

Experiencing Arab-African Solidarity: Basotho in Cairo in the 1960s and 1970s*

Abstract

Since 1952, the Basutoland African Congress (BAC, renamed Basutoland Congress Party, BCP, in 1959) – a protagonist of Lesotho’s struggle for independence – entertained close relationships with several African countries, including Egypt. Cairo’s BCP office operated under the regime of Gamal Abd El-Nasser (1954-1970), who promoted a strong African policy, which saw Egypt as one of the safe havens for African liberation movements. Many BCP members travelled to Cairo to wait for a scholarship to study overseas, mainly in Europe. But, as argued in this article, Cairo soon became more than just a staging post to further destinations. Living in Egypt was also an important political experience for many young Basotho. There, as demonstrated in the article, they encountered new ideas about the liberation of Africa, socialism and capitalism. They learned about the Arab-Israeli confrontation and reflected on its political and racial implications. They concretely experienced Arab-African solidarity and pondered the differences and similarities between the Arab and African worlds. In Cairo, the BCP produced its own propaganda and participated in the activities of the African Association. This article will provide important information on Egypt’s African policy, the history of the African Association and the history of the BCP office in Cairo through documents and interviews with the protagonists of the events. It will also provide the memories of freedom fighters who passed through Cairo – which were collected in recent interviews – and their experiences of Arab-African solidarity.

Keywords

Basutoland Congress Party, Arab-African Solidarity, Lesotho, Egypt, Nasser

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Introduction

The Basutoland Congress Party (BCP, founded in 1952 as the Basutoland African Congress) was, between the 1950s and the late 1990s, one of the most important nationalist movements in Lesotho.¹ Since its inception, the party held a solid anti-communist stance, declaring itself a non-aligned and Pan-Africanist organisation. In fact, politically speaking, the party was aligned with the “Africanists” of the African National Congress (ANC), and then, since 1959, with the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) (Grilli 2023). A protagonist of the independence struggle, it lost the last elections under colonial rule (1965) and was relegated to the opposition. After the coup of 1970, the party was forced into exile, which ended only in the early 1990s.

Since the late 1950s, its leader, Ntsu Mokhehle (1918-99), looked for assistance from other countries, including Egypt, which offered substantial political and financial help under the regime of Gamal Abd El-Nasser (1954-70).² Mokhehle sent young Basotho³ abroad to study and promote the BCP struggle and the resistance against apartheid. In his plans, Cairo was one of the main staging posts for BCP members on their way to study overseas, mainly in Europe (Grilli 2023). However, as argued in this article, Cairo soon became more than that. While waiting for scholarships to become available to them, many Basotho spent years in the Egyptian capital. For them, living in Cairo became a crucial political experience. There, as demonstrated in the article, they encountered new ideas about the liberation of Africa, socialism and capitalism. They learned about the Arab-Israeli confrontation and reflected on its political and racial implications. They concretely experienced Arab-African solidarity and pondered the differences and similarities between the Arab and African worlds. This article will reflect on these issues through interviews with high-profile members of the BCP and Egyptian officials, as well as members of the Youth League of the BCP, who represented the vast majority of the Basotho in Cairo in the 1960s and 1970s. The interviews were collected between 2017 and 2022 in South Africa, Lesotho and Egypt.⁴

This article will also provide important information on Egypt’s African policy; it will reconstruct the history of the African Association and Radio Cairo and will cover the history of the BCP office in Cairo in full. The latter, opened in 1961, produced propaganda by various means, including publications, radio – which broadcasted to Basutoland/Lesotho and South Africa – and press statements. The article will provide evidence of the impact of this propaganda in Southern Africa, Lesotho in particular. This research is based on documents

retrieved from the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, the Bureau of African Affairs archives in Ghana, the CIA files, the collections of the Mokohare Trust in Ladybrand (South Africa) and other few documents collected in Lesotho, Egypt and South Africa.

This article is part of a growing literature on the transnational mobility of students and anti-colonial activists within and beyond the Global South after World War 2. Young Basotho were drawn to Cairo by the promise of scholarships further north. Theirs was a search of “global exchanges” provided by scholarships (Tournès and Scott-Smith 2018). However, Cairo became more important from a political standpoint than an educational one. The Basotho’s experience in Egypt can be then configured better as a “political travel” (Campos Boralevi e Lagi 2009). Theirs was a “journey” that was part of a “global anticolonial activism” (Milford 2023). Within the framework of “political travel”, both the point of view of Egypt as the host country and the BCP militants as the guests who travelled to Cairo and were supported by the Egyptians will be provided to the reader.

This article also reconstructs the history of the BCP, which was moulded in a transnational setting and in exile, common themes of a recent and growing literature (Alexander, McGregor and Tendi 2017; Ellis 2013; Sapire and Saunders 2012; Saunders, Fonseca and Dallywater 2019; 2023; Terretta 2013; Van Walraven 2013; Williams 2015). The history of the BCP is still largely understudied. In particular, its transnational connections, including that with Egypt, have often been only briefly mentioned by historians of Lesotho (Grilli 2023; 2024; Machobane 1990; Makgala 2012; Mphanya 2004; Weisfelder 1999). This article aims to fill this gap.

Finally, this article is also part of a growing body of literature on liberation “hubs” in Africa between the 1950s and the 1970s (Byrne 2016; Burton 2019; 2021; 2024; Grilli 2018; Roberts 2022), and specifically Cairo as an afro-asian hub (Abou-El-Fadl 2019; Brennan 2010; Stolte and Lewis 2022).

The article opens with a short discussion of the relationship between the BCP and Egypt and then discusses Egypt’s African foreign policy. The second and central part of the article deals with the BCP office in Cairo, describing the life of activists in the Egyptian city and the political *stimuli* they encountered while living there. The last part of the article examines some key aspects of the political experiences of Basotho in Egypt, highlighting how this deeply influenced them.

The BAC/BCP's Search for International Support

Since its establishment, the BAC/BCP promoted relations with many different countries, seeking support both in and outside the African continent. It is important to note that the party, led by Ntsu Mokhehle since its founding, entertained a relationship with both sides of the Cold War in the name of its strong, non-aligned stance (Grilli 2023). As later noted by British colonial authorities, the BAC/BCP was constantly conducting, “[a]ttacks [...] both against Communism and Capitalism in a strongly Pan Africanist vein”.⁵ Pan-Africanism was seen by the party as one of the three leading forces in the world, the other two being Capitalism/Imperialism and Communism. According to the BAC/BCP leadership, only in Pan-Africanism could African people find their own salvation from the “clash of ideologies”.⁶

Informed by his strong anti-communist and non-aligned position, in the mid-1950s, Mokhehle began to search for support for his party, both political and financial, and to look for resources to send young Basotho abroad to study in order for the latter to acquire badly needed skills for the development of future independent Lesotho.⁷ The whole idea, as clarified by Godfrey Molotsi Kollisang (1924-2022) – between 1960 and 1998, at various times Secretary-General of the BCP and one of the party's leaders – was that they “were open to any country that offered [...] assistance without strings attached”.⁸ This search for support led Mokhehle to also look within the African continent for political partners who could back his fight against British colonialism and apartheid South Africa's plans of incorporating Lesotho. At the same time, he also wanted to help young Basotho students by providing them with shelter and scholarships. Lesotho's peculiar position within the complicated Southern African chessboard certainly facilitated Mokhehle's work. Soon enough, between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s, several independent African states offered the Basotho party resources and political backing for its struggles. Among them, a very important role was played by Nasser's Egypt, which was then one of the most active supporters of African liberation movements.

