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## “PROCEED TO SOME OTHER PORT WHERE OUR FLAG MAY FLY IN AIR THAT IS NOT TAINTED WITH THE STENCH OF APARTHEID” – THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ANTI-APARTHEID CAMPAIGN AND AMERICAN NAVAL VISITS TO SOUTH AFRICA, 1948–1967

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**ABSTRACT**

*The introduction of apartheid in 1948 with its extensive suite of discriminatory laws, had a wide-ranging impact on South Africa's international relations. Despite an ever-growing global anti-apartheid movement and calls for the country's total isolation, the country succeeded in maintaining naval relations with several nations. As a result, it frequently hosted shipping crews from Europe and Northern America, mostly on flag-displaying missions. During these visits, non-White sailors were subjected to South Africa's racial laws and entertained separately from their White counterparts. In following the principle of respecting "local law and custom", commanders of vessels became willing collaborators in enforcing apartheid. Over two decades (1948–1967), racially-defined events and activities at segregated facilities became a standard feature of these visits. Under the influence of the local and American activists who viewed their civil rights- and anti-apartheid struggle as a common one, all forms of collaboration with the racist regime, were roundly condemned. By 1967, as a result of continuous mobilisation and the use of a diversity of mechanisms, the American anti-apartheid movement in co-operation with their local counterparts, succeeded in, among others, forcing a change in their country's naval policy and its relations with South Africa. Effectively this led to the termination of American naval flag-display visits to South African ports from 1967-1994.*

*Keywords: apartheid; race; segregation; navy; United States; South Africa; international relations; Cape Town*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Naval diplomacy in the form of visiting foreign ports (showing of the flag), participation in joint naval exercises and fleet reviews, is an accepted form of international relations. Naval ships, as a result, has variously been described as “grey diplomats”, “agents of national reputation”, and as a “means of communication in power relationships”.<sup>1</sup> James Cable suggests that naval displays can perform “the expressive function of emphasising attitudes, lending verisimilitude to otherwise unconvincing statements or, providing an outlet for emotion”.<sup>2</sup> As a strategic diplomatic exercise, it is firmly based on the principle of reciprocity and under certain circumstances, the exclusion or isolation of any naval country from visits by others can, therefore, be regarded as an indicator of a country’s foreign standing, or at worse, as a precursor to more coercive forms of diplomacy.<sup>3</sup>

South African ports, pre- and during apartheid, were essential destinations for foreign vessels from Europe, North and South America, Asia and Europe as well as for power blocs such as the British Commonwealth.<sup>4</sup> During these visits, mostly flag-showing exercises, foreign fleets were royally entertained, while they executed a few official tasks and participated in certain official ceremonies. The planning and execution of these visits, however, became highly complex during apartheid (1948–1990) as a result of the existence and enforcement of legislated segregation. With due consideration to the principle of conforming to “local law and customs”, it was expected of visiting crews to respect all the laws and customs of the host port and country, creating problems especially for non-White sailors on shore leave. Simple matters such as getting access to alcohol, visiting places of public entertainment and other facilities, (for example, movie theatres, beaches, swimming pools and dance halls), were all regulated by laws. Generally

1 See, A Wessels, “‘South Africa’s Grey Diplomats’: Visits by South African Warships to Foreign Countries 1946–1996”, *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 27, 1997, pp. 67– 105; K Rowlands, “‘Decided preponderance at sea’: Naval diplomacy in strategic thought”, *Naval War College Review* 65 (4), Autumn 2012, pp. 91– 92.

2 Quoted in R Cohen, “‘Where are the aircraft carriers?’ – nonverbal communication in international politics”, *Review of International Studies* 7, 1981, p. 79.

3 See, A Wessels, “Buitelandse vlagvertoonbesoeke aan Suid-Afrikaanse hawes: Vanaf die V.O.C.-tydvak tot 1961”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 31 (1), 2006, p. 82; M Scarlett, *Coercive Naval Diplomacy*, Research Paper (Naval War College, Newport: USA, 2009).

4 Wessels, “Vanaf die V.O.C.-tydvak tot 1961”, pp. 81– 98.

superior facilities, the rights to products and services, such as buying alcohol were reserved to Whites only.

In-depth and focussed research concerning the South African visits of American ships to local ports and the subjection of non-White visiting crew members to apartheid legislation while onshore, is a neglected aspect of South African-United States foreign relations. This state of affairs, Andre Wessels suggested, possibly ascribed to the irregularity and low profile of these visits.<sup>5</sup> Far from having been “low-key” affairs, the evidence indicates that these incidences were at the heart of detailed planning to circumvent any potential diplomatic embarrassment in the wake of the public outcry that followed after the subjection of non-White sailors to apartheid law and regulation during the visit of the *USS Midway* in 1955. This incident happened within seven years after the United States military was officially desegregated and therefore intersected with the ongoing civil rights and global anti-apartheid campaigns, which a significant number of Afro-Americans started to treat as a common struggle.

This article uses the 1948–1967 naval visits as a lens to investigate the interlinkages and intersection of events in both South Africa and the United States against the background of the civil rights campaign and the global anti-apartheid campaign.

## 2. APARTHEID, RESISTANCE AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

In May 1948, the Re-United National Party (usually referred to as the NP) who fought the general election on a political platform that promised White voters the institutionalisation of segregation between the races, won the popular vote of White South Africans. Following its electoral victory and entry into government on 4 June 1948, it promulgated various laws to execute its political promise. These included the Population Registration Act 30 of 1950, the Prohibition of Mix Marriages Act 55 of 1949, the Group Areas Act 41 of 1951, and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act 49 of 1953. On the other side of the Atlantic, seven weeks after the NP’s ascendancy to power, United States President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981 to end racial segregation in its Armed Services, to reverse the trend of African Americans being treated as the “unseen servicemen and women” and the setting of higher admission standards for this group.<sup>6</sup> This order only followed

5 A Wessels, “Buitelandse vlagvertoonbesoeke aan Suid-Afrikaanse hawes (2): Die periode van fluktuerende internasionale betrekkinge, 1961-94”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 31 (2), 2006, pp. 80.

6 G Drane, “The role of African-American musicians in the integration of the United States Navy”, *Music Educators Journal* 101 (3), 2015, pp. 64-66.

six years after Black Americans were admitted to full service into the navy and after years of being restricted to positions such as mess attendants and stewards. Discriminatory practices in the different arms of the services, however, continued, with leading critics such as Milton White, in a different context, labelling integration as Black acceptance of “instalments of equality” and of joining a system in which they had little say. It also did not allow them to fully “participate in just activities with [the] unconditional response to the central command”, nor granted them the right “to refuse activity contrary to the interests of black Americans”.<sup>7</sup> This dilemma will be further explored in the following sections.

