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Daughters of the Soil: Gender and Nationalism in South Africa

By

Sayida L. Self

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

2002

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Abstract

Daughters of the Soil: Gender and Nationalism in South Africa

By

Sayida Lovely Self

Advisor: Professor Leith Mullings

This dissertation is concerned with the relationship between gender and nationalism within the Pan-Africanist movement of South Africa. I argue that women's participation in nationalist projects raises contradictions for women's activism. Political activism draws women into struggles around rights, justice and the redistribution of power. However women's activism does not necessarily precipitate a commitment to gender equity or the integration of a critical gender perspective into social movements. I examine the junctures where gender analysis is subordinated to discourses on the nation and where women become a homogenized category. The nationalism of South African Pan-Africanism elaborates notions of identity, nationhood and *Africaness*. This form of Pan-Africanism is shaped by the cleavages of race, class, gender and nationality in South Africa. I contend that as a political ideology, South African Pan-Africanism minimally addresses gender as a point of struggle.

The project also explores the ways in which Africanist women construct their identities as Black and African women. I address how Pan-Africanism positively informs the agency of activist women while simultaneously upholding unequal dynamics of power between men and women. Africanist women are both empowered by their political

activism and challenged by the structures of their organization when they aspire for leadership. This writing focuses on the manner in which activist women constitute the militants of a movement while situated on the margins of power. In South Africa motherhood, both fictive and biological was pivotal to the continuity of Pan-Africanism and the social reproduction of activists. Gender-based roles became templates for the diverse ways in which women mobilized adherents and organized constituents.

Africanist women juxtapose race and national identity when they articulate the nationalism of Pan-Africanism. I analyze the interface between the nation, as constructed by Pan-Africanism and systems of gender power, in the construction of personal narratives. It is women who must make the theoretical and organizational linkages between the representation of authority in a movement and the engendering of justice.

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Table of Contents

Copyright page.....	ii
Approval Page.....	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	ix
List of illustrations.....	x
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: <i>Zenzele (Do it for yourself)</i>	38
Chapter Two: <i>Isizwe (nation)</i>	62
Chapter Three: <i>Ba Kae Basudi?</i> (Where are the women?).....	101
Chapter Four: <i>Inkululeko Yabesifazane (Women's Freedom)</i>	131
Chapter Five: <i>Omama beNgugquleko (Mothers of the Revolution)</i>	164
Chapter Six: <i>Mawethu (My people, My Nation)</i>	207
Conclusion.....	232
Bibliography.....	252

List of Illustrations**Figure 1 – Map of Soweto.....37****Figure 2 - Emblem of the African Women's Organization (AWO/PAWO).....231**

Introduction

Introduction

“I am a great believer in my ancestors, for the things they do for me, they guide me, I dream of them, I am happy to be an African”

M'Afrika Fuku-Langa, Cape Town (1999)

There are subterranean struggles of gender within all social movements and women have to set the parameters of their political activism to safeguard their interests. South African women who belong to the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) integrate the nationalism of Pan-Africanism into everyday relationships of kinship and community. The following project looks at how gender mediates the forms of political activism women engage in whereby, through gender based roles, they undertake political work. Women's political work is multidimensional and intimate, falling outside the traditional political radar. Through studying the experiences of activist women we can illustrate how women merge the rigors of political life with motherhood, and how nationalism infuses their daily lives. I suggest that the form these women's political activism takes blocks their access to formal leadership, and excises their contribution from the political history of liberation movements. Moreover this study explores the ways in which political activism shapes women's multifaceted identities, and how Pan-Africanism reinforces their subjectivity as South African Black women. I concur with Comaroff (1985) that the “realpolitik of oppression dictates that resistance be expressed in domains seeming apolitical”, therefore I focus my research lens on the spaces where

the private and the political intersect (Comaroff 1985:261).

South African Pan-Africanism grows out of the strands of African nationalism that were debated within the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in the 1950's. The philosophy of Africanism was adopted by the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) when it formed in 1959. South African Pan-Africanism is a stream of nationalism that called for African sovereignty within the leadership of the liberation movements. Further it expounded upon the idea that South Africa belonged to the African majority and that the appropriation of land by the white majority laid the foundation for the poverty of Black South Africans. Like the Pan-Africanism of the Black Diaspora and the Pan-Africanism of Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, South African Pan-Africanism called for the unification of the African continent and people of African descent. Therefore, within the Pan-Africanist movement in South Africa, members are called Africanists and Pan-Africanists interchangeably. Thus I refer to women who are members of the PAC and who self-designate themselves as subscribers of Pan-Africanism as Africanists. I acknowledge that there are Pan-Africanists inside the African National Congress (ANC), and outside of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), but I have chosen to study the variant of Pan-Africanism found within the movement of the PAC in South Africa.

In their studies of the rural Eastern Cape, Beinart and Bundy (1987) refer to a "rural Africanism" that was an amalgam of independent Christianity, nationalism, traditionalism and Garveyism. This "rural Africanism" was rooted in local events that revolved around the "reassertion of traditional values, the support of hereditary chiefs, the defense of communal lands and the struggle to limit the impact of labor migrancy upon homestead life" (Beinart and Bundy 1987:34). Different from the urban based African

political organizations. “rural Africanism had a real material base, that is the struggle of peasants/migrants over rights to land, their ownership of cattle and other resources, and their ability to affect local political processes” (Beinart and Bundy 1987:35). Beinart and Bundy argue that “rural Africanism” was indicative of rural identities that remained deep within the communities of the Eastern Cape in Transkei. Moreover this “rural Africanism” was highly influenced by the “potency of pre-colonial symbols”(Beinart and Bundy 1987:38). The eclecticism of “rural Africanism” demonstrates the diversity of contexts in which Pan-Africanism finds resonance. In order to understand the magnitude of the various expressions of Pan-Africanism and Africanism it is necessary to differentiate between Pan-Africanism as a political strategy and Pan-Africanism as a mode of thought. The Pan-Africanism broached by the PAC, as a version of nationalism, was a guiding principle for a political project aimed at achieving national liberation. Pan-Africanism as articulated by activists is experienced daily, that is, it transcends the structure of a political organization, and it implies a pattern that people invoke when they formulate their intimate, community, cultural and political relationships. The multivocality of Pan-Africanism needs to be underlined as well as the multiple subtexts that as a form of nationalism it addresses.

The impetus for this examination of Africanist women in South Africa began with my initial interest in the anti-apartheid movement. I recognized that the anti-apartheid movement was heterogeneous and that there were multiple dialogues of liberation within the struggle history of South Africa. I made my first visit to South Africa in 1994 after the first democratic elections to gauge ground level political ideas within townships. I stayed in the township of Atteridgeville, in Pretoria, whose walls were strewn with

graffiti supporting the Pan Africanist Congress and Africanist slogans. This sparked my curiosity about South African Pan-Africanism as a critique of the negotiation process, but more importantly, as a variety of nationalism. As I traveled from Pretoria to Durban and through the Eastern Cape, ending in Cape Town, I realized that Pan-Africanism provided the possibility for exploring the relationships between gender and nationalism. Meeting Africanist women and observing the vitality with which they espoused their standpoints on the meaning of being an African, yet struggling with questions of how a critical gender analysis could enrich their political activism, engaged me. In addition, I wanted to demonstrate that the liberation movement was not uniform and that women were relevant to the robustness of this political diversity.

African nationalism of the ANC, the Pan-Africanism of the PAC and the Black Consciousness of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) represented critical perspectives of South African society and explored the linkages between systems of domination that operated on the axis of race, class, gender and nationality. Different ideological assertions were expressed as “idioms of the mass movements” of the African National Congress, the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement (Marx 1991). The tripartite relationship of race, nation, and class became a reference for liberation movements in their analysis of South African society, and in their formulations of African sovereignty. Gilroy (1993:120) has observed that within diasporic political cultures, “the sign of Africa and its associated Black nationalisms have been used as essential motifs for visions of racial identity.” Nationalism has been theoretically resilient within dialogues of Black liberation and this has been evident in South Africa. During the transition to democracy the liberation organizations were forced to remodel themselves

into political parties. While South Africa remains politically pluralistic there has been a shift away from “representing the nation” to “representing specific constituencies” (Ottaway 1991:66). However the legacy of these diverse conceptions of race, nation, class, gender and citizenry crystallized by the liberation struggle continues to impact contemporary political attitudes.

In South Africa there were many political cultures and the Pan-Africanist movement is one that has not received adequate attention, specifically as it articulates the relationship between gender and nationalism. The relationship between Black women’s activism and forms of Black nationalism opens a broader understanding of how women contribute to the propagation of political ideas. As nationalists, Africanist Black women are politically and theoretically subversive, thus their lives have been eclipsed by the dominant discourse on movements. As Begona Aretxaga argues regarding nationalist women in Northern Ireland, the “politics of identity shape the experience of women” which leads them into “different and contraposed positions” with regard to feminism (Aretxaga 1997:7). As I will show for some Africanist women, attitudes towards feminism range from ambiguity to clear refutation. The lives of Africanist women demonstrate that the linkages between women and communities can override gender identity (Aretxaga 1997). Pan-Africanism as practiced and lived by Africanist women is an interrogation of nationalism as a liberatory idea. This project explores the spaces where politics converge with the interiors of women’s lives and how that interaction enriches the basis of a movement. A movement is not confined to a structure but it gains momentum in everyday experiences. Women are instrumental in abetting a movement by making politics mundane and ubiquitous.

Pan-Africanism can be employed theoretically to conceptualize the asymmetries predicated on racial and class hierarchies and thus have a global application. Lemelle and Kelley (1994:4) suggest that the “ideological and practical, or discursive and nondiscursive, aspects of Pan-Africanism are so inseparable as to render such distinctions meaningless.” Pan-Africanism as a strand of nationalism shows how political consciousness can be multilayered. Race, culture, class and history are all invoked in an “imagined community” where Black subjectivity is aligned with activism (Anderson 1983). Historically, the streams of Pan-Africanism have been affected by different paradigms, some of which essentialize race, severing it from the matrix of class and gender dynamics of domination. Other discourses on Pan-Africanism reify tradition and culture, thereby thwarting critical analysis of past societies, which then limits transformative models for Black liberation in the future. Afrocentrism is another perspective that seeks to reconnect African culture and values to contemporary life in the Black Diaspora. It heralds a static view of African history using an Afrocentric framework from which people of African descent draw on for cultural and social templates. Manning Marable refutes “narrow Afrocentrism and separatist black nationalism based on simplistic reductions of racial categories because they advocate a politics of metaphysics and mysticism which are disconnected from the actual material struggles and needs of our people”(Marable 1996: 211). Pan-Africanism is varied and its articulation can be conservative or progressive. Sidney Lemelle argued that “revolutionary Pan-Africanism must be transracial and transgendered, inclusive (not exclusive) and internationalist (rather than simply nationalist)” (Lemelle 1994:346). He contends that revolutionary Pan-Africanism has a greater potential as a “counter-

hegemonic discourse” because of its emphasis on historical materialism and political praxis (Lemelle 1994:333).

In the history of Pan-Africanism women have been present and active, but their participation has been overlooked in the polemics about unity, tradition, and the entitlement of leadership. Within the historiography of Pan-Africanism, gender was excluded or subordinated as a category of analysis. Lemelle and Kelley (1994:5) argue that “gender shapes dominant discourse and that Black male constructions of masculinity shape culture, ideology, and politics in the diaspora.” In South African Pan-Africanism, gender as a critique enters later in the movement, and it remains a point of contention. Issues of gender are minimally politicized and at times Black women are complicit in making their specific interests tangential. In writing about the Africanist South African women, I do not try to represent the consciousness of activist women because such an endeavor would be disingenuous. I agree with Spivak that such “an assumption and construction of a consciousness and subject” leaves the “subaltern woman mute as ever”(1988:295). I intend to address, through ethnographic analysis, how women reproduce nationalism, broadening activism by entangling politics with kinship; how they define their political identities; and how their subjectivity is mirrored in individual narratives and the metanarrative of Pan-Africanism.

This study contributes to the literature on nationalism and gender in that it looks at nationalist movements from the ground up. McClintock remarked that the “explorations of the gendering of the national imaginary have been conspicuously paltry”(1995:353). That is, by observing the everyday lives of Africanist women, I focus not on the theoretical origins of nationalist thought, but on how it operates in people’s homes.

families and communities. I examine how nationalism as lived in the everyday is a collaborative experience. Homi Bhaba argues that there needs to be an “understanding of the performativity of language in the narrative of the nation” and that the “authority of culture is ambivalent because it is in the act of composing” (1990:3). Therefore “meanings are partial and history is half-made because it is in the process of being made” (Bhabha 1990:3). Nationalism is continuously reenacted and this process is always incomplete.

The South African form of Pan-Africanism, particularly its expression in the Pan-Africanist Congress, will be addressed in the following chapters. While it was greatly influenced by the waves of decolonization in Africa of the late 1950's, it is very specific to South Africa. A history of European settlement in South Africa differentiates the way Pan-Africanism was formulated and it directly influenced the salience of identity in the movement. South African Pan-Africanism constructed a dichotomy between an African and a “settler”, implicating race as a badge of the oppressed or the oppressor (Glaser 1993). Therefore race was implicitly central to expressions of Pan-Africanism in South Africa, making it a controversial political discourse. Frequently, people questioned my interest in the political history of Pan-Africanism in South Africa and dismissed the PAC as politically irrelevant. My goal is not to argue for the political validity of one political position over another but to enrich the canon on Black women's history. I am interested in why some women become activists and how they come to choose particular forms of activism, in this instance Pan-Africanism. For such women their choices were made in a context of repression and violence which makes their lives more remarkable. While the PAC has struggled to catch a foothold in the new South Africa, those activists like

thousands of other South Africans in different political camps have stories that deserve to be honored.

The Making of South Africa 1652-1800

John Comaroff described the colonialism of South Africa as an incoherent process marked by “tensions and contradictions” (Comaroff 1989:661). The Republic of South Africa has a colonial history much like the rest of Africa in that as Europeans settled there, it became an important locus of trade and the indigenous populations suffered mass displacement. South Africa is unique in the scale of European settlement, the importation of Indian indentured laborers, and the presence of a substantial population of people with mixed ethnic background, the “so-called Coloured” population. Since 1500, Portuguese, Dutch and English vessels circled the Cape peninsula on their way to India. The Khoi and the San were the original inhabitants of the Western Cape prior to European settlement. Before the arrival of Europeans, Bantu-speaking peoples migrated to the Southern Africa. They settled in mixed agricultural and pastoral areas, assimilating the hunter-gatherers they encountered. Nguni speakers like the Zulu and Xhosa occupied the eastern coast whereas Sotho-speakers settled in the interior north (Wilson 1969). The present day Afrikaaners are descendants from Dutch, German, French and other Europeans who settled at the Cape of Good Hope (Thompson 1985). It was in 1652 that the Dutch East India Company established a station for the resupply of vessels with provisions such as fresh meat and vegetables under the leadership of Jan Van Riebeck.

Over time Table Bay moved from being a “refreshment station” to a colony of settlement (Marks 1972:63). The Khoi were willing trade partners with the Dutch, exchanging surplus cattle for copper and tobacco. However, as the “refreshment station”

gave rise to an expanding settlement, the demands for land for cultivation and pastoralism grew. Eventually, employees of the Dutch East India Company were granted land on which to cultivate and raise cattle. These settlers or “freeburghers” who now had land rights to herd, slaughter, and sell livestock to the trading company, were in need of labor. The Khoi were an unreliable labor source because they were a pastoral people and their familiarity with the landscape made it easy for them to desert their employers. In order to meet the demands for labor, slaves from Angola, Madasagascar, Indonesia and East Africa were imported. By 1771 the “burger population of 1,756 owned 1,781 slaves” (Wilson 1969: 204). In 1659 in response to the confiscation of land and the rising threat against their pastoral way of life, the first of two Khoi wars in the seventeenth century erupted. The impoverishment of the Khoi followed the expansion of European settlement. According to Shula Marks, the European population increased from “200 in the 1660’s to 20,000 by the end of the Dutch period” (Marks 1972:68). Throughout the eighteenth century violence, raids and commando expeditions characterized the relationship between settlers and the Khoi. The “Bushman Wars” were fought by dispossessed Khoi, and escaped slaves, against settlers. The commandos led by white settlers or “trekboers” retaliated against raiding Khoisan and captured Khoisan children. The children were forced to serve apprenticeships, where they were bonded to their bosses and provided free labor until adulthood. However until the end of Dutch control of the Cape, the Khoisan put up a formidable resistance against European encroachment.

Within one hundred years of the founding of the station the Khoisan, who had been the dominant population in the Western Cape, were forced into slavery, wage labor, and moved to the interior. Rapid expansion of the pastoral economy followed and

“trekboers” went deeper eastward into the interior, imposing on Xhosa communities.

Another consequence of the European settlement on the Cape was the shift in ethnic identity of the Khoisan. The displacement of Khoisan communities and the sexual relationships between Khoisan women and white men lay the basis for a “Cape Coloured” identity. Marks writes that the Khoisan “acculturated themselves out of existence” (Marks 1972:77). Mixed Khoi and mixed Khoi-Xhosa communities of the Griqua populated the frontier Xhosa settlements (Marks 1972). By 1795 the British had occupied the Cape, and the London based East India Company took over the Dutch East India Company.

1800-1867 Pacification of South Africa

The annexation of Cape Town by the British led to the abolition of slavery in 1807. Frontier clashes were a frequent occurrence between trekboers and the combined forces of Khoi, San and Xhosa. Some of the communities of Khoi and Griqua continued to raid the trekboers of livestock. The period between 1836-1854 known as the “Great Trek” was an organized migration of fourteen thousand “voortrekkers” across the Orange River. They were in search of land and autonomy from the British government. From 1806 to 1906, wars erupted between Africans and settlers, and sporadic skirmishes occurred between African communities. In the 1820’s there was massive upheaval after the internal conflict of the Zulu kingdom during the period known as the “*mfecane*”, which forced an outpouring of refugees from Natal. As voortrekkers continued to move east, conflicts escalated, and in 1838, at the Battle of Blood River, they defeated Zulu regiments of three thousand fighters. After the defeat of the Zulu military the voortrekkers settled in Natal. In 1842, Britain made Natal a British colony and began importing Indian

indentured laborers to build the sugar industry. Between 1860 –1866 6,000 Indian workers arrived in Natal. Eventually Indians outnumbered the white population of Natal.

The “Kaffir Wars” of 1835, 1847, 1851 and 1879 pitted the British against the Xhosa, greatly dispossessing them of land and livestock. There was armed resistance under the leadership of Xhosa, Griqua and Sotho chiefs. In 1856 –1857 a young girl by the name of Nonqawuse began giving prophecies to the Xhosa, instructing them to slaughter their cattle. The “cattle killing” among the Xhosa led to massive devastation and a “massive exodus of Xhosa into the colonial labor market”(Peires 1989:319). The Xhosa population decreased by two-thirds between 1852 and 1858. In the words of Peires a “white corridor” was etched out of lands that were formerly Xhosa (Peires 1989). Afrikaaners moved to the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, establishing them as Afrikaaner republics in 1852 and 1854. In the Orange Free State the Sotho under the leadership of Moshoeshe successfully resisted the “trekkers” throughout the 1860’s and in 1868 the British annexed Basutoland.

Colin Bundy (1972) examined the adaptability of the African peasantry in the 1800’s. The African peasantry was able to respond positively to the market economy and adapted their subsistence methods to the new opportunities. Among the Mfengu and Thembu in the Ciskei, African peasants cultivated wheat, millet, maize and raised sheep for wool production. The leasing of land to African tenants afforded African peasants an alternative to wage labor. In Natal, Africans were able to “withstand pressure on them to work for the white man and had been able to pay their taxes by selling off their surplus grain and cattle” (Bundy 1972:376). When diamonds were first mined in 1867, the need for foodstuffs rose and African farmers continued to meet these demands. However, as

white commercial agriculture and mining interests pressed their need for cheap labor, African land tenancy came under siege. Bundy argues that the “decline of the peasantry was a necessary component of, and not separate from, the process of capitalist development in South Africa” (Bundy 1972:388). It was the adjustments in colonial policy precipitated by the mineral boom which forced Africans into wage labor and not the failure of African agriculture.

1886-1948 The Hunt for Black Labor

More importantly distinctive about South Africa has been its swift industrialization and rapid proletarianization of its population, facilitated by enormous mineral wealth. In 1886, gold was discovered on the reefs of the Witwatersrand, which led to the establishment of the city of Johannesburg. By the late 1890's, South Africa was the largest producer and supplier of gold in the world, with between a fifth and a quarter of the worldwide supply (Marks and Trapido 1977:61). Marks and Trapido argue that the union of South Africa in 1910 created a coherent colonial state expediting the restructuring of capitalist development which could maximize the benefits from the mining industry. The discovery of gold highlighted certain disjunctures in South African society between the “enclave of capitalist mode of production and huge concentrations of European finance capital, and political /state power which remained in the hands of Afrikaaner notables dependent on landholdings”(Marks and Trapido 1977:64). For Marks and Trapido, the mining industry demanded a “new form of centralized and effectively coercive state apparatus”(Marks and Trapido 1977:64).

As Magubane has pointed out, the major contradiction in South African society was the need to “exploit African labor but the undesirability of the physical presence of

Africans" (Magubane 1979:10). In 1880 Earl Grey, the British Colonial Secretary, stated that "facilities should be afforded to the white colonists for obtaining the possession of land occupied by Native tribes, secondly the Kaffir population should be made to furnish as large and as cheap a supply of labor as possible" (Magubane 1979:71). Kelesto Atkins argued that at one point the motivation behind African's participation in wage labor was to "rebuild their subsistence base" (Atkins 1993:54). Other incentives were the impositions of colonial hut and labor taxes by the government that propelled Africans into the wage economy. The device for the surveillance and stabilization of African labor was the "pass", a form of identification that designated the residential and working privileges of Africans. Instituted within the Cape Colony to control the mobility of Khoikhoi slaves, the pass became an entrenched instrument of regulating the African labor force.

The state initiated various forms of social engineering to garner a steady source of cheap black labor. As Charles van Onselen notes, the South African labor market has been "dominated by three major sectors of employment; mining, agriculture and domestic service" (van Onselen 1982:1). The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand led to an explosive demand for mining labor and for domestic servants. There was a skewed ratio of men to women on the Rand and even working-class whites employed black domestic labor. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century the state and mining magnates collaborated on policies that would ensure an available supply of cheap black male labor for the mines. Different strategies were implemented to "transform black tenant farmers into wage laborers" (Marks and Trapido 1977:77). In the 1890's there was "intersectoral competition for black labor" between the mines and the domestic

service sector (van Onselen 1982:7). Black houseboys were a common feature in white households and their wages and working conditions were better than those offered by the mining industry. There were schemes to import white domestic labor, but this supply was never adequate to fulfill the demand, and furthermore white women could always find better work and pay in other sectors (van Onselen 1982). African labor was found in two main sectors, migrant labor of the mines and the agricultural sector.

By 1897 a great concentration of mineral wealth had been discovered in the Transvaal republic. Grievances between “uitlanders”, the Dutch word for non-Afrikaans whites, and Afrikaaners grew in the Transvaal, where under the Afrikaaner president Kruger, uitlanders had no vote. In 1895, the “Jameson Raid” was a failed attempt by “uitlanders” to take over the republic. Alfred Milner was appointed as British High Commissioner in 1897 and demanded that President Kruger give “uitlanders” the right to vote in the republics or risk war. In 1899 the Anglo-Boer war broke out and the British eventually defeated the Afrikaaners, overtook Johannesburg and annexed the Transvaal republics. On May 31, in 1902, the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed, ratifying this outcome. However after the war Afrikaaner leaders like J.B.M. Hertzog, J.C. Smuts and Louis Botha mobilized political parties and returned to power in the Transvaal and Orange Free State in 1907. In 1910, representatives from the four colonies of the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State, and the Transvaal inaugurated the union of South Africa. Louis Botha led the new government with J.C. Smuts. However it was the British and their mining interests who provided the revenue for the government.

After 1910, an alliance of “maize and gold” helped to consolidate the support given by the mining industry to white commercial agriculture (Denoon and Hyeko 1984).

The Natives Land Act of 1913, barred Africans from acquiring land outside “scheduled African areas”, thereby relegating them to marginal agricultural areas. The Act also banned forms of sharecropping such as “farming on the half”, whereby Africans with their own equipment and livestock cultivated land owned by whites, and in return gave half of the harvest to the landowner. Africans were allotted roughly only 13 percent of all land in South Africa. African reserves became reservoirs of poverty and “dormitories for cheap labor” (Magubane 1979:86). Bundy writes that the main function of the Natives Land Act was that “squatters and share-croppers were reduced to the level of labor tenants” (Bundy 1972:384).

Cooperation between white labor and the state was also pivotal to the success of the mining industry. Following the Anglo-Boer war, the Afrikaaner “rural settler economy” was weakened and many Afrikaaners moved to the cities. According to Davies (1973) seventy-five percent of white miners were Afrikaaners by the mid-1920’s. The Mines and Works Act was passed in 1911 to uphold the color bar throughout the union (Denoan and Nyeko 1984). An insurrection of white workers in 1922 over wages and the proportion of African workers, led to suppression by military forces. After the Rand revolt, as the insurrection was called Afrikaaner politicians, the white working class, and the mining industry, worked to guarantee the security and confidence of white workers. Hertzog formed the Nationalist Party in 1914 after squabbles between himself and English-speakers in the South African Party (SAP). Now three parties represented Afrikaaner interests, the SAP, the Nationalist Party and the Labor Party. After the crisis of 1921-2 when mine management sought to level the wages of white miners, the SAP backed the mine owners. In 1924 white workers within the Labor Party in alliance with

the Nationalists ousted the SAP from government.

The 1924 Pact government was a coalition between the Nationalist Party and the Labor party. The slogan of this government was “civilized labor”, which sought to maintain an industrial color bar, guaranteeing white workers a “living wage” while keeping the labor force segregated. In 1933, the United South African National Party, a coalition that represented mine owners, landowners and white labor, emerged under the leadership of Prime Minister Hertzog and Smuts as deputy. This party was a fusion of interests representing white labor, landowners and mining capital. After the outbreak of World War Two debates over South Africa’s neutrality in the war ended in a schism between the Purified Nationalists under Dr.D.F.Malan and the other factions of the United Party supported by Smuts (Denoon and Nyeko 1984). In the election of 1948, the Nationalist Party led by Dr. D.F. Malan was elected.

The term apartheid is the Afrikaans word for “separateness”, and in 1948 under the Nationalist government, it became the official policy of the South African state. Representatives of Afrikaaner capital, politicians and Afrikaaner nationalists debated over whether the “total segregation” of Africans was reconcilable with the need for African labor. Bonner, Delius and Posel (1993:1) contend that the “central dynamic of apartheid was a struggle over the distribution and control of labor.” Apartheid was an outcome of a more “interventionist state” that could thoroughly manage African labor amidst the contradictions of industrialization and rapid urbanization. State controls were implemented to channel the African workforce between rural and urban economic sectors (Posel 1991). Magubane referred to “apartheid as a new name for an old process”(1979:226). Expanding after the discovery of gold and diamonds, the

urbanization of Africans contradicted the official discourse of the state that upheld that Africans were to be temporary or migrant workers. In 1923, the Urban Areas Act legalized the racial and territorial segregation of Africans and further restricted their movement. While the segregation of African workers was compulsory, African urbanization and proletarianization proceeded. To the state, the “native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas which are essentially the white man’s creation, when he is willing to enter to minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart when he ceases to minister”(Magubane 1979:125). However, as the influx of Africans into the urban centers continued, a working-class consciousness emerged. A stable urban proletarian African workforce had developed whose ties to the reserves had diminished. By 1940, the growth of the manufacturing sector in South Africa necessitated an ever more permanent workforce and one that was in close proximity to sites of employment. After 1943 the contribution of manufacturing to the gross national product had exceeded mining (Posel 1991:25).

White socialists were influential in the early days of trade union involvement by Africans. Africans participated within the Industrial Workers of Africa formed in 1917 and the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) organized in 1919. The ICU attracted Black workers and rural Africans with a blend of nationalist and socialist ideas. In 1927 the membership of the ICU reached 100,000 (Lodge 1983). The ICU had a “massive working-class membership” but ideological differences between socialists and the leadership lead to its organizational decline (Lodge 1983:7). Later, after the legislation of apartheid, the African trade union movement burgeoned again. In 1912, the Native National Congress, later known as the African National Congress (ANC) was formed.

and the African National Congress Youth League was constituted. These organizations, along with the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), founded in 1921, will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter. By the 1940's trade unionism was spreading among Africans and by 1945, 40 percent of the Black industrial workforce was unionized. In 1946, 10,000 African miners went on strike foreshadowing the "strategy of mass action" as advocated by the ANC and the CPSA (Posel 1991). According to Tom Lodge (1983) the 1940's was a significant decade for African politics because of the strengthening of trade union activity, the founding of the Congress Youth League and the integration of communists into the mass movement.

1950-1975 The Mapping of Apartheid and Black Rebellion

Deborah Posel views apartheid as being "forged through a series of struggles within and beyond the state"(Posel 1991:5). Apartheid's planners consistently adjusted strategies as they executed policies. Therefore apartheid was not a "grand design" or ready-made blueprint implemented by the Nationalists as they seized power (Posel 1991). Apartheid as a set of policies was continuously revised to assimilate the changes that faced South Africa. In 1950, the Population Registration Act forced South Africans to be registered by racial group: White, Coloured, Bantu or Indian. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 stipulated separate and stratified education for all racial groups. The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 reserved the segregation of public facilities.

In 1951, through the Bantu Authorities Act, the state manufactured ten artificial "homelands" the Transkei, KwaZulu, Lebowa, Bophutatswana, Ciskei, Venda, Gazankulu, Swazi and Basotho-Qwaqwa. The Group Areas Act of 1953 further extended residential segregation and zoned specific urban areas for particular groups: Africans.

Coloureds, Asians and Whites. This led to the massive uprooting of communities and rezoning of areas according to race and ethnicity. People were forced to move from one urban area to another, others were expelled from urban areas altogether and deported to Bantustans, and people were relocated from white farms and "Black spots" into reserves (Ramphela and Wilson 1989:21). The homelands were never self-sufficient. Dependent upon the economy of South Africa, they were niches for the cheap reproduction of the African labor force. The eligibility of Africans living in homelands to work outside these borders was strictly monitored. There was an inextricable nexus between the migrant labor system and the reserves. Ramphela notes that African men were required to live in two places simultaneously, as "labor units in the cities, working in mining and manufacturing as migrant laborers and in the rural reserves as husbands, fathers and citizens"(Ramphela and Wilson 1989: 208). For rural communities there was ever increasing dependency on migrant labor, a degradation of the subsistence economy and intensified state hegemony. In 1959 the Bantu Self-Government Act was passed, proclaiming that the "Bantu peoples of the Union of South Africa do not constitute a homogenous people but form separate national units on the basis of language and culture"(Danaher 1987). Black South Africans were gradually denationalized and integrated into "new states" along tribal and linguistic lines.

Throughout the 1950's the African National Congress and members of the Congress Alliance (Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, and the Congress of Trade Unions) protested against pass laws in acts of civil disobedience. This burgeoning urban opposition was related to the ever-growing urban Black proletariat in South Africa. Since the early 1940's manufacturing contributed to the rise of an African urban

workforce. The architects of apartheid grappled with the increasing urban proletariat and the labor shortage in white commercial agriculture. Measures of “influx control” were designed to reconcile the contradictions of labor needs and African urban residence. According to Posel the “state sought greater control over the distribution of African labor between the urban and rural areas”(Posel 1991:8). Pass offenders were “endorsed out” of white areas and deported back to “homelands.” Since 1960 3.5 million Africans were forcibly removed from “white South Africa to bantustans” and other areas designated for Blacks (Ramphela 1989; Danaher 1987).

From 1955 African workers organized the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and engaged in “political unionism”, allying with and assisting the African National Congress and Congress Alliance in mass campaigns (Webster 1988:22). In 1960, state repression and the banning of its leadership devastated SACTU. During the 1960’s, foreign investment in South Africa grew and the manufacturing sector experienced a boom. More Africans were entering semi-skilled positions, although there was a tightening of “influx control” measures. From 1960 Black opposition was under attack and the state passed a number of acts to stamp out the liberation movements. The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 resulted in the banning, detention and imprisonment of hundreds of activists. Several other legislative acts were used by the state to prevent unionization by Africans: the Internal Security Act, which prohibited public gatherings that endangered the security of the state, the Riotous Assemblies Act which outlawed picketing, and the Terrorism Act which banned anything that could be used to jeopardize the law and order of the state. In the 1970’s, Africans were allowed to organize themselves into trade unions and this provided a platform for opposition politics

that had been earlier thwarted with the banning of the ANC, CPSA and PAC. All these factors influenced the forms of social relations that were crystallized in apartheid and the popular upsurges that characterized the liberation movements. The predominance of race and class in the discourses of resistance were not just a consequence of the apartheid state, but of processes that preceded 1948.

1976-2001 Negotiating the New South Africa

On Wednesday June 16, 1976 twenty thousand Soweto school children protested a decree issued by the Department of Bantu Education that Afrikaans be used as a language of instruction in high schools (Kane-Berman 1978). Reports of the unrest observed that the student's placards read " *Viva Azania!*" and "Black Power!", evidence of the influence of Black Consciousness Movement (Kane-Berman 1978). The student revolt spread to the townships of Langa and Nyanga in Cape Town, Kimberley in the Northern Cape, Natal and the Orange Free State. The greatest fatalities were in Cape Town, where at least 60 people died and Soweto, the center of the student uprising. Thousands of Africans were detained and 1,122 juveniles were convicted on charges stemming from the demonstrations. The brutal clampdown on young people after the Soweto uprising contributed to the "militarization of national liberation struggle" that began to gain momentum since the 1960's (Cock 1993). Many student activists fled South Africa and went into military training in exile camps of the ANC and the PAC. In the aftermath of the unrest the United States government under the Carter administration joined the United Nations Security Council in imposing an arms embargo on South Africa.

In the general elections of 1977 the Nationalist Party was reelected, taking the majority of parliament. Following the Soweto uprising the government "embarked on a

total strategy of combined reform and militarization" (Klug and Seidman 1985:22). Pass laws, bantustans and the political exclusion of Africans remained unchanged whereas the segregation of public facilities was relaxed. With the creation of independent states of Transkei in 1976, Bophuthatswana in 1977, Ciskei in 1981 and Venda in 1979, eight million Africans lost their South African nationality. In accordance with the National States Citizenship Act "any African with genetic, cultural, linguistic, familial or residential ties to a particular bantustan is automatically deprived of South Africa citizenship on the day the bantustan is declared independent" (Danaher 1987:253). By manipulating a "state-sponsored ethnicity" the "traditional elites within homeland regimes" were able to defend their position through the political structures of the bantustans (Szeftel 1994:192).