Egypt's African Policy, the African Association and Radio Cairo

As noted by Abou-El-Fadl (2019: 162), prior to 1952, Egypt's state tradition was “firmly” nationalist “with little Arab or Afro-Asian engagement”. In contrast, the Free Officers, who overthrew the monarchy in the July Revolution

of 1952, “had promptly begun outreach in both Arab and African spheres” (*ibid.*). At first, Egypt’s new African policy concentrated on the traditional area of interest for the country: the Nile Valley (Ismael 1971: 22). During the negotiations with Britain over Sudan in 1953, the then vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), Gamal Abd El-Nasser Hussein (1918-70), gave for the first time instructions for Egypt’s African foreign policy to the man who would become the key responsible for Egypt’s African affairs from then to 1971: Mohamed Fayek (1929-), at the time an officer in the General Intelligence Command.⁹ The instructions were to work “against British colonialism in East Africa, and against American and Israeli influence in Ethiopia” (Sharawy 2014: 31). This was done through anti-colonial broadcasts to East Africa and “putting a stop to anti-Egyptian activities in Sudan”.¹⁰

Fayek became Nasser’s right-hand man regarding Egypt’s African policy. In 1953, a special division on African Affairs was created within the Central Intelligence Command with Fayek in charge. This would later evolve into the African Affairs Bureau, created as part of the presidency in 1960. The two officers met regularly to discuss policies and initiatives concerning Egypt and Africa. As explained by Fayek himself, he had “direct access” to Nasser, and his directives never took the form of official paperwork (Sharawy 2014: 28-9).

In 1954, Nasser, who in the same year rose to power, published his famous book *Philosophy of the Revolution*, in which he highlighted how Egypt could no longer be isolated and how its foreign policy had to “move” within three “circles”: the Arab one, the African one and the Muslim one. As for the African circle, Nasser made it clear that Egypt had to be involved in the liberation of the whole African continent, even beyond the country’s traditional area of interest, that is, the Nile Valley (Nasser 1963: 69). Also, and crucially, it aimed to counteract Israel’s African policy in the process (Ismael 1971: 51 and 64-6; Ojo 1988).

“From the beginning”, as stated by Fayek himself, “I was responsible for the African circle. [...] Actually, Nasser said at the time, ‘we will never feel free unless the whole of Africa is free’. And I was working on this issue”.¹¹ Since Egypt “had no contacts at first”, Fayek’s first task was to “personally [...] trying to find African leaders, making efforts to reach them”.¹² This work paid off, as representatives of the Mau Mau and leaders of Uganda and Nigeria were invited in early 1954 to meet with then President Nagib (Ismael 1971: 24). In 1954, Fayek created a Swahili-language radio station, Voice of Africa, and programmes in Amharic and Sudanese “dialects” (Fayek 1982). He supported

Kenyan leaders, including Mau Mau, and the Algerian National Liberation Front, which set up an office in Cairo (Abou-El-Fadl 2016: 8-9).

A further acceleration happened in 1955 when Nasser went to the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, “turning more toward Africa” (Ismael 1971: 27). Bandung gave Egypt a more important stature internationally and accelerated the implementation of its African policy, with the consequence that many African anti-colonial movements began to look to Cairo for support. As part of a renewed effort to reach out to African liberation movements, Fayek established the African Association in the same year. This non-statal organisation was directly linked and dependent on Fayek’s office and its resources (Fayek 1982).¹³ At first, its function was to care for thousands of African students studying in Cairo, especially at Al-Azhar University. Fayek’s final goal, however, was to find students involved with national liberation movements and convince a few to create permanent offices for their parties. This phase, however, was short-lived. Soon enough, especially after the Suez crisis and its favourable outcome, Egypt became “the tangible symbol of resistance to imperialism”, and many African liberation movements began to look at it for support (Ismael 1971: 36 and 52). Eventually, as Fayek remembers, “there were too many coming”.¹⁴ By the early 1960s, at least twenty liberation movements had their office at



Fig. 1 – Entrance to the African Society (previously known as “African Association”) at 5, Ahmad Heshmat Street, Zamalek, Cairo. Photo taken by Eric Burton on 9 October 2022

the Association. According to Fayek, “[t]he offices were too [many], then we hired a few flats”.¹⁵

The African Association was located in Zamalek, Cairo. Its address at 5, Ahmad Heshmat Street soon became a major point of attraction for all politically-involved Africans in Egypt. According to Fayek’s own words, “I created [the Association] just for any African who [could] come any time, he [could] contact me, [...] 24 hours [a day], and any African [could] reach me by this African Association. I created it, actually, to have the offices of the different liberation movements”.¹⁶ It was, according to Abou-El-Fadl (2019: 162), a “permanent politicised space for the African community to organise in Cairo” and “allowed individuals to meet one another and share their experiences and skills and encouraged ideas to flow between Cairo and other locales”. According to Helmi Sharawy – then a young student who got involved in the project from the start as a researcher and would later become the coordinator of the liberation movements – the Association was also a “good source of information” for Fayek himself, who often, “came to see people and [gather] information [...] building a relationship with Africa”.¹⁷

The director, Mohammad Abdel Al-Aziz Ishak, a well-known liberal intellectual, would also be a “pole of attraction” for young African students who got involved in the association.¹⁸ Since 1957, the association also published a magazine, *Nahdatu Ifriquiah* (Renaissance of Africa), published in Arabic, English, and French, with articles produced by the liberation movements themselves. This would become an instrument for spreading information on African liberation, primarily to the Egyptian population and possibly to wider African audiences. At the time, Sharawy adds, “Arab people, even in Egypt, they were not interested in Africa”.¹⁹ The association and its periodical *Nahdatu Ifriquiah*, according to Sharawy, “were the first attempt of Egyptian cultural society to look at Africa”. Sharawy (2014: 25) continues, “[Fayek] would invite interested pressmen and writers to frequent the [Association] and get first-hand information there”.

Meanwhile, Radio Cairo was also put at the service of African liberation movements. This had already started in 1954 with the first broadcastings in Swahili, Amharic and Sudanese dialects. After founding the African Association, Fayek connected it with Radio Cairo to provide the liberation movements with broadcasting facilities to spread knowledge about their political struggle. After meeting with East African students at Al-Azhar, according to Sharawy (2014: 32), Fayek “chose those who could participate in the broadcasting pro-

grammes and, hence, the African [Association] in Zamalek was the chosen venue for those youth”. When the first offices were created at the Association, they began to provide both personnel and content to Radio Cairo’s African broadcasts. By the 1960s, African broadcasting at Radio Cairo covered 30 African languages.²⁰ As noted by El-Fadl (2019: 169), “[t]hrough their use of language and translation, mass media such as *Nahdat Afriqya* and Cairo Radio”, the Association provided the liberation movements with “important places for the politics of African solidarity”.