In June 1952, in reaction to the institutionalisation of segregation, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa launched the *Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign* (“Defiance Campaign”) – a new phase of resistance involving multiple groups. Faced with a civil disobedience campaign that not only rejected but also deliberately infringed apartheid legislation, the apartheid state reacted with all the force and authority at its disposal, including physical assaults, arrests, imprisonment and banning of a large number of activists, to contain and repress the protest. These events forced the leadership trio of Chief Albert Luthuli, a Nobel Prize winner (African National Congress, ANC), Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., an American civil rights activist, and Father Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican Priest, to issue a call for the total isolation of the apartheid state.<sup>8</sup>

Official government and public support for the anti-apartheid struggle in the United States and Europe at the time of the Defiance Campaign were negligible at best. Pieter Kapp describes South Africa’s official relationship with the United States during 1948-1976 as “never formally allies, goodwill, friendship and almost unconscious co-operation built primarily on an economic basis”.<sup>9</sup> The United States’ policy, notes Alex Thomson in a similar observation, was always “a balancing” and “juggling act”.<sup>10</sup> On the other end of the spectrum, active public support for the campaign was confined to small groups of activists such as the New York-based, Americans for South African Resistance (AFSAR), whose self-defined role was to raise funds to aid the logistics of the Defiance Campaign and for financing the necessary legal

7 M White, “Self-determination for Black soldiers”, *The Black Scholar* 2 (3), 1970, pp. 43-45.

8 RT Vinson, “Up from Slavery and Down with Apartheid! African Americans and Black South Africans against the Global Color Line”, *Journal of American Studies* 52 (2), 2018, pp. 297-329.

9 PH Kapp, “From friendship to frustration: 1948-1976”. In: PH Kapp and GC Olivier (eds.), *United States- South African Relations: Past, Present & Future* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1987), p. 24.

10 A Thomson, *US foreign policy towards apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994* (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2008), p. 7.

representation for the arrested leadership. It also raised awareness and acted as an “information vehicle” by sharing information about progress with the campaign through its monthly bulletins. Among the members and sponsors of AFSAR were individuals such as George Houser (Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Congress of Racial Equality), Charles Farmer (Congress of Racial Equality), Congressman Adam Clayton Powell (fourth African American to be elected to Congress), the Reverend Donald Harrington (Community Church of New York), Reverend Charles Y. Trigg (Harlem Metropolitan Methodist Church), Pearl Buck (author) and Canada Lee (former boxer, jockey, musician and star in the movie, *Cry, the beloved country*).<sup>11</sup> These personalities, through treating their struggle for civil rights for all Americans and that of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa as a common struggle, engaged in what Gelya Frank and Bernard Muriithi called “occupational reconstructions”, defined as “what people do to remake ordinary life in response to a problematic situation”.<sup>12</sup>

In reaction to the earlier call for action against apartheid, and to give further impetus to the Defiance Campaign, AFSAR started a letter-writing campaign aiming at lobbying certain influential individuals such as President Harry Truman, and Secretary of State Dean Acheson. This campaign was supplemented by “mass distribution of throw-away leaflets” and a call to the American people to “support the drive against Jim Crow in South Africa”. It further positioned itself as a contact point and launching pad for the campaigns of others involved in the same struggle. An essential ally in this regard was Bostonians Allied for South African Resistance. They were involved in the organisation of awareness-raising events, public protests, fundraising and the distribution of anti-apartheid literature.<sup>13</sup> In the background and without any significant comment or visible protest, the *USS Valcour*, an American seaplane docked at Cape Town for a four-day visit from 6-9 August 1952. Neither did the onshore treatment of visiting sailors received any attention.

After the Defiance Campaign in 1953, AFSAR transformed itself into the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) – an organisation destined to play a significant role in the international solidarity movement during the intensification

11 G Houser, “The Story of the American Committee on Africa: Meeting Africa’s Challenges”, ACOA, <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-C2B-84-AA%20ACOA%20Story%20ACOA%20opt.pdf>, accessed 31 March 2019.

12 G Frank and BAK Muriithi, “Theorising social transformation in Occupational Science: The American civil rights movement and South African struggle against apartheid as “occupational reconstructions”, *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy* 45 (1), 2015, p. 11.

13 G Houser, ““American Supporters of the Defiance Campaign”: Presentation to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid”, [http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-38C-84-african\\_activist\\_archive-a0b0x9-a\\_12419.pdf](http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-38C-84-african_activist_archive-a0b0x9-a_12419.pdf), accessed 31 March 2019.

of the anti-apartheid struggle.<sup>14</sup> Through its financial contributions, AFSAR assisted in galvanising the African diaspora in the United States to acquire both greater awareness and understanding of the commonalities between the civil rights and anti-apartheid struggle. It further played a critical role in mobilising Black Americans, individually and within organisations, to become active participants in the global struggle against apartheid.<sup>15</sup>

### 3. THE USS MIDWAY AND ONSHORE APARTHEID, 1955

On 10 December 1954, the Department of External Affairs notified the City of Cape Town that they had been granted permission for a port visit by the *USS Midway*.<sup>16</sup> The 45 000-ton carrier, first of the attack aircraft carrier-class and whose name commemorates the “Battle of Midway” during the World War Two (WW2), was on its eighth cruise – designated an “operational passage, not a training cruise” as well as a “supervised typical route”.<sup>17</sup> Given the intensified United States civil rights campaigns, and the increased activities of the anti-apartheid forces domestically, the first communication between the Office of the Mayor of Cape Town and the Consul-General of the United States, raised the issue of the racial composition of the crew and their onshore stay from the onset. With due consideration to the myriad of apartheid laws that governed, segregated and discriminated against the Black population, the city authorities, indicated to the local United States representative that, “every endeavour will be made for the separate entertainment of the 400 negro

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14 The leadership of the new organisation included the Rev. Donald Harrington (Co-chairman, Community Church of New York), A. Phillip Randolph (Co-chairman, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Vice-chairman of the American Federation of Labour, C.I.O.), Peter Weiss (President), and Bishop James A. Pike (Episcopal Church and Vice-Chairman of the National Committee). Members on its Executive Board and National Committee included individuals such as Roger Baldwin, Martin Luther King Jr., Sidney Poitier, and Jackie Robinson. See, African Activist Archive, “Statement by Mr. George Houser, Executive Director American Committee on Africa to the U.N. Committee on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa”, <https://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-B76-84-AA%20ACOA%20GMH-UN%205-10-63%20opt.pdf>, accessed 30 March 2019.

15 African Activist Archive, “Bulletin: Americans for South African Resistance Bulletin”, *Bulletin 13*, [http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-6BD-84-african\\_activist\\_archive-a0b5a0-a\\_12419.pdf](http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-6BD-84-african_activist_archive-a0b5a0-a_12419.pdf), accessed 30 March 2019. See also, Houser’s testimony before the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid on 25 June 1982.

16 Cape Town Archives Repository (KAB), City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: P.M. 105/1/13 – Secretary for External Affairs – Mayor of Cape Town, 10 December 1954.