In 1979 the state formally recognized African unions. The Wiehann Commission reported that "if Black unions continued to be prohibited, they would be driven underground, and unite Black workers not only against the authorities but more importantly against the system of free enterprise in South Africa" (Maree 1987:141). The commission conceded that it would be better to bring independent African unions under the "protective and stabilizing element of the system" and "its essential discipline and control" (Maree 1987:141). It was the rising force of African unionization that motivated the commission, but the unions debated over whether or not they should register themselves. The state's efforts appeared to be a concession to workers, but it was interpreted as a strategy to control African unions. The Afrikaaner middle and professional class almost doubled by the mid- 1970's. With the election of P.W. Botha as Prime Minister in 1978 strains between the Afrikaaner bourgeoisie, farmers and the

working-class began to show. During Botha's tenure, Afrikaaner defectors from the National Party established the Conservative Party in 1982. The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 allowed for local self-government in the townships through the election of community councils (Danaher 1987:249). These community councils were limited to managing the structural problems of the townships and were blocked from participation in national politics.

Between 1981 and 1985, trade union membership doubled. From 1984 onward there were joint campaigns that involved school boycotts, bus boycotts, consumer boycotts, rent strikes and stayaways (Webster 1988: 185). Eddie Webster referred to the trade unionism in South Africa as "social movement unionism" because of this integration of economic and political issues (1988:175). The "politicization of the workplace" was a necessary component of the community struggles of the 1980's where there were broad-based campaigns. The "object of the 'stayaway' was to articulate student, worker and civic grievances and to put pressure on the state to redress these" (Maree 1987: 268). The alliance between workers and students was inevitable, as many parents were trade unionists and shop stewards. The liberalization of industrial relations was at odds with the unchanging political system. The exclusion of Africans from political channels thrust the trade unions into the political forefront. The largest trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), was formed in December 1985, and it aligned itself with the United Democratic Front (UDF) formed in August 1983. The UDF was a coalition of organizations committed to an "unitary South Africa, non-racialism and democracy"(Marx 1992:131). The UDF was launched with six hundred delegates from three hundred twenty organizations representing

community, youth, women, church, professional, trade union and sports groups (Klug and Seidman 1985:24). However, it was an alliance whose association with the African National Congress was implicitly articulated (Marx 1992). While most unions supported the democratic objectives of the UDF, some unions were wary of affiliation because, as working-class organizations, their structures and aims were different from that of the UDF. The UDF represented a multi-class and multi-racial mass movement. However, the coalition between COSATU, the largest South African federation of trade unions, and the UDF foreshadowed the COSATU/ ANC alliance of the 1990's.

In the mid 1980's political leaders from the liberation organizations called on Africans to make South Africa "ungovernable", advocating a "peoples war" to combat the state (Marx 1993). Under the Prime Minister P.W. Botha a state of emergency was declared on July 1985 around Johannesburg and in the Eastern Cape. The militarization of the townships did not quell the mass-based struggles that were characteristic of the 1980's. Further, the internationalization of the anti-apartheid struggle strengthened the position of activists as they clamored for transformation of the South African state. The popular insurgency in South Africa, the international movement of economic divestment and deepening township violence contributed to state's initiative on negotiation with the major liberation organizations. In 1990 the ban on liberation organizations was lifted and major leaders of the ANC and the PAC were released from prison.

Negotiations between the De Klerk government and the liberation organizations resulted in a schedule of elections. In the 1990's violence between followers of the *Inkatha* Freedom Party (IFP) led by Gatsha Buthelezi and followers of the African National Congress was widespread. Between 1986 and 1992 14,500 people were killed in

faction fighting, and of those, 7,500 were killed in Natal (Golan 1999). The *Inkatha* Freedom Party, founded in 1975 by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi broke with the liberation movement in the early 1980's and ANC leaders became critical of the covert relationship between the IFP and the South African government. During the early nineties the armed wing of the PAC, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) stepped up its operations within South Africa. Eventually the ANC and the PAC ceased armed struggle and participated in the general election of 1994. The African National Congress won by a landslide affirming their position as the most powerful liberation organization. The African National Congress, under the leadership of Nelson Mandela agreed to a government of national unity, a tripartite government composed of the National Party, the ANC and its allies, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). In June 1999, the ANC was reelected to power, surpassing smaller parties such as the PAC and AZAPO (the Azanian People's Organization), further consolidating their position. Though the ANC is the dominant political party in national and local political structures, the IFP in KwaZulu/Natal and the Nationalist Party in the Western Cape have a considerable constituency.

In South Africa the political construction of ethnicity and race was an essential part of state policy (Szeftel 1994). Szeftel notes that there is a considerable difference between arguing that ethnicity is an "essential element in African politics" and arguing that ethnicity is autonomous (Szeftel 1994:187). Instead of ethnic determinism, Szeftel suggests that we consider the "invention and reinvention of ethnicity by apartheid" and how these processes affected South African political history (1994:191). With the advent of democratization in the 1990's, ethnicity remains contentious as shown in ANC/*Inkatha*

violence, and the continued existence of parties like the National Party and the Democratic Party that have almost all white constituencies. The homelands were dissolved and incorporated into South Africa after the new government was installed in 1994. While studying the ideology of Pan-Africanism in South Africa, I also look at the ways in which apartheid contributed to the crystallization of race in the day-to-day lives of Africanist women. Race continues to motivate people's actions and it is an indelible factor in identity. I contend that for the majority of Africanist women, race and nationality are the most privileged aspects of their identity. These issues have been raised by writers who documented women's activism in South Africa (Bozzoli 1983; McClintock 1993 and Walker 1982). While gender relations are salient, they are not an incentive for activism. I argue that the ideology of Pan-Africanism reinforced this ambivalence about a thorough gender critique within political spaces. In the following section I provide an overview of the context of this research and the methods I employed to study Africanist women's activism.

Research Sites

South Africa is a very diverse multiethnic, multilingual country in which Africans are the majority population. My research was conducted in the townships of Johannesburg and Cape Town. Johannesburg is a thoroughly urban landscape whereas in Cape Town, Xhosa speakers are still closely tied to the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. This research was undertaken between 1994-1999. My initial and exploratory work began in June 1994 shortly after the first democratic elections. Intermittent trips to South Africa occurred in 1996 and 1997. Finally in 1999 I spent a year in South Africa, in the same year of the second democratic elections which took place in June 1999. In 1999 my

fieldwork was conducted in the massive township of Soweto outside of Johannesburg in Gauteng province. South Africa is now divided into nine provinces, Gauteng, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Province, the north West Province, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape, and the Western Cape. Gauteng has the largest population of just over six million and is one the wealthiest provinces in South Africa. There are large disparities of wealth in all of South Africa but in Gauteng as in the Western Cape they are more glaring. Gauteng is the financial, industrial and commercial capital of South Africa.

Soweto (South West Township) is a densely populated township about 15 miles southwest of Johannesburg. Between the First and Second World War, Black South Africans began migrating into Johannesburg supplying the labor for the rapid industrialization that was occurring at the time. Housing was an urgent problem for urban planners who decided to allocate residential areas for Black workers. In 1948 the government began to build two room matchbox style houses and Africans were forcibly resettled into these areas. Pimville is one of the oldest sections in Soweto built in 1904 and other areas were built over time. Originally people from the same language group lived in the same sections of Soweto but presently there is much intermingling and Soweto is home to Pedi, Tswana, Sotho, Zulu, Venda, Tsonga, and Xhosa speakers. As well there are sizeable numbers of residents from neighboring Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Two room, four room and informal settlements (squatter camps) dot the township. There are also single-sex hostels that house male workers. Hostels were built in townships for "oscillating workers", men who lived in the rural areas but worked months at a time in the city (Ramphela 1992). Soweto is also home to a large Black middle-class

and many Black businesses thrive in Soweto. Soweto is a place full of “struggle history” and there is a memorial to Hector Petersen, the first student killed in the 1976 student uprising in which students protested the mandatory introduction of Afrikaans into the curriculum. This student rebellion signalled a changing point for political struggle in South Africa. For the first time students and the youth were at the forefront of resistance struggles. Children openly defied the authority of the schools and the policies of the state, opening a new phase of radicalism, different from the acts of civil disobedience staged during the 1950’s. It was in Soweto at Orlando that Pan-Africanists inaugurated the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania in 1959.

Earlier exploratory fieldwork was conducted in Cape Town in the Black townships of Langa, Gugulethu and later in Khayalitsha. The Western Cape has historically been a “Coloured preferential” area and Blacks were repeatedly forced out of Cape Town to “homelands” in the Eastern Cape. Tom Lodge called Cape Town a “historically non-African town” because of the proportion of the Coloured population to the African one (Lodge 1978:220). The Coloured population represented a significant labour force and thus Africans were designated as a surplus community. Africans are a minority in the Western Cape and most of the squatter camps (informal settlements) such as Khayalitsha are dominated by Xhosa-speakers. There is a long history of protest over land and housing in Cape Town such as those that took place in Crossroads in the 1980’s (Wilson and Ramphela 1989). Battles over housing and the close links many Western Cape Xhosa-speakers keep with rural communities in the Eastern Cape have been important in the spread of Pan-Africanism in the Cape. The strong emphasis on land rights has contributed to the popularity of the PAC in the Eastern and Western Cape.

Many of my informants in the Western Cape had relatives who were members or were associated with *POQO*, the armed cells affiliated with the PAC which emerged after its banning. While there may have been more *POQO* cells in the Transvaal, the population of Africans in the Western Cape is much lower in comparison to areas like Johannesburg and Pretoria. The organization and discipline of *POQO* cells in the Western Cape was a point of pride for many of my subjects.

Methods

My focus was on the Rockville branch of the Pan-Africanist Congress and more specifically on women's participation in this branch's activities. However interviews cover a cross-section of women members of the Pan-Africanist Women's Organization (PAWO) who had different levels of political participation. Moreover I conducted interviews with women members of the Pan-Africanist Women's Organization (PAWO) in Soweto and in the Western Cape townships of Khayalitsha, Langa and Gugulethu. Therefore I was able to interview Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa speaking women with different backgrounds and economic circumstances. In my experience in Soweto and the Black townships of Cape Town, families and homes are politically identified. For instance a home will be publicly known as a PAC house or an ANC house and so on. It was therefore easy to network among Pan-Africanist homes and families because of their shared political histories.

Due to my contacts among PAC members in New York I was able to link up with Africanists when I first visited South Africa in 1994. In 1994 I met many PAC members in Pretoria but many more in Langa and Gugulethu in Cape Town. In 1994 I literally stepped off the Greyhound bus in Cape Town with a phone number of an Africanist

woman in Langa. Once I made contact with her, I took a train to Langa and was introduced to other members of the PAC. In Langa I networked with Africanist students at the University of the Western Cape and those acquaintances assisted me greatly in traveling throughout Cape Town. I made subsequent trips to South Africa in 1996, 1997 and finally in 1999. Initially I planned to focus my research in Cape Town but after the death of an acquaintance who arranged to host me, I decided to focus my ethnography in Johannesburg for greater security. I had many more “families” in Johannesburg and transport was convenient. Through a friend in New York, I met my host from Soweto who coordinated my stay in Rockville. She was an official in the regional branch of the PAC and head of the Rockville branch. By staying in her home I was privy to a great deal of the inner workings of politics on the grassroots level. Also because 1999 was an election year there was a lot of activity surrounding the PAC campaign in her area.

My data gathering strategies consisted of interviewing and participant-observation. The observation of kin relations was central to this research. The interviews were conducted in many formal and informal settings. I interviewed women while they cared for their children, while they cooked, during weddings, and between meetings. Ninety-percent of my interviews took place in homes and the remaining were conducted in women’s offices during working hours. Privacy was always an issue because women hardly ever have time for themselves and none of the women lived alone. Some interviews were scheduled and others just happened on the spot. I just showed up at some women’s houses and they almost always welcomed me. In Cape Town I was already a familiar figure as people knew me as a researcher since 1994. As I reached Cape Town acquaintances helped me compile a list of women to interview and it was fairly easy to

reach them because of the closeness of the Africanist community in the townships of Langa, Guguletu and Khayalithsha. My sample was diverse. They ranged in age from twenty eight to seventy-four; I did not want very young informants because I was interested in individual histories of activism and younger woman could not provide this. My informants included women who were unemployed as well as those who were professionals. Some had experiences of exile and others had never left their provinces. One-third of the respondents had military training as members of the PAC and two-thirds had collaborated with the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) at some point. Due to the clandestine nature of women's activities with APLA my trustworthiness was very important to my informants. Fortunately my introduction into Africanist circles was facilitated by highly respected activists. For some of my interview data I use fictitious names to protect the confidentiality of my subjects and the activists they mention. I was well-versed in PAC history and knew many of the top figures of the movement, because many lived in New York before returning to South Africa.

As a female researcher studying Pan-Africanism I was confronted with many challenges as well as humorous situations. Being a woman was advantageous because women are more at ease speaking with other women. However being a woman and studying a "radical" organization it was necessary for me to be very precise in the way I presented myself and my project. Because I was a woman people always questioned me about personal relationships and I constantly had to make it known that I was in South Africa as a researcher. I had to clarify that I was on a schedule and my visa was not indefinite. This often fell on deaf ears. Africanists wanted to know when I was moving to South Africa and I was constantly being invited to meet other Africanists. While my

intentions were purely academic other people had different agendas and I quickly learned how to be diplomatic in such instances. Even so I had to always remain cognizant of the fact that I was doing research even while close friendships were developing. I strongly believe that race played a significant role in people's comfort with me and it affected the way in which I was quickly integrated into their lives.

Language was another issue that I worked hard to overcome. My host in Soweto insisted on speaking to me in Zulu because she could see I was getting spoiled by the English speakers in her home. Zulu was much easier to study than Sotho which was impossible for me to understand. I took summer immersion courses in Xhosa so I was familiar with it but I understated my level of knowledge because it had been a long time since I heard Xhosa after months of living in a Zulu-speaking home. I remember one instance when a former APLA member was speaking to another in Xhosa, and a friend was watching me as I looked at the news on television. He said to the activist who was speaking "Be careful. She does understand Xhosa" and I laughed because it was true. After two weeks in Cape Town my Xhosa returned to me rather quickly. Many people assumed that I didn't understand Zulu and Xhosa, but once they realized I understood a lot of what they were saying my lessons continued.

I conducted 25 semi-structured interviews of women who were members of AWO PAWO. I enlisted the help of a translator during one interview of a Xhosa speaking woman in Khayalitsha. The interviews were taped and transcribed. All the interviews except one were conducted in English. I attended Rockville branch meetings, political rallies, amnesty hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, election roadshows, *braais* (barbecues), parties, visited prisons and the homes of Pan-Africanist

women. South African society is heavily structured along gender lines and as a woman I was given access to many social situations that were dominated by women. At funerals and parties, men and women are often, but not always, segregated. At one traditional ritual I attended, men drank traditional beer outside while women were inside cooking and talking. It was awkward for me because the women were Sotho speakers and my understanding was limited to Zulu and Xhosa. I was not able to violate such protocol at formal occasions. But I was frequently able to speak to Africanist women on a one –to-one basis. Often they did not approve of gender segregation but such things were defined as cultural. I was able to attend graduation in Leeukwop Maximum Prison at the invitation of Africanist political prisoners. Originally I was to be accompanied by an older Africanist woman who later was unable to attend the ceremony. I was able to break that strict code of gender division in entering an all male prison because I was a researcher, although this was unknown to the prison authorities.

I undertook archival research at the University of the Witwatersrand. There are large collections of documents on struggle history of the ANC, the PAC, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), the UDF, and trade union history. I sorted through documents of the PAC looking for representations of women and women's activism. I was specifically concerned with the evolving definition of women's roles in the national liberation movement and how the Pan-Africanist paradigm was broadened to integrate women as political workers.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter One I lay out a historical overview of South African politics and a brief history of South African women's activism from the 1950's to the 1990's. I discuss the

formation of different movements, their ideological perspectives and how women were integrated into these organizations. I discuss the continuities in the ways women and motherhood were constructed in each organization, as well as how the home became politicized and women as mothers became subversive by supporting the dissidence of children.

In Chapter Two I review the literature on nationalism and the relationship between gender and nationalism. I cite different examples of women's participation in nationalist movements and how women are made "iconic" figures by nationalism. Also I look at different nationalisms, specifically Black nationalisms and how they inform gender. I outline a short history of the Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO) and its formulation of a gender analysis within Pan-Africanism.

In Chapter Three I outline the basic issues that have affected African women's lives in South Africa. I discuss the systems of control used against African women and how African women attempted to assert their autonomy. The major indices that explain African women's experience have been race, class and gender. I note how African women have historically organized themselves in organizations that have working-class orientations or community –based concerns.

In Chapter Four, I examine the ways in which political identity is constituted by individual experience and activism. More specifically, I look at what identities are privileged over others, and how this is related to political activism. I am interested in how political activism motivates critical gender analysis and the contradictions that this entails.

In Chapter Five, I discuss the ways in which women live, reproduce and define

Pan-Africanism in the everyday realm. These lived experiences parallel, contradict and transcend the parameters of the organization they belong to. I contend that to understand the trajectory of women's activism within this form of nationalism, it is necessary to grasp the politicization of everyday social relations. It is the daily reproduction of themes that contributes to the continuity of nationalist ideologies in South Africa. Within women's lives, we find distinctive articulations of these processes.

In Chapter Six, I address Pan-Africanism as a metanarrative and look at how it shapes the subjectivity of Black women. Women who draft their narratives give authority to certain perspectives and sublimate the particularities of their own histories. Race and land are dominant themes in South African Pan-Africanism, and I contend that these inform women's political identities. South African Pan-Africanism is a reflection of specific experiences of Black South Africans. I use women's narratives because I agree with Kapferer who writes that the "legitimizing power of ideological references to history lies not so much in the character of a remote past as in the present social and political situation of their speaking" (Kapferer 1988:96). Africanist women's narratives are evidence of Black women's positionality in the "new South Africa" and a testament to their perceptions of liberation.

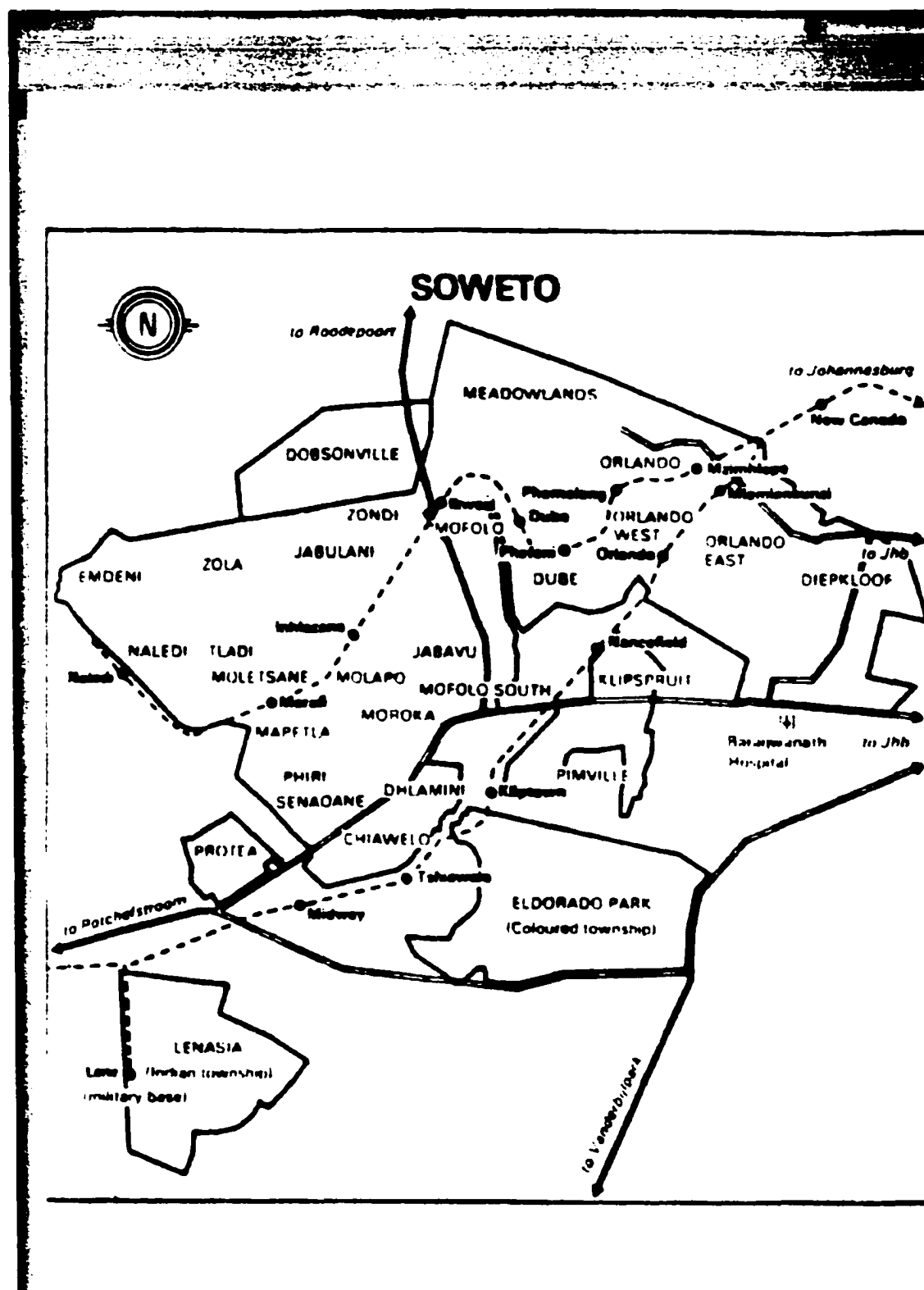


Figure 1. Map of Soweto

Chapter One

Zenzele (Do it For Yourself)

In theorizing about the historical processes that have structured the lives of Black South African women, the intersecting hierarchies of race, nationality, class and gender have to be examined. The race, gender and class nexus serves as a useful analytical frame of reference in exploring the political work of Black South African women. Race, class and gender are, as McClintock writes “articulated categories” that gain momentum through their relationship to each other (McClintock 1991:5).¹ In this chapter I give an overview of the arguments that trace the political economy of South Africa. I revisit the history of the liberation organizations and the kinds of gender struggles that were subsumed within them. I summarize the contending ideologies of the liberation organizations and the construction of women’s interests inside them. The liberation movement practically and discursively defined men and women differently. Within the spaces of political resistance, gender was subordinated to debates over race and class. I examine the forms of women’s activism that emerged in the wake of the campaigns of civil disobedience in the 1950’s. I look at the shift in women’s activism in the 1980’s and the redrawing of women’s militancy as mothers. I argue that the historical alignment of women’s activism with specific liberation movements continues to influence the trajectory of women’s political interests in South Africa today.

¹ African-American feminists highlight the multidimensionality of domination and the simultaneity of experience of oppression in the lives of Black women (Carby 1992 ; Dill 1979 ; Higginbotham 1992; King 1988; Mullings 1997)

Belinda Bozzoli and Peter Delius (1990) sketched the history of academic writing in South Africa by framing the academy within the political context of apartheid, the current of decolonization in Africa of the 1960's and the radicalism of oppositional movements. In the 1960's an Africanist scholarship emerged which "stressed the centrality of African initiative in shaping the past and present of the continent"(Bozzoli and Delius 1990:17). Africanist scholarship was greatly influenced by the movements toward decolonization in Africa and rising critiques of colonial history. By the late 1960's and 1970's, a new tide of academic writing by "revisionist" intellectuals embraced a historical materialist interpretation of South African society which emphasized the salience of class struggle (Posel 1983; Bozzoli and Delius 1990). Scholars such as F.A. Johnstone, Stanley Trapido, Martin Legassick and Shula Marks argued that state violence, cheap labor, and the politics of racial segregation were essential elements for capital accumulation in South Africa. Influenced by theoretical models of Marxism, these revisionists "placed race at the level of an effect of capitalist relations, rather than as a cause" (Bozzoli and Delius 1990:20). By focusing their emphasis on political economy, they explored the congruence between racial segregation and capitalism in South Africa. Harold Wolpe, a structuralist, summarized the destruction of pre-capitalist modes of production in South Africa. He discussed the ways in which the "system of producing cheap migrant labor generated rural impoverishment and allowed for the existence of extremely low wages to be paid to Africans in the capitalist sector" (Wolpe 1972:444). For Wolpe the contradictions between the precapitalist economies and the capitalist mode of production was a "dominant contradiction within the capitalist economy" (Wolpe

1972:454). Therefore racist ideology was one that “sustained and reproduced capitalist relations of production” (Wolpe 1972:454).

Deborah Posel discussed the debates in South African historiography between revisionist scholarship and liberal writers. Revisionist writers argued for a different paradigm of political economy, emphasizing the “functionalism of segregation to capital” (Ramphela 1992:15). For Posel, the contention over whether race or class is analytically primary loses sight of the intersecting processes in South African society. In the liberal analysis, racism and segregation are constraints on the expansion of capitalist growth (Posel 1983). Race is the “primary variable and class relations are treated as secondary or derivative of racial conflict”(Posel 1983:51). Writers within the liberal tradition of South African historiography interpreted apartheid as a system of racial segregation where race was the motive force behind social conditions. Liberal and revisionist perspectives reduced analysis to a race and class debate, treating them as “analytically independent categories”(Posel 1982:52). The race and class debates of the 1970’s were conceptually weakened by functionalism and reductionism that failed to consider “the unity of class and race as the source of structural differentiation in society”(Posel 1982:62). Therefore, in order to capture the systems of domination that existed in South African society, it was important to acknowledge the synthesis of forces that exhibited themselves in hierarchies of race and class.

Bozzoli and Delius suggested that white intellectuals who privileged a class analysis of South Africa felt alienated by nationalism and occluded the “continuities between past nationalism and present class consciousness”(Bozzoli and Delius1990: 23). After 1976, youth and community organizations, and trade unions escalated their protest

against the state. These movements, which invoked the “essential unity of the Black experience”, gave less importance to class analysis (Bozzoli and Delius 1990:27).

Activists in labor and worker organizations attempted to integrate culture, consciousness and class perspectives. Academic writing shifted away from structuralism and toward a greater understanding of the way in which “state forms, identities, consciousness and structures can coalesce ” at different historical moments (Bozzoli and Delius 1990:30).

The heterodox nature of the movements of the 1980’s illustrated the ways in which the full trajectory of class could only be understood in relation to other variables such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, community, and culture (Bozzoli and Delius 1990). Anthony Marx charted differing ideological perspectives in the South African opposition, each proposing “ different conceptions of race, nation and class, and implying different strategies”(Marx 1992:28). These approaches mirrored the multiple forms of domination in South African racial discrimination, national domination and class exploitation. Therefore, in analyzing movements we can observe how “divergent ideologies and variations of strategy are associated ” with a shifting focus on race, nation, and class identity (Marx 1992:8).

The Origins of Political Resistance

On January 8, 1912 in Bloemfontein South Africa, the South African Native National Congress was formed. Tom Lodge described the event as the “ ascendancy in middle-class African circles of the contention that African interests could best be promoted not through sympathetic intermediaries but rather by action by Africans themselves” (Lodge 1983:1). The constituency of the Native National Congress was made up of “professional men, chieftains, ministers, teachers, clerks, interpreters, landholders,

businessmen, journalists, estate agents, building contractors and labor agents" (Lodge 1983:1). Upon its establishment, full membership was granted to African men, but auxiliary membership was given to women which excluded them from voting privileges. As auxiliary members women were responsible for "providing shelter and entertainment for delegates to the congress" (McClintock 1991:381). At its inaugural conference, the African National Congress, speakers addressed the "Chiefs of Royal Blood and gentlemen of our race", noting that "we have discovered that in the land of our birth we are treated as hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Walker 1982:32). The Bantu Women's League was formed in 1913 after the women's anti-pass campaigns in the Orange Free State as an affiliate to the ANC. These early women activists were, like the founding members of the ANC, educated, and predominantly Christian. The members of the Bantu Women's League lobbied for the cause of black women in the areas of pass laws and working conditions. As the Native Land Act of 1913 advanced attacks on the Black population, and the Hertzog Bill erased the voting privilege of Black men in the Cape, the ANC was unable to deliver an effective opposition and it floundered until the 1930's. After the Second World War the ANC reemerged stronger, in part due to a larger urbanized Black working class, and its alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP). The ANC renewed itself as a mass-based organization and as a nationalist movement. In 1948 the Afrikaans dominated Nationalist party was elected to government and officially coined its policy of racial segregation, "apartheid" or separate development.

The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was formed in 1921. In the 1920's they decided "their revolutionary task was among the natives" (Lodge 1983: 7). In 1928,

out of a membership of 1,750, the CPSA had 1,600 African members from largely semi-rural and rural backgrounds. Many African communists were active in the leadership of the ANC (Lodge 1983). More importantly, in 1928 it was the CPSA that developed the term “independent Native Republic” in South Africa, and thereafter the CPSA held the position that “an independent native republic was a stage towards a worker’s and peasant’s republic” (Lodge 1983: 9). The Suppression of Communism Bill was passed in 1950 after which the Communist Party of South Africa disbanded. In 1953 it regrouped underground as the South African Communist Party (SACP) working with the African National Congress and “marrying class struggle to national liberation” (Everatt 1991:38). Between 1950-1954 the SACP developed the theory of “internal colonialism”, giving equal leverage to the necessity of class and national struggles. According to the SACP, South Africa exhibited a “colonialism of a special type”, having the “characteristics of both an imperialist state and a colony within a single, indivisible, geographical, political, and economic entity” (Everatt 1991:32). Advocates of this theory explained that “the non-European population, while reduced to the status of a colonial people, has no territory of its own, no independent existence, but is almost wholly integrated in the political and economic institutions of the ruling class”(Everatt 1991:32). The SACP’s position argued that South Africa was two nations, one Black existing as a colony and one white, a settler, imperialist state. This theory served as an “ideological mid-point”, allowing for the participation of communists within the national liberation movement, with the contention that the struggle for national revolution was an intermediate phase (Everatt 1991: 39).

In April 1944, the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) was

established with a direct African nationalist orientation and mandate to build a “national liberation movement” (Karis and Carter 1973). The ANCYL would be an organization “where young African men and women will meet and exchange ideas in an atmosphere pervaded by a common hatred of oppression”(Karis and Carter 1973:306). The ANCYL embraced the philosophy of Africanism and “the creed of African nationalism”, which asserted that “Africa is a Black man’s country, that Africans are one, and that Africans should be led by Africans, that the objective was national freedom for Africans and the long term objective was of socialism after national liberation”(Karis and Carter 1973:317-8). Within its “basic policy”, the ANCYL asserted the foundation of African nationalism as being the “historical position that Africa was and has been a Black man’s continent”(Karis and Carter 1973:327). The ANCYL acknowledged that there were two streams of African nationalism, one which is an “ultrarevolutionary nationalism that is based on the slogan “Africa for the Africans”, and the other a moderate strand, calling on “the abandonment of white domination and inter-racial peace”(Karis and Carter 1973: 328). The ANCYL modeled itself after the latter, accepting that “different racial groups have come to stay” in South Africa (Karis and Carter 1973:328). According to this brand of African nationalism “Africans could admit the Europeans to a share of the fruits of Africa” once they surrender their monopoly over the land, “assist in the establishment of a free people’s democracy” and cease their domination (Karis and Carter 1973:328).

The ANC put into gear a Programme of Action that thrust the organization into full-fledged protests, demonstrations of civil disobedience, and the Defiance Campaign of 1952. In 1955, the ANCYL adopted the Freedom Charter which reiterated an African nationalism that held that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it; the people shall

share in the country 's wealth; the land should be shared among those who work it; there should be houses, security and comfort and that only a democratic state based on the will of all the people can secure to all their birthright without distinction of color, race sex, or belief." The ANC's Freedom Charter was a denouncement of racial or cultural nationalism and a reflection of the ideological heterodoxy of the Congress Alliance (Lodge 1983). All elements of the alliance stood behind the Freedom Charter, the CPSA, the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, the South African Coloured People's Organization, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

As of 1941, the decision was made to "revive the women's section of the congress" and "accord women the same status as men in the classification of membership" (Kimble and Unterhalter 1982:21). The leadership of the ANC encouraged women to participate in "nation building tasks in which the principal body of the ANC is engaged" (Karis and Carter 1972:25). Oliver Tambo a member of the national executive committee later explained:

The women's league is not just an auxiliary to the ANC and we know that we cannot win liberation and build a strong movement without the participation of women. We must make it possible for women to play their part in the liberation movement as equals and helping them in the home, even relieving them in many family and household burdens so that women may be given an opportunity of being politically active. The men in the congress movement must fight in every way possible those outmoded customs which make women inferior and must demonstrate by personal example their belief in the equality of all human beings of both sexes (Kimble and Unterhalter 1982:25).

Tambo expressed the dilemmas faced by women activists whose political work was being challenged by the domestic responsibilities assigned to them. In 1944 the

African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) was formally inaugurated as a "subsidiary body of the ANC" establishing a pattern for women's organizations within the national liberation movement (Walker 1982:90). The ANCWL was placed under the political tutelage of the ANC and thus followed its policy and programme. Their role was to "arouse the interest of African women in the struggle for freedom and equality, take up special problems and issues that affect women and carry on propaganda against apartheid and discriminating laws against African women"(Walker 1982:89). In this context women were encouraged to engage African nationalism by "inculcating children with nationalist aspirations and agitating against oppression as a part of child rearing"(Kimble and Unterhalter 1982:21).

In 1948, the revival of the African National Congress Women's League granted women voting privileges and recognition of them as full-fledged members. In 1955 women from the ANCWL, the Congress of Democrats, the trade unions and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) came together to establish the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Members of the ANCWL were prominent in the leadership and within the membership of the FSAW. At its inaugural conference, the ANCWL president stated that "we know as women we have many problems which hold us back from taking part fully in the struggle and it is precisely for that purpose that we come to break down these problems"(Walker 1982:154). The multifaceted nature of women's activism was clearly understood by speakers who expressed themselves as "members of the national liberation movements and trade unions. We march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and in defense of working people"(Walker 1982:156).

At the same time branches of the ANCWL blossomed, and it allied itself with the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) and was instrumental in drafting the women's charter affirming "what women demand" (Kimble and Unterhalter 1982). The demands stressed the need for free and universal education, proper housing, creches, worker benefits, right to vote, fair distribution of the land, the abolition of child labor, and equalization between the sexes in the areas of marriage, property and guardianship of children. The FSAW accepted the seniority of the ANC over its organization stating,

The African women as the overwhelming largest racial group must always form the main basis of a multiracial women's organization. Moreover, any women's organization that stands outside this (the national liberation) struggle must stand apart from the mass of women (Walker 1982:171).

Women of the ANCWL and the FSAW reinforced their traditional roles by the rhetoric and public appeals against passes, arguing that the government "is working with terrific speed to see that a man will return to his home to find that no fire is burning" (Kimble and Unterhalter 1982:26). The emphasis of much of the ANCWL and FSAW appeals centered on the "destabilization of African households" (Walker 1982). The FSAW declared to the government,

Women are not afraid of suffering for the sake of their children and their homes. Women have an answer to the threats to their families and their future. Women will not face a future imprisoned in the pass laws. Women will fight for the right to live and move freely as human beings (Walker 1982: 199).