This was what Egypt offered in terms of support to liberation movements. It was one of the first countries to do so and in the most effective manner. For this reason, African political organisations established contacts with Fayek and the Association between the late 1950s and early 1960s. These also included the BAC/BCP, a party founded on a robust non-aligned stance and therefore attracted by Nasser’s own political offering.

BAC/BCP’s first contacts with Egypt and the non-aligned movement

According to Fayek, a concrete relationship with the BAC/BCP only began when the party looked for support in Cairo. This presumably happened around the year 1960.²¹ In 1956, Egypt had already extended an invitation to the BAC to attend a conference in Cairo, which was meant to be a follow-up of the Bandung meeting held in the previous year to form an “African Liberation Committee”.²² While the conference never took place, it is evident that the Basotho organisation was already listed among the key Southern African liberation movements, considering that the BAC was ready to represent the ANC if they managed to reach Cairo.²³

Evidence shows that, in the second half of the 1950s, the Basotho party was closely following Egyptian politics: for instance, “Mohlabani”, a monthly journal close to the BAC, published a lengthy editorial on the Suez crisis in April 1957. In it, the editors (among whom there was the BAC leader Mokhehle) condemned British, French and Israeli aggression, stating clearly that the “whole of black Africa” had closely followed these events, siding with Cairo.²⁴

Meanwhile, Egypt’s African policy received a further boost after the first Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity conference held in Cairo between December 1957 and January 1958. The conference in itself also gave birth to the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) immediately after the gathering.

AAPSO established its headquarters and secretariat in Cairo. The conference and the establishment of the Organisation also turned out to be extremely important for the African Association, which was “a crucial precursor and later complement to AAPSO” (Abou-El-Fadl 2019: 162). As Sharawy remembers, the Conference was “attended by hundreds of young delegates”, and “some of these extended their stay in Cairo, while many more left permanent representatives to establish offices in Cairo, their best opening to the outer world”.²⁵ Sharawy also explains how new movements would open their offices at the Association and AAPSO: “The rule was for the leader to hold a personal meeting with Nasser before leaving the country, and he would obtain Nasser’s instructions for founding that new office, and allotting time on the broadcasting system. Some other members of the office would be posted at the secretariat of the Afro-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO). Thus Zamalek was crowded with many Africans. It became a refuge for revolutionaries and a venue for many students in Egypt”.²⁶

It is unclear if the BCP participated in the first Afro-Asian People’s Conference. What is known is that both Mokhehle and Fayek were present in December 1958 at the All-African People’s Conference in Ghana (Grilli 2018: 104).²⁷ Whether the first contact was made on that occasion or later in Cairo, the final result was that Mokhehle was brought by Fayek to Nasser, probably in 1960.²⁸ On that occasion, it was decided that the BCP (which had changed its name in 1959) would open an office at the Association and one at AAPSO.

Establishing the BCP Office in Cairo

The BCP office was officially opened in 1961. In May of that year, the first representative of the BCP in Cairo, Koenyama Stephen Chakela, arrived at the Association and obtained control of his office at 5, Ahmad Heshmat Street.²⁹ From then on, BCP members in Cairo would either refer to the office at the Association or to Chakela’s own residence at El Said El Bakri Street, also in Zamalek, where numerous young Basotho would also be hosted through the years.³⁰ At the time, apart from its branches in Basutoland and South Africa, the BCP had two international offices: one in Cairo, headed by Chakela, and one in Accra, headed by Molapo Qhobela. After 1963, others would be opened in London and Dar-es-Salaam.

The office at the Association, which strictly collaborated with AAPSO, had three objectives: spreading pro-BCP, anti-colonial and anti-apartheid propaganda through the Egyptian Radio and the press; obtaining funds for the party

from both AAPSO and the Egyptian government; obtaining scholarships and catering for Basotho that stayed permanently in Egypt and those who only spent time in Cairo waiting to get scholarships to go and study or be trained in Europe or the People's Republic of China (PRC).

BCP Propaganda

In terms of propaganda, Chakela, who would be the party representative between 1961 and 1965,³¹ and his successors had four means to produce and distribute pro-BCP materials. The first was the production and spreading of an English-language publication called *Makatolle International*.³² While theoretically a monthly magazine, it would be published often over a two- or three-month period. The magazine offered the readers an overview of African politics, with a focus on Southern Africa and Lesotho and BCP's stance on the main issues. It contained articles produced by the office in Cairo or the BCP leadership in Maseru.³³ It would also publish materials produced by other liberation movements represented in Cairo and articles on issues related to other parties aligned with the BCP.³⁴ Finally, and crucially, *Makatolle International* would publish pro-AAPSO and pro-Nasser propaganda.³⁵ The magazine was distributed to BCP supporters both in Cairo and in Basutoland.³⁶

As a second means of propaganda, the BCP Cairo office used the African Association's own publication, *Nahdatu Ifriquiah*. This time, despite the BCP articles being published in English, the magazine remained primarily limited to an Egyptian audience.³⁷ In fact, as noted by El-Fadl (2019: 169), *Nahdatu Ifriquiah*'s team aimed "to foster an 'imagined community' contemplating the same content across linguistic barriers simultaneously". However, "[t]his effect was subject to the constraints of the Association's resources, both technically and financially, and circulation remained highest in Egypt". This was not necessarily a problem for the Association, which, "expressly sought to forge an African consciousness among Egyptians" (Abou-El-Fadl 2019: 167). According to Fayek and Sharawy, no control was exerted by the Association or the African Affairs Bureau on the magazine's content or any other publication of the liberation movements hosted in Cairo.³⁸

The third instrument used for BCP's propaganda in Egypt was the radio. As mentioned before, Radio Cairo was used to broadcast programmes in African languages since 1954. With the number of offices at the Association and AAPSO increasing, the number of African programmes also began to rise. By the early 1960s, the number of African languages used at Radio Cairo was

between 25 and 30.³⁹ The liberation movements directly managed the broadcasts. As stated by Fayek, “of course, it was not easy to choose the languages. [...] we used to give the offices the access [to the Radio], to talk to their people by their languages”.⁴⁰ According to Sharawy and Fayek, even in this case, the African Affairs Bureau and the Association did not oversee the production of the programmes.⁴¹ As stated by Fayek, “we didn’t interfere. No. But, we saw [what they were doing]. All of them, they came to me”.⁴²

The Sesotho Radio Broadcasts System, also called *Makatolle Moea-Moea Cairo*, was established in 1961.⁴³ According to the BCP member Ntuskunyane Mphanya (2004: 40), “the aim was to give news of the BCP’s struggle to Africa and to the Far East”. In any case, being that the broadcast was in Sesotho, it was primarily aimed at Sesotho-speaking people both in South Africa and in Basutoland. As remembered by a BCP member who spent years in Cairo, “every day, the representative and his assistant would go to the radio station and broadcast to Southern Africa, to Lesotho in particular”.⁴⁴ As with any other programme produced by liberation movements hosted at the Association, it was broadcast from the Maspero building in Cairo, the headquarters of the Arab Radio and Television Union. In 1962, the BCP’s Women’s League sent one of its members, Mankhala Mary Letšela, to join the BCP broadcasting team in Cairo (Mphanya 2004: 37). Between 1962 and 1963, as the representative of the BCP Women’s League in Cairo, she was the BCP delegate at several conferences and meetings, in the USSR, Basutoland and PRC.⁴⁵