17 See, KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Cape Times*, 23 December 1954; KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Cape Times*, 7 January 1955.

personnel aboard”.<sup>18</sup> This was an important commitment since the United States was an important trading partner and investor whose South African investments by the mid-1950s consisted of \$268 million in exports, \$96 million in imports, \$257 million in direct investment and 14.79% of return on direct investment.<sup>19</sup> Satisfied with Cape Town’s eagerness to host the visitors, its commitment to make a special effort for the ship’s non-White crew and equally sensitive to the need to avoid any potential political embarrassment, the United States Consul General duly acknowledged the communication and arrangements from the city authorities.<sup>20</sup>

In line with its undertaking, the City of Cape Town planned a detailed itinerary for the weekend-stay of the *Midway* crew scheduled for 15-17 January 1955. In addition to a smoking concert in the Old Drill Hall that was to feature a menu consisting of American-style “hot dogs’, cheese, onions and brown bread and butter be served”, it included the serving of “malted liquor and cola drinks”, and a visit to Muizenberg beach for 500 enlisted men.<sup>21</sup> It further provided for crew members whose family were Rotarians or former Rotarians to be entertained by the Wynberg Rotary Club “under international service”.<sup>22</sup> Since visiting crews were known for their sporting prowess and ships normally maintained their own sports teams, consideration was given to involving the visitors, within the limited time available, in several baseball games and boxing contests.<sup>23</sup> The visitors, in turn, hosted a group of 100 orphans from local White orphanages, including Nazareth House, St. Michael’s Home, St. John’s Hostel and Kindersending Huis, on-board ship.<sup>24</sup> Each of these activities, however, was guided by the colour bar and the separate hosting of non-White sailors.

To accommodate the needs of the 400 non-European crew members, referred to in the official correspondence in abbreviated form as “N/Es” or “Non-Europeans”, the Mayor’s Ex-Servicemen’s Memorial Institute was

18 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: MB Williams [Town Clerk] – Mr. J. Stone, Consul-General for the United States of America, 20 December 1954.

19 A Thomson, *US foreign policy towards apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994* (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2008), p. 11.

20 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: John F Stone American Consul General – His Worship Councillor AF Keen, The Mayor, 21 December 1954.

21 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: MB Williams [Town Clerk] – Mr. Perkins, 10 January 1955; KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: Town Clerk – City Engineer, 10 January 1955.

22 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Cape Times*, 16 December 1954.

23 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Cape Times*, 27 December 1954.

24 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: Town Clerk – Manager: City Tramways Co. Ltd., 10 January 1955.

co-opted to handle all the entertainment arrangements. The proposed programme for non-White sailors submitted to the city included a scenic tour of the Cape Peninsula with 20 “local Coloured men” as guides, and a separate “dance for 100 N/E Ratings” at the Ex-Servicemen’s Club. To ensure an entertaining evening, and to ensure that no transgressions of the applicable liquor laws that regulated sale of alcohol to Black persons occurred, the Institute requested the Town Clerk to obtain permission from the Police’s Liquor Branch for (a) “all NE Ratings to be supplied with liquor” and (b) “for the bringing into the Club of the liquor which will be supplied by you”.<sup>25</sup> Significantly these activities and its enjoyment were confined to 100 men, while the vast majority of the 300 other non-White or non-European sailors, had to endure staying on board. In comparison, five-times more White sailors were scheduled to enjoy the privilege of fully catered onshore-leave.

Given the political sensitivity of the proposed arrangements at a time that Americans had to deal with the civil rights struggle domestically, the American Consul-General deemed it appropriate to pre-warn the United States Naval authorities about its dilemma of having to apply the apartheid laws during the onshore leave of the *USS Midway’s* crew.<sup>26</sup> When the arrangements above became known in political circles in the United States, it elicited a storm of criticism from Democratic Party Senators Herbert Lehman and Hubert Humphrey (later Vice-President) and Clarence Mitchell, Director of the Washington Bureau of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. All three parties registered protests with the Navy Secretary and the Secretary of State and demanded that docking in Cape Town be cancelled, despite it being standard naval protocol to observe local law and custom when in port. By accepting these arrangements and following a “posture that neither embraces nor isolates” approach, the United States Navy by implication, would not only have rolled back some of the gains made regarding the desegregation of the military but would also become guilty of collaborating with apartheid.<sup>27</sup> Clarence Mitchell, an avowed civil rights campaigner, demanded that:

[...] in the name of the vital democracy which we all love and are prepared to defend against all enemies, we ask that the *Midway* stay out of South Africa and proceed to some other port where our flag may fly in the air that is not tainted with the stench

25 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: Manager: Mayor’s Ex-Servicemen’s Memorial Institute – Town Clerk, 10 January 1954.

26 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *The Cape Argus*, 15 January 1955.

27 DB Easum, “United States policy toward South Africa”, *Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion* 5 (5), 1975, p. 70.

of apartheid and where our fighting men may walk ashore with the dignity that United States citizens deserve.<sup>28</sup>

This response, a typically populist one, however, fell on deaf ears, probably because the visit of the *Midway* was deemed as necessitated by an “operational, logistical requirement”.<sup>29</sup> Given the still emergent nature of the United States anti-apartheid movement and the lack of attention paid by the evolving domestic resistance movement to naval issues in their campaigns at the time, the matter failed to become a major mobilisation point. Against this background, and based on an indication by both the ship’s Commanding Officer and United States Consul General that they “understood the problem” and found the arrangements around liquor availability and the other associated matters “mutually acceptable”, it was decided to proceed with the visit.<sup>30</sup>

To prevent any misunderstanding and any embarrassing situation while onshore, the full *Midway* crew, was briefed before their docking on 15 January on all South African laws, including the laws on miscegenation. Non-White sailors were cautioned about their subjection to apartheid laws while in the city and away from the ship. The restrictions on liquor sales to Black people and that it could only be procured from establishments reserved for non-Whites were comprehensively explained. Otherwise, everybody was invited to an (all-White) baseball game between the “Midway Comets” (the ship’s official team) and a local team at Hartleyvale.<sup>31</sup> In an interesting twist, and probably also to steer non-White crew members away from the “White” Hartleyvale Stadium, the United States Consul-General, in collaboration with the ship’s commanding officer and the Department of Coloured Affairs, arranged a match between the *Midway*’s Black officers and the team of the all-Black local Cape Districts Baseball Union.<sup>32</sup>

28 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: Newspaper Clipping: “U.S. Navy men (with negroes) at the Cape”, *Bulawayo Sunday News*, 16 January 1955.

29 S Metz, “The Anti-Apartheid Movement and the populist instinct in American politics”, *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (3), 1986, p. 380; Key protestors were Senator Herbert Lehman (Democrat), Senator Hubert Humphrey (Democrat, later Vice-President of the USA), and Clarence Mitchell, (Director of the Washington Bureau of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People’s). See, KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Bulawayo Sunday News*, 16 January 1955.