Traditional gender relations also played a role in deciding the course of the women's anti-pass protest. A woman from the ANCWL wrote "Must an African woman suffer

the same as a man?" (Kimble and Unterhalter 1982: 26). The FSAW declared to the government, "as wives and mothers we condemn the pass laws and all that they imply" (Kimble and Unterhalter 1982: 26). As the numbers of women being arrested swelled to the thousands, the ANC decided to end the "no bail, no fine" stance as the absence of women was seen as harboring a negative effect on households (Kimble and Unterhalter 1982). Women were attempting to defend the interests of their families and communities. They were not seeking to redress the "gender-based inequality within the households" (Seidman 1993: 295). The alliances formed between women trade unionists, the ANC and the FSAW were making connections between gender and class interests while simultaneously invoking nationalism (Berger 1992).

During the 1950's, more stable urban Black communities flourished, characterized by more female migration, and more Black women entering the industrial sector. Following these demographic shifts, Black women's activism burgeoned with the heightened development of anti-apartheid organizations, such as the African National Congress, the Communist Party and various trade unions representing women. The Defiance Campaign against pass laws drew in thousands of women participants who volunteered for arrest. The alliance between the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), FSAW, and trade unions like the Food Canning Worker's Union, worked in solidarity towards mobilizing and politicizing women. These initiatives were aimed at women from all races to "discuss women's disabilities and promote women's rights" (Lodge 1983:142). The FSAW, the ANCWL, and the trade unions, allied along with women members of the Congress of Democrats to organize a women's anti-pass protest in Pretoria in 1955.

The rhetoric of women's defiance was construed within the framework of conservative exaltations of womanhood and motherhood. As one woman said, "a husband can never be sure any day that his wife is his wife" and the issuing of passes was the "basest method of destroying the honor of womanhood"(Lodge 1983:144). Any violation of pass laws meant arrest and detention for the offender. The idea that women would now be vulnerable to the same measures as men enraged activists. Moreover the arrest and detention of women was considered to be disruptive to the household and family. Lodge pointed out, "the predominant preoccupation of women appeared to be the effects of the new controls on their customary domain: their children, the household, their family relationships"(Lodge 1983:144). The most famous anti-pass protest occurred the following year on August 9, 1956 at the capital in Pretoria, where thousands of women attended and where petitions were delivered to the Prime Minister. At this march, it was Black South African women who, in referring to themselves as being the political target for passes, asserted that the state "had struck a woman and in essence they have struck a rock"(Lodge 1983:145; Walker 1982).

Once women were organized they followed the tradition of anti-apartheid organizations in generalizing all references to women as mothers and wives, thus subsuming women's concerns under the umbrella of domesticity. The definition of women's activism within the boundaries of motherhood bridged the gaps between women from different ethnic communities. However it narrowed the focus of women's concerns to the home whereas men's activism was aimed at the state. In the most radical terms the objective of men's activism was the transformation of state. The call for social change was directed externally and gender differentiation was left unaddressed. In this context

the scope of women's interests was limited to their domestic positions and this notion influenced the portrayal of women's activism as the liberation organizations stepped up their protests against the state.

According to Walker, the FSAW became an "educative force" within the congress alliances in that it showed the potential for political action by women and the possibility of having a broad agenda and united front (Walker 1982:261). The FSAW stood behind the principle of national liberation, multiracialism and the empowerment of women, proclaiming that "no woman can be free while her sister is in chains" (Walker 1982:276). The fact that the constituency of the FSAW was drawn from the ANC, the trade unions, and the other members of the congress alliance, meant that as state repression intervened and banned progressive organizations, the FSAW was not able to survive.

Ideological Divergence and Critique: The PAC Emerges

The African National Congress Youth League embraced African nationalism as its guiding ideology, which signaled the assimilation of not just African nationalism but another stream of thought, Pan-Africanism. These members of the ANCYL referred to this ideology as Africanism and called themselves Africanists. The "Africanist" faction of the ANCYL, based at Orlando East in Soweto worked to "radicalize the ANC from within" (Glaser 1993:303). The different strands of political thought in the ANCYL created factionalism within the league that resulted in the breakaway of disaffected Africanists. A crucial point of dissent was the Freedom Charter, which the Africanists argued, was a repudiation of the variant of African nationalism which privileged the history of dispossession suffered by the indigenous peoples of South Africa. Africanists were critical of the many alliances the ANC courted among whites in the Communist

party and the Congress of Democrats. The Africanists were contesting the authority of the liberation movement. Africanists accentuated the role of identity and unity in cultivating a mass consciousness that would mobilize African people.

In 1958, disaffection within the ANCYL grew, Africanists opposed to the Freedom Charter and to the interracial leadership of the congress alliance broke away from the ANC, and formed the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania in April 1959. Led by a university professor, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, these Africanists considered themselves "true custodians of African nationalism" and articulated a nationalist populism that "promoted an Africanized political culture"(Lodge 1983). Africanists emphasized the link between indigenoussness and African identity in their formulation of Pan-Africanism (Gerhart 1978; Lodge 1983). The PAC manifesto rebuked the "capture of a portion of the Black leadership by the section of the white ruling class"(Lodge 1983:85). Robert Sobukwe explained "African nationalism is the only liberatory outlook that can bind together the African masses"(Karis and Carter 1977: 506). Within its manifesto, the PAC called on its members to "develop and show true respect for African womanhood and demonstrate in practice the theory of sex equality with respect to men and women of the PAC" (Karis and Carter 1977: 533). Clive Glaser writes that by August 1959, the PAC "claimed a membership of almost 25,000, half of which hailed from the Transvaal"(1993:304). He also notes that at this point the PAC was an organization made up of largely young men and that niches for women's activism were nonexistent (Glaser 1993). The PAC had a strong presence in the Transvaal regions of Pretoria and Sharpeville as well as in the Western Cape.

The PAC was part of the wider anti-colonial movement of Pan-Africanism, advocated by the Ghanaian, Kwame Nkrumah, that advocated the political unity of Africa under socialism. The PAC was not long in existence before it was banned in 1960 and forced underground. Before its banning, it gained national recognition during a massive protest in Langa outside of Cape Town where 30,000 people marched against the pass laws. During this march, women were advised to remain at home while men engaged in acts of civil disobedience.

In 1960 all anti-apartheid organizations were banned and remnants of the leadership were forced underground or into exile. After the mass shootings by police against unarmed anti-pass marchers in Sharpeville and Langa, a state of emergency was declared. The PAC organized the anti-pass demonstrations in Sharpeville and Langa and the organization was quickly targeted by the state. The shootings help make the PAC into a recognized liberation organization, underlining the heterogeneity of South African liberatory discourses. With its banning, the PAC leadership was exiled to Lesotho. Decentralized underground armed structures under the name *POQO* meaning pure or alone operating mostly in the Western Cape and the Transkei, became linked to the PAC after sporadic violence. *POQO* was perceived as a grass-roots collaboration of PAC supporters who emerged after the banning. According to Glaser “sixty-eight *POQO* cells were formed between April 1961 and April 1963, twenty-two in the Transvaal and sixteen in the Western Cape” (1993:305). By 1963 3,246 suspected *POQO* members were arrested. Robert Sobukwe was imprisoned and the remnant leadership struggled in exile.

After its banning, the PAC was headquartered in Dar es-Salaam Tanzania but also established external missions in Africa and Europe where women and men played active

roles. However, an official women's organ was not formed until 1985: it was the African Women's Organization (AWO) which operated within South Africa while the PAC remained banned. AWO was established as a vehicle for the propagation of Pan-Africanism within South Africa, a support structure for women members whose husbands were imprisoned or exiled, and to politicize women into the PAC. Its objectives were the national liberation of South Africa and the social emancipation of women, which was perceived as inextricably linked to national struggle. At the same time, the PAC recruited women and men into its military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), who were then sent into operations within South Africa.

The ANC, along with its chief allies in the South African Communist Party, reformulated its philosophy from nonviolence and nonracialism to an acceptance of violence as a political strategy, also forming a military structure, *Umkhonto We Sizwe* (Spear of the nation). The ANC went underground to commence a program of sabotage until its high command was arrested in 1963. The surviving leadership went into exile and the ANC remained active as a liberation organization in external missions throughout Africa and Europe.

The Continuities of Race: Black Consciousness Movement

During the late sixties in the political vacuum left by the banning of the ANC and the PAC, a third philosophy emerged as an "ideology of liberation", Black Consciousness (Moodley 1991: 143). Drawn from student movements, including the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), and the University Christian Movement, the South African Students Organization (SASO) formed in 1969 was led by Steve Biko, a medical student. The Black Consciousness Movement sought "the liberation of the Black man

first from psychological oppression by themselves through an induced inferiority complex" (Marx 1991:52). BCM was able to draw its constituency from the burgeoning number of young people in the townships and the new population of secondary school students that came of age in the 1960's and 1970's (Marx 1992). Influenced by the Black Power movement of the United States, Black liberation theology, the writings of Frantz Fanon, Pan-Africanism and African nationalism, BCM was a dynamic ideology. By engaging the challenges of psychological liberation, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) addressed the self-negation that was implicit in the construction of Black subjectivity. As an "awareness movement", it developed an inclusive definition of the category "Black" that widened into a "positive discourse of resistance" which embraced all non-whites (Moodley 1991:146). Marx writes that BCM emphasis was on the power of ideas and altered self-awareness that could then lead to a transformation of the society at large. In 1972, the Black People's Convention (BPC) was formed as a political movement whose stated aim was to mobilize "Black people towards psychological and physical liberation" (Marx 1991:54). The BPC set up Black Community Programmes to deal with the needs of disenfranchised Black people, but its effort was thwarted by its emphasis on racial assertiveness that captured the attention of only the "educated segments of the population" (Marx 1991:59). BCM was limited in that it was a "movement of introspection" rather than confrontation and it never became a mass movement (McClintock 1991: 341).

Black Consciousness provided students with a potent paradigm and it was a major influence on student organizations in the 1970's. On June 16, 1976 high school students demonstrated against state enforced compulsory instruction in Afrikaans. In the

aftermath Steve Biko expressed his wish to see “the ANC, the PAC and Black Consciousness Movement decide to form one liberation group” (Marx 1991:82). In 1977 Steve Biko was killed while in police custody and a clampdown of Black Consciousness organizations followed. In 1978, the Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO) was formed. Unlike BCM, AZAPO expanded its analysis to the class struggle in South Africa, exploring “anti-capitalist alternatives” for Black South Africans (Moodley 1991:150). After the banning of BCM and the formation of AZAPO, many adherents to BCM joined the ANC, contributing to its organizational dominance in the townships. After 1976, the ANC was able to reestablish its ideological hegemony and mass mobilization thereafter was guided by ideologies set out in the Freedom Charter (Marx 1991:105).

Whereas Black Consciousness stressed the contradiction of Black subjectivity and the pervasiveness of white supremacy, it failed to critique relations of gender. BCM called for the “restoration of Black manhood” without a class or gender analysis (McClintock 1991:341). The activism of women within BCM was attributed to their oppression as Blacks and not as women; gender was perceived as tangential (Ramphela 1991:215). The Black Women’s Federation (BWF) was launched in 1975 to further mobilize women and serve as an umbrella organization for women of different affiliations. BWF stressed women’s “responsibility for the survival and maintenance of their families, and the socialization of the youth for the transmission of the Black cultural heritage” (Moodley 1991:147). Furthermore the federation contended that “motherhood should be redirected towards the fulfillment of Black people’s cultural, social, economic, and political aspirations”(Moodley 1991:148). Gender interests were not part of the stated objectives of BWF, since women’s significance emanated from their position as wives.

girlfriends, mothers and sisters (Ramphela 1991). The organization of BWF was reflective of gender relationships in SASO where the construction of Black women as "sisters" did not prevent them from remaining "powerless and voiceless" (Moodley 1991:148). The Black Women's Federation was banned alongside other Black Consciousness organizations in October 1977 (Walker 1982).

Apartheid Ruptures: Women's Mobilization in the 1980's

In considering the tight control over Black women's labor and their limited mobility, their position as "trapped workers" did not block them from social protests that were consistent throughout the 1980's (Cock 1980). Women's activities in consumer and transportation boycotts, rent strikes, and civic organizations highlighted their tendency to make linkages between community concerns and national struggle. Many incidents of township rebellions of the 1980's featured women's mobilization around issues of social reproduction and within community-based organizations that pursued gender-specific objectives (Seidman 1993:298). This urban unrest was related to the rapid urbanization of the 1970's, and the relaxation of pass laws by the mid-1980s, by which time almost half of all Black South Africans resided in urban or semi-urban communities. Black South African women's formal employment rose steadily in the 1980's, although it was almost always low-skilled and low paid. Women in trade unions were able to inject gender-specific issues into negotiations such as maternity leave, equal pay, day-care and job protection, but any particular articulation of their status as women was subordinated to their position as workers (Seidman 1993).

The 1980's witnessed an explosion of township politics in which a consolidation of mass-based organizations coalesced to protest, strike, conduct boycotts and stay-aways.

In 1983 the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed, guided by the Charterist principles of the ANC and more focused on strategy and action than on ideological coherence (Marx 1991). A multi-class alliance, the United Democratic Front was a broad front for trade unions, and school and community organizations. In 1985 the ANC president reiterated the aim of "rendering South Africa ungovernable" (Marx 1991:157). Meanwhile African women, who made up the majority of the female workforce in South Africa, organized themselves into various trade unions, independent women's and civic organizations. In 1985 the largest trade union federation in South Africa, COSATU, formally addressed the women's question as part of its agenda. They recognized the particular disadvantages faced by women workers in areas of pay, maternity leave, job safety and sexual harassment. As a trade union federation COSATU affirmed its belief that "women workers should take first place in our struggle. Women workers suffer the most under the bosses and the system" (Jaffee 1988:82). The United Democratic Front's organization of women was formed to assert women's leadership within the regional affiliates. It also served as an interest group, raising women's issues within the UDF to ensure that the position of women would be "integral to the political struggle" (Jaffee 1988:84). In the Western Cape, the United Women's' Organization (UWO) was created to empower and politicize women "who were oppressed in the house and at work" (Jaffee 1988:85). However the integration of activist women into the national structures of the UDF, weakened localized mobilization because of the absorption of so many women leaders (Biden, Hasim and Meinjtes 1998:11).

After the 1976 student rebellions and throughout the 1980's, when children were the target of violence, arrest and detention, women were drawn into township politics as

mothers. The deaths of children helped to perpetuate the image of women as nurturers who agitate on the basis of maternal instincts rather than as workers and activists (Jaffé 1988). Women's involvement was perceived as a direct action in defense of their homes and communities against state violence (Beall et al 1988). In the dominant discourse of the media, women were constructed as "victims or peacemakers rather than political subjects"(Beall et al 1988:94).

Within the political turmoil of the 1980's women were further caught in the violent feuds between the state, UDF and the Inkatha Freedom Party in the townships of Natal. In 1983, the Natal Organization of Women (NOW) was formed as an affiliate to the UDF, and when an executive member, Ms.Mxenge was assassinated, the ideological contradictions of women's activism surfaced. The death of Ms.Mxenge was seen as exceptional because she was a mother and she expanded the traditional notion of motherhood and did so for the purpose of the liberation struggle (Beall et al 1988). As the terrain of struggle shifted onto the community, women's political participation strengthened. In townships women held positions on crisis committees, negotiated with the police on the issue of detentions, and supported students as they rallied for "education for liberation"(Beall et al 1988). Women's support of their children and the children of the community deepened their own politicization. Conservative constructions of womanhood activated new forms of resistance where women often took leadership positions feeling immune as women from certain kinds violence (Beall et al 1988). In this context Black women's role as mothers became subversive and the struggle redefined Black mothering as an act of resistance. However, women faced contradictions with the

dominant discourse that portrayed them as mothers first who did not embrace the struggle for themselves but for their children and husbands.

It was the position of liberation movements that the empowerment of women could only be realized through the national struggle. In the ANC, throughout the years of banning and exile, women's interests were submerged into the national struggle and it was assumed that "women will assert themselves and assume their rightful place in the struggle and in society"(Kimble and Unterhalter 1982:31). Until the 1980's, critiques of gender ideologies were subordinated to the greater goal of national liberation, and women's emancipation was deemed secondary. ANC activist, Frene Ginwala, succinctly expressed the general sentiment of anti-apartheid organizations when she stated in 1986 that "women's liberation in South Africa cannot be achieved outside of the context of the liberation struggle"(Seidman 1993: 297). By the 1990's as the bannings were lifted on the liberation organizations and negotiations developed, the discourse on gender became vital to the democratic projects envisioned for the future. All liberation organizations, espoused support for a " non-racial, democratic, non-sexist South Africa" (Seidman 1993). The new consensus by liberation organizations on the need to articulate a gendered agenda was due in part to the shifts in consciousness brought on by the political participation by women in the 1980's. Women began to isolate their specific interests in their activities in trade unions and community organizations. In 1991 the trade union federation COSATU, organized women's forums, and employed women coordinators to deal with particular concerns of women workers. This effort was ongoing in the broader democratic movement where women were pushing nationalist organizations to recognize gender-specific issues (Seidman 1993). Women within the ANCWL fought for more

gender representation on the executive body of the ANC and challenged the ANC to include gender on its negotiating agenda.

Former PAC president, Zeph Mothopeng noted “ women are universally discriminated against... it becomes necessary that the rights of women should be defined, and enshrined in the constitution of a liberated Azania”(Seidman 1999:293). In the 1990’s, the PAC participated in negotiations while its military structure, APLA continued armed struggle. During this time AWO was active as a component structure in mobilizing Africanist women and supporting the policies of the PAC. As one member of AWO stated “ There is no room for the imperialist, the colonizer and the capitalist. There is only room for the African”(AWO 1989). The nationalist discourse of the PAC was critical of women’s subordination, but at the same time supported the primacy of the national struggle. According to AWO, Black women constituted the working class and peasantry that together struggled toward self-determination. AWO assumed that the interests of Black women were unitary and that the liberatory struggle was uniquely equipped to empower them.

Bozzoli argued that “different patterns of dispossession had predisposing influence upon the ways in which communities formed” (Bozzoli 1988:26).

Dispossession played a role in the types of ideological paradigms embraced by the liberation movements; the various nationalisms served as theoretical prisms for divergent activists. Black South Africans, men and women, articulated their dispossession through many kinds of consciousness that took nationalist, class and even Christian forms. While the triangulated experience of race, class and gender affected Black women’s lives, it did not always overtly reveal itself through their activism. Secondly, the efficacy of Black

women in voicing a gender specific agenda has only recently developed amidst the transition to democracy (Seidman 1999; Walker 1994). The long history of activism by Black South African women makes apparent their willingness to mobilize under severe repression and opposition. The nationalism of the ANC, the Pan-Africanism of the PAC and the Black Consciousness of BCM were unified in their treatment of gender as a less privileged category of critique and contest. Furthermore women's organizations have been less "consistently proactive with regard to women's issues"(Fester 1998:223). Gendered and class categories are produced and reproduced through discourse and policy, such that even within women's organizations, there are limits to the dialogue on gender (Manicom 1992). Moreover, the ongoing social differentiation of South African society continues to constrain much of women's transformative action because gender has yet to be organically politicized.

Women's activism has opened a dialogue on gender within the democratic movement, but it has not deconstructed the generalized male domination that blocks efforts toward social justice. Questions arise as to whether the liberation movements of yesterday which are the political parties of today will make gender a priority as new hegemonic discourses develop and struggle for space in the new South Africa. South African women, specifically Black women, have inherited a long history of subjugation and resistance. Their reproductive and productive labor have long been besieged by the state and Black women have developed different tactics of resistance.

Chapter Two

Isizwe (Nation)

In this chapter I will discuss theories of nationalism and their relationship to gender. I am specifically interested in how Pan-Africanism integrates gender, race and nationality into a discourse. How does Pan-Africanism as a form of nationalism assimilate gender into its political vision? There are congruent themes around women and motherhood that are found in different political movements. Women are incorporated into liberation movements in ways that reinforce unequal relations of power between men and women. There is often a deep critique of women's subordination within the rhetoric of such movements and women are able to exercise varying degrees of political influence. However, overwhelmingly, the position of women in political projects is derivative of their domestic roles within families. In other words, I argue that women gain more political prestige as mothers and wives than as individual activists. I will present the history of AWO/PAWO (Pan-Africanist Women's Organization) and discuss its organizational structure. I will highlight PAWO's arguments in favor of increased recognition of women's leadership potential and the ways in which they emphasize the centrality of women's contribution to the Pan-Africanist movement in South Africa. Finally, I review the emergence of a gendered discourse in the construction of the "new South Africa."

Discussion of Nationalism

Nationalism is a discourse through which diverse forms of social protest are articulated. As Benedict Anderson argues, "nationalism imagines a political community", simultaneously proposing a political paradigm for the present and future (Anderson

1983). Narration, cultural construction and historical imagination accentuate themes of continuity within various nationalist agendas (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm 1983). For scholars, nationalism is paradoxical but remains a “lingering almost atmospheric insistence in our thinking” (Brennan 1995:172). Bhabha explains that the “story of the nation demands that we articulate that archaic ambivalence that informs modernity” (Bhabha 1995: 177). In future chapters I demonstrate how South African Pan-Africanism expresses an ideological and political dissidence, capturing the historical rupture of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983). South African Pan-Africanism remained dynamic because it synthesized cultural facets of the past into a political discourse that reiterated the illegitimacy of the apartheid state. Nationalism generates subversive histories that challenge nation-states, rearrange the moral order, and disrupt social hierarchies in the collective historical consciousness. Nevertheless while historical consciousness is important, nationalism is continuously reconstituted through the linkages formed by present sociopolitical forces.

In the early literature, nationalism was viewed as an interface between capitalism and modernization, a Western model of political evolution. Nationalism was perceived to be an outgrowth of the notion that the nation-state is the normative model for political governance and hence nations are accepted as natural (Smith 1971; Gellner 1983; Kohn 1961)). For example, Hans Kohn argued that “the nation-state demands nationalism; the creation of the nation-state strengthens nationalism”(Kohn 1961:19). At the same time, moreover, historians contended that nationalism was not a fundamental natural manifestation of identity but an outcome of political and social contingencies (Kohn 1961:6). Writers argued that nationalism is basically political and necessary for state

building to take place (Smith 1992; Breuilly 1994). The Pan-Africanism of the PAC is not the inevitable extension of a politicized African identity, but I argue it is a direct consequence of the race and class asymmetries in South Africa. It is undeniably a political project, yet one that incorporates culture, history and identity. However Pan-Africanism does not disavow the nation-state as a political configuration, but rather it examines the position of Africans in the hierarchy of the nation-state.

Ernest Gellner, one of the first anthropologists to write about nationalism, discusses its political principles and emphasis on the congruency between the political and the national unit (Gellner 1983:1). The “objective need for homogeneity which is reflected in nationalism” can be best realized within the nation-state (Gellner 1983: 46). Therefore while discourses of populism are familiar to nationalism, it is a political project directed toward the state. Nationalism is not a fundamentalist expression but the result of the “crystallization of new units” that can either draw upon some elements of pre-existing cultures, modify them or dispose of them (Gellner 1983:48). Brackette Williams, also an anthropologist, argues that nationalism is the conclusion of different myth making programs that seek to extricate “homogeneity out of the realities of heterogeneity that characterize nation-building” (Williams 1989:429). Nationalism selects certain identities and makes them a part of a “hegemonic homogeneity” that subordinates other identities. From this perspective we see that identity is not inherent, but it can be imposed and legitimized by the state.

It is my position that Pan-Africanism is in large part an outcome of contemporary relations of race, class, ethnicity and gender. The identity that South African Pan-Africanism most privileges is an African one. I examine how Africanist women articulate

and manifest their African identities through political activism. However I extend my perspective beyond the nation-state and look at the niches where Pan-Africanism as a form of nationalism is integrated into intimate relationships. I contend that the Pan-Africanism of the PAC did not crystallize in the formal structures of the state but rather on the ground among activists amid the familiar quarters of homes, classrooms, union meetings, kitchens, workshops, and sewing clubs. I demonstrate that it is women who maximize the bonds that exist between personal and political relationships to reproduce the ideology of Pan-Africanism.

Smith observed within the writing of the last twenty years, the converging study between "ethnicity and ethnic community on one hand, and the analysis of national identity and nationalism" on the other (Smith 1992:1). However Smith argues that most historians hold on to the "artificiality" and modernity of the nation (1992). Smith observes within nationalism the "continuities with an ethnic past" and these ethnicities exact a heavy influence on contemporary nations. While these ethnicities may be recurrently constructed and reconstructed, their power in defining modern subjectivities is evident today. Ethnicities that predate states are useful in that they legitimate some of the paradigms of community that nationalism assert. Connor addressess the notion of kinship to national consciousness and how it informs a consensus of solidarity. The vocabulary of kinship can serve as a template for the political rhetoric of nationalism (1992). Later I show how kinship is politicized to recruit adherents, to mentor and mobilize activists, and plant ideology. The language of Pan-Africanism consistently alludes to the solidarity of Africans and a common cultural kinship, as "brothers and sisters" serve as a premise for political collaboration.

Richard Fox refers to the particular “production and conception of peoplehood” as nationalist ideologies (Fox 1990:3). The elasticity of the term “nationalist ideologies” allows for a wider consideration of different kinds of social and political movements that have specific objectives. Nationalism, ethnicity, and race are all “cultural productions of a public identity” formed through historical processes (Fox 1990:4). Fox describes how nationalist culture arises out of a nationalist ideology, that is, “a consciousness or perception of what the nation is or should be” (Fox 1990:4). Out of the struggle between nationalist ideologies, a national culture surfaces as the dominant one and its relationship to nationalist ideologies remains contingent. Fox maintains that national culture is a “historical construction” which is neither primordial nor transcendent (Fox 1990:4)). National culture is a fluid practice that “encodes the social inequalities” of a society (Fox 1990:12). Nationalist ideologies are more than an assemblage of political objectives but also a reflection of the historical contradictions of a specific society. By looking at gender relations and how they affect the political activism of Africanist women I analyze how nationalist ideologies do not necessarily transcend the asymmetric relations of the societies out of which they emerge. The gender relations of South African society are mirrored in part by the role of women activists in their communities and families. In coming chapters I explain how through political activism Africanist women actively transcend and reinforce these systems of gender subordination.

Kapferer (1988) writes that there are many nationalisms and that in the devotion to nation the political is made religious. Intrinsic to the practice of nationalism is the “primordialism of the cultural”; myths, legends, traditions all come to “constitute the nation” (Kapferer 1988:1). The specific trajectory of nationalism can only be attributed to

particular historical contingencies. In examining the fundamentalism of nationalism, Kapferer draws attention to its religious features, its tendency toward revivalism and totalizing capacity (Kapferer 1988: 5). To delve into the meaning behind the myths and legends, Kapferer looks at their relationship to specific ontologies and how they are constituted in the everyday (Kapferer 1988:19). This project looks at Pan-Africanism as it is practiced and constructed everyday to the degree that it becomes inspirational, motivational and transformative. As Kapferer argues, nationalism is not static and the elasticity of Pan-Africanism gives it a scope that spans the daily rhythm of the townships and the walls of parliament. However, it is my contention that for women, varying political contexts alter the breadth of their activism and the phasing out of liberation discourse has particular effects on the politics of gender in South Africa.

Interface Between Gender and Nationalism

Nationalism can essentialize asymmetries of race, ethnicity, class and gender. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) argue that there are patterns in the ways in which nationalist projects integrate women. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) outline women's representation in nationalist movements. Women are represented as the "biological reproducers of ethnic collectivities and as reproducers of ethnic boundaries and/or of ethnic 'national groups'" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:7). According to Anthias and Yuval-Davis women participate centrally in the "ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of culture"(Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:7). They are signifiers of "ethnic/national differences and become the focus and symbol of ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories"(Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:7). These constructions follow women as

they participate in “national, economic, political and military struggles”(Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:7). Women are assigned gender-specific roles that are perceived as contributive to the nation and the nation-building process. Their reproductive capacity is politicized and women become the symbolic markers of nationhood. Within nationalist doctrine there is a particular iconography that elaborates women as the source of the nation’s future, which holds them responsible for the survival of a culture. As I discuss later, women who integrate gender into a nationalist platform have a double agenda. Firstly, it is women who critique gender relations within a movement, and secondly, it is women who develop a gender analysis that addresses the greater society. In the case of Africanist women, their critiques of gender relations are grounded in a Pan-Africanist perspective, one that promulgates particular ideas about men and women. Therefore Africanist women’s critiques have to be made compatible with the nationalism of Pan-Africanism. I review some of the contradictions that arise as women seek to empower themselves through the structures of a liberation movement.

Sylvia Walby discusses the “differential integration of women and men into the national project” (1992:81). She critiques the model of nation building processes given by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) for an insufficient analysis of the sexual division labor and overemphasis on the ideological and cultural. Walby also points out there is hierarchy and conflict not only between ethnic/national groups but also within them. Thus there is struggle within ethnic/ national groups over what will be the dominant culture. There could be a lack of consensus between genders and classes over the “ostensible ethnic/national project” (Walby 1992:84). According to Walby the ethnic/nation project affects women and men differentially and this leads to a “differential commitment to the

national project", even perhaps to struggles over what constitutes the project (Walby 1992:90). In other words, gender, class, ethnic and race relations all affect the national project and its outcome. It is my contention that as women seek to empower themselves within a movement, such as demanding places for women in leadership structures, the contradictions of gender become more overt. There is a difference when women are targeted as mobilizing bodies in a movement and when women become authoritative figures in a political party. Within the PAC Africanist women had to petition and become strategic in order to raise the position of women within the PAC.

In addressing the ways women have been integrated into Indian paradigms of nationalism, Sangari and Vaid stated that "womanhood is often part of an asserted or desired not an actual continuity" (1990:17). Whether nationalist tenets uphold tradition or modernity, Sangari and Vaid regard them as "carriers of patriarchal ideologies" (Sangari and Vaid 1990:17). Women remain the locus of control, surveillance and regulation. Chatterjee (1990) describes the post-colonial nationalism of India as an ideology that dichotomized east and west, the spiritual from the material. Women were placed within this dichotomization as representing the essence of Indian identity and spirituality. Defined as the gatekeepers of national culture, the new "emancipated women" sought self-actualization in their domestic capacity. Nationalism sought to reformulate a new woman under a new patriarchy that was bound to a new sovereign nationhood (Chatterjee 1990:248). This form of nationalism essentialized spirituality as feminine and limited women to the parameters of the home. Women became subject to "false essentialisms" that reconstructed their subordination.

Nationalist ideologies can give women a central role because of the cultural values that a nation places on motherhood and the feminine. Koester describes the present political culture of Iceland as one that endorses a nationalism that espouses an association between “feminine qualities, motherly attributes and the nation” (Koester 1995:575). Notions of femininity are magnified in literature and linguistically in gendered references to nation and country. Koester recognizes that although the feminine imagery of motherhood has been powerful in the nationalist consciousness, this does not always translate into more political status (Koester 1995). He states that all nations employed a “gender ideology” at their core and that gender lies at the center of constructions of nationality (Koester 1995:583). The challenge for activist women is making the veneration of women in nationalist discourse meaningful in terms of power and authority within a movement.

In my examination of Africanist women I look at their portrayal in Africanist discourse, but most importantly I address what they do as activists. It is what women activists do and how they articulate their motivations that gives insight into the intersection between gender and nationalism. In coming chapters I point out the forms of women’s activism in the PAC and how this has affected their upward mobility in the organization. Within the nationalism of the PAC women are heralded as mothers and activists. Within a movement such roles have a different set of consequences for women from those within a political party.

Gender and National Liberation Movements: The *Intifada*

Political activism and participation in national liberation movements placed women in contradictory positions that hold particular consequences for the post-liberation

period. Abdo (1991) suggests that writers redirect their attention to the movement's internal structure where we can find the contradictions that inform relations of gender after liberation. She explains that the Palestinian *intifada* is composed of two movements, a women's movement and a national liberation movement. More importantly, the trajectories of these two movements are inextricably linked (Abdo 1991:22). She distinguishes regressive state nationalism from the nationalism of national liberation by the way it constructs women's spaces and roles. State nationalism is hegemonic, exclusivist and ideologically constrains women within the parameters of motherhood. Abdo claims that the nationalism of the national liberation movement has a distinct intentionality and moral premise that allows a space for the progressive activism of women. However within the national liberation movement, the homogeneity that nationalism proclaims is challenged from within by contradictions of gender and class. The motherhood-nationhood symbolism and the mother of the martyr are reiterated in the nationalism of the *intifada*.

Peoplehood, nationhood and the individual are consistently acting, reenacting and being acted upon by converging processes. Iris Jean-Klein argues that for women amid the *intifada*, their "individual selves are collaboratively and reciprocally constituted through familial relations by multiple subjects"(Jean-klein 2000:101). The individual person is made into a politico-moral subject by familial relationships that entail multiple subjectivities that work together in the articulation of women as mothers, sisters, wives etc. Self- production is related to sociopolitical contexts which take place under conditions of rewards and value based on a hierarchy of gender that is complemented by the political condition of the *intifada*. The nationalist movement assigns importance to

women as mothers of heroes and wives of heroes. This is crucial to the mobilization and organization of women. Mothers of heroes were of utmost significance in the support of not just individual sons, but in providing networks of solidarity for prisoners and all male activists. Relationships between mothers and daughters were crucial in representing the victimization and heroism of sons. According to Jean-Klein, cross-subjective narration by women was instrumental in depicting male activism. Moreover it shows that women were decisive in political knowledge-production during the *intifada*.

The example of the *intifada* reveals another perspective on the way motherhood is vividly appropriated within a nationalist movement that relies heavily on the sacrifices of young men. It is as mothers that women gain public and domestic authority. Motherhood as iconic figure is continuously reenacted and the *intifada* demonstrates the eminence of the family in the organizing of a nationalist movement (Jean-Klein 2000). While women's prestige rose in tandem with their sons, this process did not lead to a critique of patriarchal authority but it foreshadowed the gender relationships that would emerge within an independent state (Jean-Klein 2000). In forthcoming chapters I intend to demonstrate the politicization of familial relationships and the manner in which political relationships are remade into relationships of kinship in South Africa. At the forefront of these processes are women who determine the boundaries of kinship and the ways in which nationalist ideologies are pertinent to the rationalization of many social relationships.