As stated by three interviewees, all of them at the time members of the Youth League of the BCP, the radio was “very popular” in Basutoland/Lesotho.⁴⁶ In the early 1960s, they would listen to broadcastings of Cairo and Accra’s BCP offices.⁴⁷ People, especially the youth, would know when to tune in to Radio Cairo between 8:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. and would listen to it.⁴⁸ As the years went by, according to British intelligence, the broadcasts were “being listened to by an ever increasing number of Basotho”.⁴⁹ As for the contents, according to the then BCP youth leaguer, Pitso Koelane: “[t]hey were addressing Basotho. [...] They were [...] involved in politics, and they were trying to tell us about what was happening abroad. [...] International politics [...] It was broadcasting to Lesotho, and people here used to know when the programme would be coming and then tuning in to Cairo”.⁵⁰ For example, Cairo Radio reported on Koenyama Chakela’s visit to the PRC in 1964 and on the Pan-African Solidarity Conference Organization (PASCO) meeting held in the same year.⁵¹

The fourth and final way for the BCP office to produce and distribute pro-

paganda was through press statements and newsletters. For instance, in April 1964, the Cairo office issued a newsletter “condemning the British Imperialists and the South African Government”.⁵² Another example is a joint statement of nine parties represented in Cairo, BCP included, against “US imperialists” to protest the death of Malcolm X in February 1965.⁵³

Further support to spread pro-BCP propaganda also came from AAPSO, which, for instance, published in 1962 a book authored by Chakela entitled *The Past and Present Lesotho (Basutoland)*.⁵⁴ While the book was on politics in Basutoland/Lesotho, it also contained an address by Charles Molefi, Assistant General Secretary of the BCP, to the permanent secretariat of AAPSO, dated 24 March 1962, in which Molefi (1962: 56) declared how the BCP valued its AAPSO membership and “will never shrink for a moment from the realities challenging our role in the Afro-Asian struggle for liberation from Capitalism, Imperialism, Colonialism and Neo-colonialism”. Interestingly, the book was published by Dar El-Hana Press in Cairo, the same one that also published *Makatolle International*.

By late 1961, at the Annual General Meeting of the BCP, Mokhehle showed to be already satisfied with the results of Chakela’s work in Cairo and “congratulated” him and Molapo Qhobela, the BCP representative in Ghana, for “their activities via the press and radio”.⁵⁵ On the same occasion, Chakela took the stand and praised Nasser’s Egypt in a lengthy speech, in which he highlighted how “Nasser is spoken well of by all the people”.⁵⁶ At the time, the relationship between BCP and Nasser was very warm. Nasser himself had sent his “good wishes” to the BCP meeting.⁵⁷ A picture of him and Mokhehle taken at the All-African People’s Conference held in Cairo in March 1961 had been published in a *Makatolle* issue (see Fig. 2).⁵⁸

Obtaining Funds for BCP’s Political Struggle

One of the tasks of Chakela and his successors was to attract funds and scholarships primarily from the Egyptian government and AAPSO but also from other sources. According to the then Secretary-General of the BCP, Godfrey Kolisang, “Nasser supported the BCP with funds at times”.⁵⁹ As Fayek explained, his office dealt with financial support to liberation movements: “the persons that came to me as refugees, they got a monthly assistance. The office also [...] had assistance. It depend[ed] on the country. [The money came] from the presidency. There was a special budget for it”.⁶⁰ Money was also provided for elections, but only if the country was still under colonial rule. After



Fig. 2 – Nasser is welcoming African delegates at the All-African People’s Conference held in Cairo in March 1961. Mokhehle is the second person on the right waiting to shake Nasser’s hand. “Makatolle”, 1 Phupiane (June), 1961.

independence, no funds were provided to political parties in order to avoid “interfering with the affairs of others. This was a very important principle of Bandung”.⁶¹ According to Sharawy, the financial help provided to political parties was “generally modest”. For instance, Egypt provided only 25,000 dollars for a “country wide election campaign before independence in 1964”.⁶²

As for the BCP, funds were “badly needed”, especially in view of the pre-independence 1965 elections, and the party “depended” also upon the “unpredictable trickle of money from pan-Africanist sources in Accra and Cairo” (Weisfelder 1999: 13, 64). In 1960-1, the BCP received donations only from Accra.⁶³ In early 1962, the Central Executive Committee of the BCP was said to be in a “poor financial position”.⁶⁴ However, by December 1962, 85 per cent of the total budget of the Central Executive Committee of the BCP, amounting to R15,000, was reported to come from Accra and Cairo together.⁶⁵ As reported by British intelligence, this excluded “the cost of numerous journeys to East and West Africa, Cairo and America undertaken by party leaders for which these and other sources provided fares”.⁶⁶ In fact, the BCP leaders, particularly Kolisang and Mokhehle, who often visited Cairo, frequently requested and obtained tickets from their donors, including Ghana and Egypt.⁶⁷ Egypt also provided them with Egyptian *laissez-passers* to travel to Europe and the US.⁶⁸

In December ’62, British intelligence reported that “although Ghana and

Cairo have supplied the major part of funds at the disposal of the BCP, there is growing suspicion regarding the intentions of Nasser and Nkrumah towards Basutoland and increasing doubt as to their ability to render effective assistance”.⁶⁹ Whether this “suspicion” and “doubt” was true is not possible to ascertain. What is known is that, from 1963, the sources of support for the BCP became more diversified. In 1963, the party received R22,000 and R70,000 from Cairo and PRC, respectively.⁷⁰ In 1964, R48,000 were obtained from “Afro-Asian countries”.⁷¹ Much of the funds at this point were coming from the Liberation Committee in Dar-es-Salaam and the PRC.⁷² The latter was praised by Chakela on a Radio Cairo broadcast in September 1964 for the “strong support [...] for the struggle of the Basutoland people to achieve independence”.⁷³ Part of the funds received by the BCP was shared with the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), which had, until 1963, its headquarters in Basutoland.⁷⁴ The two parties were extremely close, even in their missions abroad, as demonstrated by a picture of the leadership of BCP and PAC, including Chakela, published in *Makatolle International*.⁷⁵

As for AAPSO funds, there is no evidence of consistent funding to the BCP from the organisation. What is known is that, as of December 1961, according to the CIA, the BCP had not received funds from AAPSO despite having requested them. There are no indications that any relevant funds were provided after this date. However, there is clear evidence that AAPSO provided scholarships to BCP students.⁷⁶

Searching for Scholarships and Catering for the Youth

The BCP had a specific strategy for education, which consisted of sending as many young Basotho as possible to study abroad to “acquire knowledge and skills so that they can come back to Lesotho and [participate in] the development”.⁷⁷ Youngsters would be sent with or without a scholarship to Cairo through Botswana, Zambia or Tanzania.⁷⁸ Those with scholarships would then immediately leave Cairo for their destination. The others would wait, sometimes years, to get scholarships to study in Egypt or in other countries, especially in Eastern Europe, “through the help of the AAPSO and individually through the governments of those respective countries”.⁷⁹ The BCP Office in Cairo had the task of looking for scholarships for the young Basotho in Cairo, who, in the meantime, kept busy with political activities at the Association, the party headquarters and at AAPSO.