30 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70s G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *The Star*, 15 January 1955.

31 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *The Cape Argus*, 15 January 1955. Non-European crew consisted of 86 African Americans and 300 of Filipino or Americans of Japanese extraction.

32 H Snyders, “The sound of the hickory and the roar of the crowds” – Reflections on South African baseball history, colonisation and the need for decolonisation”. In: FJ Cleophas

Following the docking of the *Midway*, consistent with the communicated arrangements, White sailors were mostly entertained separately although the two groups socialised together at several events. They attended an all-White musical revue, and a “braaivleis” (or barbecue), both hosted by the Mayor and City Council.<sup>33</sup> They also enjoyed exclusive and almost unlimited access to facilities and establishments such as the Union Jack Club, which was “open all day to petty officers and enlisted men (white) for meals, drinks and sleeping accommodations”, and a “dance for 400 enlisted men (whites only) at the New Drill Hall by the Navy League”. Further, White sailors were treated to “swimming and refreshments for 500 enlisted men (whites only) at Muizenberg Beach by City Council”, and a “City Hall Concert commemorating *Midway* visit to which Commanding Officer, 24 Officers and 100 enlisted men (whites only)” were invited.<sup>34</sup> The exception to these all-White events was one dance held for “500 enlisted men only (whites and non-whites) at the Old Drill Hall by City Council”. Otherwise “non-white entertainment and refreshments” were provided for “100 non-white enlisted men” hosted by the British Ex-Service Men’s League (Coloured section) at the Ex-Servicemen’s Club.

While onshore, the crew participated in an investiture ceremony at the Cape Castle where South African officers of the South African Air Force, were honoured with the United States Awards for service in Korea. Beyond thanking officers and South Africa for their role in the Korean War, the country was also thanked for her ongoing contribution towards the United States’ efforts in the Cold War and especially, for keeping its “perspective in the matter”.<sup>35</sup> Despite the reports surrounding the treatment of Black sailors in the domestic media, no traceable comment came from the side of the local anti-apartheid movement. The only other notable protest about any significant issue of the day came during a wreath-laying ceremony in honour of the fallen heroes during WW2 when 12 people participated in a placard demonstration against the use of the atomic bomb. They were, however, speedily confronted and dispersed by the Railway Police and members of the Special branch.<sup>36</sup>

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(ed.), *Exploring decolonising themes in South African sport history: Issues and challenges* (Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 2018).

33 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: Programme of Musical Revue, 15 January 1955.

34 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: Program U.S.S. *Midway*, Cape Town January 15-17, 1955.

35 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *The Cape Argus*, 15 January 1955.

36 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 17 January 1955.

Despite the political nature of the events during their Cape Town visit, the ship's cruise book revealed nothing sensational or any doubts from the side of the sailors. Indeed, one of the key entries read:

Although only in Cape Town for two days, the men of the *Midway* were captivated by the generous hospitality of the South Africans. Two huge drill halls were opened for crew's dances; a South African baseball team beat us at a match but, we all enjoyed, and we went to countless receptions, lawn parties, barbecues and other social events.<sup>37</sup>

It is further quite revealing that even this entry failed to mention that at least one baseball match was played against an all-Black team or that the majority of their events and activities were organised along racial lines. The same omission applies to the entry about a group of White orphans' visit to the ship:

"Best of all were the orphans who came aboard. The *Midway* had perfected its technique for giving orphans parties in the Mediterranean and was ready for everything. The children were fed, shown movies and given gifts as a memento of their visit to the *Midway*".

Judging by the photographs of this visit, all the orphans in question were White – a fact not mentioned in the cruise book. Neither is the crew's subjection to segregated swimming at both the public beaches and bathing facilities within the city. This strategic silence is also maintained around public bathing with the naval magazine, *Naval Aviation News*, merely noted that "an additional treat was a visit to a spacious Muizenberg beach".<sup>38</sup> The record further preferred to rather comment on the feminine side of Cape Town by noting: "On the Cape Town beaches, a veritable storehouse of feminine pulchritude awaited *Midway* sailors. Of every colour, shape and description, these gals welcomed Yankees with open arms". Upon their departure, the cruise book further reflected; "Our two days in Cape Town were up all too soon. However, the *Midway* had made many friends and had done much to improve American-South African understanding. The openness of the American sailors and the diplomatic skill of the Captain in such a politically delicate area was indeed a triumph for the United States Navy."<sup>39</sup>

37 A G Patureau (ed.), "Cruise Book – USS *Midway*". <https://www.navy-site.de/cruisebooks/cv41-55/016.htm>, accessed 23 October 2019.

38 Anon., "USS *Midway* visits South Africa", *Naval Aviation News*, May 1955, NavAer No.0075R-3; p. 27. An official navy-specific periodic magazine published by the United States Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics.

39 Patureau (ed.), "Cruise Book – USS *Midway*".

Given the coordinated effort by both the national and local authorities to portray the visit as a problem-free and non-political affair and despite the substantial political dimensions thereof, the local newspapers followed the visit with keen interest. As part of their review of the visit, among others they attempted to solicit feedback on the extent to which the non-White crew had indeed used the special permissions or “special concessions of admission to non-European bars and canteens” as per their adherence to “local law and custom”. The feedback from bar proprietors to the *Sunday Times*, for example, indicated that “none has made use of the facility”.<sup>40</sup> Further, the investigation of the *Natal Daily News*, on the other hand, revealed that generally, sailors had spent very little money during their visit and that most of the US\$10 000 issued before shore leave were cashed back upon departure.<sup>41</sup> The reason could probably be because the hosts went out of their way to ensure the comfort and enjoyment of their guests. Further, with only two days at their disposal, the majority of those on shore leave, arguably, could not find any gift or memento worth acquiring.

The newspapers turned their attention to the political side of the visit after failing to find any substantive political motive for low-sailor spending or lack of visits to racial establishments. The active participation of the commanders of the *Midway* and the naval authorities at large in what was regarded as active support for discrimination was inevitably criticised both locally and abroad. Not surprising, since the civil rights campaign continued to fill newspaper columns in the United States, especially the Montgomery bus boycott and associated problems. Regarding the actions of the United States Navy in the run-up and during the Cape Town visit, the *New York Times* (as quoted by the *Canberra Times*) was scathing and noted that the naval authorities’ actions could only be described as having “slipped badly”. They denounced apartheid and its laws as “an affront to human decency and that its enforcement against our soldiers in Cape Town is an affront to the United States Navy”.<sup>42</sup> It further argued that South Africa should have waived its racial laws during the visit of the ship and that despite the principle of complying with “local law and custom” that the United States Navy should have refused to have “taken it lying down”, which, in the view of the newspaper, “is not in Navy tradition”. Ultimately, it finally noted: “South African law is one thing, but elementary morality is another.”<sup>43</sup>

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40 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Sunday Times*, 16 January 1955.

41 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Natal Daily News*, 17 January 1955.