Nationalism and Women of the African Diaspora

Nationalisms are varied and can be representative of an interaction between racial, class and gender asymmetries. Peoples of African descent in North America, the

Caribbean and Africa have embraced different streams of nationalism. Black nationalism, African nationalism and Pan-Africanism have developed diverse paradigms for self-determination and self-identification. African women, African-American women, Afro-Latin women and Afro-Caribbean women have had to negotiate their gendered identities through contexts that are permeated with racial and class inequalities. White argues that the nationalism of African-Americans works as an oppositional paradigm against hegemonic culture but it also “attempts to construct utopian and repressive gender relations” (White 1990: 73). Historically, within African American communities, there have been ongoing efforts to “construct and reconstruct collective political memories of African culture” (White 1990:73). These nascent nationalisms could garner group cohesiveness and become a defense against racism and oppression (White 1990:73). Out of this nationalism, Afrocentric models of gender relations uphold ideologies of complementarity that contradict the empowerment of Black women. Nationalism can then be counterhegemonic with its criticism, and conservative when it seeks to establish “traditional” standards for gender relationships. White acknowledges that African-American nationalism looks to destigmatize the Black family and neutralize the dominant discourse of black pathology. African-American nationalism is viewed as a radicalizing current because it “advocates for an oppressed people, giving its Afrocentric ideology a progressive edge”(White 1990:76).

The nationalism of African-Americans draws on Africa as its source for models of gender relations without exploring the historically contingent variables that account for the complexity of African cultures. White argues that this tendency has reproduced some of the false essentialisms that are found in hegemonic and reductionist images of Africa.

White sees the role that African-American nationalism serves in critiquing racist ideologies, but she points out that this nationalism is dialectically related to these same hegemonic discourses (White 1990:85). Nationalist emphasis on the complementarity of male and female roles essentializes Black woman, drawing her as a “monolithic and undifferentiated category with no competing interests, values or conflicts” (White 1990: 87). However, as White notes, Black women themselves see the strength in nationalist discourse as a counterargument to dominant ideologies and a discourse that builds political cohesion (White 1990:90).

African-American Black nationalism extended a consciousness of an “abstract Black community”(Davis 1992:319). This nationalism had the effect of limiting some queries about class and gender, obfuscating differentiation in the African-American community. However, it also elicited ideas that produced diverse kinds of liberatory projects that addressed the complex nexus of race, class and gender. Angela Davis suggests that the tendency to reiterate tradition and culture risks making “cultural representations into surrogates of activism”, which then supplant political practices and limits its emancipatory potential (Davis 1992:324).

African-American women’s struggles have historically been embedded within broader movements by African –Americans to “define their collective identity and to address the structure of hierarchy”(Mullings 1997: 132). Leith Mullings draws three general models for the kinds of movements that African-Americans have developed, and in which African –American women have been engaged. Within the inclusionist perspectives, African-Americans seek integration into the greater society as Americans and seek more access to the democratic, capitalist system. Mullings regards her second

model, the autonomist model, as one that closely resembles Black Nationalism, in that it seeks “autonomous geographic, institutional or cultural space”(Mullings 1997: 134).

From this perspective there is a heightened awareness of race as an organizing principle and a variable in the distribution of power and capital. Mullings argues that the autonomist and inclusionist models both fail to challenge racial categories but see them as fixed. Mullings calls the third model, one of transformation, a model that links African-American liberation to global struggles around economic redistribution and social justice.

Mullings tracks the ways in which African –Americans historically sought to emulate Euro-American models of family and gender roles. For the autonomists, there is refutation of the Eurocentric familial model and a projection of an alternative standard of “gender relationships based on ancestral tradition” (Mullings 1997: 149). A rhetoric of complementarity makes patriarchy invisible as it upholds and reformulates hierarchial gender relationships. Within nationalist discourse the “reproductive capacity of women is essentialized and becomes the primary aspect of their identity”(Mullings 1997:139).

Within idealist visions of gender relations, perspectives are retrogressive and uncritical. Mullings writes that the “nexus between motherhood, family and nationhood grant women guardianship of nation and national culture”(Mullings 1997:140). Ideas of Black homogeneity fail to critique internal asymmetries and mask the “necessity to exercise power over women”(Mullings 1997:153). Women’s subordination within nationalist movements impedes the progress of projects of liberation.

Within the third world, struggles over women’s empowerment were essential and integral elements of anti-colonial movements (Jayawardena 1986:8). Historically women have played a decisive role in the national liberation struggles of Africa (Geiger

1997; Presley 1986; Ramphela 1991; Urdang 1979; Walker 1982). There has been minimum exploration of African women's gender consciousness and how this relates to their political participation in nationalist movements (Geiger 1987). Women often perceived in nationalist movements possibilities of self-actualization and transformation of gender relations. In Tanzania, women's political work proved crucial in the mobilization of other women and in the propagation of nationalist discourse. In other instances such as the *Mau Mau* rebellion in Kenya, women constituted the bulk of popular support and became the target of punitive measures attempting to depoliticize them (Presley 1988). Presley refers to women as the "support troops" of the *Mau-Mau*, the non-combatant forces that became transgressive forces to British colonialists (Presley 1988:504). *Kikuyu* women's participation in the nationalist movements arose from the belief that their lives would be transformed socially and economically in the aftermath of nationalist victory (Presley 1988). Similar themes arise in the case of South Africa and for women in the Pan-Africanist movement who believed that a particular version of nationalism was representative of their aspirations and histories.

Women and Nationalism in South Africa

In the following section I will examine the varieties of nationalisms associated with different parties and organizations in South Africa. I will address the ways in which different nationalisms define, delimit and broaden women's roles. There are continuities to how different political agendas depict women and this raises the issue of how gender ideologies transverse race and ethnicity.

Shireen Hassim (1993) analyzed the women's wing of the *Inkatha* Freedom Party (IFP) of South Africa, the *Inkatha* Women's Brigade launched in 1977. The IFP was

closely associated with the Zulu Cultural Movement, *Inkatha Zulu* formed in 1923. The Zulu National Cultural Liberation Movement, the IFP was founded in 1977 under Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi. The *Inkatha Zulu* and the *Inkatha Freedom Party* were movements asserting the “belief that National Unity and models for development should be based on values extrapolated from people’s culture and adapted to present day needs and situations”(Golan 1999:11). The IFP is an organization that combines Zulu traditionalism, and politics (Marks 1986). The rise of cultural authenticity and “refurbished tradition” coincided with the apartheid homeland policies and hegemony of Zulu-speaking elite in Natal (Marks 1986). The IFP operated within the former homeland system of Kwazulu where the Zulu-speaking elite administered the resources of the Bantustan. They manipulated the idiom of tradition in their allocation of resources and they were able to mobilize Zulu speakers in efforts to guard the rights of the Zulu speaking community. However, most Zulu speakers belong to the African National Congress and this has led to much violence. On August 30, 1990, President De Klerk introduced an amendment to the 1891 Natal Code of Zulu Law, which forbade Zulus from carrying traditional weapons, stating Blacks could carry weapons if they were “able to prove that they had the bona fide intention to carry such weapons in accordance with traditional Zulu usages, customs or religions”(Golan 1999:18). IFP followers could use these traditional weapons in clashes with ANC supporters. These traditional weapons such as spears, axes and pangas were used in “thirty-five percent of the killings in Natal between 1985 and 1990”(Golan 1999:18).

Golan writes that more than half of the membership of the IFP are women while the majority of IFP men live as migrant workers in the cities. The women’s brigade was

formed to spearhead the role of women in development, particularly in the rural areas where *Inkatha*'s constituency is strongest. *Inkatha* was able to gain strength by forging alliances with traditional chiefs and providing resources to rural women. The ideological thrust of *Inkatha*'s view on women was conservative, infused with patriarchal doctrines that focused on motherhood and domesticity. *Inkatha*'s essentialized construction of women restricted their "traditional" obligations to the family and household. According to Hassim, *Inkatha*'s version of the traditional African family was more consistent with Christian doctrines that reinforced obedience. Authoritarianism in the home was seen as conducive to the success of the nation and mirrored the organization hierarchical structures. Women are subordinate to men in the home and politically the women's brigade is subordinate to the central structure of *Inkatha*. The greatest political work of women is the maintenance of the home and the support of men. Hassim states that "women are strong but subordinate: they are the backbone of the movement but men make the decisions"(Hassim 1993:12).

The centrality of the home as a locus of political struggle has important resonance in South Africa where the home was the seat of resistance and a place of refuge. However as Hassim points out there is danger in such idealization of the home in that it can "reproduce oppressive relationships"(Hassim 1993:14). Thus motherhood can be conservative and subversive depending on the political contingencies present. Motherhood has to be analyzed in reference to different political contexts in which women find themselves and this analysis has to examine the agendas that lie behind overtures to tradition.

South African Afrikaaner nationalism also employed ideologies that centered on motherhood and women as “mother of the nation”(Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989; McClintock 1995). In this instance the direction of this constructed ideology of women differs from African nationalism in South Africa because of differing concepts of nation and history (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989:58). Motherhood in Afrikaaner nationalism shifted in accordance to the changing notions of the Afrikaaner nation. In the early 1900’s Afrikaaner nationalism, motherhood is perceived as self-sacrificing, suffering and stoic(Gaitskell and Unterhalter1989:60). This was reflective of the Afrikaaner communities’ experience of the Anglo-Boer War and the violent clashes with African peoples along the “Great Trek.” Gaitskell and Unterhalter described the second phase of Afrikaner nationalism as a period where Afrikaners set about strengthening their communities and revitalizing their culture. The Afrikaaner home became a focus of attention where Afrikaaner culture, language and religion could be reinforced. The Afrikaaner Language Movement was led by intellectuals who held an “overriding interest in making the Afrikaans family a solid reality” (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989: 62). Afrikaner women’s organizations emphasized an authentic Afrikaaner female identity that reinforced women’s domestic role. The third phase of Afrikaaner nationalism came after prosperity in the 1970’s and the rising tide of opposition to apartheid. Afrikaaner women were incorporated into a militaristic ideology as defender of the nation. Afrikaaner men and women prepared for a “total onslaught on themselves as a nation” (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989:65). Afrikaaner women were incorporated into this ideology and expansion of their roles.

Still womanhood was framed in a double role of service to her home and nation. Women were deemed an intrinsic resource in the preservation of white domination. As the material conditions of Afrikaaner communities changed, concepts of nationhood shifted and definitions of motherhood followed and were rearticulated. Gaitskell and Unterhalter demonstrate the ways that the “totemic symbol” of motherhood is employed when there is intent to mobilize women (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989). Motherhood then becomes a part of an organizing strategy through which to harness the participation of women. This acts as a way of politicizing women and unleashing new identities that catapult women into positions that may challenge ascribed gender roles.

The Nationalism of Pan-Africanism

The stream of nationalism that I seek to address here is Pan-Africanism, an ideological perspective with a long history within the Black Diaspora. Historically, Pan-Africanism was closely intertwined with discourses on race and political identity within the African/Black Diaspora. Ethnicity, race and national identity were themes that punctuated the political assumptions of Pan-Africanism. Lemelle and Kelley distinguish between two traditions of Pan-Africanism, the liberal/nationalist and the more recent afrocentric/cultural nationalist strand (Lemelle and Kelley 1994:1). As a form of nationalism Pan-Africanism has long been an ideology of opposition. Kelley and Lemelle view Pan-Africanism as the “construction and reconstruction of a diasporic identity, a product of racial capitalism, cultural hegemony and self-activity (Lemelle and Kelley 1994:2). It was an “eccentric” ideology because African-Americans and Afro-Caribbean activists and thinkers originally formulated Pan-Africanism outside of Africa (Nwafor 1973). Pan-Africanism directed itself toward building a consciousness and set of

practices among peoples of African descent, worldwide. According to Horace Campbell, Pan-Africanism aimed to “unite a subjective reservoir of African identity” towards active intervention in unifying spheres of struggle (Campbell 1994:288). At the core of Pan-Africanism was, as Robert Hill, writes the belief in a “dialectic in which Black struggle in one particular domain illuminated and inspired struggle in other scattered domains of the Black experience”(Hill 1982:80). Pan-Africanism addressed contours of continuity within the experiences of people of African descent.

Pan-Africanism is an elastic paradigm rooted in nineteenth century African-American activism. In the nineteenth century, African-Americans developed different theoretical challenges to their status as bonded people and as exploited laborers in a racially divided country. In the 1800’s Ethiopianism, an ideological precursor to Pan-Africanism, expounded ideas of black sovereignty, autonomy and cultural distinctiveness. Parallels to African-American life were revealed in Biblical scriptures and Africa became a place of refuge and redemption. Strong currents of Ethiopianism ran through African-American Christianity in the nineteenth century. An early spokesman, Edward Blyden, declared “Nationality is an ordinance of nature.... The heart of every true Negro yearns after a distinct and separate nationality”(Fredrickson 1995:69). During the emigration of African-Americans to Liberia and Sierre Leone, Ethiopianism was a moving ideological force that encouraged self-actualization outside of America. Martin Delany, an outspoken nationalist and supporter of emigration to West Africa, stated that “our policy must be..... Africa for the African race and for Black men to rule them”(Frederickson 1995: 66). Reverend Henry Highland Garnet was a Presbyterian clergyman and president of the African Civilization Society, an organization supporting Black emigration to West Africa

in the late 1850's. The objective of the organization was "to establish a grand center of Negro nationality, from which shall flow streams of commercial, intellectual, and political power which will make colored people respected everywhere"(Frederickson 1995:65). Ethiopianism was characterized by a strong emphasis on Western ideals of nationhood, and civilization which influenced early perspectives of Pan-Africanism.

In 1900 the first Pan-African conference was held in England and it was attended by Afro-Caribbean professionals like Sylvester Williams of Trinidad, and African-Americans like W.E.B. Dubois of the United States. This conference was convened fifteen years after the Berlin conference in 1884 where, in the "scramble for Africa", European nations had divided Africa for their imperialistic projects. The mission of the first Pan-African conference was to advocate on behalf of people of African descent and rally against their maltreatment. Dubois later reflected on this conference: "There is slowly arising not only a strong brotherhood of Negroes throughout the world but also the common cause of the darker races against the intolerable assumptions and insult of Europeans has already found expression. Most men in the world are colored. A belief in humanity means a belief in colored men" (cited in Frederickson 1995:150). This kind of Pan-Africanism was soon eclipsed by a populist Pan-Africanism that transversed the African Diaspora.

Jamaican born Marcus Garvey was a charismatic spokesman for the largest Black movement of the twentieth century, labeled a "Back-to-Africa Movement." The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was a populist movement with an eclectic blend of Christianity and nationalism. According to Frederickson, in the 1920's Pan-Africanism was the greatest rival to the "incorporationist liberalism" advocated by middle-class

African American leaders and emblematic of such organizations as the NAACP (Federickson 1995:137). Integral to the philosophical tenet of Garvey's Pan-Africanism was what Federickson calls an "existential Blackness" that bound people of African descent (1995:158). Garvey's appeal was at the grass-roots level and he reaffirmed the integrity of Black populist culture. The UNIA had branches in the Caribbean, Latin America, West Africa and South Africa. The "populist Pan-Africanism" of Garveyism influenced the trajectory of the Black nationalism of the 1960's and the Black power movement of the 1970's (Federickson 1995). Garveyism's appeal to African independence and cultural solidarity was reiterated as far as South Africa where his thoughts had an influence on Black politics and the trade union movement (Hill 1982). Robert Hill showed how the dissemination of Garveyism by Afro-Caribbeans and African-Americans led to the formation of UNIA chapters in South Africa (1982).

An offshoot of Pan-Africanism, the Negritude Movement among French-speaking Afro-Caribbeans and West Africans conceived of an "African personality." It was an idealist movement that upheld the cultural unity of Africa. Scholars and activists involved in national liberation attempted to transcend ideas of essential Black thought and instead addressed the nexus of class exploitation and racial asymmetry. In the 1930's Trinidad born Pan-Africanists like George Padmore and C.L.R. James formed organizations that protested against the Italian invasion and colonization of Ethiopia. The International African Friends of Abyssinia and the International African Service Bureau were organizations that represented the activist dimension of Pan-Africanism (Lemelle 1992).

In 1945 the Fifth Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester, England and its delegates were from the progressive ranks of trade unionists, activists and workers.

Manning Marable explains that during this period, “the movement to realize Pan-Africanism was directly reinforced by a wide variety of concomitant social protests and resistance struggles” (Marable 1996: 207). Pan-Africanism was beginning to transcend the rhetoric of solidarity and became a prism through which people of African descent could analyze sociopolitical processes. At this congress activists drew up the Manifesto titled “Challenge to the Colonial Powers” where they declared “We demand for Black Africa autonomy and independence” and they “Condemned the monopoly of capital and the rule of private wealth and industry for private profit alone. We welcome economic democracy as the only real democracy” (Marable 1996: 206). Pan-Africanism was beginning to integrate elements of the different political projects of Europe and Africa. Colonization had lost its legitimacy and Pan-Africanists were reshaping Pan-Africanism into a paradigm of activism.

In 1958, an All-African Peoples Congress was held in Ghana, and it was here that anti-colonial activists like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo networked with other activists throughout the African continent. Nkrumah stated “No part of Africa can be safe or free to develop fully and independently while any part remains unliberated....” Furthermore he argued that “unless Africa is politically united under an All-African Union government there can be no solution to our political and economic problems....”(Nkrumah 1970). Also in 1958 the Pan-African Movement for East and Central Africa was formed to campaign for independence and unity among the countries of Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Northern, and Southern Rhodesia. In attendance at the Accra conference were activists from South Africa, particularly Africanists who were greatly influenced by the Pan-Africanism espoused at this

conference. According to Gerhart, Africanists had appropriated “every tenet of Pan-Africanist doctrine into an article of faith into the ideology of the Pan-Africanist Congress”(Gerhart 1978:207). After 1958, Pan-Africanism as an ideology had moved to embrace solidarity between national liberation movements. Martinique- born writer Frantz Fanon warned of the pitfalls of narrow nationalism that embraced racial solidarity and ultimately replicated the hegemonic practices of the colonizer. Activist and Guyanese scholar Walter Rodney also pointed to the latent class contradictions posed by Pan-Africanism in a decolonized Africa. It was class contradictions, he argued that challenged the progress of African states and the rhetoric behind the unity of struggle.

Lemelle and Kelly point to the historical tendency of Pan-Africanism to obscure particular class and gender differences (1994). More importantly, Black masculinity greatly informed the ideas of Pan-Africanism, establishing a “gendered iconography” that is still cogent today (Lemelle and Kelley 1994). Scholars contend that the limitations of Pan-Africanism will remain as long as it embraces any essentialist notion of race out of which racism itself derives (Marable 1996). Kwame Appiah traced the “centrality of race in the history of African nationalism” and the ways in which Pan-Africanism assumes a natural fraternity on the basis of race (Appiah 1992:4-17). According to Appiah, metaphysical assertions that subscribe to the notion of race impoverish Pan-Africanism. Instead he argues that Pan-Africanism can be a progressive force once it refutes race, seeing it as a construction and as a retrogressive argument for unity (Appiah 1992). However Pan-Africanism was also a reflection of the contradictions of identity that faced and still face Black communities inside and outside of Africa. Pan-Africanism encoded the histories and multiple identities of the black Diaspora. DuBois spoke of the “double-

consciousness” of African-Americans and Pan-Africanism was an outlet for an identification with Africa.

Pan-Africanism in South Africa has been influenced by the variations of Black nationalism and Pan-Africanism in Africa, but it has followed a specific course in South Africa.

Organizational History of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) 1990-1999

The PAC is made up of component structures that are subordinate to it such as the Pan-African Women’s Organization (PAWO), the Pan-Africanist Student Organization (PASO), and the Azanian Youth Organization (AZANYU). In 1989 the Pan-African Student Organization (PASO) was launched as an “Africanist orientated student organization ” whose motto was “mobilize, educate and advance.” The PAC consists of a national executive committee (NEC), which includes the president, deputy president, national organizer, secretary general and secretary for different departments such as women’s affairs, labor and health. There are also provincial and regional branches with their own internal structures. Each branch is mandated to pay a membership fee to the PAC and this allows current branches to send voting delegates to national congresses. Each component structure also has a national executive committee and is divided into provinces, regions and local branches. PAWO has a national executive committee from which two members serve on the NEC of the PAC. This assures the participation of women within the leadership structures of the PAC.

The Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania is a former liberation movement that currently operates as a political party. In the transition from a liberation movement, the PAC has had to make ideological adjustments that have led to contradictions within the

organization. In December 1989 the Pan-Africanist Movement (PAM) was formed under the presidency of ailing and imprisoned activist Zephania Mothopeng. PAM became the PAC's internal wing and the external wing remained in exile awaiting political developments in the country. Thereafter the structure of the organization was duplicated (Nyatumba 1992). After the unbanning of the liberation organizations, PAM reconstituted itself as the Pan-Africanist Congress in 1990. The PAC along with the Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO) expressed discontent with the negotiation process, and repudiated the legitimacy of the F.W. De Klerk's government. The youth wing of the PAC, Azanyu and the student organization, PASO were vehemently opposed to the negotiations. In 1990, a consultative conference was called by the PAC in Harare, Zimbabwe to discuss "exploratory talks" with the government and a party congress was scheduled for December to clarify the PAC's position (Nyatumba 1992). For the PAC, the conditions set by the government were meant to "frustrate legitimate goals of liberation" (PAC document 1991). Under the presidency of Clarence Makwetu, the PAC argued for representation within the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) as part of the negotiating team and to present a Pan-Africanist perspective to the forum. The PAC demanded the formation of a constituent assembly on the basis of one person one vote as a precondition for negotiations. Divisions within the ranks of the PAC began to erupt in the 1990's. As the elections approached, Africanists debated PAC's role in the negotiations and the elections. Africanists referred to as "watchdogs" opposed the conciliatory gestures of the leadership who participated in talks at the World Trade Center (Weekly Mail 1993). Moreover these critical Africanists resented the "kind of packaging that presented the ANC as sole and authentic voice of the oppressed

majority in Azania”(Convention of Africanists Document 1997). Other Africanists called these “watchdogs” provocative elements whose real aim was to sabotage the PAC.

In 1992 the PAC claimed 410 branches and in 1993 that figure rose to 850 with an estimated membership of 700,000 (Work in Progress 1993:18). The year 1993 was heralded as the “Year of the Great Storm” by the APLA structures of the PAC. The activities of APLA, whose most infamous slogan was “one settler, one bullet” were in accordance with the PAC’s position of “waging struggle on all fronts.” The PAC argued that it would not “abandon the bullet until the ballot was secured”(Friedman and Atkinson 1994:28). According to APLA commander Sabelo Phama “ South Africa was the last bastion of settler colonialism and it was APLA’s mission to liberate Azania”(Sowetan 1993). APLA articulated the militancy and radicalism of the PAC while the leadership engaged in talks about future arrangements of power. Throughout the early 1990’s the surveys of support for the PAC ranged from 2% to 5% among Black South Africans (Work in Progress 1993:19).

In January 1991 the PAC and Azapo held bilateral talks to discuss the “idea of a transitional authority to oversee the transitional process”(Nyatumba 1992:98). The PAC agreed to multiparty talks and to be a part of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU). For some political observers this marked a significant shift in the PAC’s “decolonization model for a transfer of power”(Work in Progress 1993:14). Multiparty talks among the negotiating council at Kempton Park were aimed at reaching an agreement on “constitutional principles, the constitutional framework and a time frame for the elections”(Atkinson 1994 :96). Because of APLA attacks the police raided PAC and APLA safe houses arresting seventy-three members on May 25th, 1993. Afterward

the PAC walked out of negotiations at the World Trade Center in Kempton Park. The Law and Order Minister Hernus Kriel stated “a seat at the negotiating table does not give any person, party or organization the right to commit crimes”(Friedman and Atkinson 1994:28). The South African government and the PAC argued over the conditions of talks and the main point of contention was APLA. The PAC explained that APLA’s leadership was autonomous. At risk of being sidelined from negotiations, on June 22nd the PAC agreed, in a joint statement with 25 other parties to the “cessation and suspension of hostilities, armed struggle and violence”(SAPA 1993). The leadership of APLA, the PAC and representatives of the South African government met in Harare, Zimbabwe in November of 1993 to discuss a “moratorium on violence.” The decision to suspend armed struggle brought further acrimony within the PAC, specifically between APLA militants and the leadership. Some ex-APLA combatants told me that they were still engaging in operations after the ceasefire because they were never informed of this decision by their leadership. The end of armed struggle revealed some of the contradictions between the high command of APLA and the “footsoldiers.” After discussions at Kempton Park “assurances of five years of joint government” was rejected by the PAC (Atkinson 1994: 96). The proposed form of “mixed government” secured a place for the National Party in the government and cabinet.

At its annual conference on December 18, 1993, the PAC leadership formally announced its participation in the first democratic elections on April 27th 1994. In polls conducted right before the 1994 elections, the PAC was described as the “second most popular” party after the ANC (Work in Progress 1993:3). The forecasts by Africanists and poll takers was that the PAC was “poised to emerge as the single most popular electoral

force behind the ANC” (Work in Progress 1993:3). However in 1994 the PAC received 1.7% of the electorate garnering the organization five parliamentary seats. While the African National Congress captured “fifty-four percent of the voter population” (Stack 1999:26). The PAC received 2.0 % in the Eastern Cape, 6.4 % in the Orange Free State, 1.5 % in Gauteng, 1.6 % in Mpumalanga, 0.9 % in the Northern Cape, 1.3 % in the Northern Province, 1.7 % in the Northwest, 1.1 % in the Western Cape and 0.7 % in Kwazulu Natal (Stack 1999 :30). For my respondents in Cape Town, the election results were shocking because of the popularity of the PAC in the Western Cape and to them it proved that the elections of 1994 were “engineered.” Many in the PAC saw the election results as a considerable setback and resolved to change the leadership.

As of 1996, the organization maintained its adherence to the ideology of Pan-Africanism (PAC Policy Document 1996). In 1996 PAC’s objectives were to “unite and rally African peoples into one national front on the basis of African nationalism” (PAC Constitution 1996). It maintained the original aims were the “maintenance of the right to self-determination of the African peoples under an unitary non-racial democracy that is Africanist and socialist.” It was the mission of PAC to “promote the concept and ideology of Pan-Africanism by promoting unity among the peoples of Africa” (PAC constitution 1996).

Minister Stanley Mogoba was elected president in 1997 and Dr. Motsoko Pheko was voted vice-president. Former president Clarence Makwetu challenged moves by PAC members to oust him from the leadership and was suspended from the PAC for three years. In 1996 and 1997 the PAC submitted more than two hundred applications for amnesty to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for APLA operatives. The

TRC was convened based on the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995. The Commission reviewed amnesty applications for acts committed between 1960 and 1993. The ex-APLA combatants I spoke to at Leeukwop Maximum and Greenpoint Prison were serving sentences for murder and robbery. The robberies were part of operations of “repossession” that APLA soldiers engaged in to fund their activities. Some of the prisoners were denied amnesty, others were awaiting their hearings and I met some who were appealing the decisions by the TRC in their cases. They were all young men who argued that they were political prisoners. For the 1999 elections the PAC outlined its five principles: unity, morality, economic justice, non-racialism and land (PAC election manifesto 1999). Political observers explained that because of PAC’s “exclusively Black support” it represented the “best chance South Africa had at maintaining a multiparty political system”(Finance Week 1999:22). In 1999, female membership of the PAC was estimated at 25 percent and there were nineteen women in provincial leadership structures and eleven women on the national executive (Women’s National Coalition 1999:5). As of 1999, PAC support was estimated to be at two percent of the electoral market. It was suggested that if PAC campaigned effectively their support base could rise to between five percent and 10 percent (Finance Week 1999:23). Between 1993 and 1994 support for the ANC “peaked at seventy percent” (Stack 1999: 26). While the ANC’s support had increased, the PAC’s base remained consistent between one and two percent between 1994 and 1999. The ANC’s rise showed a “consolidation of Black support” (Stack 1999:28). Whereas, in 1999 the PAC captured less than one percent of the vote and its representation in parliament dwindled to just two, but it remains a steadfast member of the opposition.

Organizational History of the Pan-African Women's Organization

Before the establishment of the African Women's Organization (AWO) in 1985, women in the PAC had no formal structure. They were full members of the PAC but leadership was male dominated and women's participation was largely supportive. In the Manifesto of the PAC in 1959, women are mentioned in the excerpt on personal habits: "They (men) should develop and show true respect for African womanhood and demonstrate in practice the theory of sex equality with respect to men and women in the PAC" (PAC Manifesto 1959:52). The PAC Manifesto remains an ideological handbook of the PAC. In the early days of the organization women were discouraged from direct political action because it was they who had to keep "the home fires burning" in the event of the arrest of their husbands. Women were directed to abstain from civil disobedience and told that they would be "assigned their historic role but in the first phase of the struggle they must make sure that all men go to jail" (PAC Leaflet 1960). Women at this time were "required to stay home with the youth" and not participate in anti-pass campaigns (Gerhart 1978). Nevertheless women did participate in the anti-pass campaigns and this was verified by my respondents. Women were also among the victims of the shootings that took place in Sharpeville and the violence that occurred in Langa. Women's lives were constructed around their familial relationships; a specific gender consciousness had not yet entered into the nationalism of the PAC in the late 1950's.

The African Women's Organization (AWO) was formed as a separate but affiliated organization of the Pan-Africanist Congress. It was linked to the PAC through ideology, leadership and political direction (PAWO 1997). Its objectives were twofold,

the propagation of Pan-Africanism in the context of the banning of the PAC and the political mobilization of women. In the early days of AWO, not all members were PAC members and many women within the PAC were not active in AWO. Within AWO, women were able to engage in the political work necessary to keep a banned and underground organization active in the country. At its first national council in 1990, AWO was described as “the different battalion in one army of the self-same struggle” in the liberation of Azania (South Africa). At the opening address it was stated that “sex oppression had not been problematized and that the primary struggle was against settler-colonial rule”(AWO document 1990). Women of AWO were intent on deeper involvement in the general struggle against apartheid alongside male activists, and they sought greater visibility for women within the leadership.

The original goals of AWO were to “rally and unite all oppressed, exploited and dispossessed African women in occupied *Azania* under the banner of African nationalism, to heighten the national consciousness of women in the national liberation struggle, to engage women in programs that fulfill the aims and objectives of the organization, to educate women to embrace the vanguard role of the workers and peasants in the national liberation struggle, to inculcate the spirit of self reliance in women, and strive for a non-racial non-sexual social order in Africa”(AWO President’s Address 1990). At that juncture sexism, racism and class exploitation were perceived to be inextricably linked to the hegemony of apartheid. It is for this reason that the “women’s struggle” was not seen as distinct from the national liberation movement and AWO as an organization was intended to be an impermanent structure. The national executive committee (NEC) of AWO is composed of a national chairperson, deputy chairperson, the secretary general,

deputy secretary general, national organizer, publicity secretary, health and social welfare, environmental affairs, education, labor, economic development, culture and sports, national treasurer. There are regional structures in the Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, the Free State and the Transvaal. The regional structures coordinate branches which all have internal structures that included a chair-person, vice-chairperson, secretary, vice secretary, treasurers, branch organizer and two additional members. All women members of the PAC are granted automatic membership into AWO/PAWO.

With the unbanning of the liberation organizations, AWO was able to operate more freely but was subject to the contradictions facing liberation movements which must make the transition to a political party. As debates over ideological direction, militarism and the elections ensued, the PAC was weakened and this affected AWO. In 1997 AWO became PAWO (Pan-Africanist Women's Organization) with a new mission to increase women's participation within the leadership of the PAC, increase women delegates, and make gender equity a major element of the Pan-Africanist program. AWO/PAWO's objective was to define a gender framework and introduce a gender agenda to all the policies of the PAC. As a component of the PAC, AWO/PAWO is subject to its directives, which constitutes a major challenge. Furthermore the linking of nationalism and gender can thwart a consensus on what are women's interests. An example of such a challenge arose with the proposition of the Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996. legislation to legalize abortion in South Africa. As debates over the act circulated in parliament, ideological cleavages emerged between women in AWO/PAWO. Among the members of AWO/PAWO there was disagreement over the issue of abortion and specifically within the national executive committee (NEC) there was a lack of

consensus. The national executive of AWO/PAWO requested more time for internal dialogue and debate over the issue before the PAC voted on the act. A member of the NEC of AWO/PAWO described how women mobilized “traditional Africanist men” to push an anti-abortion line. Some Africanist women could not reconcile the “unAfrican nature of abortion” with notions of reproductive autonomy. As one Africanist woman told me “children are a blessing in African culture” and abortion contradicted the cultural ideals of Pan-Africanism. AWO/PAWO petitioned the PAC to abstain from voting because they wanted to poll Africanist women before making a final decision. However the PAC proceeded in voting for the legislation without additional consultation with AWO/PAWO. AWO/PAWO wanted greater input into the decisionmaking of the PAC parliamentarians. However, AWO/PAWO eventually voted against the Termination of Pregnancy Act and the PAC parliamentarians also voted against it. AWO/PAWO’S advocacy for a commitment towards gender equality within South African society and their push for change within the structure of the PAC emerged within a shifting discourse among the liberation movements in the 1990’s.

1990’s-2000 Moving Forward: Gender and the State in the Transition Process

In the negotiations that followed the unbanning of liberation organizations, South African woman activists collaborated to define their gender interests and integrate them into the structures of the new South African state. Women activists demanded a “gendered democratization process”, one that acknowledged the importance of gender equity in all institutions (Seidman 1999:289). A Gender Advisory Board was convened in 1991 to study the “gender impact” of the negotiation process (Seidman 1999). In 1993 all twenty-six political parties agreed to a gender quota for the negotiations: “fifty-percent

of each two-person team had to be female”(Seidman 1999:294). The liberation organizations acknowledged the importance of a “gendered representation at the national negotiations”(Seidman 1999:293). The African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress had at least one woman on their negotiating team. The PAC asked the African Women’s Organization (AWO) to recommend a woman for the negotiating team. In an interview with her she recalled the difficulties of being a woman at the negotiations. There were complaints that she was too quiet and that she didn’t ask enough questions.² The ANC slogans of the 1990’s demanded a “nonracial, democratic and nonsexist South Africa.” The Black Consciousness organization, the Azanian People’s Organization (AZAPO) and the Democratic Party (DP) committed themselves to ending gender subordination (Seidman 1999). A Democratic Party discussion paper stated “ The status of women must be improved both on the grounds of democracy and justice” (Seidman 1999: 293). The ANC set a 30 percent quota for women on its electoral list and the first democratically elected parliament was composed of 106 women, 26.5 percent of the 400 representatives

In 1991 the African National Congress Women’s League initiated the launch of the Women’s National Coalition (WNC). At the founding meeting seventy organizations committed to the drafting of a Women’s Charter of Effective Equality. The WNC represented a coalition of women from political parties, civic and community organizations (Baden, Hasim and Meintjies 1998).³

² The first woman negotiator recommended by AWO was replaced by Patricia De Lille, a trade unionist who became the PAC’s chief negotiator.

³ Five of my respondents are on the board of the Women’s National Coalition.

However women from white conservative groups left the coalition as the different political tendencies weakened the unity of women's interests. The Women's National Coalition recommended a nonpartisan women's charter to be introduced into the new constitution after conducting a survey of women and organizing a round of focus groups. Three million women participated in the focus groups and the research was used to assess the concerns of women in the interim before the 1994 elections. The Women's Charter outline general issues related to women such as equality, law, violence against women, education, environment, training, health, social services, political and civic life, and culture. The Charter was officially endorsed by the National Parliament in 1994. On August 9, 1994 President Mandela officially received the Women's Charter and that day was subsequently declared National Women's Day (Women's National Coalition 1999).