At the time, Egypt itself was a pole of attraction for African students, primarily through its most prestigious institutions of higher learning: Al-Azhar

University and Cairo University. According to Sharawy, “the number of African students seeking education at Al-Azhar University” alone, in the mid-1960s, “exceeded 20,000”.⁸⁰ Many others were attracted by Cairo University, especially its faculties of engineering and medicine. All these students, both from north and south of the Sahara were getting free education, like their Egyptian counterparts (Sharawy 2005: 50). With regard to Cairo University, Nasser’s government offered the BCP a few scholarships through the years.⁸¹ Very few Basotho, however, did study in Egypt due to a number of issues they encountered.

The main problem, as testified by both Sharawy and Makase Nyaphisi, one BCP student who lived in Cairo in the early 1970s, was that teaching was most often in Arabic, and this proved too difficult to overcome for many non-Arabic-speaking Africans, Nyaphisi included.⁸² As remembered by Sharawy, “leaders from African countries complained to the President and Fayek that all these institutions [were] teaching in Arabic”.⁸³ Other complaints were also about the religious content of Al-Azhar teaching, which was “not much use” to the African youth. Nasser then decided to create special sections in existing universities to teach in English and French (Sharawy 2005: 51) and founded “new institutes of higher education where tuition was carried out in English and in French”.⁸⁴ One of these was the Industrial Technical Institute Shoubra.⁸⁵

Chakela and his successors worked tirelessly to find scholarships for BCP students to study in Europe, the Soviet Union, or further East. British intelligence reported that in September 1961, Chakela “had discussions with Russian officials [in Cairo] as a result of which he visited Moscow, where he represented Basutoland at the World Youth Forum meeting and endeavoured to get the 20 scholarships allocated by Iron Curtain countries increased”.⁸⁶ Generally speaking, especially in the early 1960s, the vast majority of BCP students who went to study abroad were directed to the Soviet Bloc and they all passed by Cairo.⁸⁷ An exception was ten BCP members who passed by Cairo in 1964 *en route* to the PRC, but in this case, to undergo military training.⁸⁸ As mentioned before, according to BCP members who stayed in Cairo in the 1960s and 1970s, scholarships were also offered by AAPSO and directed to the BCP office at the Association.⁸⁹ In the early 1970s, other scholarships were offered to BCP students in Cairo from Scandinavian countries through the intercession of GM Kolisang, who was then a representative of the party in Sweden.⁹⁰

For those without scholarships and stuck in Cairo, there were few resources that their Office could offer other than the bare minimum to survive. In 1963,

British intelligence, citing a “delicate and reliable source”, reported how “BCP sponsored students in Cairo, some of whom have been there since 1961” were “DESTITUTE”. “It is said”, the report continued, “that they have not been able to study, nor are they allowed to obtain work. They are now seeking financial assistance to enable them to return to Basutoland or to study elsewhere”.⁹¹ A few months later, the BCP Cairo office had managed to find two scholarships for Switzerland, while two other students were sent to North Korea, and one was on its way to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), thanks to the mediation of the then member of the South African Communist Party (SACP), Joe Matthews.⁹²

As remembered by Pitso Koelane, a BCP youth leaguer who spent time in Cairo in the early 1970s waiting for a scholarship, the party office would not provide any allowance to the students but would “feed you [...] take care of you”.⁹³ This, however, according to Makase Nyaphisi, also in Cairo at that time, had become increasingly difficult in the early 1970s as, by that time, money had become increasingly tight. He then stepped in and provided for the office: “I realised that there was short[age] of funding, the office was short of funding, and they were relying on allowances from the Egyptian government. But it was not enough. So I decided to leave and go and work in Kuwait so that I [could] have some money to support the office. I wasn’t working for myself. But I was helping the office. And I got a job there, to teach. So with the money, I was able to support the office and make sure that the students that were coming would have something to eat”.⁹⁴ A lack of funds in this period might have also been linked to the change of regime, which happened in Egypt with the death of Nasser in 1970 and Sadat’s rise to power. The latter had a more conservative foreign policy (Kassem 2010; Rubinstein 1974). Also, he radically broke with the management of African affairs during the Nasser years. Indeed, Fayek himself was jailed in 1971 as part of Sadat’s repression of Nasserists within the state and government.⁹⁵ Sharawy remembers that this period was “very frustrating both for my personal duties and for my feelings towards Sadat’s position with regard to supporting liberation movements”.⁹⁶

The BCP managed to maintain an office in Cairo until the 1970s, despite Lesotho becoming independent in 1966. As mentioned before, there was a rule according to which the Association would not provide an office and support to a party belonging to an independent country. According to Fayek, the BCP was an exception, and support was provided to Mokhehle’s party only because Lesotho was considered “part of South Africa”. At the time, he adds,

“we were considering it as a part of the system”.⁹⁷ This was due to Lesotho’s geographical isolation as well as its traditional economic dependence on South Africa, coupled with a not-so-subtle early alliance between Leabua Jonathan and Vorster’s regimes. As confirmed by Sharawy, “[the BCP] were left because we were supporting their stand against the racist regime in South Africa. I think that gave the BCP some privilege to keep them supported against that racist regime in South Africa”.⁹⁸

In the 1970s, the BCP office was still active, but most likely only at El-Said El-Bakri Street and, therefore, not at the Association. Indeed, a letter from Kolisang to the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore and a press release of the party, both dated January 1971, were sent from El-Said El-Bakri Street.⁹⁹ Also, the first issue of a new run of *Makatolle International* was said to be published at El-Bakri Street and not at 5, Ahmad Heshmat Street, the African Association’s address, as the previous one.¹⁰⁰ The much lower production quality of the second run compared to the first seems to suggest that the BCP could not count on the same funds they had in the previous decade.

This concludes the second part of the article, which highlighted the history of the BCP office in Cairo. In the next and final part, the article will examine the political experiences of two BCP students who spent years in Cairo, one in the mid-1960s and the other in the early 1970s. Through these personal testimonies, it will be possible to demonstrate how the experience in Cairo became one important moment in the political education of young Basotho.

Cairo as a Profound Political Experience

For BCP members, Cairo was not just a staging post to further destinations. For many young Basotho, travelling to Egypt was also a very important political experience. Before the trip to Cairo, many young Basotho had no practical experience of inter-African solidarity or Arab-African solidarity. Also, they did not know much about important debates on topics such as the Cold War or the Arab-Israeli conflict. Back in Lesotho, they could seldom study the different ideologies and political models competing for influence in the Southern Hemisphere. In Cairo, they encountered new ideas about the liberation of Africa, socialism, and capitalism; they learned about the Arab-Israeli confrontation and could confront it with their own experiences of political and racial conflicts in Southern Africa. They could also learn more about other African countries through encounters with activists from the whole continent, and they could fully experience Egyptian solidarity with regard to African liberation movements.