42 *Canberra Times*, 18 January 1955.

43 *Argus* (Melbourne), 18 January 1955.

Similarly, the local *Rand Daily Mail* argued that by insisting on adherence to the apartheid laws, Cape Town has “dealt a serious blow to South Africa’s prestige in America”.<sup>44</sup> The only dissenting voice on this matter came from the *Cape Argus*, one of the few who attempted to offer an alternative view by suggesting that: “... she afforded the civilian an unusual glimpse of the armed might of the United States. She also made thoughtful people aware of the magnitude of the defence burden that has become inseparable from world leadership. She was a useful reminder of the security that lies in the strength of powerful friends.”<sup>45</sup>

Affected by the media fall-out and after acknowledging the criticism offered, the United States naval authorities, indicated that the events in question would be investigated and further stated that all such issues would be resolved through the normal diplomatic channels.<sup>46</sup> Whether this was a genuine commitment or merely an exercise in public appeasement, only time and the next round of scheduled flag-showing visits to South Africa would tell. Admittedly, given the short duration of the stay, it left little room for the exercise of what Steven Metz has called “inside strategies” of influence, which utilise compromise, bargaining, and structural power to gain results within the “standard operating procedure” of the pertinent unit of government.<sup>47</sup> The first test of the Navy authorities’ commitment was the scheduled arrival of the *USS Valcour* in Cape Town in February.

#### 4. VISIT OF THE *USS VALCOUR*, 21- 24 FEBRUARY 1955

The *USS Valcour*, a seaplane, on its way from Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf of Persia where it was to serve as “an advance base for United States seaplanes and as the flagship of the Middle East Command”, entered the port of Cape Town for its second visit on 21 February and remained in port until 24 February – a four-day stay.<sup>48</sup> Following the events surrounding the visit of the *Midway*, the Cape Town hosts were much more cautious in their arrangements for the entertainment of non-White sailors since the ship’s crew consisted of 15 “Coloured and Negro” and 185 White sailors out of the total complement of 200 men and officers. Against the background of events four weeks earlier, local newspapers specifically zoomed in on the onshore-leave

44 *Canberra Times*, 21 January 1955.

45 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *The Cape Argus*, 17 January 1955.

46 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *The Cape Argus*, 19 January 1955.

47 Metz, “The Anti-Apartheid Movement and the populist instinct in American politics”, p. 380.

48 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping: *Cape Times*, 22 February 1955.

arrangements made. Given its commitment to fully implement the apartheid system, the South African government remained steadfast and unwavering in its determination not to dilute its policy. It, therefore, came as no surprise when the local newspapers reported that “the same arrangements have been made as for the crew of the aircraft carrier *Midway*, which visited Cape Town last month”. Further that “they [non-White sailors] will be given certificates exempting them from the provisions of the Liquor Act which prohibit the sale of liquor to Natives. They will be served in Coloured bars”.<sup>49</sup> The only minor change seemingly was made concerning the sailors’ access to public bathing facilities, which upon close inspection, were changes of appearance rather than of substance.

Whereas the City of Cape Town formerly had no qualms about insisting on the blanket application of beach segregation as the law of the land, with the visit of the *Valcour*, the city’s Baths and Pavilions Branch were instructed to give “free admission ... to any personnel of the above ship, should they so desire, but only if they are in uniform” for the duration of the ship’s visit.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, transport arrangements to public service providers such as the local bus and taxi company contracted to render transport for official outings of the crew were issued without any written racial instructions. As far as the official correspondence concerning the two dances for 100 enlisted men each was concern, racial indications were omitted. In practice, however, the enforcement of racial segregation continued to be the standard practice during the visit. Like their predecessors, non-White crew members of the *Valcour* continued to be excluded from places like the Union Jack Club who, yet again, catered for White enlisted men 24 hours a day.

Similarly, municipal beaches and the swimming pools at Sea Point, Camps Bay and Muizenberg were “open free of charge to all-white members of *Valcour* complement”. In addition to these, White sailors now also enjoyed movies at African Consolidated Theatres, “opened gratis to White members of *Valcour*’s complement in uniform”, free admission to all at Kalk Bay Beach and Pavilion and a second dance hosted by the City Council.<sup>51</sup> All of these were provided within the city centre, and White sailors were provided with partners for the dances. Non-White sailors, on the other hand, were entertained with a dance in the segregated *Retreat Hotel* in the Coloured group area of Retreat in the South Peninsula. The official correspondence also made no

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49 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55, Newspaper Clipping *Cape Times*, 22 February 1955.

50 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: Manager: Baths & Pavilions, 17 February 1955.

51 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: U.S.S. “*Valcour*” – Program February 21-24, 1955.

mention of whether any special arrangements were made to ensure female companionship as was the case with the *White* sailors.<sup>52</sup> Judging by reports following the *Valcour's* third visit a year later, this was seemingly not an insurmountable problem. At the time the newspapers noted that upon the ship's departure, a good number of "teary and waving" females came to say goodbye and that "the executive officers praised how Cape Town treated the ship's non-European members of the crew. They had everything laid on for them and were not left out of any of the entertainment". In comparison to the *Midway*, the *Valcour* with a much smaller non-White crew attracted far less media attention and could, therefore, depart without any significant incident, four months before the start of the Congress of the People. This event continued the anti-apartheid campaign started earlier and was to define South African politics during the next phase. As such, naval visits continued to coincide with key political campaigns, all of which continued to have an impact on United States-South African relations.

## 5. NAVAL VISITS BETWEEN THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE, 1955–1959

Following months of active grassroots mobilisation against the apartheid system and growing pockets of foreign support for their cause as expressed during the Defiance Campaign. The major Black groups organised under the umbrella of the Congress Alliance convened in Kliptown in Johannesburg and adopted the so-called Freedom Charter in June 1955.<sup>53</sup> The Freedom Charter, beyond outlining the vision of the domestic anti-apartheid forces for post-apartheid South Africa, explicitly called for the abolishment of the colour bar in all facets of life including cultural life, sport and education.<sup>54</sup> As an emancipatory document, its provisions fully politicised South African life and irreversibly linked the struggle for non-racialism, equality, and opportunity to political liberation.<sup>55</sup>

The formation of a united and non-racial political front, guided by a document outlining a democratic alternative, threatened the status quo.

52 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/70: G. 5/23/55: U.S.S. "Valcour" – Program 22-25 February 1955.

53 The Congress of the People consisted of all of the key domestic anti-apartheid groups, including the African National Congress (ANC), SA Indian Congress (SAIC), SA Coloured People's Congress (SACPC) and the white Congress of Democrats (COD).

54 Congress of the People, *The Freedom Charter*, Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive (UWHPRA forthwith), Collection Number AD 1137: Federation of South African Women, 1954–1963.

55 R Suttner, "Talking to the Ancestors: National heritage, the Freedom Charter and nation-building in South Africa in 2005", *Development Southern Africa* 23 (1), 2006, pp. 6-8.