The South African Constitution has specific provisions pertinent to gender equality. It prohibits discrimination on the grounds of: race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture language and birth. Within the Constitution "there are provisions for affirmative action, clauses protecting the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which also pertains to reproductive freedom, the guarantee of legal measures to promote land reform and equitable access to natural resources, provisions for socio-economic rights to housing, health care, food, water and social security, provisions for right to basic education, and the Constitution has the authority to overrule customary law" (Biden, Hasim and Meintjes 1998:32). Moreover the Constitution reserves the right of "positive discrimination" to address discriminatory practices of the past.

The new government set out to “institutionalize gender in the government by integrating gender concerns in the policies of all departments” rather than compartmentalize gender into a separate bureau of “women’s affairs”(Biden, Hasim and Meinjtes 1998:17). In 1995 a Women’s Budget was proposed to track the governmental expenditures on women through budget allocations (IDASA 2001). The Women’s Budget “examines the gender impact of key aspects of the total budget”(Budlender 1996:4). Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Finance, researchers from the Law, Race and Gender Project at the University of Cape Town, Idasa (Budget Information Service), and NGO’s worked jointly on the Women’s Budget. A multiparty Parliamentary Women’s Group and a Committee on Improving the Quality of Life and Status of Women were set up in August 1996. These committees were responsible for the implementation of the UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Biden, Hasim and Meintjes 1998).

The tasks of the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) were mandated by the constitution in 1996, but the Commission was formally established in 1997. It was the “peak coordinating body for all policies attempting to address gender equality”(Seidman 1999:302). It served as a lobbying body pressuring governmental and civil service structures to develop policies that address gender inequalities. The CGE also made recommendations to the government on promoting new legislation and commission research on gender disparities. The CGE promoted “Gender Dialogues” to debate topics that concern women such as the Termination of Pregnancy Act. In 1997 the Office of the Status of women (OSW) was formed to “coordinate and facilitate the implementation of gender policy in the government” (Biden, Hasim and Meintjes 1998:17). The OSW was

charged with promoting affirmative action in the government and organizing “gender training”(Biden, Hasim and Meintjes 1998). The South African government has demonstrated that it is committed to the integration of women into state structures but the question remains as to how much authority these “gender desks” hold in the formulation of policy and the allocation of resources.

On May 25, 1994 President Nelson Mandela addressed the first democratically elected Parliament saying, “freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression”(Biden, Hasim and Meintjes 1998:14). Since 1994 women’s activism has been hampered by the increase in political apathy in all political organizations. The directives of the new government have “mainstreamed gender” in national structures but local governing bodies have not been transformed to the same degree. Biden, Hasim and Meintjes argue that it is at the level of local government that the “delivery of services impact women” the most because of the gendered organization of the household (1998: 17). Moreover the work of “gender specialists” in the CGE and OSW does not halt the “ghettoization” of such statutory bodies. Without adequate budgets and a translation of policies to women on the ground, the lives of everyday women are peripherally affected by progressive gender policies.

In 1999 when I spoke to a member of the national executive board of AWO/PAWO she described how African women have been “demobilized nationally” since the elections of 1994. Time after time Africanist women told me that “things are worse now.” The competition for women’s interest comes from churches, nongovernmental organizations (NGO’s), community work, and their families. Biden, Hasim and Meintjes explained that “resources previously directed toward movements and

organizations in civil society have been redirected toward the state”(Biden, Hasim and Meintjes 1998:22). Some feel that since 1994 the South African state has consolidated itself at the expense of social movements. Political inactivity has been a consequence of the growing breach between the government and women from all political parties. How do women, not only Africanist women make the transition from being a “critical mass to a thinking mass” in an organization and movement. As an organization, AWO/PAWO has faced challenges in the context of the new South Africa where paradigms of nationalism are faced with questions of relevance. Perhaps most difficult is finding novel ways to recruit into Pan-Africanism a generation of women who have no experience of political activism, and drawing the ideological linkages between gender empowerment and the nationalism of Pan-Africanism. In the next chapter I will sketch the history of African women in South Africa and demonstrate that their legacies of activism were nourished by the depths of deprivation they were faced with.

Chapter Three

***Ba kae Basadi?* (Where are the women?)**

South Africa offers a vivid example of how gender needs to be analyzed within the intersecting vectors of race, ethnic and class stratification. Historically, Black women in South Africa have been the targets of different state mechanisms of control that sought to monitor their domestic lives and regulate their patterns of work. The reproductive and domestic labor of Black women was manipulated to subsidize the system of migrant labor in South Africa. As “perpetual minors” Black women were subordinated to the state and the state reinforced their subordination within the household and the wage economy. Thus within the context of South Africa, gender informs the structure of relationships between men and women and mitigates experiences of domination. Gender ideologies were intrinsic to state policy and to the legislation of apartheid (Manicom 1992). Moreover the gendered face of political violence played a formative role in shaping the way women were defined as victims, collaborators or militants within the liberation struggle (Goldblatt and Meintjies 1996).

Apartheid “impacted what was acknowledged as the main site of struggle”; relations of gender did not draw the same depth of critique or contention as did race and class (Fester 1998:222). Black women’s interests were not disaggregated from the interests of the nation or the community. Gender was unevenly integrated into liberation discourse, demonstrating the capacity of race to “negate its own complex interplay with the very social relations it envelops” (Higginbotham 1992:255). As a system, apartheid helped to foster “the widest extremes in types of female solidarity”, so the bonds of sisterhood across the domains of race, ethnicity and class were tenuous (Gaitskell 1983).

The struggle against apartheid illuminated the fallacies embedded in essentialist notions about women. Overall the heterogeneity of women in South Africa provides an illustration of how disparities in access to resources is integral to experiences of gender.

Before the 1960's women were underrepresented in the historical record of South Africa and Africa. The discussion of women was relegated to "biological reproduction, embedded in descriptions of marriage customs, fertility rituals, witchcraft and domestic labor" (Robertson 1987:98). Anthropologists, grounded in functionalism, depicted African women in the "ethnographic present", misinterpreting their status and roles in the societies studied (Robertson 1987). In the late 1960's and 1970's, writings on African women demonstrated the diminishing social and economic autonomy of women under colonialism, where a "transposition of gender stratification into class formation" was engineered by marginalizing women from the means of production (Robertson 1987:111). Since the late 1970's, South African feminist historians have tended to write a "compensatory history" of women using an interdisciplinary analysis to address the absence of a women's history (Hetherington 1993). Overall, Hetherington cites two prevailing themes in research on South African women: they are portrayed as "oppressed victims of capitalism buttressed by the state or there is the celebration of heroic resistance of women against oppression" (Hetherington 1993:261). South African writers have not yet captured the diversity in Black women's lives because of the lasting effects of the apartheid regime and secondly because of scarce representation of Black women in the South African academy

Since the 1970's, feminist historians have recognized the need to incorporate a gender analysis into writings on the political economy of South Africa. Hetherington

distinguishes between feminist historians whose theoretical approach problematized gender with a critique of patriarchy and those who employed a Marxist analysis to studies of gender (Hetherington 1993). Marxist explanations of African women's oppression defined women in terms of their role in the capitalist mode of production as the reproducers of labor and as a labor reserve army (Bozzoli 1983). Analysis was geared towards "the family as reproductive unit in society rather than looking at the gender struggles which take place within the family"(Hetherington 1993:260). In attempting to transcend the ahistorical reduction of women's oppression to the trajectories of capitalism, some writers directed analysis to the "domestic sphere." They argued that critical attention should be paid to women's subordination within "domestic struggles", where struggles for authority over labor and resources took place within the household (Bozzoli 1983). According to Belinda Bozzoli, pre-capitalist gender relations in the domestic sphere structure the gender divisions that account for the patterns of male proletarianization and migrant labor (Bozzoli 1983). However this focus on domestic relations tended to reify the household and overlook the "historical construction of the domestic sphere"(Manicom 1992:449). The emphasis on an analysis of "domestic struggles separated the state from domestic patriarchal relations", discounting the ways in which the state regulated and legitimated forms of gender domination (Manicom 1992). Significantly, the Marxist framework has dominated the writings of South African feminists, due in part to the fact that the overwhelming majority of African women are working -class and rural.

By acknowledging the implications of gender in all political categories and social processes we gain an understanding of how apartheid was differentially experienced by

African men and women (Manicom 1992). The political construction of an African was a gendered category as well as a racialized one. The state itself invoked particular gender relations, which reinforced the subordination of African women. The construction of gender is inextricably linked to the history of rule within South Africa. In contemplating the history of Black South African women, it is important that we view the gendered organization of the pre-apartheid, as well as the apartheid state and its responsibility for “gendering processes”(Manicom 1992).

History of Black women’s work

Early feminist writings on the changing status of African women looked at the continuities and divergences in relations of gender in pre-capitalist and colonial South Africa. They described how capitalism remapped the domestic sphere into a site of reproduction and consumption, which helped to entrench an ideology that legitimated the web of race, national, class and gender asymmetries. In comparing the sex/gender systems of the indigenous pre-colonial societies and those of settler society, writers noted the measures to control African women’s labor in both contexts (Walker 1990; Guy 1990). Whereas in pre-capitalist communities, women played a central productive role, the advent of settler society redefined their role under an ideology of domesticity, reconstituting them as minors and dependants (Walker 1990). Even so the viability of rural communities remained contingent on the labor of African women which made their productive and reproductive capacities a locus of struggle. Writers pointed to gender specific patterns of migrant labor and proletarianization which served the needs of both the capitalist economy and the rural economy. On the reserves there was a convergence of gender ideologies between the colonizer and the colonized in the mutual subordination of

African women. In studying the “patterns of gender relationships that were precolonial”, feminist writers were looking at the history of African women’s subordination in South Africa and locating the junctures where social organization shifted (Bozzoli 1983; Manicom 1992). However by exploring pre-capitalist forms of patriarchy, writers assumed a certain “continuity of the domestic realm” that was homogenous and uncontested (Manicom 1992). They failed to acknowledge that the sex/gender system and the domestic sphere were open to dynamic constructions that “varied according to class, race, culture and state policy” (Manicom 1992:450).

The literature suggests that in pre-capitalist society, throughout colonization and under the apartheid state, the reproductive and productive labor of African women has been central to gender relations. Keletso Atkins, in describing women’s work in colonial Natal, argues that African men and women were “accustomed to working conjointly” (1993:46). The bulk of women’s work was agricultural and it revolved “around her kraal and village economy” (Atkins 1993:45). It was through marriage that South African women in pre-capitalist society gained “direct access to economic resources”(Atkins 1993: 41). Patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal communities characterized pre-colonial society in South Africa. Guy explained that central to precolonial society was the marital “homestead” which functioned as a “unit of production” (Guy 1990:36). Women assumed the reins of agriculture and men were charged with stock keeping (Guy 1990:34). According to Guy women were the generators of wealth, through their fertility, agricultural labor and their role in the exchange of cattle. With the ascendancy of Shaka, there was a tightening of authority over surplus labor and reproduction. Adult men were conscripted into regiments where they gave years of service to the Zulu monarchy and

these were not allowed to marry until Shaka granted permission. In this way Shaka was able to manipulate demography by controlling the labor of men and the fertility of women (Guy 1990).

Kinsman found a similar pattern for Tswana speaking women, who assumed responsibility for agricultural production in networks that supported a strict division of labor. According to Kinsman “women cultivated, gathered edible foods, built and repaired houses, and molded household utensils”(Kinsman 1983). While women weeded and harvested men provided meat and milk for the household. ‘*Lobola*’ or bridewealth was a fundamental method for the redistribution of cattle in the community, making marriage a pivotal institution within pre-capitalist societies. As a “cornerstone of traditional culture”, ‘*lobola*’ functioned as a device for controlling the reproductive power of women (Ramphela 1992:20). In the “cattle complex” cultures of Southern Africa cattle was a “means of reproduction and a major means of production”(Kimble 1985:68). There was a “vertical transfer of property between fathers and sons” and “horizontal connections made between husbands and their wives families through the transfer of ‘*lobola*’ (Guy 1990:35). However, women held a great deal of economic autonomy because of their responsibility for agricultural production and the high value placed on fertility. Under colonial authority, “the surplus generated by wives was appropriated by husbands, fathers and the state” which depended upon the subordination of women’s labor (Guy 1990:43).

My subjects held very positive views of their pre-colonial past and firmly believed that women enjoyed more privileges in traditional culture. While they acknowledged there were varying degrees of gender asymmetry, they argued that the lives of women

were qualitatively better than they are in contemporary South Africa. A Zulu-speaking teacher from Soweto explained the cultural background of women's positions as follows:

Culturally the wife is a child to the husband, a husband will say these are my children, but it did not mean that in practice. When Africans ask how are those at home they will ask *banjani abantwana ekhaya?* (How are the children at home?) and that includes you. They don't ask how is your wife. The white man took advantage of our in-laws calling us (women) children.

Whatever the dynamics of culture and tradition, Africanists recall that women as mothers were viewed with a particular respect and dignity. A Xhosa -speaking Africanist man and a former political prisoner described women's status in traditional Xhosa society:

As a Xhosa, I know where I grew up in Transkei (Eastern Cape) women were always respected. When I was a little boy and I was sent on an errand somewhere it was always the home of *MuBoniswa* or Ma' whoever, because the home was always associated with a woman. The household was always referred to as the woman's.

In Charles van Onselen's studies of the Witwatersrand mining industry in the late 1800's, he writes of the imbalances between men and women in Johannesburg. The sex ratios were more highly skewed for Africans. For example in 1896 there were 12,961 Black men to 1,234 women a ratio of 10.50 men to every woman. If all the male compounds are included, the numbers were 40,855 men to 1,678 women, or 24.34 men to every woman (van Onselen 1982:104). The ratio of white men to women was 1.78 and consequently prostitution became an outlet for "Coloured" women, who entered the booming economy of the Witwatersrand. According to van Onselen, the first prostitutes in Johannesburg were "daughters of South Africa's proletariat", migrants from the Cape

Peninsula (van Onselen 1982:107). Later European women immigrants outnumbered the South African born prostitutes and organized prostitution became an important part of the Rand economy (van Onselen 1982). In the early 1900's after a combination of drought, cattle disease and internal rebellions in Natal, African women began migrating to the mining areas of Witwatersrand.

Van Onselen wrote, since the 1880's, domestic service has remained an "important sector in the developing capitalist economy of South Africa"(van Onselen 1982:1) However, it was Black men and not Black women who initially dominated the ranks of "houseboys" and servants. African families discouraged African women from domestic service because it was seen as morally dangerous. Between the late 1800's and early 1900's, African women who arrived on the Rand worked in illegal occupations, such as beer brewing and prostitution.

Despite this pattern, however, women became domestics in large numbers. A report compiled by the Department of Native Affairs of 1919-1921 emphasized the necessity of "agricultural training for African boys and practical domestic training for African girls"(Walker 1982:19). Cherryl Walker has written that "more than any other single type of work domestic service has had a formative influence on the way Black women are viewed in white society"(Walker 1982:14). Domestic service came to be the "principal wage occupation for Black women in South Africa" (Robertson 1987:122). Historically Black women were employed in both domestic service and agriculture. Cock argued that the domestic worker is subject to an "ultra-exploitation" derived from a social order that reaffirmed racial and sexual domination (Cock 1980:4). According to Cock, the economic and educational limitation placed on Black women worked to "trap" them into

domestic service while their vulnerability to laws of influx control made their employment insecure. Domestic service as an institution was a challenge to the rhetoric of "sisterhood" since "the wages paid and the hours of work exacted by white madams from their Black maids suggest a measure of oppression of women by women"(Cock 1980:1). Within the Eastern Cape, Cock found that the "most common route to survival for men was migration to the mines and the most common route for women was migration to domestic service" (1983:20). The domestic work provided by Black women freed white women from household responsibilities and allowed them the opportunity for self-realization. Black domestic workers performed double duties, working in the homes of employers and fulfilling domestic obligations in their own households (Cock 1983). Family networks of women helped each other in the care of children and in the organization of "women's work." In sum, the organization of paid domestic labor by race and class reinforces the subordination of Black women and does not disrupt the traditional association of domestic work with women.

Urban African women's protest against the state was an act of resistance against an authority that sought to set the parameters of their labor. The state attempted to control the mobility of African women through various modes of "influx control." African women resisted pass laws and coercive state measures, which tried to make them into full time wage laborers. They struggled against "full time proletarianization" and opted for home based work such as laundry, hawking and beer brewing (Wells 1983). According to Wells, the majority of women preferred the autonomy of informal sector work and part-time domestic work where they held more latitude in setting the terms of their employment (1983). Anti-pass campaigns in the Orange Free State in 1918 were waged

by women who, because of informal and home based part-time work, were able to negotiate family responsibilities and income generating activities, thereby avoiding “full time wage employment”(Wells 1983:69). Another kind of protest that was linked to Black women’s “asymmetric relationship to wage labor” were demonstrations against beer halls in the late 1920’s (Wells 1983). Domestic brewing by African women was made illegal and African men consumed beer in municipal beer halls from which African women were barred. African women were placed in ever more precarious circumstances as their men spent wages in municipal beerhalls, preventing them from making a subsistence income from home brewing. As Bradford (1987) points out, the women’s protest was a “politicization of the domestic sphere” where women were able to draw the connection between their subordination, their class position and the presence of the beer halls. The women understood the continuity between the domestic economy, public space and male wages. Bradford recognized that an understanding of different expressions of Black resistance necessitated an “analysis between the female sphere and the political economy”(Bradford 1987:293).

Race, class and gender have been the cornerstone of differentiation in the organization of employment and economy in South Africa. The lines of race demarcate the work lives of even professional African women. Shula Marks wrote of the history of African women in the nursing profession and discussed the way in which racist ideology was used to facilitate the creation of a segregated health sector for the urban African communities (Marks 1993). In 1957, the Nursing Amendment Act imposed passes on African nurses and injected segregationist policies into the nursing profession. According to Marks the act was a preemptive effort by the state that predicted a rise in the number of

African nurses. The measures taken by the Nationalist Party were “ a particular form of resolution of the urban crisis of the 1940’s and 1950’s”(Marks 1993:354). Marks showed that the segregation and expansion of African nursing was attributed to the need to “provide for the social reproduction of new, larger, Black urban workforce in the 1950’s”(Marks 1993:354). Under the Nationalist Party, the segregation of nursing led to the expansion of African training institutions and hospitals. Therefore one of the few vehicles for upwardly mobility for Black women was “rooted in segregationist practices” (1993: 355).

The majority of African women have worked in one of three sectors, domestic service, agriculture and secondary industry. The sex and race typing of female employment continued as more African women engaged in wage labor. Between the 1970’s and 1980’s the proportion of Black women who were employed increased by 51 percent but they were overrepresented in the service and agricultural sector. In 1982, 95 percent of Black women in the professional sector were either teachers or nurses and this sector made up only 11 percent of Black women. Agriculture accounted for 17 percent, 13 percent were in manufacturing and 50 percent were in the service economy. The greatest leap occurred in manufacturing where Black women work in the food, textile and garment industries. Black women dominated the industry where they made up 83 percent of the employees (Cock 1983). Historically the segments of the economy where Black women are found have always been the lowest paid and provided the least job security. Berger remarked that for working-class Black women, “their consciousness of themselves as women and as workers were very closely related” (Berger 1986:233). A 45 year old Africanist from Langa described the challenges at work and at home:

Me and my husband are both working but I am the one who has to make sure the school fees are paid, that they (children) are clothed. They (men) always say they don't have money; you have to insist that you need money. Even at work there is discrimination, for example you are employed and a Coloured lady or man comes to work, you teach them and train them. In three or six months they get promoted. If you don't talk, they will forget you. In my case I asked what must I do because I deserved a promotion. I asked is it because of my color and the whites said *Sisi* it is not because of your color. The problem, it is mostly race, in our department there are only three Blacks, we are mostly women.

Black Women and Worker's Struggles

Women's presence in squatter movements, shop boycotts, food committees, and rural protests had the intent of maintaining the viability of their households but also served to politicize them (Lodge 1983; Walker 1982). African women's participation in trade unions reflected their ability to broaden the spheres of protest and integrate family and work concerns. According to Berger, the political participation of working-class South African women exhibited the influential "connection between class-consciousness and nationalist consciousness" (Berger 1986:231). The unions were able to widen the critique from the factory to the community to national politics. Unions became an outlet for women to be politically active and community based while remaining effective in the factories.

African women experienced gender specific incorporation into the working class. Before 1936, white women constituted the majority of women working in industry. They later moved into the clerical workforce, which became the largest employment sector for white women (Walker 1982:65). During the Second World War manufacturing and industry expanded, and more labor was needed to meet the rising demand. As more stable

urban African communities flourished, characterized by growing female migration, increasingly more African women entered the industrial sector. By the 1950's African women began to enter the manufacturing industry, particularly in clothing and textiles. During the 1950's the garment industry was the fourth major industry behind iron and steel, metal products and construction (Berger 1987:139). Between 1947 and 1952, African women in this industry increased by 42 percent. By 1952, 47 percent of African women in secondary industry, were in manufacturing (Berger 1987).

Iris Berger traced the struggle of the garment workers in organizing a multi-racial trade union among women in the 1950's. Between 1930 and 1932 the majority of women working in the industrial sector were mostly young, white, single and Afrikaans speaking. In the mid 1930's Coloured women began entering the factories and after 1937, the white female labor force fell from 96 percent to 64 percent (Berger 1987:133). In 1947 African women made up only 8 percent of garment workers in the Transvaal and the African community complained that African women "were barred from working in the factories and were forced into doing washing" (Berger 1987:134). As African women began to enter the factories, employers paid them considerably lower wages arguing that under the Industrial Conciliation Act, it was legal to do so. According to this Act, pass holding Africans were not allowed to join registered trade unions and share in their benefits (Berger 1987:135). However, at the time African women were not mandated to carry passes and were therefore exempt from the Act. The Garment Worker's Union (GWU) went to court to defend African women's exemption, which they won in November 1944. The GWU demanded back pay for those African women who were underpaid and soon after they recruited their first black shop steward, Lucy Mvubelo.

Berger explains that while the GWU leadership wanted to reaffirm itself as a multiracial union, membership was divided about this issue and when Coloured members petitioned for a separate Coloured branch, the GWU created “sections” or parallel branches for Coloured and African members. Moreover, Afrikaaner women in trade unions had difficulties working with Coloured women since they “felt enormous pressure to conform to the norms of the emerging nationalist consensus” (Berger 1992:176). In 1953 the Native Labor (Settlement of Disputes Act) barred African women from registered trade unions. The Native Labor (Settlement of Disputes) Act “redefined employee to exclude all African workers and aimed to regulate the conditions of employment for African employees” (Horner 1987:126). The act was a form of legislation for the settlement of disputes between workers and employers. Prior to this act, only pass carrying Africans were excluded from the “definition of employee” (Horner 1987:126). The conditions set forth by this act provided for the election of a worker’s committee composed of African workers but who were subordinate to a white Labour Officer and a Central Native Labour Board of elected white officials. African workers were blocked from direct representation (Horner 1987). Employers began to lower their pay, and to replace white workers with African women, reclassifying job categories to undercut wages. African women staged a protest against wage cuts and exclaimed their “readiness for any action which our union or the GWU of South Africa may call on us to take” (Berger 1987:142). The GWU provided the opportunity for African women’s leadership and Lucy Mvubelo became a founding member of the multiracial Federation of South African Women (FSAW). Lillian Ngoyi, the Federation of South African Women’s vice-president had also been a garment worker. However the Suppression of

Communism Act stifled the inroads trade union organizing made among Black women.

Trade unionism in the 1950's saw the emergence of a coalition between unions and national liberation organizations. Women were active in the South African Coalition of Trade Unions (SACTU) whose members received banning orders from the state. By working in solidarity with the African National Congress and the Federation of South African women, trade unionists were making connections between gender, class and nationalism (Berger 1992). The unions developed a "class oriented explanation of the Congress movement"(Berger 1992:206). Unions such as the Food Canning Workers Union (FCWU) and its African counterpart, the AFCWU, addressed themselves to community issues and encouraged the politicization of their members. African women trade unionists protested in solidarity with the Congress alliance's anti-pass campaigns stating " we want work, not passes"(Berger 1992:208). Women trade unionists redefined class in terms that were grounded in their experience (Berger 1992).

The problems raised by working women were integrated into an unionist agenda that struggled to help women balance motherhood and work. This strengthened women's resolve to negotiate work with family responsibilities without critiquing the sexual division of labor in the household. Women trade unionists were able to coalesce on the basis of class and race, struggling as working-class wives and mothers (Berger 1992:220). The unions were critical in influencing the ideological discourse that framed how women interpreted their exploitation. By working under the aegis of the liberation organizations women both expanded the breadth of their activism and set the foundation for a particular discourse on gender.

In the 1980's Black women were at the forefront of community struggles that

mobilized the working-class and political activists. Spokesmen from the Food and Canning Workers Union stated “our viewpoint is that a union should not split the struggle of the worker in the factory from the struggles outside the workplace, in the community and political issues. We don’t believe the problem of the worker is separate from the problem in the areas where they live”(Hindson 1987:211). Workers, community activists and intellectuals coordinated efforts to make political and social demands of the state. In 1985 they organized consumer boycotts of white owned shops as a political strategy to demand the “lifting of the state of emergency, the removal of army and police from the townships, the release of political prisoners and political rights for all South Africans” (Cock 1983:151). In 1986 the South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU) was formed to address the specific social isolation of domestic workers and their lack of protection of under the law. The president of SADWU stated that “the new union will maintain the unity of working-class struggle under the umbrella of COSATU. It will also work with other progressive organizations for a democratic South Africa”(Cock 1983:153).

Within unions, African women struggled for leadership positions and fought to include changes in trade union demands that addressed the specific concerns of women workers. The Commercial Catering and Allied Workers of South Africa (CCAWUSA) was the first union in 1983 to win women paid maternity leave. While most of the members were women, its leadership was predominately male. Black women had to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace, lower pay, difficult working conditions, strip searches and lack of benefits for pregnant women. Emma Mashinini, a trade unionist in the CCAWUSA said, “ the whole life of a worker needs trade union involvement. And

together with that the whole question of equality between men and women”(1999:119).

In the 1984 “stayaways”, African women participated in their roles as trade unionists, community activists, students and political activists. Women also became involved in parent student committees which supported the activities of the Congress of South African students (COSAS). Women mobilized their communities over rent hikes, “Bantu education”, the coopting of local councils, transport costs, utility rates, the lifting of the state of emergency and the detention of children. Women were active on various committees such as the Detainees Parents Support Committees and they worked within the United Democratic Federation (UDF) mobilizing an interracial, multi class mass movement.

Rural Women and the Reserve System

In South Africa the poor are overwhelming African, rural and living in female headed households. Ramphele and Wilson (1989) found that within the rural Transkei, the “average farmer is a consumer of agricultural produce and not a producer” and that “two-thirds of rural households with incomes of less than R1. 500 a year” are subsidized by remittances sent by migrants (Ramphele and Wilson 1989:63). In 1982 they found that throughout the Transkei the degree of landlessness was at levels of twenty to thirty percent (Ramphele and Wilson 1989:40). The research also found that on average rural families spent 187 minutes, almost three hours on everyday, “fetching and carrying water” (Ramphele and Wilson 1989:49). Since it is young girls and women who are largely responsible for such tasks then it is women who are putting in these hours everyday. Moreover, “two-thirds of African households had no access to electricity in a country that utilized sixty percent of electrical energy on the African continent”

(Ramphela and Wilson 1989:8). Deng and Tjonneland documented the poverty rate of Africans as 65 percent, for Coloureds 33 percent, Indians 2.5 percent, and for whites 0.7 percent (1996). Women made up 60 percent of the poor and 70 percent of African children were poor (1996:41). Carter and May documented the “livelihood strategies” that rural households engage in to sustain themselves such as “agriculture, wage labor, pensions and disability grants, remittance from migrant labor, and small and micro-enterprise from hawking and petty commodity production”(Carter and May 1998:7).

According to Walker the migrant labor system has largely been gender-specific (Walker 1990:177). Writers argued that the subordination of women’s labor in the rural areas was a significant element in the organization of the migrant system (Bozzoli 1983). Until the 1940’s, the majority of African women, 70 percent, lived in the Native Reserves. Up until the 1920’s, African women were the least urbanized segment of the population. In 1952 passes were made mandatory for African women and women were only permitted entry into urban areas as “dependants of men with urban qualifications” (Ramphela 1992: 282). Then in 1964 there was an “embargo on African women to urban areas” (Ramphela 1992: 81). The apartheid state defined African women and children as a “superfluous appendage” who needed to be confined to the reserves, Bantustans and homelands. It was women and children who were targeted for removal and resettlement by the state. It was also women who became most active in squatter movements and defied the pass laws that restricted their residence in urban centers (IDF 1981). As a member of the Crossroads Women’s Committee stated, “squatter camps are grassroots revolts against the migrant labor system” (IDF 1981:77). The Bantustans represented a form of “domestic colonialism” that attempted to occlude South Africa’s dependency on

African labor (Carter, Karis and Stultz 1967). There is, of course, diversity in the rural landscape such that rural areas are made up of the bantustans, or “homelands” and the white owned commercial farms. In each context, state and traditional authorities disenfranchised African women.

Historically, rural women mobilized themselves when their subsistence was threatened by fluctuation in prices and by the imposition of the state on their resources. William Beinart (1987) described the trading store boycotts led by women in the Herschel district of the Eastern Cape in the 1920’s, when prices rose for basic commodities. In 1922 three thousand women organized a strike where they agreed to “stop buying from the shops in Herschel until the white shopkeepers cut prices and bought wheat sold to them at a reasonable price”(Beinart 1987: 235). Women were under enormous pressure since at this time 75 percent of adult men were absent for almost six months a year. Rural women had frequent interaction with traders since they were responsible for their households. With more autonomy over the household, women were directly affected by any inflation in the price of commodities. Beinart noted how much of an influence women’s Christian unions (*manyanos*) had on the boycotters and how they provided an outlet for women’s independence from male authority. *Manyanos* provided the “organizational core” of women’s participation in the boycott (Beinart 1987:239). Christian or “dressed women” were in the forefront of female opposition to inflating prices and the registration of land. Women were keenly aware that individual registration of land would favor men and jeopardize widows and single women. The resistance of women against land registration was a “battle for the maintenance of communal tenure”(Beinart 1987:243). Furthermore, women whose husbands were migrant laborers

did not depend solely on remittances for their livelihood; and access to land and livestock remained important. It was women who were most opposed to policies by the state to curtail their access to resources.

Mamphela Ramphele (1992) documented the social organization of the hostels in the Western Cape where men, women and children share a “bedhold” in traditional single sex compounds. In the Cape Peninsula, African women were barred from legal residence without a pass until 1986 when the Abolition of Influx Control Act brought the pass system to an end. In the Western Cape, women were specifically targeted for harassment and detention since they officially belonged in the “reserves” and “Bantustans.” According to Ramphele “there was a special assault against women in line with government policy of preventing Black family life taking further root in the Cape Peninsula”(Ramphele 1992:17). A “bedhold” operated like a household in that bonds of kinship and intimacy determined privileges and entitlement to accommodation and to the income of the male bedholder. Ramphele found that 70 percent of women living in these hostels had no income and those who did were usually self-employed in the informal sector (1992). Women earned income by selling food, brewing and selling beer which generated more income than formal employment. The majority of the women were dependent on the bedholder for accommodation and income, which forced them to conform to a system of gender relations predicated on inequalities. Women “cooked, cleaned, did the laundry and provided for the man’s sexual needs in order to have access to the bedhold”(Ramphele 1992:21). In the hostels only one-third of the residents were actual bedholders and the rest were dependants, therefore many people were enmeshed in networks of dependency. However it was women for whom existence was the most

precarious, some having to oscillate between rural areas and Cape Town to salvage marriages, seek maintenance for themselves and children and eke out a living. A 24 year old male Africanist, a former political prisoner who grew up in the townships of Cape Town, Nyanga, Gugulethu and Khayalitsha, described what happened to his mother when as a child he played in her purse and misplaced her pass:

I remember one day, when my mom used to come from her work, I used to take her bag and look at what is inside there-- maybe candy for me-- and in doing that I threw the pass out but I didn't know that. I ended up landing my mom in prison because I threw the pass away. When she went to work the next morning the police asked her where is your pass as a *kaffir*. She said proudly I have it. Only to find that it was missing out of her bag, so my mom was imprisoned for what I had done.

He also described the tactics women used to fend off police harassment if they did not possess a pass:

When I was a kid, women used to fight over me because there was a rule that mothers or women who are still breastfeeding can not be arrested for not having a pass. Women used to come to my mother and say can I have "Sizwe" for tomorrow because the police are coming. If the police find that you don't have a pass and you don't have a baby you will spend the night in prison.

I often visited the hostels in Langa to meet older Africanist men. The hostels are now populated by men, women and entire families. They are built of cement and are multileveled. Curtains divide hostel rooms so that different families can have some measure of privacy. Buckets are used to store and haul water for bathing and cooking. The rooms I visited were very clean and organized because there are so many people living together. Africanists were ready to show me the hostels because they wanted me to

see how “Africans have to live.” They are noisy places especially on the weekends when a lot of alcohol is consumed. As always women stay busy in such places because due to the congestion you have to clean continuously. Once I visited the hostels, escorted by a male Africanist to visit his family. His cousins were speaking in Xhosa so I was trying very hard to catch what they were saying. All I kept hearing was the word “*amasi*” which means milk in Xhosa. They were laughing during all of this so I was very curious. After we left I inquired about the conversation and he told me how his cousin had asked him whether the family should bring some goat’s milk for me. He then explained that among the Xhosa, a “*makoti*” is given goat’s milk as a sign of her acceptance into her husband’s family. Also it is traditional for a new wife to wear a “*doek*” (headtie or headwrap) and since I always wear my hair in such a way people used to always call me a “*makoti*.”

In 1991 the census reported that four out of every five rural African women had no identifiable income (Budlender 1996:37). The “circular migration” of men points to the interrelationship between urban and rural space in South Africa. The migratory labor of men impinges on rural women by binding them in rural impoverishment and subordinating their status. Women as wives and mothers are responsible for the maintenance of the rural home. However greater responsibility does not carry greater authority in the home or in the community because of customary law. Women in rural areas have limited control over land and resources because husbands, brothers, sons and chiefs block accessibility (Meer 1997). Price and Budlender mark the significance of rural women as both “travellers and the means of transport” that is, women who shepherd children on their backs, carry firewood, water and other goods (1997:268). Even after the demise of apartheid rural women remain isolated and the lack of transport limits their

access to basic services like medical assistance, schools and markets. Meer explained that making changes in rural resource allocation threatens the dynamics of power based on “current class, race, and gender power relations, and the privilege of white farmers, traditional authorities and men”(1997:171).

