule out further steps in the near further. Ibid., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{89} Boles, n. 87, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{91} Canadian aid to the SADCC countries was increased from $85 million in 1983 to $125 million in 1984. An establishment of a $5million education aid package for South African blacks was announced in 1985 and in 1986 another $2million was added to the fund. Redekop, n. 79, pp. 6-8.
Canada gave $452000 in 1990 to the Nassau fellowship, to CCFMSA $146000, to the Mozambique special fund $1,078000 and as assistance to Namibia $104000.92

Canada's leadership and its support of sanctions however created differences between Britain and Canada. Britain accused Canada of hypocrisy by the allegation that while calling for sanctions, Canada's trade with South Africa had actually grown. But it turned out that Britain was quoting 1986 figures before sanctions were applied while the 1987 figures showed that trade had fallen by 52% in the first six months. Suggestions were also put mysteriously, that Mulroney was chairing the conference badly. However the Canadians blamed the British for the rumour. This led to Bob Hawk, Mugabe, Kaunda and Rajiv Gandhi holding a joint press conference where they emphasised how well Mulroney had performed and accused the British of a misinformation campaign.93

The peak period for Canada's positive image came between 1985 and 1987 when Canada was able to take a lead in the Commonwealth and called for concerted international action against South Africa. The leadership that it took however lead it to embarrassments as it struggled to live up to the expectations created. The first of the embarrassments occurred at the third meeting of the CCFMSA in Harare in February 1989. The preliminary trade statistics released prior to the meeting showed a 68 percent increase in imports from South Africa and a 4 percent increase in exports to South Africa over 1987. The government argued that these figures were less meaningful that it appeared as the increases largely reflected price changes rather than volume increase.94

Canada's reputation was further damaged at the CCFMSA meeting when it was announced that the Bank of Nova Scotia intended to make a $600 million loan to Minorco, an offshore subsidiary of the giant South African conglomerate, Anglo-American. Joe Clark explained lamely that this action violated the spirit, but not the letter, of Canada's voluntary ban on private sector loans to South Africa, and was

93 Derek Ingram, "Commonwealth Note Book", The Round Table, no. 306, 1988, p. 106.
94 The New Democratic Party MP Howard McCurdy accused the trade rise "a slap in the face and charged that the government had a commitment to hypocrisy rather than action. " Charlotte Montgomery and Susan Delacour. "Trade Rise a Slap in the Face to Apartheid Opponents", Globe and Mail (Ottawa), 27 January 1989.
therefore unacceptable. This was criticised by anti-apartheid activists in South Africa.\textsuperscript{95} The damage to Canada’s reputation as a sanctions leader was substantial.

From 1987, Canada had taken no new measures against South Africa. This was criticised inside Canada also.\textsuperscript{96} Joe Clark argued that the new goal was to widen, tighten and intensify the existing sanctions and at the fourth CCFMSA meeting in an effort to demonstrate Canada’s leadership called for a focus on financial sanctions. In particular the Foreign Ministers agreed that the Commonwealth should put pressure of banks not to reschedule $8 billion of South African debt due in 1990. Clark later announced that he had assurance from twelve of the fourteen major banks involved that they would be seeking the highest possible interest payments and the fastest possible repayments.\textsuperscript{97} However immediately prior to the Commonwealth summit in Kuala Lumpur South Africa announced that it had managed to reschedule its debt on favourable basis. Canada pointed accusatory fingers at Britain, as it had not pressured its banks to co-operate. The tension between Britain and Canada further accentuated with Mrs Thatcher releasing Britain’s opinion on sanctions soon after the release of the Commonwealth declaration. Mulroney along with Hawk asked for an explanation from Thatcher.

With the release of Mandela Britain was of the opinion that sanctions should be withdrawn. However Canada supported the view of the ANC and the front-line states, which argued that sanctions should not be withdrawn as the negotiations, had just begun and without pressure and international attention it could stall or reversed. Mulroney declared that he had staked for his successors the high moral ground of opposing apartheid unequivocally and that when the question is asked by a new South Africa “Where did Canada stand and who stood for us the word Canada will come back loud and clear.”\textsuperscript{98} Canada though in the early years was against sanctions later was in the

\textsuperscript{95} Rev. Alan Boesak called the proposed loan a “vast betrayal” of South Africa’s black population. Africa Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series (London), March 311989, p. 9465-9466.

\textsuperscript{96} The Canadian Council of Churches chastised the government for its lax policy on a and urged comprehensive mandatory sanctions Howard Ross “Apartheid Foes Betrayed by Ottawa, Churches Say”, Globe and Mail (Ottawa), 18 August 1989.

\textsuperscript{97} “South Africa Side-steps Short term Debt Squeeze”, Globe and Mail (Ottawa), 20 October 1989.

\textsuperscript{98} “Mulroney Takes Credit for Anti-Apartheid Push”, Globe and Mail (Ottawa), 21 October 1989.
forefront to fight apartheid and the vehicle for it has been the Commonwealth. Now to look into where Australia stood in this issue.