To enforce compliance with those sections of the Native Laws Amendment Act 54 of 1952 that explicitly prohibited racial mixing and membership of civic organisations including sport clubs, churches and schools, the apartheid government unleashed a programme of intimidation, and repression of their political opponents.<sup>56</sup> This programme of repression, using the stipulations of the Suppression of Communism Act 44 of 1950, lasted the rest of the year as the government search for incriminating evidence against the key leaders of the Congress Alliance.

As the United Nations Organisation began debating the programme of repression and other related matters, the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) – a faithful American ally of the South African anti-apartheid lobby – convened a conference. The United States, United Nations and Africa conference was held at the Willkie Memorial Building in New York on 22 October 1955. They wanted to promote a better understanding of the “issues involving Africa being debated in the current session of the United Nations Assembly”.<sup>57</sup> Among the speakers and organisations, lined-up for this occasion were notable opinion-makers around anti-apartheid and African affairs such as George Houser (ACOA), Robert Hardmond (United Nations Observer of the American Baptist Convention of the United States) and Gladys Walser (United Nations Consultant for the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom). These initiatives further narrowed the gap between South African and American social justice activists and created a situation where events in the one context, almost immediately impacted on the other.

As the year entered its final month, political events in the United States once again intersected with events in South African. On 1 December 1955, Rosa Parks, an African American seamstress and secretary of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People refused to give up her seat to a White fellow passenger on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. This defiant act, followed by her arrest and a US\$14 fine, resulted in the start of a bus boycott on 5 December by an estimated 40 000 Black commuters, who called for the abolishment of the segregation ordinance. In the face of city intransigence, the protestors started to organise carpools and discounted fares with Black taxi drivers. The civil rights movement used these mass protest meetings to popularise the struggle

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56 C Rademeyer, “Entrenching apartheid in South African sport, 1948 to 1980: the shaping of a sporting society during the Strijdom-, Verwoerd- and Vorster administrations”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 39 (2), 2014, p. 122.

57 American Committee on Africa, “A Call to a Conference on the U.S., the U.N., & Africa”, n.d. <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-B5E-84-AA%20ACOA%20conf%201955%20opt.pdf>, accessed 21 November 2019.

further. Against this background, the *USS Valcour* visited Cape Town for the third time in February 1956.

As have become the standard practice, non-White American sailors continued to be subjected to South Africa's apartheid laws. Not only were their entertainment during shore leave placed in the hands of members of the local Coloured population, but all venues catering for their needs were located within the neighbourhoods designated for the aforementioned ethnic group. A small but noteworthy deviation from the formerly exclusively-White audience in their onshore-engagement, was the crew's hosting of a small group of Coloured orphans instead of only Whites as was the practice before. Against this background, the *Valcour* could depart from Cape Town, having avoided any unsavoury incident.

Locally, the efforts of the apartheid regime to neutralise its opponents continued unabated. In December 1956, mass arrests of activists followed under the Suppression of Communism Act. Among those detained and subsequently charged for treason, were the likes of Luthuli and Nelson Mandela. The detention of Luthuli, given his former role in calling for the total isolation of apartheid during the Defiance Campaign, particularly attracted global attention. The imprisonment and forced deportation of Mrs Marie-Louis Hooper, an American citizen, longstanding civil rights activist and a close associate of Luthuli (assistant) and the ANC also attracted wide attention in the United States. The ACOA, in particular, supported her cause as part of their general commitment to African freedom and by February 1958 formally appointed her as its West Coast Representative of the South Africa Defence Fund, a fundraising initiative of the organisation to support the legal defence of arrested activists of the so-called "Treason Trial".<sup>58</sup> ACOA followed this appointment with the launch of a public education campaign based on a "Declaration of Conscience Against Apartheid", and a call on other countries and organisations on 10 December 1957, to persuade South Africa "that only in democratic equality is there lasting peace and security".<sup>59</sup> The South African government roundly rejected this call. After 11 days, two new United States warships, the *USS Wyandotte* and *USS Westwind* entered South African waters.

58 American Committee on Africa, Minutes of the Executive Board of the American Committee on Africa, 10 June 1957, <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-236A-84-PW%20ACOA%20minutes%206-10-57%20opt.pdf>, accessed 20 December 2018; 10 February, 1958. <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-2405-84-PW%20ACOA%20EB%202-10-58%20opt.pdf>, accessed 20 December 2018.

59 American Committee on Africa, Minutes of the Executive Board of the American Committee on Africa, 10 February, 1958. <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-2405-84-PW%20ACOA%20EB%202-10-58%20opt.pdf>, accessed 20 December 2018.

In line with established practise, the United States Consul-General requested the Cape Town City Council, to host the crews of the attack cargo ship and the icebreaker, who were on a “non-saluting” visit and who had to enter the port for logistic and recreational purposes. The formal correspondence indicated that the local authorities were specifically asked to “extend the same courtesies and consideration which you and your staff have so kindly shown to the personnel of those United States Navy ships which have visited Cape Town in the past”.<sup>60</sup> These “courtesies”, indeed, did not deviate from the past visits, and during the stay of the ships from 21-26 December 1957, the same facilities such as swimming at the segregated Muizenberg beach were open to non-White sailors; the Union Jack Club and YMCA, local theatres and municipal swimming pools were open for “White enlisted men”. These “courtesies” were also extended to the crews of the *USS Essex*, *USS Rowan* and *USS Forrest Royal*, that arrived in Cape Town the next year and stayed in port from 25-27 October 1958 and the *USS Bigelow*, who stayed from 31 October to 3 November 1958. As in the past, the entertainment of the non-White crews or the “non-Caucasian members” or “other members of the ship’s company, which included Negroes, Filipinos and Guamese”, as officially described in the official correspondence, was left in the hands of a local Coloured organising committee who provided the standard entertainment in their segregated neighbourhoods and facilities.<sup>61</sup> Before disembarking, members of the *USS Bigelow* were briefed on the Plan of the Day that stated, among others:

All personnel going ashore in Cape Town are expected to adhere to the laws of that land just as the people of South Africa would be expected to obey the laws of the United States should they visit there. It is not a question of whether or not you agree with the laws and customs or whether or not the laws coincide with our laws – any disrespect for their laws could very easily lead to severe personal entanglement in civil court action. The observance of and adherence to the South African law of segregation of Caucasian and non-Caucasian is just as applicable to one as the other. This law is strictly enforced; adherence to the law should not keep you from enjoying your stay in Cape Town. Take your liberty separately as required, have a good time (keeping in mind your self-discipline), return to your shipmates and compare notes on the Good-will and understanding accomplished.<sup>62</sup>

60 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/71: G. 5/23/57: U.S.S. Wyandot and USS Westwind – S.D. Boykin: American Consul General – MB Williams: Town Clerk, 5 December 1957.