My informants in Cape Town all had ties to the Ciskei and Transkei in the Eastern Cape. They and their families came to Cape Town to look for work and as women they suffered because of the difficulties of obtaining a pass. However, many of my informants speak fondly of the rural areas because of the social cohesiveness of the communities. It is in the Eastern Cape where many cultural activities take place and it is in the rural areas where young men are circumcised. After the circumcision, the men are welcomed home with a large reception and cattle are slaughtered. Thus the rural areas are viewed as a place of rekindling cultural mores and values. In Khayalitsha, I found many Xhosa speakers with the top of the pinky finger severed. It is a tradition followed by some Xhosa clans and families. A 45 year old activist who was born in Langa, Cape Town, but grew up in Transkei and was educated in the Ciskei, explained why she preferred the rural areas to the townships:

Everything was nice. I enjoyed everything, you know your background, your culture, the people who grew up in Langa don't know everything. They don't know about cows and fetching water from the river, it is an experience. Here (Langa) is boring, there (Transkei) when we were young girls we used to go on Sunday to cook and after cooking we visit someone on the farms. I used to come to Langa on holiday. I preferred to come here in June because it is raining so we are in the house but there in the rural areas it is a lot of work, we had to go to the fields but in December work there is finished.

Culture and Contradiction in Black women's Lives

Historically, South African women have both conceded to the authority of culture and tradition and struggled against it as a determining influence in their individual life choices. Keletso Atkins traced the 1876 rebellion of young women in Natal against the Zulu monarchy for the right to choose their own husbands (1993). This insurrection of girls against controls over their labor and sexuality lead to the violent repression of dissent by King Cetshwayo (Atkins 1993). Within the national liberation movement, Black women have also demonstrated a determination to maintain their cultural integrity and simultaneously resist their subordination. Tradition and culture operate as symbols of autonomy and forms of self-expression in a society where women's lives are stifled in innumerable ways.

Mamphela Ramphela explored the way that "gender politics are shaped by racial exploitation, poverty, and the manipulation of tradition to legitimate male control" in the hostels of Cape Town (1992). Tradition and culture facilitated the legitimization of various modes of control over Black women. Under "customary law" all African women single and married were defined as "legal minors." The guardianship of women was in the hands of her husband and legally a woman was prohibited from entering into contracts, establishing credit or even renting property without her husband's consent. Africanist women demonstrate the salience of cultural tenets to their identities while at the same they have an awareness of the ways in which men manipulate culture to exert power. An Africanist woman from White City, Soweto described the contradictions:

When it suits them (men) women must go to work and feed them. If you look back people would say a woman's place is in the kitchen, but if you look at the reality of today 50 percent of the breadwinners are women.

Another woman from Soweto explained:

You know culture is used when they (men) want to sit down. It is tailor made to suit them and suppress us in the interest of culture. When we have to go out looking for jobs they don't mention culture. Only when they have to look after the kids, cook or help you.

Many women support '*lobola*' because it empowers them by contributing to their prestige in the community. A young Africanist from Gugulethu expressed the importance of '*lobola*':

I strongly believe we should keep it. If a man could marry me without going to my family, without going to pay *lobola* people out there will think I am cheap or something.

Women in the "new South Africa"

African women in South Africa are still the poorest members of South African society. By and large African women are heads of households, the number of African female headed households is greater than among Coloured, Indian and white populations in both rural and urban areas. Writers have attributed the breakdown of the traditional African family to the destructiveness of the migrant system. However this reason does not address the high levels of single motherhood in the urban areas. Women headed

households are usually the poorest and African women usually have more than one dependant. The 1991 census placed unemployment at 18 percent and 53.4 percent of those unemployed are women (Beijing Report 1994). These figures rise when the definition of unemployed includes "discouraged" those who have given up hope of finding a job in a depressed economy" (Beijing Report 1994: 2). In 1995 half of African women were unemployed and in rural areas the rate is higher. According to the 1991 census, women made up two-fifths of South Africa's economically active population (Beijing Report 1994:12), yet their earnings are still considerably lower than that of men. African women's mean gross monthly earnings in 1994 was R600.56 (\$200.18) for African women and R3, 322.69 (\$1,107.56) for African men, for white women it was R5, 335.17 (\$1,778.39) and for White men it was R17, 371.84 (\$5,790.61) (Budlender 1996:39)⁴. A 1994 survey found that 34 percent of women in South Africa who are employed are African women working in social services, which includes "domestic servants, nurses, teachers. The differentiation in occupation along race and gender remains marked. Women are found in greater numbers in the "secondary labour market, mainly domestic work, informal sector and agriculture"(Budlender 1996:62). Cheryl Walker points to fact that programs of land restitution can do little for women if "men as former landowners are the key beneficiaries" so that tenure reform is essential if women are to gain equity in land access (1997:179)

The Interpol International Crime Statistics report of 1994 ranked South Africa as having the highest reported rape ratio in the world (Idasa: 134). Moreover women outnumber men in HIV infections, and it is women who bear the burden of caregiving for

⁴ These figures are estimates based on the exchange rate between the US \$ and the Rand in 1994.

the sick and delay their own diagnosis and treatment.⁵ Rape, HIV infection and domestic violence are a part of a general context where violence against women is prevalent. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided an opportunity for women to express their experience of political violence and it also raised the issue of the specific ways in which the state used sexual terrorism as a method of political violence. At hearings of the TRC, women tend to privilege the victimization of husbands and sons over their personal experiences. Women were 54 percent of the witnesses at the TRC hearings (Goldblatt and Meinjtes 1996). Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes argue that while men and women experienced sexual torture and physical abuse, "gender was a key aspect which pertained in detention and in prisons in South Africa"(Goldblatt and Meintjes 1996:4). A gender analysis of political violence underlines the "awareness by the police of the nature of gender power relations and how this could be used to threaten and engender fear in victims" (Goldblatt and Meintjes 1996:4). The threat of rape, sexual humiliation, vaginal examinations, electric shock of genitals, strip searches, and beatings were some of the torture tactics used against activists. Race and class played a role in how White, Coloured and African women prisoners experienced detention and tortures. Most female detainees in the 1970's and the 1980's were young, African and from working-class backgrounds (Goldblatt and Meinjties 1996:25). Many women acted violently against other women, colluding with police as spies and informing on female activists.

During the 1980's the sexual forms of violence against women intensified, with rape being used as a form of punishment against women within the townships. Men from

⁵ During my year in South Africa the sisters of two acquaintances died of pneumonia and other AIDS related illnesses. A year and a half after my fieldwork I was informed that about ten of the young women I met in Soweto had succumbed to AIDS.

different political organizations, or representing self-defense units or other militants, used rape as a terroristic device and as punishment. In the 1986 and 1987 state of emergency 12 percent of detainees were women (Goldblatt and Meintjies 1996: 13). Women became targets of violence because of their own activism or because of their relationship to particular men. Goldblatt and Meintjies (1996) explained that for women who lost male relatives and husbands to political violence, the loss was economic because these were breadwinners or potential breadwinners, and cultural since young widows were marginalized from their communities. Township violence through 'necklacing' was used against both men and women. Women were often caught in the violence between "comrades" and the police as girlfriends of suspected informers. The gang rape of women within hostels was commonplace amidst the political violence between 'comrades' and hostel-dwellers.

Even within the liberation movements sexual violence occurred, especially within the camps for political refugees, to which some young women fled. Thenijwe Mtintso, a senior member of the ANC was told this by a comrade:

You know it is going to get to a point where I am going to rape you. It is going to be very easy to rape you and I know that there is no way that you are going to stand in front of all these people and say I raped you (Goldblatt and Meintjes 1996:34).

Africanist women activists whom I interviewed made subtle remarks about sexual harassment and rape. In the end it was an issue that I hesitated to explore because many women would say they "heard stories" but none offered personal experiences. In speaking with an Africanist woman she mentioned the promiscuity of a friend of hers. She

explained that the woman was angry with men because of what she had been through in the “camps.” She recounted the story that her friend was “saved” by PAC men who went and took her from “ANC” camps where she suffered sexual abuse. In the camps I was told there was “nothing you could do” as a young woman. Africanist women did discuss the camps as places where sexual abuse happened, as did this activist from Langa:

My uncle said if you join the struggle, there are a lot bad things that happen. Like the older men exploit the young girls and that is what happened in the camps. The others will point fingers but the PAC and the ANC, all of us, even the big guys, who are married go to the camps and exploit young girls. That is the worse thing that can happen.

Goldblatt and Meinjties (1996) discuss the debate over whether rape falls within the definition of a political act and if so should it be granted amnesty. The testimony from the TRC showed most rapes were not committed to further a political objective but stemmed from “personal malice, ill will or spite directed against the victim”(Goldblatt and Meintjes 1996:36). Whether or not amnesty is granted, the most important issue is to bring to the surface rape as an intentional political strategy against women.

As of 2000, 30 percent of the seats in parliament and 27.6 percent of the seats in the provincial legislature are held by women. In local government, the number of elected women is “8 percent which places South Africa in seventh place in the world in the ranking of equitable representation”(Idasa 2000:1). There are eight women ministers and eight deputy ministers in the Cabinet of President Thabo Mbeki. The history of South African politics has been one that is divided along party lines, making it hard for women to voice internal criticism of their organization’s policy on gender. Women in political

parties tend to articulate an agenda that is in accordance with their party, which leaves little room for a dissenting voice that pushes for specific women's interests over and above political affiliation. While gender has become part of official political discourse, a commitment to a total overhaul of systems of gender power has yet to be undertaken.

Chapter Four

Inkululeko Yabesifazane (Women's Freedom)

In the following chapter I explore the multilayered identities that shape political activism. Moreover, I address how identity is formed by the experience of political activism of women in PAWO/AWO. Gender identity, race, nationalism and class are simultaneously articulated through practice and discourse. Africanist women weave connections of experience into a political identity that encompasses notions of race and gender that are simultaneously reflected, reinforced and challenged by political activism. Using their words, I want to show how Africanist women construct and represent these overlapping identities. I contend that the identities of these women are selectively politicized and that gender is the least problematized identity because of the contradictions it raises for nationalism.

I endeavor to address the ways in which women who identify themselves as Pan-Africanists define the contours of women's empowerment, and how these conceptualizations are informed by their nationalist ideologies. I am interested in locating the junctures at which these activist women relate their gender identity to the political framework of their Pan-Africanism. I want to examine the contradictions that arise as their political work uncovers the contradictions of gender within nationalist discourse. Their social location as activist Black women is implicated in their construction of feminism, and specific articulation of Black women's historical narratives within South Africa. The history of these women influences their political work and informs their narratives, which privilege identities of race and nationality. I want to show from women's perspectives how their "Blackness supercedes their gendered location", and

how the nationalism of Pan-Africanism reinforces this (Robnett 1997:43). Africanist women have diverse perceptions of gender that must be contextualized within the history of a specific political culture and tradition. I refer to *Africaness* to describe the notions of nationality that South African Pan-Africanism denotes. I use *Africaness* to specify the articulation of Pan-Africanism in South Africa because this form of nationalism places so much value on being and doing things as Africans. *Africaness* is what the nationalism of Pan-Africanism seeks to articulate about the past and propose for the future.

Furthermore I will examine in more detail the history of AWO/PAWO, their representation of Black women, and the way in which they express the relationship of Black women in South Africa to Pan-Africanism. I will infer women's notions of gender through the examination of the literature of AWO/PAWO and an analysis of interviews. I am keenly interested in how AWO/PAWO seeks to expand the ideological discourse of Pan-Africanism and raise the centrality of gender. By broadening our scope and acknowledging how feminism can "authorize and inscribe diverse movements for political equality" we can access a more diverse feminist ethnography (Visweswaran 1997: 616). The history of Pan-Africanism in South Africa demonstrates a shift in the representation of gender in political discourse and the difficulties of transforming everyday gender dynamics.

Gender, Race, Feminism and Black Women's Lives

Literature about the intersection of race, class and gender in the lives of women of color criticizes early feminism for overlooking the intersecting systems of asymmetry. Ladner argued that there "was no monolithic concept of the Black woman, but there are many models of Black womanhood" (Ladner 1971:4). For Ladner, the common thread

that ran through the historical experiences of Black women was oppression (Ladner 1971). Black feminists challenged the essentialist theorizing of feminism that represented women as a homogenous category and patriarchy as a uniform system (Higginbotham 1992). Writings by women of color represented the multifaceted experiences of women and argued against a singular female experience. Zavella explained that the “overlap of subjective and material features of race, class, and gender create a great deal of heterogeneity” in the experiences of Chicano men and women (Zavella 1989:30). King recommended that in analyzing Black women’s lives, we avoid additive models and employ one that “captured the multiple jeopardy of the interacting processes that face Black women” (King 1988:47). Feminist theory was perceived as racially exclusive, reproducing some hierarchies while critiquing others (Carby 1992:264).

King (1989) wrote that feminism subordinated the histories and worldviews of Black women. Absent from feminist history was the history of black feminist activism, one that was embedded in the economic and political struggles of their communities. Carby argues that historically, African American women have been aware of the relationship between patriarchy, political and economic domination. Black feminism embraced the continuity of Black women’s activism and reiterated the interlocking forms of oppression (Combahee River Collective 1974:210). Moreover, feminism theorized by Black women emerges in relation to struggles like the black liberation movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s. Deborah King remarked that a keen awareness of all oppressions is a “hallmark of black feminist thought”(King 1988:43). Adler wrote that Black women who organized in “uniracial organizations were conscious of gender and class oppression”(Adler 1992:357). The histories of Black women demonstrate the

“metalanguage of race” and how it shapes multiple identities discursively and ideologically (Higginbotham 1992). The dialectical dimension of Black women’s lives allows them to merge different ideologies in multifaceted struggles (Dill 1979; King 1988). Black women’s feminist theorizing mirrored their multiple consciousness that is shaped by their struggles against multiple jeopardy (King 1988).

Patricia Collins emphasized the existence of a “Black women’s standpoint”, one that draws from the distinctive histories of Black women and the everyday knowledge Black women gather (1990). Black feminism elaborates on Black women’s standpoint by rearticulating a consciousness that emboldened women to resist subordination. For Collins, Black feminism is historically and culturally distinctive, grounded in an Afrocentric epistemology. Collins suggests that as Black women, a shared history helps form a particular ideological and theoretical framework.

According to Mohanty, different women espouse diverse conceptions of gender and their histories affect the kinds of relations of gender they experience (1991). Women’s experiences of gender have to be contextualized within the histories of the communities from which they came. The expression of feminism outside the Western world was a specific articulation in relation to capitalism, colonialism, race, and gender (Mohanty 1991). The feminism that third world women theorize is affected both by the intersecting forms of domination and by the forms of resistance that emerge in their communities. Mohanty adds that in recounting the experiences of women of color with feminism there are overlapping themes that accentuate the experience of “simultaneity of oppressions” that underpins their social marginalization (Dill 1979; Carby 1992). Secondly, she cites the role of the state in the circumscription of everyday life and the

salience of memory and writing as expressions of oppositional discourse (Mohanty 1991:10). Thirdly, she highlights the differences that arise in women's organizations and the contradictions that are present in liberation movements. The histories of women develop in "relation to other struggles", and their perspectives on gender are grounded in contexts outside any individual life story (Mohanty 1991).

Feminist writings emphasized that race, gender, class, and nationality are relational fields of experience and should be analyzed as such. By employing interviews in analyzing women's sense of gender, researchers have learned how personal experience and political consciousness are interrelated. Mohanty states that through writing and memory certain images of resistance are codified and that a communal or feminist consciousness can be created through story telling (1991). I found that for my informants individual lifestories were permeated with multiple perspectives and collective histories. *Africaness* is a collective identity, which is reenacted through political work. This consciousness of collectivity as a nation or in this case as Africans was greatly influenced by Pan-Africanist ideology that consistently reiterated the sense of a nation. Mohanty argues that such conceptualizing of "collective consciousness is itself a political practice" (Mohanty 1991:36). The practice of remembering, retelling, and narrating can be a way of documenting resistance and preserving the continuity of a specific discourse.

Visweswaran documented the history of feminism between the first, second, third and fourth waves. Second wave feminism of the 1970's and 80's, saw the development of standpoint theory, which argued for a women's point of view that transcended ethnic and cultural differences. This position represented a gender essentialism that minimized the historical specificities in women's lives. Visweswaran charts the shift from standpoint

theory to theories of multiple consciousness and positioning. The second wave of gender “identification (women like us)” gave way to a third wave of “gender disidentification”(women unlike us) through racial, sexual, or class positioning (Visweswaran 1997:596). Gender disidentification “exposed difference and the operation of power”, underlining the structural specificity of different women and the communities from which they come (Visweswaran 1997:595). Feminist anthropology argued that gender was a political and social construction (Rosaldo 1980). Sacks wrote that feminist theory had to incorporate a perspective that viewed “racial, class and gender oppression as part of a single, specific, and historically created system”(Sacks 1989:534). She noted that a gendered identity was neither class or racially neutral and women’s lives have to be analytically understood as multilayered (Sacks 1989). In the lifestories of my informants there was a tendency to describe women according to class and political ideology. This arises out of the political culture that unified people under the same political organizations. Even within a singular organization, class, linguistic and educational divisions created cleavages between some women.

Women’s Empowerment and Feminism: Africanist Women’s Perceptions

Higginbotham pointed out three important analytical strategies to exploring the trajectory of race in relation to other systems of power (1992). According to Higginbotham it is important that we “define the construction and technologies of race as well as gender and sexuality.” Higginbotham explained the enormous implications race has in the “construction and representation of other social and power relations, namely, gender, class, and sexuality”(Higginbotham 1992:252). Thirdly, she argues that race is a site of dialogic exchange and contestation, since it is a major discursive tool for “both

oppression and liberation”(Higginbotham 1992:252). Therefore when respondents speak about gender their conversation is prefaced with themes on race and *Africaness*.

Gwen Mikell describes the “new culturally attuned activism” that forms the basis of “African feminism”(Mikell 1997: 3). African feminism distinguishes itself from Western feminism in its use of “cultural patterns as symbolic references” and the histories of colonialism and resistance (Mikell 1997: 3). African and African-American women writers have theorized a perspective of “womanism” that integrates a “consciousness of racial, cultural, sexual, national economic and political considerations” (Ogunyemi 2000:712). Alice Walker has coined the word “womanist” to denote black feminism and feminists of color (1983). Belinda Robnett also writes about the experience of African-American women activists in the civil rights movement (1991). She writes that the womanist, Black /feminist perspective clarifies the “social construction of who does what for the movement and why”(Robnett 1997:15). Womanism developed as an alternative to feminism, which some Black women writers found to be exclusivist and inept at capturing the diversity of Black women’s historical experiences. The Africanist women of AWO/PAWO and the PAC perceive and integrate different elements that together constitute processes that subordinate them. The “womanism” that Africanist women profess confronts “bread, butter, culture and power issues”(Mikell 1997: 4). However, their articulation of these paradoxes is drawn from a nationalist, Pan-Africanist standpoint. In recounting Black women’s participation in the civil rights organizations, Robnett described the ways in which Black women’s gender identity was overshadowed by race. She wrote “Black women’s identities were clearly anchored to their race and that gender was secondary to their racial identity”(Robnett 1997: 43).

Multiple Scripts: “Daughters of the Soil”

In the interviews that were conducted, I specifically queried my interviewees on their attitude towards feminism and women’s empowerment. I asked women what they thought of feminism. I raised the issue of women’s rights. I asked them what they thought about women having leadership in the PAC. Also I asked them about women’s position in the home. Did they believe women should have the same opportunities as men at work and at school? I also asked about violence against women. Women were also questioned about experiences of gender discrimination within their work as activists. Women’s response to these questions varied but there was a general support for women’s advancement in the PAC and in the workplace. All women were supportive of women’s empowerment but a third of women felt that when it came to the home, it would be hard to introduce change. Women realized that ideally things should be equitable but in daily life certain practices were hard to relinquish. The women who had been university educated could clearly and thoroughly explain their support and criticism of feminism. However three-quarters of my informants had not been educated beyond high school and they had greater difficulty understanding feminism conceptually. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the variations in cultural norms and expectations that challenged existing relations of gender. A 40 year old Africanist and national executive committee (NEC) member explained the differences between feminism and AWO/PAWO’s position:

Our background is very different from the feminist movement which is more eurocentric and westernized where a man is the enemy to be fought against. They (European women) come from a patriarchal culture, where Africa was always matriarchal before colonialism and that is why it is called mother Africa.

From this standpoint, the nationalism of Pan-Africanism provides a resolution to these contradictions in contemporary relations of gender, by posing reconciliation with the cultural mores that existed before colonization. The subordination of women is the consequence, of as AWO/PAWO sees it, one of a “triple burden we have been given by colonization and the patriarchal society that Europeans brought.” The history of feminism has affected the way feminism is perceived by these activist women who view it as a homogeneous theory and movement that speaks outside their histories. The Combahee River Collective, a Black feminist organization stated that because of our “situation as Black people it is necessary that we have solidarity around the fact of race..... We struggle together with Black men against racism while we also struggle with Black men about sexism”(cited in Carby 1992:213). Black women have opted out of the male/female dichotomy that they perceive in feminism. For Africanists womenhood is rooted in cultural and political identities. My subject continues by saying: “We are not anti-men. We are proud of being women in our society because we have a role to play we are the first bearers of life in the world.” A 45-year-old, community educator from Langa explained African women’s suspicions about feminism more succinctly:

At the beginning I was against the whole idea because I thought it was about white women who were privileged. From how we saw things it did not touch on bread and butter issues. If we had our own philosophy of feminism we could define it differently but we don’t write and we don’t form pressure groups, so it has a negative connotation because of the way it originated.

Women’s gender identity appeared to continuously develop as women’s lives followed different trajectories. A woman’s gender identity was not politicized in the way

that racial identities were, where race and nationality have been central to public discourse in South Africa. As Robnett points out, "gendered identity is relational and interaction specific" so it is a realm open to concession, where as relations of race are less ambiguous (1997:43). For some women their gender identity developed later as their political awareness sharpened and their activism deepened. A 40- year-old respondent from the AWO/PAWO's NEC, explained her personal development: "It was a gradual thing, I had to learn, it was not my experience of being discriminated against as a woman, it came late after my political consciousness." In regard to feminist theory she said: "I think intellectually I understood it but emotionally I still didn't until I started interacting with other African women. To be honest Western feminists could not convince me."

Activist South African women have a different relationship to the household because of the politicization of the home in South Africa. The home is not safe from public conflicts and tensions. A year before I arrived to Khayalitsha a neighbor whose shack was adjacent to the one in which I was staying lived alone with her son. She is an Africanist and very active in her branch. There was ongoing conflict within the PAC in the Western Cape over leadership. I was told of the tensions between loyalists of former PAC president Clarence Makwetu and supporters of current president Stanley Mogoba. The Xhosa-speaking Africanists in the Western Cape often felt marginalized from organizational structures in Johannesburg. While Africanists rhetorically eschew tribalism I often heard things like "you can't trust Xhosa" or "Zulus like to fight." My Africanist neighbor had a son who was active in PASO and one night people fired shots into their home and her son was injured. When confiding in me about the episode she described the situation nonchalantly in that it was part of the price one paid if one is political. Even in

the “new South Africa” the home remains a political site. The home remains vulnerable to violence, for example. one night as I stayed in Khayalitsha, at two or three in the morning, there was a loud banging on the door. I was not sure what to expect, a political emergency or intruders. It happened to be policemen looking for someone but my host and I were very frightened. My host was married to an Africanist and her husband answered the door. The policemen were drunk and asked my host’s husband if he had a shovel. They also asked if he had seen a friend of the couple’s son because he was wanted for questioning. The police were familiar with the home because they had raided it in 1993 looking for APLA weapons. I was told there was still antagonism between police and Africanists because of APLA past operations. APLA often attacked the police, white and Black because they were considered branches of the state and legitimate targets. Fortunately the family had no shovels and the police left.

It was in the home that Africanist women organized *braais* (barbecues) for political prisoners, and often activists would come to the homes of such women to meet and discuss issues and agendas. In the home where I stayed in Soweto, activists returning from exile as well as activists who were in Johannesburg for business or training visited frequently. As I will discuss in chapter 5, the home is where women exert great influence and activist women are well aware of the gender dynamics of the home.

Resistance was reproduced, reinforced and sheltered within the home. As Angela Davis wrote on the history of slave women in the United States, African American women were stalwart defenders of the home and family relationships (Davis 1971). Carby noted the centrality of the household in the Black Diaspora, “the Black family has functioned as a prime source of resistance to oppression”(Carby 1992:214). Within the

political climate of apartheid, some women acquiesced to the roles that were assigned to them but opposed abuse and the exploitation in these relationships. A 46-year-old seamstress from Khayalitsha described her position as such:

As for a woman you will never be a man but I don't like oppression just because you are a woman. I don't like that sometimes men don't want to do anything and you have to clean the house, you have to wash the walls, and you must cook. You have to be a woman but there is a limit to doing things and in that situation I am for that thing of women's rights.

For these women, their problems were bread and butter issues that revolved around employment and housing. In 1994, African's per capita disposable income was 13 percent of white per capita income, a disparity so great that Blacks and Whites composed two separate countries (Budlender 1996:38). The ranking of white South Africans as a country would be 34th in the world and that of Blacks is 128th (Budlender 1996:38). As of 1994 there were 2,253,661 Black women who were unemployed as compared to 94,218 white women. Women's economic stagnation was a particular theme that ran through many of the interviewees' lifestories. My interviews often took place in the daytime because most of the women were unemployed and at night they would be busy with their families. Usually entire families would be dependent upon one income, in some cases the pension of a grandmother. They lived from day to day sometimes making money from petty hawking like the buying and selling of clothes. Women survived by pooling resources. I attended a meeting of a NGO, *Aganang Setjaba* (The nation will build itself), formed by an Africanist that serviced senior citizens in Orlando West, Soweto. The number one complaint of elderly women was the manipulation by relatives

to get access to their pensions and titles to their homes. In some cases relatives did not report deaths of grandparents so that they could continue to collect pensions. I recall one instance where an Africanist came by the house to pay my host a visit. They hadn't seen each other in over a year. After they chatted and the neighbor left, my host told me that the woman wanted to borrow money for her electric bill but was embarrassed to ask in front of me. Because my host is a teacher and lived in a beautiful home people often came to her for assistance. A respondent who worked in skills development in Cape Town put in this way:

The number one problem for women is unemployment. They are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. I think women are just used when politicians are organizing their rallies. It is women at the forefront but after all that hard work they are forgotten.

For most Africanist women however, the challenges in women's lives are linked to not only limited economic opportunities but also to the erosion of the African cultural ethos that places a particular value on motherhood and womanhood. In the words of a 36-year-old trade unionist,

The main problem is empowering women economically and the respect for womanhood. A woman is someone who has to be cherished, who brings life to earth, they are the mothers of the world.

An important point that most of the respondents concurred on was the strength of African women and their independence. African women "rise to the occasion" in spite of thwarted employment opportunities. The South African economy is divided between a

primary labor market of management, white collar and professional workers, a secondary market of manufacturing that is mostly unskilled or semi-skilled, and the non-market that is made up of informal, casual and unpaid domestic labor. Most African women are located in the “elementary occupations” of the informal sector, almost 88 percent as of 1994 (Budlender 1996:62). Many Africanist women feel very frustrated at not being able to do more for their children. Forty percent of the female population is of childbearing age. According to Budlender, African women account for 45 percent of all Africans age 20-49 in urban areas and 49 percent of those 50 and above. A 35-year-old unemployed single mother from Soweto summed it up as such:

If you have strength you are a woman but if you don't have strength then you are not a woman because you must always fight for your rights. With no strength you can't fight for your rights you will always be told what to do and what not to do.

In 1993 the level of illiteracy in South Africa was found to be 30 percent and this percentage is higher for rural women. Moreover the rate of illiteracy shifts according to “economic activity” so that the unemployed, and domestic and agriculture workers have a higher proportion of illiteracy. One interviewee explained that in her experience of organizing women it was the problem of illiteracy that most frustrated her: “How do you run a project with an illiterate person, such simple things as dressmaking, if the person cannot read or write, it is difficult.”

Whereas feminism continues to be problematic for African women, in the context of nationalist liberation movements, the spaces available for the integration of a gender platform have been historically challenged. As one Africanist said, “we must ground our

feminism in Africanism.” The question is what does this mean operationally for gender dynamics within the parameters of an organization, and on the ground where political mobilization takes place? The development of a gender identity appears to occur outside of the political realm. Where domination, oppression and struggle are contentious in terms of race and *Africaness*, this same clarity is absent when the dialogue is directed toward gender dynamics. Gender has yet to attain equal political authority with race and nationhood.

Nationalism and Engendered Identity among Activist Women

Historically African –Americans who were active in community and political work were called “race women” and “race men”(Adler 1992). This designation inverted the construct of race, turning it into a “cultural identity that resisted white hegemonic forces”(Higginbotham 1992:267). Karen Adler describes the feminism of Amy Garvey, wife of Marcus Garvey, as one that was inextricably linked to Black nationalism (1992). According to Adler, underlying her feminism and nationalism was a “commitment to social justice” which she consistently addressed in her writings. As a “race woman”, Amy Garvey’s political work was a synthesis of ideas that emanated from both “Afrocentric and feminist conceptions of social change”(Adler 1992:372). As Carby argued, for Black women it is difficult to “point to a single source of oppression”, since so many processes of domination converge on their lives (1985:213).

Robnett in her study of African-American women activists emphasized the “social location and identity” of members of a movement (1997). She argues that “race, class and gender and culture determine different movement experiences”(Robnett 1997:15). She demonstrates the importance of identity formation within the context of a

movement and the “overlap between personal identity and a cultivated political identity” (Robnett 1997:15). While identities are fluid they can affect the form and content of political participation.

Activist women perceive their political work as a positive influence on their gender identity as women and on their cultural identity as Africans. I interviewed women who spent years unemployed or struggling in the informal sector. Political work was an outlet where they felt some measure of autonomy. For the young Africanist women of Soweto, working in a branch gave them something to do and an opportunity to be involved in larger processes that went beyond their households. Whenever a meeting or rally was organized women were the most enthusiastic workers. For young single mothers political participation made them different from their peers. Their political work empowered them against the “multiple jeopardy” that permeated their lives and nationalism provided the political language to articulate their identities. When I asked a 35-year-old unemployed woman why she chose the PAC she said the PAC helped her:

To understand who I am. I am an African. I know my culture but before I didn't know Africanism. PAC puts Africans first. I know I am an African and I can't do something a white woman is doing I must do an African thing. I must be myself.

For another woman, also unemployed the PAC strengthened her identity as a Black woman:

I like being a Black woman, because God did not make any mistake to create us as Black women. It is only the people who are greedy like whites who think God made them to get something and they must oppress us. So to be a Black woman I don't see problem. The only thing to me that is not nice is the white people who

oppress us.

Still other women are drawn to the emphasis on cultural identity in the PAC, on

Africaness: “ I like their ideas, that they take everyone as African, they would say you are an African and tell us why.” On the PAC’s effect on her as a woman, she continued:

I have learned to accept myself as an African woman, and I can never run away from being an African you see, that is what I learned. Before I thought I am too black or sometimes you used to hate the fact that you are an African. They (PAC) made me to be proud to be an African especially to be a woman. They used to tell us all of us we are borne by you, we respect you, even men they respect us.

Identity is a recurrent point of contention for these women which can be attributed to the society that they grew up in. As one 30-year-old trade unionist put it:

Now I know I am an African and that was the best thing that caught my eye. We grew up in a Coloured, so-called Coloured township and we went to the same school so there was lots of confusion about who the person is. In PAC I came to realize who I am and become proud of that.

For Africanist women Pan-Africanism furthered offered an alternative to dominant themes about femininity, the more so as its nationalist representations of womanhood espoused African cultural values. While nationalism minimally develops the question of gender, it does offer possibilities for the self-realization of women who are struggling with hegemonic discourses on Black womanhood, such as in South Africa. A AWO/PAWO member recalled her early experiences: “Pan-Africanism taught me about African womanhood, about consciousness of the mind and that we need to liberate our mind.”

Pan-Africanism was and is a cultural and political channel for these women. Gender framed within the nationalist setting did not appear problematic until women's political work expanded to critiquing particular relations of gender. Women within the PAC moved from political invisibility to important constituents in the movement. Women's political work forced a reexamination of the relationship between nationalism and gender within South Africa.

Women's "Historic Role"; the discourse on gender within AWO

Examining the challenges faced by women within the Sandanista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua, Chinchilla shows how they sought to define a "feminism that was both consistent with the revolutionary process and supported by a wide variety of women" (1990:373). Women within the FSLN wanted to infuse forms of "gender-specific or feminist struggle" into the revolutionary process (1990:372). In this context women's work and their position as constituency help push forward a progressive agenda that integrate gender into policy. Nevertheless, in Peru, Maruja Barrig, observed that feminists have to balance gender specific interests within popular movements when they wish to infiltrate the political mainstream (1989). Using "feminist separatism as a point of departure" isolates feminists and "restricts the arenas of power where democratizing efforts can be pursued" (Barrig 1989: 127).

Sociopolitical protest provides opportunities for women to present "new gendered political claims" (Alvarez 1994:15). As for AWO/PAWO, the difficulty in maintaining a political conversation with women reveals some of the contradictions in women's organizing. Historically, women did not become politicized over gender-specific issues within the liberation organizations. Before AWO/PAWO emerged, relations of gender

were naturalized within the discourse of South African Pan-Africanism. Gender did not become politically visible until after the 1970's, when the construction of women's activism entered Pan-Africanist discourse. Women's activism was then expanded beyond motherhood, to political activist, political exile and soldier. Where women were once referred to as "mothers with babies on their backs" in early Pan-Africanist literature, their status evolved into an important element of political insurgency. An AWO/PAWO member told me she was tired of seeing women as "dancers for meetings." Presently woman's political role is in transition as the politics of national liberation is diminished. So the dynamics in AWO/PAWO mirrors broader changes within the new South Africa, a transition from "women's mobilization towards the politics of gender"(Jaquette 1994:8).

In 1983, the central committee of the PAC acknowledged that "half of the oppressed, exploited and dispossessed in Azania are women." At a plenary meeting, the central committee of the PAC "decided seriously to activate PAC women's programs." The PAC as an organization recognized the importance of developing women members as political activists. A PAC seminar on the role of women in the liberation struggle was held in Tanzania in 1980, and the objectives of a women's section were drawn. The PAC outlined its "goal to develop women's potential to the fullest in order to enable them to accomplish the goals of the party for the execution of the liberation struggle in Azania." The importance of "reviving and strengthening of women's sense of responsibility in the pre-and post liberation eras in order to ensure their equal participation both during and after the liberation struggle" was noted. Women within the PAC external structures in Tanzania at the Bagamoyo Transit and Rehabilitation Center petitioned for "mid and high-level vocational training for women cadres" to prepare women political refugees for

“post-liberation reconstruction.” This request was made so those women could be “groomed for leadership roles and assume key roles in national planning activities.”