**Australia**

A change of leadership in Australia in 1983 did not affect its policy towards South Africa. Bob Hawk, the new Prime Minister was in tune with the Commonwealth on the South African issues and he went further than Fraser by advocating sanctions. At Nassau, he said, “the world that is witness to events in South Africa is becoming increasingly impatient. I believe it is looking to us to draw upon our tradition. After speaking of the “option of further effective economic sanctions”. He referred to the “flame of enlightened self-interest that has now been lit in South Africa”. He claimed that “all the economic capacity that has been established in South Africa and which now disproportionally benefits the few, will only endure and be available for the benefit of all if a new, free and just South Africa is created”.  

Australia was represented in the EPG by the former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser who was the co-chairman of the group. The EPG came out strongly in support of sanctions and Fraser commented that it was a tragedy that the Botha government had not taken the opportunity for negotiations when it was in their grasp. Fraser also contacted the British Deputy Prime Minister Lord Whilow in an attempt to sway Mrs Thatcher towards accepting sanctions. This led Hawk to further support sanctions and at the mini-summit he said that the participating governments would not settle for the lowest common denominator position which is not consistent with a position of integrity.

The fact that Australia was siding with Africans was not taken lightly by South Africa or Britain. Mrs Thatcher had tried to wean away Australia and Canada from others asking them whether they have studied the implications of committing themselves to a wide

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100 Malcolm Fraser said that sanctions represented the only path remaining to bring the South African government to negotiate the dismantling of apartheid. International Herald Tribune (New York), 15 June 1986.

series of sanctions. She was however rebuffed by them. In 1987 Bob Hawk tried to bring about rapprochement between Mrs Thatcher and others but failed. He acknowledged that that there is a fundamental difference of opinion between Britain and others but said that it would not deter the Commonwealth from intensifying the existing sanctions. In 1987 itself bitter differences emerged over Australia and Britain with the Foreign Secretary of Australia commenting on John Major then Foreign Minister of Britain as “ungracious to the last.”

Australia’s trading relationship with South Africa is competitive and not complementary as both deal in major exports such as coal, wool, iron manganese and fruits. In Australia itself this was noted in 1980 when one member of the sub-committee on southern Africa had suggested albeit hypothetically that it might be in Australia’s economic interest to support sanctions against South Africa. He suggested what might be lost in direct trade between the two states could be more than compensated for by the removal of one of Australia’s major competitor from resources and primary product market in Europe and Japan. This led Mr. Pik Botha the foreign minister of South Africa to accuse that Australia was acting out of its own selfish interests. However to say that this is the fact that lead Australia to support sanctions would not be correct.

Bob Hawk was under pressure from various factors to apply sanctions. On the one hand he had to take into account the active role-played by the formal Liberal Party Prime Minister Fraser in the Zimbabwe settlement. This brought about expectations in the Commonwealth circles as to what Hawk’s policy would be on sanctions. Secondly his party circles had made known that certain measures had to be taken if party unity is to be preserved. Thirdly the Liberal-National Party opposition under the leadership of John Howard was moving towards a position on South Africa not dissimilar to that taken by

102 In answer they replied that she did not need to worry about them, as they knew what they were doing. The Hindu (Madras) 5 August 1986.
103 Hawke said that there is no point in trying to disguise that there is a fundamental difference of opinion and that it would not deter the Commonwealth in surging ahead with wider, tighter, intensified and more sanctions against South Africa. Patriot (New Delhi), 28 September 1987.
104 The Times (London), 23 October 1989
105 Higgott, n. 26, p. 260.
106 The foreign Minister of South Africa asked “could it be that Australia entered into an agreement with the ANC leadership on the marketing of coal in the future? Africa Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series (London), vol. 23, no. 8, September 15 1986, p. 8206.
Mrs Thatcher. Each of these factors impelled Hawk to take a relatively high profile within the Commonwealth context on the sanctions issue.

By the time of the 1989 Kuala Lumpur meeting there was a significant reversal of roles with the African countries becoming restrained in their remarks while Australia and Canada becoming more outspoken and blunt. Hawk proposed a five-point plan in Kuala Lumpur. This included the continuation of all existing sanctions and new forms of financial pressures on South Africa. It included calling all relevant banks and financial institutions to impose tougher conditions on day to day trade financing and making trade credits to South Africa tighter. It also included persuading the IMF to make any major financial package for South Africa contingent upon structural and political reform of any that could guarantee the countries economic stability in the future.

Australia had supported sanctions and gave financial assistance to the blacks. Australia gave $170,000 to the CCFMSA, $804,000 to the Mozambique special fund and $906,000 as assistance to Namibia in 1989-1990. However by 1991 Australia had started advocating a staged removal of sanctions. In 1991 the Australian Foreign Minister at the CCFMSA meeting proposed this but was opposed by the frontline states. However it had played a positive role in the issue of sanctions and in sports unlike New Zealand which is pertinent for its sports controversy in the Commonwealth.