61 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/71: G. 5/23/58: U.S.S. Essex, Newspaper Clipping: *Cape Times*.

62 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/71: G. 5/23/58: U.S.S. Bigelow, Plan of the Day, 30 October 1958.

Although a greater provision was also made for the local population to visit the ships in port, the number of White visitors taken on special guided tours far outnumbered the number of Blacks who were granted this opportunity. During the visit of the *USS Jonas Ingram* (24-27 September 1959), an attempt was made to balance these figures. Still, while all-White schools in Cape Town were invited to send representatives to visit the ship, only 50 Coloured Boy Scouts were granted the same opportunity. Black schools were ignored. Further, to avoid the City of Cape Town from being directly involved in the provision of segregated amenities, the local authorities requested owners of private and semi-private clubs such as the Junior Civil Service Club, Civil Service Club, Cape Town Master Mariners Club, and the Navy League, to avail their facilities and offer honorary membership to the sailors during the stay.<sup>63</sup> Black sailors continued to be catered for by their darker-skinned brethren. In the background of these activities, the Treason Trial and the persecution of anti-apartheid activists continued. These actions, regarded by anti-apartheid opponents as an attack on non-violence, was condemned by the ACOA, also calling for a South African boycott since they believed that the decade has seen “an intensification of the injustices” and that “the necessity for a clear expression of world opinion in opposition to this pattern of extreme racism has never been more obvious”.<sup>64</sup>

As the decade reached its end, long pent-up tensions about both the direction and nature of the freedom struggle started to surface within the ranks of the ANC, the largest anti-apartheid grouping. At the heart of the issue was the extensive involvement of White activists and organisations (both locally and in the international anti-apartheid movement) in campaigns such as the Defiance Campaign, Congress of the People and Treason Trial which gave the liberation struggle a strong multi-racial character. The activists, supporting the principle of African self-determination, and who viewed the struggle as essentially a fight for the “repossession of usurped land”, publicly rejected the Freedom Charter’s promotion of multi-racialism, especially its declaration that “South Africa belongs to everybody who lives in it – black and white”. Fearing the degeneration of their struggle into a mere civil rights struggle and “integration or co-option into the existing system”, they insisted that nothing less than national liberation inclusive of the full restoration of all dispossessed land should remain the organisation’s key strategic objective.<sup>65</sup> American

63 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/72: G. 5/23/59: U.S.S. “Jonas Ingram” 24-27 September 1959.

64 American Committee on Africa, “Memorandum on an American boycott of South African goods”, 6 January 1960. <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-23F8-84-PW%20ACOA%20memo%201-6-60%20opt.pdf>, accessed 29 January 2019.

65 GA Ebrahim, “Pan Africanist Congress”, *Journal of Democracy* 1 (4), 1990, p. 28.

support for campaigns such as the Defiance Campaign was generally appreciated across the political spectrum.

By April 1959, existing tensions resulted in a split and the formation of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.<sup>66</sup> Tensions including the ANC's expressions of "reservations about references to "our African personality" and "pan-African socialism"; its public commitment to a post-apartheid "multi-racial society"; as well as a declaration at the All-African People's Conference, held in Accra in December 1958.<sup>67</sup> Its founding congress unambiguously declared that it did not only rejected multi-racialism but that they viewed "multi-racialism as pandering to European arrogance, a method of safeguarding White interests".<sup>68</sup> They, therefore, emphasised that Blacks should lead their liberation and restrict the influence of Whites in this process – an approach which, according to Håkan Thörn, added new complexity to the internal relations of the growing transnational anti-apartheid movement.<sup>69</sup>

## 6. SHARPEVILLE, GLOBAL OUTRAGE AND CONTINUED NAVAL VISITS, 1960–1967

The 1960s witnessed a renewed push by Black political organisations to force political change. This was met with a concomitant increase in state violence and little regard for human lives as was demonstrated in the government's handling of an anti-pass campaign in March 1960. The Pass Law Campaign, one of the key civil disobedience campaigns of the period, was aimed at forcing the abolition of restrictions on the freedom of movement of Blacks. The event, however, ended tragically on 21 March 1960 when the police killed 69 demonstrators at Sharpeville on the Witwatersrand. In its wake, various political organisations, including the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress were outlawed under the Unlawful Organisations Act 34 of 1960. Armed with extended powers of law enforcement under a declared State of Emergency, the state security establishment detained, killed and exiled scores of activists following several so-called "backlash demonstrations".<sup>70</sup> Several international organisations, including the ACOA, condemned these actions.

66 C Gurney, "A Great Cause": The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, June 1959-March 1960", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26 (1), 2000, p. 126.

67 Gurney, "A Great Cause", p. 126.

68 P Rodda, "The Africanists cut loose", *Africa South* 3 (4), 1959, p. 25.

69 H Thörn, *Anti-apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 49-51.

70 RA Francisco, "The dictator's dilemma". In: C Davenport *et al* (eds.), *Repression and mobilisation* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 71.

ACOA, in solidarity with others, started a South Africa Emergency Campaign to both support the anti-apartheid forces and to “discuss coordination of citizen action in the United States against apartheid” in the aftermath of the Sharpeville events.<sup>71</sup> This campaign consisted of three parts, namely fundraising, action, and education. An Emergency Action Conference scheduled from 31 May to 1 June 1960, was to be executed with the blessing of Oliver Tambo (president of the exiled ANC).<sup>72</sup> Shortly after its establishment, the South Africa Emergency Campaign also issued a “Call to Action”, imploring ordinary Americans to become active participants in a worldwide boycott and the United States government “maintain a firm position- both in the United Nations and in its diplomatic relations-against apartheid”.<sup>73</sup>

Despite these calls and active lobbying to achieve the objectives of the various campaigns, several American warships continued to visit South Africa right into the 1960s. Among these were the *USS Chivo* (24-29 November 1960), *USS Windham County* (11-14 November 1960), and *USS Whitfield County*. As in the past, segregated services to visiting crews continued while the City of Cape Town and partners in service-delivery attempted “to ensure that their visit proves most enjoyable and that our service is of the best”.<sup>74</sup> During the visit of the *Whitfield County* and *Windham County*, a subtle change was detected when it was decided to leave the choice of whether Black sailors wanted to undertake certain activities to themselves. In this regard, the official correspondence about a city tour for White sailors, noted; “Non-Caucasians desiring same will be taken in private cars on tours of the Cape Peninsula arranged by Messrs Parker and Scott,” and further that, “up to 80 Non-Caucasians will be picked up at [the] ship and taken to Retreat Hotel for a dance and reception”.<sup>75</sup> The United States Navy, contrary to its commitment after the *Midway*-affair, did not honour its promise to ensure non-discrimination against its members. This situation continued with the arrival of among others, the *USS Hermitage*, *Spiegel Grove*, *Suffolk County*, *Graham*

71 American Committee on Africa, Annual Report American Committee on Africa, 1 June 1959 – 31 May 1960. <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-D89-84-PW%20ACOA%20AR%205-60%20opt.pdf>, accessed 20 December 2018.