Within the archival sources from this time I found documents from the PAC concerning the plight of women refugees. PAC statements expressed the need to develop women to the degree where they could “participate fully in liberated Azania.” This signaled a change from the earlier organization of the PAC, which, since its inception in 1959, had existed without a women’s structure. In 1979 Elizabeth Sibeko a PAC deputy observer at the United Nations explained the absence of a women’s section: “there is no women’s wing or detachment because according to our constitution women and men are to be treated equally, because both are equally oppressed and if we have to fight a people’s war for self-determination and national liberation then equal participation should be stressed.”

Respondents recounted the history of AWO/PAWO and the reasons for its formation. For the PAC women it was a chance at recognition of their specific political work and an opportunity for women to further their political acuity. A 30-year-old trade unionist said: “For me it was a way of empowering women as much as working in the structure in the organization.” Another subject explained: “The people who wanted to form AWO did it because the PAC was banned, the women said we can build this organization and work together with the PAC, the aim of AWO was to try so PAC must not die.” According to a 41-year-old Africanist woman from Orlando West,

The purpose of AWO was to keep the homefires burning since all the men were gone. There was nobody to lead the issue of PAC but at the same time there were issues and problems facing women in PAC. At that time we needed to trade ideas on how to keep the homefires burning and how to keep their families together.

For still others, AWO was an opportunity to grow politically: "When the PAC was still banned, I found through AWO, I have more power to push the ideology of the PAC to the people."

Historically women activists within the PAC and later in AWO and PAWO reiterated the position that it is only through "active participation in the liberation struggle that women will attain equality, development and peace"(AWO 1980). As Black women, their specific gender interests were subordinated to the objective of the liberation struggle. In 1990, the nature of the African women's struggle was defined as "national oppression and exploitation" and their major effort should be geared towards achieving national liberation and social emancipation"(AWO 1990). Women were defined in relationship to their position as part of an "oppressed and exploited African nation"(AWO 1990). This perspective was echoed in many interviews where women remarked that they felt little if any gender discrimination as members of the PAC or in doing political work. The PAC did not develop a perspective on gender until the 1970's when women's participation shifted the dynamics of activism and when men and women, gathered in exile, began to address specific women's interests. AWO acknowledged that women had specific concerns nestled in relations of gender that could be attributed to "archaic traditional customary practices and a capitalist system that promoted retrogressive social relations such as gender discrimination"(AWO 1990). However, these contradictions that women faced were deemed "secondary battles against oppression by male counterparts and these minibattles had to be fought and won before national liberation"(AWO 1990). Africanist women noted the "dual oppression and dual exploitation" that characterized their struggle (AWO 1990). Even so, AWO concluded

that the “place and real goals of the women’s struggle is not different from the overall goals of the struggle of Azania”(AWO 1990). The particularity of women’s lives had to be eclipsed by the national liberation struggle.

Meanwhile, within the PAC, various forms of discrimination were experienced. In the words of one interviewee, “men are on top and that the only problem with women is that they are not as active, they are always behind.” Other women were more specific: “Within political organizations we are constantly children of the movement, we never grow up, we never inherit the throne, inheritance is always passed down through men.” Others commented:

Men have difficulty accepting authority from women in that some hold the position that a woman can’t tell me this and she can’t give me instructions. If you are at a NEC (PAC) meeting you are shouted down as a woman.

With regard to political education and training, some subjects felt little if any gender discrimination but perceived the imbalances. An Africanist remarked on the internal organization by saying:

We have been disadvantaged as women, but it is time we address the imbalances and you know we must start. It means we are pulling ourselves away from the PAC. Why is a women’s structure what we need? That is a question we are always talking about equality, that is why we have a special structure for women.

Other women, however detected the contradictions in women’s behavior that reinforced the imbalances in leadership. One woman described her experiences as such:

Now they give us that freedom. We just passed these elections and they were actually motivating women to be the candidates. They (PAC) needed more women and you know there are few women in the PAC. So you see there is no discrimination whether racial or gender.

Speaking on the complicity of women in preserving leadership, an activist from

Gugulethu said:

Generally women work very hard, they would oppress themselves, by appointing men into positions of power. The same women later comment that within the organization there is no balance; they still have that old thinking that women should be in the kitchen although it is being improved now. They have grown but there are still some members that feel like this.

When asked about the reasons behind the prevalence of these attitudes she replied: "The doors are open for women, they are encouraging them. There are just a few women who are willing to take those positions, some feel inferior. They resent themselves, they think they can't do it." So while women point out that: "within PAC they are treated as members and not as a women" they still acknowledge the lack of visible female leadership. They realized that "when it comes to titles, there are few women."

Women's activism within the PAC was very high in the period before the 1994 elections and before the suspension of armed struggle. Many exiles were returning to the country and in the early 1990's APLA escalated its operations. Women were very active harboring cadres and building AWO. In the summer of 1994, which I spent in the township of Langa, outside of Cape Town, Africanists appeared to be in the majority. When I walked the streets, people always greeted each other as "*M'Afrika*" (Africanist) and salutes of *Izwe-Lethu* (Our Land, Our Nation) were heard frequently. When people

heard that I was studying the PAC, women took me into their homes and I was sent to meet the president, Clarence Makwetu. After the elections many activists were unhappy with the direction of the party. There were disagreements over the negotiations, over the suspension of armed struggle, and over whether or not the PAC should participate in the elections. Many Africanists did not vote in the 1994 elections. As organizations within the national liberation movement had to reorganize into political parties, ideologies were challenged by the “new South Africa.”

Negotiating Women’s Leadership

After 1994, women within AWO/PAWO attempted to draw attention to the centrality of women’s political work in ushering in a “new social order” that subscribed to non-racist, non-sexist, democratic and socialist policy. An important theme throughout the discourse of AWO/PAWO is the “seizure of leadership of the struggle by women.” The marginalization of women from the upper ranks of leadership remained a consistent point of contention for women of AWO/PAWO. In 1996, AWO/PAWO convened a workshop titled “women can lead” where there was critical discussion of the dynamics of power in relations between women and women, and men and women. The obstacles to women’s assumption of leadership were addressed, particularly how women can contribute to the decision making process within the PAC (*Mosadi Wa Afrika* 1996). Issues raised touched on some of the stigma attached to politically active women, such as promiscuity and that they were “looking for men.” Husbands of activists were also challenged since in many instances it was they who gave permission for wives to attend meetings or political activities. Some women felt that their weak communication skills and lack of fluency in English were impediments to their political mobility. Furthermore,

women held greater responsibilities than men did and family obligations took precedence over political work. Also Africanist women mentioned to me that men wanted activist women as girlfriends rather than political colleagues; to the extent that they remained “uncooperative” in regards to personal relationships, their political positions and analyses went unsupported. An Africanist described some of the public misconceptions about activist women:

There are women who think that because they are married they can't do this kind of thing. That is the perception because there are few doing this (political work) so we end up being like a club. They believe that it is not for everybody, not for people who are not confident like me and who can't speak.

At the same workshop women discussed sexual harassment and abusive speech, traditions that oppress women in party circles and structures. AWO/PAWO sought to claim its full political space by having its entire national executive body represented on the national executive body of the PAC. Women within AWO/PAWO drew upon a legacy of women's activism to motivate fuller participation within the PAC. AWO/PAWO argued that only when women “directly influence the vision and shape” of the PAC will their contributions and participation be fully recognized. More importantly in facing the challenges of organizing women, AWO/PAWO concluded that to “present women's emancipation as a problem particular to women is a monumental error.” In this regard AWO/PAWO was addressing the contradictions it was facing as it attempted to organize women around specific gender interests in order to strengthen women's position within the PAC. Arguments about gender were relegated to an apolitical space that reinforced women's subordination within and outside the organization.

AWO/PAWO tackled the issue of women's integration into the leadership of a fledgling political organization. Women were thus being pushed to a diminished capacity within an organization that was struggling to find its footing in the "new South Africa." Firstly, women of AWO/PAWO found it necessary to explain the importance of a women's wing and its role as a "positive force that pushes the movement and the political party forward." Africanist women must be critically organized as a vibrant force. This is because AWO/PAWO argued, a liberation movement must have a women's wing in order to be a genuine mass organization. AWO/PAWO addressed itself to the PAC demanding more recognition and support as a "means to return full participation and education of women to our society at all levels." Again AWO/PAWO was perceptive, however, of the ways in which women within AWO/PAWO and the PAC worked indirectly against their empowerment. According to a draft paper, the continued "inactivity (of women) perpetuates the retardation of our movement, holding back our positive development."

All social movements are characterized by divisions of gender which are rationalized and contested in various ways. Recently the PAC has shown mixed support for PAWO and this parallels a shift in the kind of politics that has surfaced in the new South Africa. The need for certain kinds of women's mobilization that permeated national liberation movements has diminished. Traditional women's political activism was essential for the movement, but is less so for a political party. In the case of AWO/PAWO, Africanist women have begun to disengage from political work because their traditional work has been officially marginalized from the current organizational politics of Pan-Africanism. The existence of AWO/PAWO suggests that women have to

be organized specifically by women. However in the year prior to the 1999 elections AWO/PAWO recognized that “the recruitment and retention of women is the responsibility of the PAC” (PAWO Report 1998). They challenged the party to make its election drive gender balanced, with the election manifesto being gender affirming, with the provincial lists and national lists having 30 percent women and calling for training for women when necessary. However, as the women’s structure of the PAC, AWO/PAWO was unable to ensure that “women are both visible and vocal” without the support of the PAC and this was not forthcoming in the elections of 1999. The inactivity of Africanist women is a manifestation of the party’s inertia when it comes to women.

Presently AWO/PAWO and the PAC are facing critical moments as an organization and politically because the relevancy of Pan-Africanism is being challenged by the dominant discourses in South Africa. More importantly, because of the dismal electoral results of the PAC, its credibility as a political party is in jeopardy. This has repercussions for women within the structures of AWO/PAWO who are working toward attaining balanced representation within the leadership of a political party that itself is struggling. This also resonates on the ground for Africanist women who have been politically invisible in recent years. Because of the changes, their narratives of activism are being subsumed and relegated to the past.

When a subject was queried about the objectives of AWO/PAWO today, she answered:

There is no vast difference in what we are doing now and what we were doing then.... We wanted to politicize women so that they know about the struggle of the land, the economic struggle, the struggle of identity as a people, that is what

we wanted to achieve.

Africaness: Articulation of Pan-Africanism by Africanist Women

In the words of one Africanist, “dispossession strikes women in a unique manner, to bear children without a land and country of their own, to live and die without a land and country of their own-what motherly fulfillment is there”? Women who have been active in the Pan-Africanist movement have specific reasons why they were drawn ideologically to this form of nationalism. They articulate this nationalism in different ways, drawing on notions of race, culture and class to explain why Pan-Africanism provides the resolution to many of their contradictions as Black women South Africa. As a form of nationalism, Pan-Africanism in South Africa has historically emphasized two main themes, landlessness and identity. Landlessness is inextricably linked to nationality, which shapes personal and political identities. It is different from Pan-Africanism within the African Diaspora where ideological connections are asserted between race, identity and Africa in its totality.

Within the “struggle history” of South Africa every political organization had its language that marked its ideological distinctiveness. Certain phrases, references, slogans, and behavior became representative of particular organizations. Within the PAC and among Africanists, the slogan “IZWE LETHU” and the response “*I-Africa*”, which translates into Africa for the Africans are often exchanged as greetings or salutes. PAC members and Africanists referred to one another as *M’Afrika* in the singular and *Ama.Afrika* in the plural. The slogan became a symbol of the radicalism of the PAC but among the Africanists it epitomized the premise of South African Pan-Africanism. This

form of nationalism upheld the primacy of land in its discourse on liberation and political identities. Political and national identities are reiterated in the terms “*son of the soil*” and “*daughter of the soil*” which refer to members of the PAC. In the words of one respondent, *Africaness* is reserved for those “who suffered under the yoke of oppression throughout the continent.” These aspects of national identity were expressed when I asked Africanists why they joined the PAC. A national executive committee (NEC) member from Orlando West gave this reason for joining as a teenager: “The PAC said to me you are an African, Africa belongs to you even though Africa has been cut into lemons.” Another respondent said: “They (PAC) were talking about the totality of oppression... they highlighted the question of housing and the question of land. They highlighted that the land belongs to the African masses.” When I asked an interviewee from Soweto why she chose PAC she responded: “PAC is for the poor people not only the rich people. If you can vote for PAC then most people will get jobs....” Other women were more specific in detailing what were the objectives of Pan-Africanism and describing this nationalism. Another interviewee from Cape Town explained: “We as PAC are talking about the land.” In defining Pan-Africanism she added: “If you are not an Africanist you can not get Africanism because Africanism is to share, to understand where you are and who you are.” Her goal as a Pan-Africanist was to “help the nation, I want to see that the people get land, to see that the people get houses, to see that the people get jobs.”

A recurrent theme in the women’s articulation of Pan-Africanism is the land and how land and landlessness denote certain identities that are designated as African. An AWO PAWO member of the NEC described the bleak situation in South Africa in terms of land: “We have people who are squatters in their own land. This is what the party was

fighting for, for the land of the African people and for everyone to have access to land. If you have land you have everything.” In other words, Pan-Africanism encompasses many facets of women’s concerns and aspirations that arise out of their position as Black women confronted with poverty. More often Pan-Africanism unites racial and cultural identities with a political agenda that is directed toward an African context. A 30- year-old respondent from Gugulethu explained Pan-Africanism as: “Being an African you must have your interests here in Africa. Lets say you are a Black person, I can’t say you are an African, because you may have interests elsewhere in America or in Europe.” A 30-year-old former soldier from Soweto added that: “I define Africanism on the basis of the continent I come from, but I don’t judge on the basis of skin color. It is on the basis of what they do for the continent and where they come from.”

Significantly in many conversations about Pan-Africanism, in only one instance did a woman raise the subject of nationalism as it relates to gender. Having spent her childhood outside of South Africa in exile in Zambia, she explained the difficulties that women face in nationalist movements. These movements hold pitfalls for women if they follow the tendency to make hierarchies of gender intrinsic to culture.

It is almost as if Pan-Africanism is a protected mechanism where people don’t want to accept that patriarchy can actually exist in Pan-Africanism. There is a lot of patriarchal gatekeeping among women and you find there is more resistance from women.

The Push and Pull: “You Have To Be A Woman”

In places like Khayalithsa, women’s domestic work is never-ending because the majority of women live in shacks with few amenities. There is no indoor plumbing so the

washing of children, the washing of clothes and even the washing of dishes can be burdensome. Women use paraffin, candles, and electric stoves for heat, light and cooking respectively. They are the first to rise to cook breakfast, wash clothes and take care of children. Therefore African women are "income-poor" but also "time-poor" and this is connected to the sexual division of labor (Budlender 1997: 49). Only 30 percent of African households are nuclear and in Cape Town seven of ten children born between 1989-1990 were born to unmarried women or women who never lived with a man in a relationship (Budlender 1997:47). Moreover 16 percent of African children are cared for by their grandmother, only 37 percent were cared for by their mother. Only 35 percent of these children had their mother and father as primary caretakers (Budlender 1997: 48). In Khayalitsha many children are in the care of relatives because mothers are working and fathers are often absent. Many middle-aged women stay at home caring for grandchildren and it is women of all ages on the streets of Khayalitsha who sell cooked food, drinks, snacks, fresh meat, peanuts, and clothes.

Before I arrived in South Africa, a prominent woman activist from Langa, Cape Town was killed in a hijacking in Khayalitsha. In a discussion with a male activist about her life he made to me a very insightful point that can readily sum up the contradictory perceptions of political women by men in the leadership. He lamented the terrible way she died and of course he praised her dedication to the PAC. He said that she was so committed that "sometimes if you went to her home you could see that she was not attending to everything she should be." He was trying to convey that she was so active that the needs of her household and her family sometimes went unmet. Although she was remembered honorably for her political work, it was implied that as a woman she had

other responsibilities she should have been able to manage. An activist woman has to be organized enough to handle her duties in the workplace, if she is employed, in her household and in her organization. These burdens inhibit the development of female leadership within political organization and this cuts across political ideology.

Women's activism in the Pan-Africanist movement has had different trajectories. There is the organizational work that AWO/PAWO represents, which seeks to empower women within the structure of the PAC and make the ranks of the leadership more representative of the movement as a whole. This political work is directed towards equitable distribution of power within the organization and integrates gender into the political discourse of Pan-Africanism. The other kind of activism in which most women within the Pan-Africanist movement have been historically engaged has been the everyday, on the ground political work that reproduces politics within the community. This is the kind of political work that is also influenced by everyday relations of gender, and is also the work that poses the most important critique to organizational leadership, since it is at the community level that political ideologies are nurtured and their continuity furthered. I pose the query as to how these different kinds of political work relate to each other and what they tell us about women's relationship to political work. I contend that perhaps it is because the bulk of women's political work is community based and passes through networks of kin, fictive kin, and familial relationships, that their marginalization has remained consistent. While these networks have been integral to the liberation movements within in South Africa, so much of it has failed to thoroughly challenge the prevailing attitudes about gender because they arise out of those same relations of gender that situate women in position of support and not power. As a movement makes the

transition to a political party, men are positioned advantageously leaving the majority of women outside the corridors of power and authority. The gender relationships in a political party will be derivative of many of the gender dynamics that permeated the liberation movement. As a consequence women's interests are consigned to the margins and the development of women's leadership is retarded.

For the majority of my respondents their pivotal identification is with *Africaness* which is consistent with their embrace of the nationalism of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism appears to positively influence notions of gender because gender identities are entangled with race, culture and nationality. As for many Black women it is difficult to undo these kinds of linkages across identities because simultaneity is an ongoing experience. The dilemma for women within the former liberation organizations such as the PAC is making ideologies "operational and real" in the daily struggles for survival that ensnare so many South Africans. Africanist women have to interrogate the concept of *Africaness* and expand notions of social justice to the relations of gender.

Chapter Five

Omama beNgugquleko (Mothers of the Revolution)

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the different ways in which Africanist women reproduce Pan-Africanism as a lived experience. Women, in the roles of mother, wife, comrade, *m'afrika* (Africanist) use the idiom of kinship to maintain the continuity of Pan-Africanism. Women in their multifaceted lives use organizational, professional, community and familial outlets to extend Pan-Africanism. I am interested in how political activism transforms women's role and how structures of gender relations affect their differential access to political authority. Political activism is manifested in myriad ways and women demonstrate their political identification through activities that are differentiated by gender. An important differentiation is to be made between women's reiteration of Pan-Africanism as an ideology through everyday relationships and their support of the PAC as an organization. There is a second difference between women's support of the PAC and women being empowered within the structures of the organization. I argue that women have been intrinsic to the resilience of Pan-Africanism in South Africa, but this has not shifted the dynamics of gender within the organization.

The kinds of political work that women engage in extend the definition of what is political. The importance of women's mobilization is acknowledged without the consideration of their specific gender interests. Therefore to locate women's political work in the crevices of everyday relationships of reciprocity is to extract a history that is subsumed in connections of kinship both fictive and real. Women's domestic contribution to the reproduction of the nationalist struggle has not been assigned to the rubric of political work. I contend that in the spaces between family and politics, women's

activities have been depoliticized. Ideologies of gender informed the political activities of women and the organization of the Pan-Africanist movement reinforced and simultaneously contradicted those ideologies. Political activism created avenues where women could coalesce and mobilize with specific gender interests within the PAC. I argue that a significant contradiction can be illustrated when we observe how the liberation movement appropriated the political work of women without altering basic gender relations. The devaluation of women's political agency is necessary to maintaining their social subordination. Moreover, it is because of "traditional" gender assumptions and attitudes within former liberation organizations like the PAC, women and women's interests remain at the periphery of the political map. .

By looking at the "dynamics of politicization in women's lives rather than the outcome" I focus on the spheres of relations that are salient for women (Morgen and Bookman 1988:12). I seek to challenge the political invisibility of women by extending the definition of what is political and how women in many capacities contribute to the perpetuation of an ideology and movement. Women are more than witnesses to social change, they are the political facilitators in their communities. Aretxaga was critical of social science writing that categorizes Irish nationalist women's political participation as "anecdotal to the real politics of the conflict"(1997:6). She argues that the "invisible practices" of women had great impact on the "nationalist culture and the reconfiguration of women's identities"(Aretxaga 1997:6). For Africanist women, ethnicity, language, region, profession, kinship and political history form the configuration of their identities. However, in the struggle history of South Africa, women's political history is accorded differential meaning, and for Africanist women their testimonies have been overlooked.

According to Morgen and Bookman, "race, ethnicity and class intersect with gender in shaping political action and consciousness" (1988:7). The Africanist women through their daily construction and perpetuation of Pan-Africanism reaffirm their agency within a context of oppression. Moreover, their everyday "ideas and actions reveal a world in which behavior is a statement of philosophy" (Collins 1990:15). The *Africaness* that Africanist women within the PAC reproduce everyday is reinforced by the dynamics of interdependence in township life and shared history of political struggle. *Africaness* is both what Africanist women's political activism is directed towards, and what they practice everyday among neighbors, comrades and kin. The nationalism of this *Africaness* is actual and observable. Like many nationalisms, Pan-Africanism expresses an *Africaness* which is double-sided, emphasizing the continuity of culture and struggling to transform the dynamics of power.

The ethnography for this chapter took place in the townships of Soweto outside of Johannesburg and Langa, Gugulethu, and Khayalitsha outside of Cape Town. There is a long history of residential segregation in South Africa and townships, formerly known as locations, are still mostly African. There are Coloured townships in urban centers as well, particularly in the Western Cape where the Coloured population is in the majority. The housing in Soweto were traditionally four room houses or what South Africans refer to as matchboxes. Usually the bathroom was outside the home and many generations of families shared these small houses. Presently, the housing in Soweto ranges from the shacks of informal settlements to luxurious mansions owned by the African elite such as businessmen, and businesswoman, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. The home in which I stayed belonged to a teacher, a member of the middle-class, and was a five

bedroom house which is expansive for a township. For township residents, the home is very important because it is usually the only investment or property one has, and African women are very conscientious about the appearance of the house. Also, South African custom permits people to drop by at anytime, so the home must always be presentable. Almost every home has at least two doors, the front door and one for the kitchen. Ordinarily the kitchen door remains open during the day. It is very rare for people to live alone in a house, especially a woman and there is always extended family present.

In Soweto, you find all the amenities of a community, including a major hospital, Chris Hani Baragwanath, the largest hospital in Africa, churches, taxi stands, fast food restaurants such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, jazz clubs, community centers and schools. Within the township, weddings, baptisms and most importantly funerals take place on the weekend. Whenever there is a funeral, people must always put in an appearance at the home of the bereaved or at the funeral itself. It is fundamental to South African culture that someone from the household be present to share grief with neighbors and relatives. Many times I was requested to attend weddings or visit homes of people I didn't know, but as a visitor it was important for me to be seen. There are tours of Soweto for foreign tourists interested in seeing historical places in the national liberation struggle.

Although almost every South African language is spoken in Soweto, the most common are Zulu and Sotho. Most South Africans speak at least two indigenous languages and many are fluent in English. In Cape Town the majority of Xhosa speakers are able to speak Afrikaans as well. In Johannesburg there were many instances where people were curious to hear me speak English and if my friends from the Cape spoke Xhosa, there were always whispers and stares. There was even an occasion when police

questioned me to see if I was South African or a foreigner by greeting me in Sotho. I made sure that I always carried my passport so as not to be arrested by the police and be possibly deported to a neighboring African country. Foreigners are called “*amakwerekwere*” which means foreigner and there have been South Africans detained because they were mistakenly taken for “*amakwerekwere*.” I was called this often, once I was called a “Mandela *amakwerekwere*”, a reference to Nelson Mandela’s Mozambique born wife, Graca Mandela. Pan-Africanists, however, referred to me as an African or a “sister.” Overall the residents of Rockville/Moroka were extremely friendly and neighborly. My host went out of her way to introduce me to her neighbors and family, and soon my status as guest wore off and I became part of the family.

For Soweto residents, if there is a need to go shopping, handle business affairs, go to work, or even buy a bus ticket, one has to go to “town” which is the city center of Johannesburg. The most convenient way to get around the areas of Soweto and to get to “town” is by taxi. The taxis, or “combis” as they are called are African owned, operated and controlled. Johannesburg is a crowded, noisy, and bustling African city of immigrants from all over Africa, Asia and Europe. Many of the major businesses and services have left the city center for outer suburbs. The city center is thoroughly African with immigrants from East, West, Central and Southern Africa selling goods on the sidewalks. There are areas of Johannesburg, in particular Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville, where South Africans are the minority and Nigerians and Congolese are the majority. The informal economy is predominant in “town”, along with crime. It is mostly African women who sell food, fruits and vegetables, clothes, traditional medicines and herbs on the streets of downtown Johannesburg. Many have young children strapped to their backs or playing

besides them. On at least three occasions I walked into gun battles, and almost all shopkeepers are armed. Taxi drivers are also very aggressive and are organized along ethnic lines. Taxi operators used to always cram me into the smallest spaces of the “*combi*” because I was slim but I knew better than to complain. A woman has to be very careful on the streets of Johannesburg because sexual harassment is rife and violence against women is prevalent. It is rare to see a white person walking in the streets of downtown because of fear of violence. Even in a car there is little security; I witnessed motorists being robbed in their cars as they waited for stoplights.

I witnessed many episodes of street justice and ordinary people can be brutal on criminals. In KwaNdebele I saw a crowd beat a man who stole a radio from a stall. He was bloody, dazed and terrified. In Kathlehong I was walking with an ex-APLA member when shots rang out and I froze. A man running towards us was being shot at but eventually he halted after more shots were fired. The man doing the shooting quickly shoved the thief into the trunk of his car and drove off. *Tsotsis* (criminals) usually followed me in Johannesburg, stalking me in pairs. However I usually noticed them early enough to prevent them from assaulting me and I was very vigilant when alone. I remember when I was home in Soweto and I opened the door for someone before asking for his name. My host told me “Not every Black face is an African. He could be a *tsotsis*. Be careful.”

Once when walking in downtown Johannesburg a man passed by me and grabbed my arm. At first I took no notice of it because I was growing accustomed to being touched by strange men on the street. However I happened to look down at my arm and noticed a brown clayish mixture. Soon after two women approached me and told me in

English that I had been rubbed with *muti* (traditional medicine) and I must quickly consult a *sangoma* (traditional doctor) to remove the spell. I was warned to act quickly or I would lose my husband, all my money or get sick. I quickly realized that I was being set up for a scam and that the women were working with the *sangoma*. I didn't have a husband to lose or much money to worry about and I was quite healthy. Later I heard of people who had been hypnotized by the *sangoma* and whom willingly gave the *sangoma* their ATM password. When I reached home to Soweto that night, *Gogo* (grandmother) suggested I drink holy water to cast off the spell, but I declined.

When I needed a break from township life I stayed with friends in the Johannesburg suburbs of Bryanston and Randburg. In Bryanston I lived in a guesthouse which I shared with a friend. In Bryanston I felt both safe and vulnerable. Township life while potentially dangerous is also very vibrant and exciting. Many times I rode the "combis" alone from "town" to Soweto waiting on long lines in town. I had to learn how to say where I was going in Zulu and Sotho because to get on the wrong "combi" could have been disastrous, especially at night. Also the taxi drivers usually placed me in the front seat where I had to collect all the fares, count them and give it to the driver. I always felt a lot of pressure when doing this because I never wanted to get the count wrong because I was a "foreigner."

Bryanston was an almost exclusive white suburb where almost all the Black faces belonged to the servants and other workers. An electric gate surrounded the house I stayed in and ferocious dogs that I felt were trained to attack Black people lived there also. The dogs tried to bite me on many occasions. Bryanston was quiet, peaceful and boring. Suburban life is very lonely and all my friends who lived in the suburbs went to

the townships on the weekends. I frequented the mall when I wanted entertainment or wanted to go out to eat. The owners of the house were kind and interested in me as an American student. They were surprised that I lived in the townships and that township residents spoke English. They offered me the services of their maid to do my laundry but I decided to wash my own clothes. This was a tiresome chore because it had to be done by hand and people didn't understand why I didn't pay someone to do it for me. I felt uncomfortable with a stranger washing my clothes and I knew that people assumed that Americans were all rich and lazy. The African workers would look at me in a puzzled way when they saw me hanging my clothes to dry and I knew what they were thinking. The safety of the suburbs can be deceptive and people are often very isolated in these houses that resembled fortresses. I usually did not sleep well at night because I knew most home invasions occurred between midnight and five in the morning. I knew that at least in Soweto people would help you but in the suburbs you were all on your own.

Because of the dearth of sources on Africanist women and the activism of women in the PAC, I rely heavily on interviews. Interviews supplement the historical record since the political lives of most of these women are undocumented. In Soweto interviews were conducted in English since my respondents were comfortable with the language. In Cape Town I used interpreters on two occasions since respondents needed Xhosa translations of particular questions. I resided in the area of Rockville, Soweto, and it was the Rockville/Moroka branch of the PAC where I observed the centrality of women in organizing youth for political mobilization. In Khayalitsha, a community of informal settlements in the area named Site B, I observed the open door policy between fellow political activists and again the mothering by PAC women of young activists. In the Cape

Town Township of Langa, I discovered that political affiliation leads to relationships of fictive kin and access to domestic resources of PAC women. I stayed in the homes of Africanist women, attended branch meetings, and rallies, observed women's political roles and perceptions. I was most interested in how the political work of women is a multilayered and formative factor in their identities. I sought to explore what activities constituted a "daughter of the soil" or a "PAC woman" in the minds of the women themselves and the community.

Building Through Mothering in Many Places

Within many movements of social protest, the disruption of community and family life provokes the political participation of women (Aretxaga 1997). In the case of Africanist women, their close bond with young people as "othermothers" helps politicize them into Pan-Africanism. Patricia Collins defines "othermothers" as "women who assist bloodmothers by sharing mothering responsibilities"(Collins 1990:119). She states that "Black women's experiences as othermothers fuels Black women's activism"(Collins 1990:129.) Collins argues that in the Black community, "othermothers" are a "central institution of Black motherhood" (Collins 1990:119). For some women activism is motivated by a community ethic of responsibility, accountability and care. In South Africa, there is a history of student and youth activism, because schools offer an easy gateway to political organization and mobilization. As described by Ackelsberg, a women's "political consciousness seems to be making connections between their own lives and that of others"(1988:305). The activism of women can be an example for young people and the political work of young people can draw women into the sphere of politics as mothers and othermothers. This has meant that motherhood became a political

relationship as well as one defined by nurturing and kinship. Among Africanist women, othermothering elicits different kinds of political participation and activism. Activist women are predominant in “mothering the mind”, the politicization of young people, and women develop relationships where there is a politicization of nurturing. That is, women integrate a specific political paradigm within their roles as mothers and “othermothers.” Women in the role of biological or fictive role of mother or othermother demonstrate the “politics of relationship” in which interpersonal linkages are organized by shared political ideology.

Senior activist women in the community often become what Karen Sacks has termed “centerwomen” in that they are “key actors in network formation and consciousness shaping” (Sacks 1988:79). These women consistently towed the line, they consciously reiterated the ideology of Pan-Africanism through the involvement in the lives of others and their politicizing of intimate relationships. Robnett in her study of the civil rights movement explained that women as bridge leaders were able to “cross the boundaries between the public life of a movement organization and the private spheres of adherents and potential constituents”(Robnett 1997:19). Bridge leadership was the most readily available form of leadership open to women whereas formal leadership was inaccessible because of ideologies of gender that excluded women. However, as Robnett noted, this did not inhibit the presence of women from leadership; rather it allowed spaces for different forms of leadership, with women becoming integral mobilizers within the civil rights movement. Robnett observed that “within the informal tier of leadership”, women’s capacities became important to the robustness of the movement (Robnett 1997). In other words, a movement benefits from the interaction between formal leadership and

bridge leadership. Gender is then a key construct in organizing spaces of leadership, mobilization and reproduction of narratives of nationalism. Africanist women use the niches organized by gender to perpetuate the nationalism of Pan-Africanism and express their notions of *Africaness*.

Motherhood is politically emotive and in the context of African culture all women are mothers. As Aretxaga wrote about martyrdom in Northern Ireland, there is collective identification with the suffering of mothers. She points out that "men's suffering is inscribed in their own bodies through fighting; whereas a women's suffering is inscribed in the bodies of others: fathers, sons, husbands, or friends"(Aretxaga 1997:50). This collectivity of women also extends toward ensuring the heroism of men, where women are crucial to sheltering, nurturing, protecting, and guiding young male activists. A fifty-year-old seamstress from Khayalitsha described in an interview the blended roles of mother and political mentor in her relationship to young male activists.

I used to keep comrades in my house. I had to move to the Transkei with "Sizwe" and the others before they got jailed. I tried to escape with them to Transkei. "Sizwe" and the others used to stay with me before they went underground. I also went to training (military) with the recruits. I went to look after them as a mother because at that time it was not easy to see maybe five boys staying alone in a house. I had to go in that area and rent a house for them. They would then come and recruit people in that area.

As an "othermother", her role was both logistically important for the movement and emotionally supportive for those teenage recruits. A former commander of APLA told me that women provided the "solace and protection" for young militants in the training camps.

Cheryl Gilkes drew attention to the community work of African American women in building Black oriented institutions in the spaces in which they work (1988). She emphasized the centrality of women in transmitting and nourishing “cultures of resistance” in communities in which they struggle. Women are attuned to the implications of racism within their own families and in the community as a whole. According to Gilkes, women involve themselves intimately in the lives of their biological children and the children in the community. This is one experience that politically awakens women and mobilizes them to action. In the study by Gilkes, the African American women’s notions of Black community extended to “the Race” and to “wherever Black people are”(Gilkes 1988:55). Among Africanist women, their perception of community is also extensive, including the townships they lived in, their families, political networks, the nation of South Africa, and finally Africans as a whole. The concept *Ama.Afrika* can refer any level. As one activist commented on her life of service she said “I love doing things for Africans.” As Gilkes described in her study of community workers, there was little “compartmentalization between professional, political and social activities” within women’s lives. For women active in the PAC, home life and political life were entangled and the continuous thread for these women was service. In the home where I stayed in Khayalitsha, there was a young boy who always visited us and he would sit quietly. I asked my host about the boy and she said he was hungry and that there were problems with his mother. I became friendly with him and so did the Africanists who frequented the home. One day an activist asked the boy how he felt about the PAC and he answered he loved it when I asked him why, he responded “because all my friends are PAC and *MaZoliswa* is PAC.” For this child the person who fed him when he was hungry and the

people who protected him were Africanists. These are the ways in which politics become intertwined with acts of kindness.