New Zealand

Change took place with the election of labour party under David Lange in June 1984. One of the first statements of the new government was to announce its intention to close the wellington based South African consulate. The South African government preempted the promised expulsion by closing the consulate on 1 Aug. 1984. Lange said that he found it ‘very satisfactory’. The Commonwealth conference of 1985 brought New Zealand in line with the Commonwealth approach. The Labour government gave the assurance that they would adopt whatever sanctions the Commonwealth deemed

109 Doxey, n. 92, p. 50.
110 Payne, n. 53, p. 347.
necessary. New Zealand’s role in the conference was not very active. It would be best described in the words, of Lange “of bit player... extras in the chorus”. 111

Lange in 1986 after the mini-summit committed the New Zealand government to implementing all the measures adopted, through legislation if necessary. Even though it's role was that of bit players their alignment with the Afro-Asian countries meant that Britain was isolated and helped to add more pressure on Britain. From being seen as a supporter of South Africa in the 60’s and 70’s the New Zealand’s policy changed under Lange in such a way that they came in line with the others in the Commonwealth.

Though all the Asian countries supported sanctions Britain had assumed that Singapore would side with them. The policy of ASEAN, which includes Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Brunei, had been to ban imports but only to discourage exports to South Africa. Moreover Singapore port is one of the busiest in the World: Oil, Coffee and Timber may pass through en route to South Africa. Further Singapore does not break down its African trade by Country, so nobody knows how much goes where. 112 While Singapore seemed to take middle the line policy, Malaysia remained a strident supporter of sanctions and felt that Britain was not giving sufficient recognition to the Commonwealth views. 113

Dr. Mahathir cited the lack of progress in attitude of the rich members towards economic issues and the South Africa’s racial policies as the reason for not attending CHOGM 1981 or CHOGM 1983. Later, when he attended the 1985 Nassau Summit, he said that his main reason for attending this meeting was to launch an attack at South Africa. He argued that if sanctions can destroy apartheid it should be applied by those countries, which have the biggest economic clout. 114 Many in Malaysia had hoped that Malaysia would be given a place in the EPG but was disappointed. Malaysia however provided observers to serve in the Commonwealth Observers Mission in South Africa (COMSA). Mahathir at Vancouver paid tribute to the

111 Ibid., p. 348.


113 Mahathir felt that Britain did not give sufficient recognition to Commonwealth views and depth of feeling, and he reiterated that there was no alternative to sanctions. Muda, n. 1, p. 430.

114 If sanctions can help destroy despicable policy like apartheid, then sanctions must be applied by those who can hurt most, by the countries with the biggest economic clout. Failure to do so would mean hypocrisy on their part of the countries and that will rub off on the Commonwealth. Africa Research Bulletin Political, Social and Cultural Series (London), vol. 22, no. 10, 15 Nov. 1985, p. 7808.
constructive work of Canada and the chairmanship of Mulroney. The attending the Commonwealth Conferences of 1985 and 1987 seemed to have changed his opinion on the Commonwealth that he offered to host the meeting. The 1989 Commonwealth meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur.

Among the countries in the Commonwealth other than Britain and the African countries India and Canada have been major players in the struggle against apartheid. After Britain the countries that could have made a difference were the old Commonwealth countries. They shared a common affinity with South Africa and had financial and sporting links with it. It was the support of Canada that had prevented the Commonwealth break up in lines of colour in 1961. Moreover it was Canada’s support that had been a surprise and decisive in the South African decision to withdraw. Canada has supported the African countries in the issue of arms and sports from the beginning. Trudeau was one of the firsts to express his misgivings on the decision to resume arms sale to Britain. However Canada was reluctant to support sanctions till mid 1980’s. But when it did it played an active role in the Commonwealth.

Australia for long was against the idea to isolate South Africa. It was against the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth and had supported the decision of Britain to resume arms sale. But later its policies changed and Australia started to accommodate the feelings of Africans on apartheid South Africa. It adhered to the Gleneagles agreement and Fraser played an important role in the Rhodesian issue. However Fraser refused to accept sanctions as the Prime Minister of Australia but later as the co-chairman of the EPG was a strong advocate of sanctions. Australia in 1985 supported the call for sanctions and was an active player in the Commonwealth.

New Zealand has been more notorious for its sports relation with South Africa in the Commonwealth. In spite of the Gleneagles agreement it continued its sports relation with South Africa which created an offence in the Commonwealth. However New Zealand also sided with the others and stopped its sporting relation and supported sanctions with others.

Among the Asian Countries and among others India has been a major player. It was a member of all major groups set up in the Commonwealth. It has supported the African Countries in their entire endeavour against South Africa. In the issue of arms, sports or sanctions India has always been in the forefront in its support to the African countries.