72 American Committee on Africa, Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting, May 9, 1960. <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-23F3-84-PW%20ACOA%20EB%205-9-60%20opt.pdf>, accessed 20 December 2018.

73 American Committee on Africa and A Paton, “South Africa Emergency Campaign: A Call to Action”. <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-B65-84-32-130-B65-84-al.sff.document.acoa000251.pdf>, accessed 1 November 2019.

74 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/72: G. 5/23/60: U.S.S. “Chivo”: Manager Bathing Amenities Memorandum, 25 November 1960.

75 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/72: G. 5/23/60: U.S.S. Windham County and U.S.S. Whitfield County: Entertainment Program for Commander, LST Division and the U.S.S. Windham County and U.S.S. Whitfield County arranged by the City of Cape Town.

County, Gearing, Vogelsang, Matabessett, Nespelen, Duxbury Bay, Donner, Forrest Sherman and Meredith in 1961. These visits were in direct violation of a call by Dr King Jr. and Oliver Tambo and their American allies' joint "Appeal for Action Against Apartheid", meetings and demonstrations that called for a trade boycott, disinvestment, economic sanctions and the general isolation of apartheid. The document further made the strong point that "the Apartheid republic is a reality today only because the people and governments of the world have been unwilling to place her in quarantine".<sup>76</sup> The Appeal for Action Against Apartheid was further motivated by the apartheid's government earlier rejection of both the 1957 Declaration of Conscience against Apartheid and the call to align its policies with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Solidarity organisations and individuals in both the United Kingdom and the United States took up the appeal. They started to organise appropriate campaigns, not only to intensify the struggle against apartheid brutality and oppression but also in the search for "a much larger, multi-textured effort to achieve far-reaching alterations".<sup>77</sup> In the mid-1960s, Hubert Humphrey, long-known for his human rights orientation and now in his capacity as Vice-President of the United States, further strengthened this campaign when he not only continued his relationship but also actively associated with ACOA – a situation which the organisation deeply appreciated.<sup>78</sup>

In 1965, the ACOA and the University Christian Movement initiated the Committee of Conscience Against Apartheid to coordinate their ongoing campaigns better; uniting a wide range of organisations and individuals in multiple fields ranging from religion to sports and entertainment, including the Olympic Project for Human Rights. The project's key objective was "to raise awareness of institutionalised racism and the organisation of an African American boycott of the 1968 Olympics' in general".<sup>79</sup> Strengthened by a wider network through the Committee of Conscience Against Apartheid, the ACOA mobilised a diverse group of 65 creative individuals inclusive of performing artists, sculptors, novelists/authors, poets, essayists, playwrights, composers, conductors, producers and actors to sign the "We Say No to Apartheid" Pledge". The signatories committed explicitly to "refuse any personal and

76 American Committee on Africa, "Appeal for Action Against Apartheid", [http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document\\_images/undecided/621100-005.pdf](http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/621100-005.pdf), accessed 1 November 2019.

77 JB Spector, "Non-traditional diplomacy: Cultural, academic and sports boycotts and change in South Africa", *New tools for Reform and Stability* (Johannesburg, South Africa Institute of International Affairs, 2004).

78 American Committee on Africa, "Executive Board Minutes, December 14, 1964". <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-23C2-84-PW%20ACOA%20EB%2012-14-64%20opt.pdf>, accessed 25 October 2019.

79 D Blackman, "African Americans, Pan-Africanism, and the Anti-Apartheid Campaign to Expel South Africa from the 1968 Olympics", *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5 (3), 2012, p. 2.

professional association with the present Republic of South Africa, until the day when all its people whether black or white – could equally enjoy the educational and cultural advantages of this rich and lovely land”.<sup>80</sup> These were well-known personalities from all ethnic backgrounds whose public stand against apartheid, strongly foregrounded the immoral aspects of the ideology.<sup>81</sup> These events signalled unambiguously that the tide against apartheid was starting to turn. American warships, such as the *USS President Roosevelt*, scheduled for 4-7 February 1967 for refuelling and recreation purposes, however, continued to visit.<sup>82</sup>

Judging by the official correspondence in preparation for the visit, *Roosevelt’s* hosts appeared oblivious of the state, scope and growing influence of the global anti-apartheid campaign. It, therefore, continued to make detailed arrangements for separate entertainment for the visiting crew, including “Caucasians” and others.<sup>83</sup> Although the official record mention very few racial references in planning, in most activities, the racial element was omnipresent. These included dances at least two Black establishments, the *Gold Finger Inn* in the Coloured residential neighbourhoods of Athlone, and the *Retreat Hotel* in the similarly-named neighbourhood, but also invitations to additional dances in so-called “Bantu” or “African” townships of Langa and Gugulethu, as well as a sports day at the City Park Stadium in the Coloured area of Crawford, near Athlone. The organising committee also considered invitations inviting the ship’s crew to jazz and traditional choral music in Langa and sports meetings (softball, baseball and boxing) from the Western Province Baseball Union, Cape District Baseball and Softball Association and Amateur Boxing Association respectively.

Given the changing political landscape and expansion of the anti-apartheid movement, this visit became a source of controversy, with members of the Black community in the United States expressing strong opposition to a continued association with apartheid South Africa. A day before the crew was due to dock; the United States authorities issued a statement declaring its objection against the segregated treatment of its citizens. In the end, no member of the crew went ashore despite the ship being in port, effectively

80 Quoted in C Braam and F Geerling, “Towards new Cultural relations: A reflection on the cultural boycott”. In: W Campschreur and J Divendal (eds.), *Culture in Another South Africa* (London: Zed, 1989), p. 173.

81 This group included individuals such as Sammy Davis Jr., Harry Belafonte, Saul Bellow, Langston Hughes, John Ciardi, William Gibson, Arthur Miller, Marc Connelly, Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Sidney Poitier and Ossie Davis.

82 A Wessels, “Die periode van fluktuerende internasionale betrekkinge, 1961-1994”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 31 (2), 2006, p. 82.

83 KAB, City of Cape Town: 3/CT 4/1/11/75: G. 5/23/67: U.S.S. “F.D Roosevelt” – Visit to Cape Town, 4-7 February 1967.

becoming the last visit of a United States warship to a South African port for 27 years.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The termination of American naval visits to South African ports, came about as a subsidiary effect of sustained advocacy by a multitude of anti-apartheid organisations in the United States. Informed by the view that the civil rights and anti-apartheid campaigns are indivisibly linked, the local and overseas protest movement worked in sync to ensure that global audiences not only understood the rationale behind these programmes of resistance but that they would actively support it through physical participation or monetary donation. This was particularly important within the context of the navy, given that the organisational culture of the military prevented individuals from expressing their own opinion publicly. It further forced the American authorities to stop collaborating with the apartheid regime, at a time that they were struggling with their own racial issues.