The long years of waiting for scholarships further North allowed the Basotho activists to become conversant with the language of politics and acquire important skills that could be used in the struggle for freedom in Lesotho.

Ralistoel Lepoqo and Makase Nyaphisi are two of those Basotho, then members of the BCP Youth League, who travelled to Cairo and lived there in the 1960s and 1970s. Both decided to further their education abroad, answering Mokhehle's call for young Basotho to travel and study outside of Basutoland/Lesotho and eventually come back to contribute to the development of the country, in view of the BCP's eventual conquest of power (Grilli 2024). Lepoqo left in 1963 and headed first to Ghana and then to Egypt, where he spent the next few years. In 1967 or 1968, he finally obtained a scholarship to study in Bulgaria, where he lived until 1985. Nyaphisi arrived in Egypt in 1971 and stayed until 1974 when he also finally obtained a scholarship to study in the GDR, where he stayed until the end of the decade. Therefore, their combined experience covers a good part of the first decade and a half of the BCP office in Cairo and allows us to reflect on key issues concerning politics, African and Afro-Arab solidarity, cultural differences between Sub-Saharan Africans and Arabs, and finally, the question of Palestine and the relations between racial discrimination against Palestinians related to the situation in apartheid South Africa.

Arab-African and inter-African Solidarity

While waiting for scholarships, BCP members actively participated in the political life of the party office and AAPSO. For them, it was, in most cases, a "baptism of fire" in terms of political engagement, since back in Lesotho, they had all been young students seldom involved in party activities. As Lepoqo remembers, he often participated in meetings related to African and Arab politics. In particular, he remembers how "the Egyptians themselves came to tell us about their history, about how they fought for independence, how they think they are part of Africa". According to him, this was "[b]ecause of Abdel Nasser. The President of Egypt, he was one of the most respected leaders of [Africa]. And we also respected him. He loved Africa. And he fought for African unity too".¹⁰¹ For youngsters like Lepoqo, this was one of the first instances in which they could experience Arab-African solidarity in person. However, the political life in Cairo revolved even more around inter-African relations.

According to Sharawy and Fayek, the meetings referred to by Lepoqo most likely did not occur at the African Association but at AAPSO or elsewhere. Meetings at the Association were reserved for Africans to discuss among

themselves. Each party could address the others on their political struggle or the situation of their countries. Also, discussions often occurred among Africans from different areas on common issues. For instance, as Lepoqo remembers, “we talked about apartheid issues. We did. Yes. Because most of us, most of our parents were in South Africa, they were working there. [They were] migrant workers. And they were suffering from apartheid”.¹⁰² Nyaphisi remembers how most of the interactions were, in fact, between Southern African liberation movements: “The ANC had representatives there. The PAC also had their representatives there. ZAPU had their representatives there. ZANU also had their representatives there. [...] SWAPO also had their representatives there. So, we would meet socially and otherwise. [...] Cairo was a melting pot. [...] we would talk about the liberation of Southern Africa, because, at that time, the only independent countries in Southern Africa were Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia.¹⁰³ Mozambique was not free, South West Africa was not free, Zimbabwe was not free, South Africa was not [free], so we would talk about that”.¹⁰⁴

For the Basotho activists, this was a crucial political experience. Before Cairo, they had no chance to engage with other Africans involved in liberation struggles and fully explore inter-African solidarity. The latter aspect made them reflect on what the Pan-Africanism preached by Mokhehle meant in practice and what united or did not unite Arabs and Africans. As highlighted by Lepoqo, Basotho felt “welcomed by the Egyptians”.¹⁰⁵ This, of course, was rooted in Nasser’s “Africanism” and his efforts to demonstrate in practice how Egypt and the whole of Arab North Africa were indeed connected with “black” Africa (Ismael 1971: 103-104). This was also obtained through the Egyptian media, which “showed great interest in the activities of the liberation movement’s offices in Zamalek”¹⁰⁶ and *Nahdatu Ifriquiah* which helped the Egyptians to know more about Africa and see themselves as Africans. There remained, however, a distance between Sub-Saharan Africans and Egyptians, which was felt by many at the Association, Lepoqo included. There was a sort of practical limit to the Arab-African solidarity preached by Nasser’s African policy. Lepoqo – who had the chance to experience inter-African solidarity in Nkrumah’s Ghana (Grilli 2018) for a few months prior to his arrival in Cairo – had a chance to reflect on what united Basotho to the Ghanaians more than to the Egyptians: “[Egypt] was a different country from Ghana. [...] because of the culture [...] especially religion. And we were not as free as we were in Ghana. Not that we were [prevented] to do things that we were doing in Ghana but you

felt that you [were] a foreigner. You see? We felt that we were foreigners. [...] not because the Egyptian people were against us. Because it was an entirely different culture from the culture we had experienced from our home and from Ghana. [We] felt that we were different from them. As far as culture is concerned. But with Ghana we didn't feel it. We didn't get that feeling. [...] you can go to any country. If you go to that country and you find people having a different religion, cultural activities, you would feel that you are not part of them. Not that you are not accepted. But that you are not part of this kind of culture."¹⁰⁷

In contrast, as remembered again by Lepoqo, the solidarity among young Africans in Cairo was "impressive". For the BCP students with their limited resources, it was essential to count on networks of solidarity which were created within the African community at the Association: "One thing which impressed me a lot when we were in Cairo was the solidarity that we had as youth from different countries on the continent. [...] I remember, I even stayed with some African National Congress students in the hostel where they were living. Because for us, as a small country, there was not enough accommodation. And it was not difficult [to find it] we didn't even apply for it [...] we told amongst ourselves, we suggested: now, look, you can go and stay with these people, it's ok for us. [...] The solidarity that was among us was wonderful."¹⁰⁸ These practical experiences of solidarity, more than any party activity, deeply influenced the young Basotho. Pan-Africanism was no longer a vague term; it became a concrete call to coordinate the efforts of all Africans involved in liberation struggles. This would be then encountered and explored more even after Cairo, for instance, in Eastern Europe (Grilli 2023).

Palestinians and Racial Discrimination

One final point of interest about the Basotho experience in Cairo and, more in general, in the Middle East, was their involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict or, rather, the impression left on the Basotho youth of the way the Palestinians were treated in the region. Prior to their arrival in Cairo, the Basotho were expecting to find evidence of Israeli racism against Palestinians much in a similar vein as white racism against blacks in Southern Africa. The parallel between Israeli and South African racism was even highlighted by BCP publications such as *Makatolle International* (Grilli 2024).¹⁰⁹

The lived experience of Basotho in the Middle East added unexpected nuances to this view of racism against Palestinians. As remembered by Nyaphisi, Palestinians were not only victims of Israeli racism. Rather, at least in the

early 1970s, Palestinians were constantly and publicly mistreated by fellow Arabs, both in Egypt and in other countries of the region. This allowed him to compare the situation with what he left at home, in Southern Africa: “It was 1971. [...] the Palestinians [...], even in Egypt and in Kuwait, they were treated like second-class citizens. Although they were teachers. Working as teachers, doctors [...]. But they were never really recognised as whole citizens by the Arabs. With the exception of Jordan. [...] So you [saw] discrimination against Palestinians [...] it showed me, it taught me that discrimination, racial discrimination is not just between black and white, it’s even amongst the people in the Middle East.”¹¹⁰ Once more, the experience in Cairo and, more generally, in the Middle East gave the Basotho the chance to observe racial discrimination in a different context to South Africa. This, in turn, further strengthened their anti-racist views and helped them better understand apartheid and its political implications in Southern Africa, comparing it to similar situations elsewhere.

Conclusions

Initially, Cairo was conceived by the BCP leadership as a staging post for further destinations and as a propaganda centre for the party. Indeed, as evidenced in the article, it served these purposes. What the party did not make provision for was the political apprenticeship, which long years of wait offered to the Basotho. As demonstrated in the article, while in Cairo, many youngsters learnt for the first time about African politics, the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict and so on. Their stop-over in Egypt became a full-fledged “political travel”. There, they could experience inter-African and Arab-African solidarity, often for the first time. As a result, they could develop from young students into political activists. The BCP members left Egypt with much knowledge and a renewed and strengthened belief in Pan-Africanism. To this day ex BCP members are still grateful to Egyptians for the help they were offered in times of need. Their time in Cairo was a crucial political and human experience. It was a founding moment in the lives of many Basotho. As demonstrated in this article, Cairo became essential for the political lives of BCP members between the 1960s and 1970s.

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Notes

- 1 - The party is also known in Sesotho as *Lekhotla la Mahatammoho*.
- 2 - While between 1958 and 1971 the country was officially named United Arab Republic (UAR), I will refer to it throughout the article as “Egypt”.
- 3 - Basotho is the plural form for Sotho people. Mosotho is the singular form.
- 4 - These oral testimonies provide information and perspectives which are unattainable through written documentation. They are, nevertheless, biased by nature, being the personal recollection of the interviewees from their own point of view, and are potentially limited by the fact that they are told several decades after the events.
- 5 - The National Archives, London (henceforth TNA)/Colonial Office (henceforth CO) 1048/108/Basutoland Intelligence Report, December 1961.
- 6 - TNA/CO 1048/108/Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Basutoland Congress Party held at Maseru from 23 to 26 December 1961, Annexure A, undated, p. 5.
- 7 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.
- 8 - Interview with Godfrey Molotsi Kolisang, Johannesburg, 11 September 2021.
- 9 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African liberation (1956-1975)*, “Pambazuka News”, 19 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105231260.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 2.
- 10 - *Ibid.*
- 11 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 12 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 13 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022. Fayek himself had an office at the Association.
- 14 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 15 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 16 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 17 - Interview with Helmi Sharawy, Cairo, 12 October 2022.
- 18 - Sharawy, H., *Memories on African liberation (1956-1975)*, “Pambazuka News”, 19 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105231260.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 2.
- 19 - Interview with Helmi Sharawy, Cairo, 12 October 2022.
- 20 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African liberation (1956-1975)*, “Pambazuka News”, 19 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105231260.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 2.
- 21 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 22 - TNA/Dominions Office (DO) 35/4456/ Letter from R.W.D. Fowler to Mr Shannon, 16 July 1956.
- 23 - TNA/DO 35/4456/ Telegram from HCO to CRO, 19 July 1956.
- 24 - *The Editor Speaks*, “Mohlabani”, vol. 3, n. 1-4, ‘Mesa/April 1957 pp. 1-3.
- 25 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African liberation (1956-1975)*, “Pambazuka News”, 19 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105231260.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 3.

- 26 - *Ibid.*
- 27 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 28 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 29 - “Makatolle”, 15 June 1961.
- 30 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi and Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 2 September 2021; interview with Ralitseole Lepoqo, Maseru, 31 August 2021.
- 31 - According to British sources, in June 1965, the representative in Cairo was Chitja Tsolo. TNA/CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, June 1965, Part II, External, p. 2.
- 32 - For the record, the name referred to “Makatolle”, which was the BCP official newspaper published in Sesotho and English and printed in Cape Town.
- 33 - See, for instance, N. Mokhehle, *Neo-Colonialism (Part1)*, “Makatolle International”, vol. 2, n. 1-2, January-February 1962, pp. 18-20.
- 34 - See, for instance, *An Appeal from the People of South West Africa*, “Makatolle International”, vol. 1, n. 2, 1961, pp. 16-17; G. M. Kolisang, *Pan-African Solidarity Conference for Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland*, “Makatolle International”, vol. 2, n. 1-2, January-February 1962, pp. 9-10; K. S. Chakela, *The Swazis and the British*, “Makatolle International”, vol. 2, n. 3-4, March-April 1962, pp. 6-10.
- 35 - See, for instance, *Declaration of the Gaza Conference of the Executive Committee of the African-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity, 9-11- Dec 1961 General Declaration*, “Makatolle International”, vol. 1, n. 2, 1961.
- 36 - As noted by British authorities, *Makatolle International* had appeared in the streets of Maseru in May 1962, in TNA/CO 1048/108/ Basutoland Central Intelligence Report, May ’62, p. 1.
- 37 - See, for instance, N. Mokhehle, *Constitutional Problems of Basutoland*, “Nahdatu Ifriquiah”, vol. 5, n. 48, October 1961, pp. 13-18; L. Masoabi, *The Bluff of a Constitutional Commission in Basutoland*, “Nahdatu Ifriquiah”, vol. 6, n. 63, February 1963, pp. 14-17.
- 38 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022 and interview with Helmi Sharawy, Cairo, 12 October 2022.
- 39 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 40 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 41 - Interview with Helmi Sharawy, Cairo, 12 October 2022 and interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 42 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 43 - TNA/CO 1048/108, Extract of Special branch Intelligence Summary, November 1962.
- 44 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.
- 45 - For instance, in November 1962, she was invited to a Committee of Soviet Women meeting in Moscow; in TNA/CO 1048/108, Extract of Special branch Intelligence Summary, November 1962.
- 46 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi and Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 2 September 2021; interview with Ralitseole Lepoqo, Maseru, 31 August 2021.

- 47 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.
- 48 - Interview with Ralitsele Lepoqo and Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 31 August 2021. On several *Makatolle International* issues, the following message was printed: “Hear Sesotho on the air. Tune your Radio to Cairo. Listen to the Voice of Africa from Cairo every day at 8:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on 16.87 meter band or 17.785 Kilocycles per second”.
- 49 - TNA/CO 1048/457, CICR, February 1963, Part II, external, p. 6.
- 50 - Interview with Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 31 August 2021.
- 51 - On Chakela’s visit to the PRC, see TNA/CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, Sept 1964, Part II, External Influences, p. 2. On the PASCO conference (Maseru, 3-5 Sept 64), see TNA/CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, Sept 1964, Part II, External Influences, p. 2.
- 52 - TNA/CO 1048/457/ CICR, April 1964, Part II, external, p. 6.
- 53 - Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)/RPD75/00149R000700490013-1/Foreign Broadcast Information Service/ Malcolm X Assassination Protests, 25 February 1965, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP75-00149R000700490013-1.pdf> (last accessed on 13 March 2024).
- 54 - A copy of this book can be found in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies Collections, London (henceforth ICS)/Lesotho/PP.LO.BCP/Basutoland Congress Party.
- 55 - TNA/CO 1048/108/ Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Basutoland Congress Party held at Maseru from 23rd to 26th December 1961, Annexure A, undated, p. 1.
- 56 - TNA/CO 1048/108/ Report Annual General Meeting of BCP, December 1961, Annexure A, undated, p. 5
- 57 - TNA/CO 1048/108/ Report Annual General Meeting of BCP, December 1961, Annexure A, undated, p. 1.
- 58 - “Makatolle”, 1 Phupiane (June), 1961. On the same occasion, Mokhehle was elected to the AAPC steering committee; also, AAPSO was reported to have contributed £500,000 to the AAPC. In CIA/RDP78/00915R001300320006-6/The All Africa Peoples Conference in 1961, 1 November 1961, available at <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-00915R001300320006-6.pdf>, accessed on 13 March 2024.
- 59 - G.M. Kolisang’s communication to the author, 20 September 2021.
- 60 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 61 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.
- 62 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African Liberation (1956-1975)*, “Pambazuka News”, 19 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105231260.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 5.
- 63 - TNA/CO 1048/108/ Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Basutoland Congress Party held at Maseru from 23rd to 26th December 1961, Annexure A, undated, pp. 7-8.
- 64 - TNA/CO 1048/108/ Intelligence Report, February 1962.
- 65 - TNA/ CO 1048/457/ CICR, December 1962-January 1963, Part II internal, p. 4.
- 66 - TNA/ CO 1048/457/ CICR, December 1962-January 1963, Part II internal, p. 4.
- 67 - For instance, in May 1962, Kolisang requested Accra and Cairo tickets to get to New York to address the UN “Committee of Seventeen” on colonialism in the High Commission

Territories, in TNA/CO 1048/108/, Basutoland Central Intelligence Report, May '62, political parties, BCP, p. 1.

68 - Interview with Godfrey Molotsi Kolisang, Johannesburg, 11 September 2021.

69 - TNA, CO 1048/457, Basutoland, CICR, December 1962 and January 1963, Part II, internal, p. 5

70 - TNA, CO 1048/457, Basutoland, CICR, December 1963/January 1964, Part II, Internal, pp. 4-5.

71 - TNA, CO 1048/457, Basutoland, CICR, January 1965, Part II, Political, p. 3.

72 - TNA, CO 1048/457, Basutoland, CICR, Communism in Basutoland, January 1965, p. 2.

73 - TNA, CO 1048/457, Basutoland, CICR, Sept 1964, Part II, External Influences, p. 2.

74 - TNA, CO 1048/457, Basutoland, CICR, December 1964, Part II, Political, p. 2.

75 - TNA, CO 1048/457, Basutoland, CICR, December 1964, Part II, Political, p. 2.

76 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi and Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

77 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

78 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

79 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

80 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African liberation (1956-1975)*, "Pambazuka News", 19 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105231260.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 5.

81 - For instance, scholarships were offered to the BCP in 1962 to study "mechanical training", in TNA CO/ 1048/108/ Extract of Special branch Intelligence Summary, November 1962; in 1965, Kofi Batsa, Secretary General of the Pan-African Union of Journalists sent a letter to the National Secretary of the Association of Journalists and Writers, Basutoland (that is, most likely, the BCP representative in Accra) an offer of five scholarships provided by the Egyptian government to five African students to train at Cairo University. In George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs, Accra/BAA/393/ Letter from Kofi Batsa to the National Secretary of the Association of Journalists and Writers, Basutoland, 10 November 1965.

82 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

83 - Interview with Helmi Sharawy, Cairo, 12 October 2022.

84 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African liberation (1956-1975)*, "Pambazuka News", 19 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105231260.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 5.

85 - Interview with Helmi Sharawy, Cairo, 12 October 2022.

86 - TNA/CO 1048/108/ Basutoland Central Intelligence Report, May '62, p. 1.

87 - The total number of BCP students who went to study abroad is difficult to ascertain. We do have some numbers for the first half of the 1960s. A report by British intelligence estimated that a total of 40 students were sent to Iron Curtain countries between 1959 and 1965. In TNA/CO 1048/524/ Basutoland, CICR, Communism in Basutoland, January 1965. For the same period, G.M. Kolisang provided the figure of 76 (53 of whom were males). In TNA/ CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, January 1965, Part II, Political, p. 3.

88 - TNA/ CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, August 1964, Part I, External, p. 2; TNA/ CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, May 1965, Part II, Political, p. 2; TNA/ CO 1048/342/ Letter

Ntsu Mokhehle to Director Department of Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories, UN Headquarters, 6 September 1965; Interview with Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 28 September 2017.

89 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi and Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 2 September 2021; Interview with Lepoqo, 31 August 2021.

90 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

91 - TNA/ CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, May 1963, Part II, external, p. 5. Capital letters in the original.

92 - TNA/ CO 1048/457/ Basutoland, CICR, June 1963, Part II, external, p. 6.

93 - Interview with Pitso Koelane, Maseru, 31 August 2021.

94 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

95 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.

96 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African Liberation (1956-1975): Part 2*, “Pambazuka News”, 25 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105270381.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024).

97 - Interview with Mohamed Fayek, Cairo, 17 October 2022.

98 - Interview with Helmi Sharawy, Cairo, 12 October 2022.

99 - ICS/Lesotho/PP.LO.BCP/Basutoland Congress Party/Letter from G.M. Kolisang to the Chairman, Commonwealth Conference, Singapore, 10 January 1971; ICS/Lesotho/PP.LO.BCP/Basutoland Congress Party/ BCP Press Release, 13 January 1971.

100 - “Makatolle International”, Vol. 1, 1971. The only existing copy seems to be the one in ICS/Lesotho/PP.LO.BCP/Basutoland Congress Party.

101 - Interview with Ralitsele Lepoqo, Maseru, 31 August 2021.

102 - Interview with Ralitsele Lepoqo, Maseru, 31 August 2021.

103 - Here, Nyaphisi most likely did not list Lesotho willingly, as it was at the time considered by the BCP as a “puppet” state dependent on South Africa.

104 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.

105 - Interview with Ralitsele Lepoqo, Maseru, 31 August 2021.

106 - Sharawy H., *Memories on African Liberation (1956-1975): Part 2*, “Pambazuka News”, 25 May 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201105270381.html> (last accessed 2 April 2024), p. 3.

107 - Interview with Ralitsele Lepoqo, Maseru, 31 August 2021.

108 - Interview with Ralitsele Lepoqo, Maseru, 31 August 2021.

109 - *Makatolle International*, vol. 4, n. 1-2-3 Jan-Feb-Mar 1964, p. 15.

110 - Interview with Makase Nyaphisi, Maseru, 2 September 2021.