An example of the networks Africanist women build among themselves and their role as othermothers occurred early in my stay at the home of a prominent activist. A young woman called at the house relating the story of a nine year old girl who had fled to her home after being sexually assaulted. The young PAC women did not know what to do. A member of the local PAC branch, she was reaching out for advice on whether to call the police or take the child home. This demonstrated the intersection of political and social terrains that women have to navigate. That woman's political mentoring stretched to express a level of intimacy that made younger women and men feel that her life and home were accessible to them. Othermothers are confidants for young activists and responsible for their political upbringing.

Africanist women "provide nurturance and contexts for activism" (Ackelsberg 1988: 304). Within the homes of Africanist women, young people flow in and out for advice, financial help, referrals, companionship, food, accommodation, refuge and emotional nurturing. When I queried some of the youth on how they came to politics many would refer to particular women who initiated them into political activism. Women invited them to branch meetings and in doing so political families developed over years. When young people went underground during exile or political training it was often women who accommodated them and guided them through the safe channels. After the suspension of armed struggle, young people in the military structure were integrated into the South African National Defense Forces. Women served as references and guides counseling them through this process. When young people experienced problems in

school or within families, political families provided homes. When one young man was thrown out of his house by his parents for political involvement, an Africanist woman, “*Nozizwe*” went to his father and said he could live with her. “*Nozizwe*” politically educated him and supervised his training. Later this same young man described to me how “*Nozizwe*” had been his “political commissar.”

One activist, a business consultant from Orlando, Soweto in her mid forties and the mother of two daughters gave an example of how important it was to her to help the youth. She housed members of the Pan-African Student Organization (PASO) while they awaited their integration into the South African Defense Force (SADF). Her daughters complained of the presence of so many young people in the home, but the mothers of those students were very grateful that she, as a woman, cared for their children and found them employment. Africanist women often took in other children and as they integrated them into their homes they politicized them into Pan-Africanism.

The close relationship between women and youth was demonstrated to me when an Africanist woman mobilized young PAC members of the Rockville branch for a political roadshow before the June elections. A roadshow was planned in Rockville, Soweto where young people would pass out flyers and help campaign for the PAC. What was most interesting about this event was not the presence of the youth, which was common, but that it was both a roadshow and a commemoration. The roadshow culminated at the home of a PAC youth who had been killed by the police a few years before. At the home of the youth his mother, aunts, grandmothers, sat with senior members of the branch. Speeches were made, songs were sung and words were spoken about the deceased young man. In this regard the event was a commemoration of the life

of the young activist. The moment epitomized the way in which linkages between the past and present are preserved, and how the young man was memorialized not just as an activist but as a son and brother to the movement. Women reinforce these linkages between politics and kinship and as mothers they memorialize the sacrifice of the youth.

At a post-election meeting in 1999, there was some confusion and gossip about compensation for the volunteers who worked at the voting stations. The branch chair told the volunteers there would be no compensation or stipend for their time because of the poor financial situation of the PAC. However, after the voting there were members who were rumored to have been unhappy about not being paid for their time. The branch head was angry at this, and at the post-election meeting, she had the members who were known to be spreading rumors stand and apologize to her. The young men did as they were told and apologized, but the exchange had the ring of an argument between mother and son rather than between two activists. Because the branch head was a middle-aged woman and the activists although male were young, the etiquette of respect and obedience was expected.

Time and time again I saw young activists being instructed to do things for older Africanist women and doing them. In one case, the son of an Africanist woman had been arrested as an accessory to a robbery. She asked a young male activist, who had been detained with her husband, to go and find the other suspects and bring them to the police. Moreover she asked him to contact other activists who were in the same prison to watch over her son. When I went to pay a visit to her son with her, we were granted a special face to face visit because of links made by Africanists in the prison. Clearly, women use their political associations in myriad ways, to protect their own children and to protect the

children of others. Africanist women also use the ideology of motherhood to get things done and to castigate younger activists whom they politically mentor. I do not wish to suggest that this occurs only with Africanist women; indeed I would argue that this is derivative from traditional culture. Elder women have long had a degree of social leverage over junior women and junior men. However, Africanist women weave political relationships into families and politicize links of kinship, describing it as the practice of Pan-Africanism.

In almost every political movement, motherhood is allotted a privileged space and this is also the case in South Africa. In 1994 in the time before the elections there was ongoing internal strife in the PAC about whether to participate and over the cessation of armed struggle. A bodyguard of then PAC president Clarence Makwetu was killed and there was a gathering at the home of the family of the deceased. This was in Langa and because I was a guest, I was brought to the home to meet President Makwetu and to greet the family. I recall the somber moment of washing my hands before entering the home and seeing President Makwetu with the mother of his bodyguard. The women of the family were together cooking and preparing meals while the mother sat in grief. In Cape Town on two occasions mothers of PAC activists approached me about the whereabouts of their sons who had years ago gone into exile and were never heard of again. Though the centrality of motherhood is not specific to a liberation ideology, the ways in which motherhood is articulated within different political projects may differ.

In the home where I lived in Soweto, my host was told there were African-American students visiting Cape Town. They wanted to visit Soweto so she opened her home to them. She called the younger members of her branch and organized a van to pick

up the students from the airport. She also called some young Africanist women to come cook and clean her house to prepare for the guests. We picked up the African-Americans and gave them a tour of Soweto. I was in a privileged position because, although also an African-American, after a year in South Africa I was accustomed to the townships. The young men prepared a “*braai*” (barbecue) for the guests and they spent the night. It was important for my host to show the African-American students they were “home” in South Africa and give them a sense of African hospitality. More importantly, during the conversations with the African-Americans, she made it clear that she was a Pan-Africanist and gave a history of the PAC. We took the students to a memorial of Hector Petersen, who was the first child killed during the student rebellions of 1976 and she told them the history of that era from the perspective of an Africanist. She said that it was not the Charterists (ANC) who organized those protests but it was students from the Pan-Africanist and Black Consciousness camp. From her vantage point she was showing the students Pan-Africanism, that is opening her home to Africans from America, giving them an Africanist history of South Africa and mothering them because they were far from their families. In this situation she asked younger Africanists from her branch to help in welcoming the students, acting as a mother who tells her children to clean the house while she goes out. She was also acting as a surrogate mother to the students who visited her home. In both situations she was living out Pan-Africanism and politicizing the African-American students.

Within the literature on gender in South Africa, there has been much discussion on the home as a site for the subordination of women and simultaneously a space of subversion against the state. For Africanist women the home represented a respite from

the political hegemony of the apartheid state and for the organization of dissent. For many women within the PAC and AWO, an important element of their political work was making their homes political spaces of refuge for activists. Aretxaga (1997) describes the importance of the home as a politicized, gendered space in the lives of nationalist Irish women. The home constitutes an “interior landscape of political allegiance and defiance” (1997:52). For Africanist women, the home represents the collectivity, a space for *umafrika* and thus the public/private dichotomy is obscured in the face of political struggle. As in Ireland where the house was a “place for hiding terrorist men”, the home for Africanist women epitomized the convergence of the political and familial (Aretxaga 1997: 53). The home serves as the locus for a “gendered structure of power”, but also a space where emotion surfaces as a political force which thus motivates deeper involvement and commitment from women (Aretxaga 1997:53).

Within the township areas, specific homes were designated as ANC, PAC or BCM. This meant, however, that in times of police harassment, the home was easily the first place where the state would harass and pick up suspected activists. An Africanist from Rockville described her experience with the police coming to her home:

We had to be very vigilant because at that time if people saw a stranger around or if they saw somebody who does not stay in your house they would call the police. We used to have outside toilets so there would come a time when they have to go to the toilet and neighbors would see them and police would come to my house. One night about forty policemen came to my house and they were accompanied by people, they were my neighbors. Someone must have gone and told the police that I was recruiting people for training, so they thought I must be harboring people and have weapons in the house.

Following the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

amnesty hearings were launched. Pan-Africanists who had been jailed for activities within the military structures of the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) testified in televised hearings about operations conducted in the country. Prior to this, Africanist women were instrumental in advocating on behalf of political prisoners. They made visits to the prisons, looked after the families of prisoners, liaised with lawyers and prison officials, and gave much needed emotional support for prisoners. Mothers of prisoners and Africanist women mutually supported one another. An Africanist teacher in her middle forties when asked why she continued these visits to political prisoners answered:

They are ours (the PAC) they belong to us. They are not criminals. It was the Boers (Afrikaners) who stole our land and cattle. She pointed to a shackled political prisoner and commented you see Mandela is free but we are still in chains.

Families of political prisoners often called at the home where I was staying asking for funds or favors. I recall an instance during one amnesty hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission where the wife of the testifying prisoner trembled the entire two hours. She understood the ramifications of the amnesty committee's decision on her life and that of her son. Later her husband was given amnesty for the killing of a policeman. He told me I had given him good luck because he had waited years for his hearing and soon after I visited him he was scheduled to testify. In addition when prisoners were granted amnesty, the homes of Africanist women became gathering points for reaffirming political solidarity. Women hosted political prisoners and maintained the linkages with activists outside of prison. They challenged the perception that their political history had become part of a buried liberation movement although they realized the political climate had shifted.

Genealogy of Political Struggle

Within South Africa, family history often exists as a critical point of politicization that steers women toward political activism along specific ideological lines. Africanist women differ in their respective levels of political activism, and this is often a consequence of how they came to politics. A majority of Africanist women interviewed were introduced to Pan-Africanism via kinship. For some the political involvement of husbands was a precedent for their participation. Other women were “born into the PAC” or grew up with uncles, sons and fathers in exile. In that respect there was a genealogy of politics and legacy of Pan-Africanism that some women inherited. All the politically active Africanist married women I met had husbands who were Africanists too. In the early formation of the Pan-Africanist movement, and particularly during the banning of liberation organizations, wives often did not know of their husband’s political activities. They were purposefully left out of politics because of “security reasons” giving them the cover of deniability. Or as one woman told me husbands just did not trust their wives. However, I did come across marriages where husbands were highly political and wives were apolitical. The wife of former PAC president Zephania Mothopeng and the first president of AWO, Ms. Mothopeng, said she was not “involved in politics, that she was just his wife.” However she exemplified the strenuous life of an activist wife in that she bore the enormous burden of caring for a family while her husband was jailed for many years. This could be a reflection of a generation of women, married into politics, but not bearing independent political positions. In the early 1960’s Africanist women were constructed primarily as mothers and wives. An activist in her early forties described the Africanist women of her childhood:

Most of the time, they came to the party as wives. They had their own women's meetings where they talked and socialized together, but I am not sure they talked about the political situation at all. The men would sit in the sitting room and talk the whole night and debate, but there were never any women in those discussions. When all the men sat gathered in the sitting room sometimes my mother would sit for a while and listen. I don't know if she sat as wife or as a colleague.

For some women, their introduction to politics occurred at the moment their husbands became politically involved. They grew politically together and although at times the political involvement of the husbands may have been greater, wives were very supportive. When husbands were jailed, it was wives who had to support families, and communicate with the organization to assure that husbands were properly defended in court. Women did this when the organization was limited in what it could do for wives in this situation. Wives were told that as "PAC women they have to be strong and be able to stand for anything." Experiences with the police were at times traumatic for women, especially those with young children to support, and they also lived under the threat of arrest because of their husband's political work. This was given as one reason for the formation of AWO, to provide support for women whose husbands were jailed or in exile. An Africanist from Khayalithsa related to me her encounter with the police when they arrested her husband:

The police came to where he was working and brought him to the house where they found me. He said to me the Boers have arrested me. He came to get his wash cloth and they then took him away, but only after they searched the house. Since his arrest I did not rest because the neighbors told me the police kept coming to the house. They were saying they wanted me because I knew where the arms were. One morning I was drinking tea and the police came to the house and they were asking my neighbor if I was in the house. I heard this and ran from the

house with the tea in my hand. The police saw me pass but didn't say a word to me. They didn't know what I looked like and afterward I went to hide in the Transkei. I stayed there until I heard on the radio that the PAC men arrested in Cape Town had won the case then I jumped up and packed to go to Cape Town.

At the Fifth PAC National Congress held at the University of Venda in December 1996, there was a remembrance for Sabelo Phama, a former commander of the Azanian Peoples Liberation Army (APLA), who died under mysterious circumstances in Tanzania. His wife was called to the front of the room where PAC and APLA songs were sung to honor the memory of her husband and to honor her as his wife. As the wife of a martyr, Ms. Phama was given respect for the political history of her husband. As wives, women can gain prestige, and as wives they learn to sacrifice.

However, the majority of women I interviewed had some experience of activism before getting married or having children. For most of the women, their children "grew up in the PAC." An activist in her early forties from Khayalitsha recounted the experience of her son who went into exile as a teenager:

We (me and my husband) joined PAC and my children joined the PAC. The big one used to always sleep in the front room and listen to his father who would talk with his friends. When his father went to meetings he went too and someone told him about APLA. One day he and other PAC children went away and did not return for a week. We were looking for him and my husband said if anyone takes my child to the army (APLA) he will kill them. My son came back and then the next week he went into exile for years. He came back and said mommy I don't want to stay in the army I want to go back to school. He went to standard nine, and his friend got into a fight with another guy. My son tried to stop them and the other one stabbed my son. He died but we didn't leave PAC for those things it is our home.

As one activist said “she did not want to sacrifice other people’s children and protect her own.” Her children were active in the student politics of their high schools and universities. Children of PAC mothers were more often than not active in the Pan-African Student Association (PASO) or AZANYU. Whole families attended branch meetings, rallies and funerals. Women were able to integrate their children in the activities, teaching them PAC songs, greetings, praises. Mothers encouraged and supported the political work of their children. A thirty-year-old secretary from Umtata, Eastern Cape described her intentions towards her daughter’s politicization:

I will let her decide at the end of the day which party she wants to join but as long as she lives under my roof we have to speak the same language when it comes to politics.

Women activists had a distinctive relationship with their children, in that their children were often integrated into their political life, in turn thoroughly intertwined within their domestic life. Also children had to be politically exposed and guided so as not to endanger the lives of their mothers and other activists. A forty-five year old activist from Soweto recounted the way she raised her children amid her political work:

It was all about sacrifice and I would tell myself I am doing this for them so if anything happened I have contributed to their liberation. In a way I was sacrificing them for the African people. I called them around the table and I said if the police come and ask for so and so you must lie. I told them that lying is wrong but in this case you are lying to save a soul. If you ever told the police anything there would be a shooting and I am going to die and you would lose a mother. As a result they had a hatred of the police. The police would come, threaten them, show them guns, cock the guns saying they would shoot them but the person who they respected more was me so they did not talk.

A few women came from families that were actively Pan-Africanist or had Pan-Africanist leanings. As children of PAC, their earliest contact with politics was seeing family members go into exile or being arrested. An accountant in her mid-forties from Orlando, Soweto recounted the experiences of her father:

I grew up in a house that was PAC. My parent's politics were PAC at the end of the day, but as children you never take notice until it hits you. As we grew up there was this problem with my uncle who had gone into exile and the police would always pick up my father because they had the same initials. They would always pick up my father, and soon discover after one day that it is not him. My father took up community issues, but not political ones but they (her father and her uncle) both discussed politics. We grew up in this type of atmosphere.

Other women grew up in PAC households, but their influences came from distant family members or political activists who were close to the family. Because many activists moved between different households to elude authorities or in transit to exile, children became familiarized with the politics of Pan-Africanism. A forty-year-old activist and daughter of a PAC leader who spent many years in exile described her early political education:

My parents were there but there were uncle comrades who lived with us and those were really the people who politicized us. They talked about what is the PAC very openly and why Africans need to strive for Pan-Africanism.

From the first PAC formation women were advised to "stay home but all men must go to jail." Women were discouraged from marches, for example because men, sure to be arrested, needed them to "keep the homefires burning." At this time women were

expected to be supportive but not participate in specific political acts. The early PAC campaigns were considered to be a “job best left to men.” An activist from Langa described her familiarization with PAC and the sense of secrecy that followed the banning of the PAC as follows:

I know both my brothers were PAC but it was very hush, hush, and nobody would talk about it but fortunately one of the people who worked at the family shop made us appreciate PAC. He was a great influence in our lives and just across where we lived there was a place where people would go and register to become PAC members. As girls we were not expected to become members of the organization because some people talked about an organization that was coming to fight whites. It was very scary even though we wanted them to succeed.

The activism of women fluctuated throughout their lives. Sometimes their activities were of only one kind, for a specific purpose and at a critical time. Women manipulated ideologies of gender to work covertly on behalf of the organization. One activist from Gugulethu in her early forties described her mother’s sheltering of relatives who were active members of the PAC:

It began in 1960 when my mother was involved. She was a widow and the police did not think she could have a man, so she used to have my uncle and cousins sleep at the house. As a woman, they (the police) would not think there is someone in the house because she was a widow alone with kids.

A former APLA commander told me that “most women who engaged in the struggle survived unscathed” because of the gender assumptions the police held about African women. For one woman, her mother discouraged her political involvement because of the traumatic experience she had during the Langa massacre in 1960. Her mother refused to

disclose her political history and worried about the danger her daughter faced because of her activities. The activist from Khayalitsha described her mother's reaction to her PAC membership:

My mother did not believe it when she saw us saluting like that (open palm) she said it was the salute of the PAC. My mother did not want to talk about politics. She was involved in the crisis of 1960, she always said she got a lash from the Boers (Afrikaners). She didn't want us to talk loud about politics, everybody must keep quiet, she was scared she would lose me. If you begin to talk about the Langa massacre she would say no I don't want to talk politics. I think she didn't want me to find out she loves PAC.

Another Africanist from Langa, grew up in a family that was torn apart by politics and her mother also discouraged her activism.

My mom said we did this thing in 1960 but we didn't survive. My uncle kept encouraging us forward, he told me you will survive. My mother was scared, she had five brothers and three went into exile. She felt pain over her brothers. When they went into exile they were all PAC but then on the way some went to ANC. There was one who was a staunch PAC member but we don't know where he is.

Families were very important in the politicization of Africanist women and families were outlets for the everyday articulation of Pan-Africanism. In the case of one centerwoman from Soweto, her family laid the foundation of her PAC branch after the unbanning in 1990. She described her reactions to the unbanning of political organizations this way:

When we were unbanned we were not excited because we knew what was coming. We knew there would be negotiations and that was selling out. We felt negotiations were not going to take us anywhere and things are worse now than

before. Then I opened the branch immediately in March 1990. We had to start fresh again but we did not coerce people. I started with my family, and the youth in the area. I organized a braai (barbeque) and people would come. People who were still in hiding started to come out. On March 21 we officially met, but before that we had to deny we were PAC, but now we could say Izwe Lethu (Africa for Africans). The branch started with me and my family as the first members.

Women's Mobilization for Pan-Africanism

According to a hard working Africanist centerwoman, in the PAC, "men delegate but women and youth do all the work on the ground." However women were active on many levels of the PAC including the military structures. About one fourth of the women I spoke to have undergone military training and as women activists this was encouraged as the discourse on gender within the PAC had shifted. The first generation of Africanist women who were politically active were working class and middle-class. These women, who joined PAC in the late 1950's and early 1960's more often than not married into the PAC. Their political work was very important to the longevity of the movement outside of South Africa from which it was banned in 1960. Women in exile communities had to work and support families while their husbands traveled throughout Africa and worked in the anti-apartheid movement. Many women were also able to attend school while in exile and lead professional lives in a way that would have been difficult in South Africa. A woman who grew up in an Africanist family in exile described the women she remembered growing up with in Zambia:

Most of the women within the PAC were breadwinners, they were teachers and nurses. They were the people who actually financed things like newsletters for the party, cooked food for people, and organized meetings. It was they who actually financed all these things.

After the mid-1970's women were constructed not solely as mothers of the revolution but as activists, combatants and militants. The seventies proved to be a pivotal point in the liberation struggle because it was also time of industrialization and labor struggle in South Africa. African labor struggles and unionization gave women another vehicle for politicization since liberation organizations were banned. Women were able to make the connection between their personal and political histories. Africanist women, like women from other liberation organizations, perceived the multiple trajectories of systems of power that worked against them. An Africanist from White City, Soweto who works as a trade unionist told me of her political evolution:

My activism began at school where I was on the student representative council and I wanted to know why we were forced to learn another language (Afrikaans). I joined the PAC underground in 1975. Underground literature and propaganda was smuggled into the country by the PAC. I was involved in the 1976 school rebellions and went to Botswana because the police were looking for me. In Botswana I had to use a codename and then in 1979 I came home because I was pregnant. I went back to school in 1980. I started working at a factory to support my son and family. In 1979 Blacks were allowed to join unions and I became a shop steward and elected to the national executive committee. I became active again in PAC and in 1986 I helped to form AWO.

Gender works simultaneously in contradictory ways, in that it may limit and widen the scope of a woman's political work. Women were aware of the fact that their participation was anomalous and therefore their gender could be used to obfuscate their political work. Women often recounted that at the height of political crisis egalitarianism

prevailed between activists because the danger of their activities minimized gender differences. A teacher from Soweto who became active at seventeen explained:

It was challenging as Africans because it is always this thing you are a girl or you are a boy, but because you know you are fighting you forget those differences. In 1976 when we were hiding from the police, boys and girls slept on the same floor. We ate from the same bowl, we used our hands together, we were being hunted from the police, we respected each other, we looked at each other as sisters and brothers, that is why we call each other *M'Afrika*.

She described the way she smuggled documents into the country masking her political work behind the perception the state had about African mothers and women.

As a girl they would give me more difficult tasks because the system was more after the boys than the girls. When I crossed the border I was a young girl so they would not even search me, they would ignore me so I was used more than the boys because of this. When I married I could travel with my children and have them on my back. I could hide documents easily because I was clever. All they would see was an African mother with a *doek* (headtie) and children.

Women often worked as couriers for the PAC, smuggling documents into the country from exile Africanists in Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Women were also responsible for carrying information in and out of the country between the exiled leadership and activists in the country. This was common before 1990 when the PAC was an illegal organization, branches were nonexistent and activists operated within the structure of cells. An activist from Orlando who is kin to the former president of the PAC, Zeph Mothopeng, explained life during the banning:

I joined the PAC underground and because MaMothopeng (wife of PAC president, Zeph Mothopeng) was a relative, it was not really a question of joining. In 1976 I took up a membership card, but it was difficult to work underground because it was dangerous and only your handler knew what you were doing. My handler was Zeph Mothopeng and he was also my relative. I used to pass messages between him and my uncle as a courier underground. As a student I could move easily among different countries, like Botswana, Lesotho. I traveled with friends but never told anyone because we had our own informers and I would pass on information and bring what I had to, but you had to be really smart. I was never discovered.

Most of the Africanist women were politically active in school politics and trade unions before and while being active in the PAC. A critical juncture for many of my subjects occurred in 1976 with the demonstrations by high school students against the mandatory teaching of Afrikaans. To the activists in their forties this was a major turning point and most of them participated in student politics at this time. Many were members of their high school student representative councils (SRC), and their politicization in liberation politics began within student politics. Young women had more opportunity for politics since they were not married and domestic responsibilities were fewer. However, like men they had to bear the same consequences of political work, such as arrest, intimidation and police surveillance. For those who went for military training, there was no special treatment because of gender politics. A 29-year-old trade unionist from Soweto described her political background:

I became active in high school. I tried to recruit students into PASO (Pan-African Student organization) at my high school. I was the chairperson of PASO. When I graduated I joined AWO and by that time I was eighteen. It became hard and I was arrested for PAC work, but I did not go into exile. I used to go out the country for training and come back. I was the only woman in my platoon and when I came back to the unit I was working in I was the only woman. It was tough for me. They treated me as an equal not as a woman. Somewhere I felt like they were

trying to make me fail and have an excuse for why we should exclude women.

Due to the banning of liberation organizations women had to be creative in their political work. They used their professional positions and community networks to expand the ideology of Pan-Africanism. More importantly, women accentuated the critical themes of *Africaness* throughout their many professional capacities. This *Africaness* could be expressed culturally to shield the women from the danger of being caught propagating the aims of an illegal organization. Since Pan-Africanism is an articulation of culture and politics, some women were able to build the organization amidst the banning. An activist from Langa explained how she did this for her community as a librarian:

We did have structures underground and since I worked for a public library from 1970 I organized cultural activities in that library. I showed films, organized debating societies, readings of African literature, and a writer's series. Those kinds of things helped bring people together in the 1960's and 1970's. We had meetings every Tuesday where we invited PAC members some of whom had been detained at Robben Island. It made the younger people identify with PAC more. Then they assigned me to a library in Gugulethu and I was warned not to introduce *POQO* (PAC).

The Africanist women who were teachers were able to mobilize students and politicize them into Pan-Africanism. Other Africanist women were able to weave their political ideology into their professional work and community work. Since students in the townships attended schools in the areas close to where they lived, it was easier for Africanist women to build the student, youth and military structures of the PAC. More important, as teachers they had a ready forum to transmit the nationalism of Pan-Africanism. I recall meeting a young filmmaker from Soweto. I mentioned the person to

an Africanist schoolteacher, and she actually remembered him as one of her students.

Later I asked the filmmaker about the teacher. Yes, he said “she was a great teacher and a great Africanist.” Then he went on to tell me that he had been a member of PASO at the school, but since then he had been apolitical. He later came to the home and greeted his former teacher. While he was no longer politically involved, the Pan-Africanism he learned from his teacher had stayed with him. Another former teacher and writer who lived in exile in Australia explained how she politicized students:

During the struggle in Mozambique I kept my students aware (of politics). I used to take time to teach them about the struggle. My students used to call themselves Frelimo.

Other women came to the PAC after a political crisis and remained with the organization after their politicization. In the Western Cape, where historically it was a Coloured preferential labor zone, Africans had difficulty securing housing and passes to work. Cape Town has a large population of Africans who live in squatter camps such as Crossroads where politics ignited much faction fighting and violence. In the mid -1980's the Crossroads and satellite camps were terrorized by state supported and police assisted “witdoeke”(conservative) vigilantes who razed the squatter camps. It was reported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that in May and June of 1986 about 1,000 people were murdered and about 70,000 were left as refugees. Fighting between witdoekes and anti apartheid “comrades” of the UDF in Crossroads and the surrounding camps placed the PAC in the middle. People resisted the relocation to Khayalithsa while others volunteered to go. When an Africanist escorted me on an interview to Gugulethu we

passed by Crossroads on the way back to Khayalitsha. The “new” houses were in fact one room homes which looked very much like matchboxes. Another friend was angry that I went to Crossroads because it was dangerous and said “they used to kill PAC members there.” An Africanist who was active in the Crossroads struggle but now lives in Khayalitsha explained how the Crossroads crisis heightened her politicization:

I was working on farms so I saw how the Boers (Afrikaners) do the people. I came here from East London where I was in the domestic worker’s union and in 1976 I was involved in that struggle. We were *toy-toying* (marching and singing) and traveling by trains because there was a bus boycott at that time. When I came to Cape Town the UDF (United Democratic Front) was *toy-toying* because they didn’t want the people to come to Khayalitsha. I was involved in the community committees and I would stand up and say Africans we must do that and Africans we must say this. Then people thought I was an Africanist, but I was just fighting for my rights.

She continued with how she joined the PAC: *M’afrika “Thanda”* started to show me what is right and what is wrong he just put up the line of the PAC. I thought this is the organization I thought I should belong to.” She explained the position of Africanists:

People were so mixed, there was UDF, PAC everything. Some people did not want to move to Khayalitsha, but others did so there was conflict. They complained that the houses were too small and they looked like matchboxes. The PAC advised them that they should move because Crossroads was a filthy place. In Khayalitsha they can build houses and fight for their rights. The PAC said we should demand that the Boers help us and create jobs.

In 1986 Africanist women formed AWO and the wife of the then PAC president, Zeph Mothopeng was elected as head of the organization. It was created because as one woman said, “ women felt they had to be recognized as women, not to depend on men

and without interference of men.” The structure of AWO gave additional opportunities for women to be active in ways that benefited them. Skill building and economic independence were as important for AWO members as spreading the ideology of Pan-Africanism. Many of the projects spearheaded by AWO gave women needed economic self-reliance and provided a resource for them to network politically. AWO organized sewing projects where women were able to sell their clothing. Women were also given parcels of land to grow crops to feed their families. Adult and night schools were also organized to teach remedial classes. However, they served also as “camouflage to teach Pan-Africanism.” Many AWO members were unionists and unionization was also a way of deflecting attention from the work of politicizing women in Pan-Africanism. At the union meetings there were consciousness-raising discussions about Pan-Africanism. Women gained sewing skills in AWO and it was primarily AWO women who made the accessories and clothing for the PAC. As a woman from Khayalitsha remarked “ I can sew because of AWO. They taught us to sew. I was making T-shirts for the party, tracksuits for the party, even berets for the party. they taught us to do things with our hands.”

After the elections of 1994 and 1999 Africanist women still used their professional and community networks to translate their Pan-Africanism into an everyday ideology. Women are involved in a range of community and grassroots organizations that allow them a route to serve *amaAfrika* outside the PAC. Therefore, their sense of *Africaness* is not restricted to the organization of PAC, but to a working ideology of transformation that transcends a specific organization. Nationalism is therefore a daily a mapping of thought, ethos and agency. When I asked an Africanist community worker

about the educational project she ran in Langa, she explained that her political affiliation was important to her projects, but that it was geared to the community at large:

When I worked, I ran a program called know your continent Africa that was very popular. Young people flocked to the auditorium, when people came and gave their views on Africanism. There was this misunderstanding that PAC was just this small group of people. They did not know it was an international organization and they did not understand where it originated. It was not a PAC program. it was for the community but it became associated with the PAC.

The program ran reading rooms, adult education programs, libraries and teacher upgrading programs. She also ran a sewing project that provided women with more economic independence, although it had problems with funding because many of its members were Africanists. In Khayalitsha I stayed next door to an Africanist woman who worked in this project but she had not worked in months. I visited the local office in Khayalitsha and it was full of sewing machines and fabrics but there had not been any orders for a few months. They specialized in traditional Xhosa clothing and pictures of their designs dotted the walls. I visited the project office in Cape Town and spoke with the Africanist supervisor of the program who told me they were forced to close down because of funding problems. The Africanist from Khayalitsha who worked for the program told me that in the early nineties when APLA was active, whites felt uncomfortable funding programs run by Africanists even if they were women centered because the funders were afraid that the money would be siphoned off to fund the PAC. She said that “whites did not want to give money to people who were killing them”, referring to APLA’s operations. The project run by Africanist women no longer exists, the organization having faltered after the elections in 1994. For other women, their

community work led them to build organizations where they are able to see Pan-Africanism broadened and benefit people in ways that were more identifiable. As one activist who formed a NGO for senior citizens in Orlando West, said:

There is no difference, only a different guise. If you look at PAC principles the constitution says you must be where the Africans are. They (Africans) are in the community, this is a continuation.

When women are able to work in other community organizations they are able to draw on a similar dynamics of power. Africanist women who work with women from differing political perspectives are able to see the ideological deficits that exist in many organizations when it comes to dealing with relations of gender. An Africanist woman who worked for the Women's National Coalition (WNC), an umbrella coalition of women's organizations, summed up her experience:

I had to work with every political group. It helped me realize that as women if we don't find our own political agenda we sort of get lost and muffled in these ideologies. We defeat our agenda. We have to fight strategically even within these political spaces but it is much easier to tow the political line and not realize that we have to disaggregate between men and women.

Working Hard for Azania: The domestic is political

The lives of politically active working-class women contradict the dichotomy between public and private domains (Susser 1986). Africanist women have a consistent ideology of *Africaness* and social expectations of *amaAfrika*. The relationship between Africanist women, particularly within the same townships, or the same area of a township

shows the convergence of the domestic and political. This is especially evident in the townships like Khayalithsa where because of the social organization of squatter camps, neighbors live in very close proximity and there is much interdependence. I asked one activist about living in a squatter camp and she responded:

Even if I have got nothing from my house I know at the end of the day I will get it even if I haven't any money. If I haven't got food, I can always call *MaSindiswa* and *MaNikiwe* is here as well as other members of the PAC. There are PAC members I can go to if I am hungry and ask for something to eat. So to me the PAC makes me stronger and I can stand for anything, so I don't worry.

When I stayed in Khayalithsa women routinely gathered, folded and gave me my laundry after it dried on the line. I stayed in a four roomed shack that had electricity but no indoor plumbing. The home was very comfortable in spite of the fact there were few luxuries. Outside the home there was a communal tap and bathroom. The ground is sandy in Khayalitsha so women are always sweeping sand from their homes. The shacks are very close to one another, so close you can hear the conversations of neighbors. As in Johannesburg, the way you get between Khayalitsha and "town" is by taxi. Taxi stands in Cape Town carry people to the African and Coloured townships. In Khayalitsha the women shared food, irons and even telephones. When the phone rang where I stayed, I answered in my poor Xhosa and then had to leave the house and find the person whom the call was for. Women went by many names, their birth names, their "christian" names, their clan names and then if they were mothers they were called mothers of so and so. The front door stayed open until night and I stayed often alone at night when my host spent the weekend with her husband in Cape Town. I felt much safer in Khayalithsa than

When I washed my clothes, the neighbor's children would pick them off the line, fold them and bring them to me once they were dry. I never asked this favor of anyone but this is how Khayalitsha was for me.

A funeral, rally, or even a *braai* provides the opportunity of observing the division of work between men and women. At a wedding I attended in Soweto, there were many Africanists because the mother of the bride was a well-known activist. In traditional culture, men slaughter and cook the meat whereas women cook the vegetables. At the wedding women cooked the vegetables and served the food. The handling of meat is the province of African men. More often than not it is women who prepare the food, cook, serve and clean up afterwards. The wife of a recently released political prisoner was very busy cooking, cleaning and serving food. She was helping as she had been assisted by Africanists while her husband was in prison.

Usually it is junior women who do this and older women supervise them. When male activists came to the home where I was staying I soon learned that I must make tea, serve refreshments and even cook for up to ten people. As a junior woman I was obliged to follow the same rules and I soon learned that as a woman you have to work hard and continuously. The running joke in the home I stayed in was that I was a "*makoti*" which, in South African culture, is a girlfriend, fiancée or young wife. The "*makoti*" is obliged to serve the family of her husband and work hard to impress them, especially her mother-in-law. As Africanist men were always visiting and staying over I was always called a "*makoti*." So they would say we are training you to be a "*makoti*"; that is how to serve properly and appropriately to men. I recall one occasion when there was a young Africanist who was staying with us. He was very generous when it came to sharing the

properly and appropriately to men. I recall one occasion when there was a young Africanist who was staying with us. He was very generous when it came to sharing the housework and cleaning, although he could not cook. I was impressed by his progressive attitude towards women and it was women who looked out for him during his political training. When I cooked a dinner for about ten ex-political prisoners at the home, he refused to help me serve the food. I realized that it was because other men were there and he had to maintain the conventional practice in which women cook. It demonstrated to me that although these Africanist men had been trained to be sensitive to gender discrimination and the subordination of African women, they continued to manipulate those traditional ideologies in everyday life.

More importantly it is women who reinforce this by not voicing these contradictions. In public gatherings men and women seat separately and during branch meetings men are more outspoken than women. At rallies or major political events, Africanist women usually wear traditional attire and clothing with emblems of the PAC on them. I recall at an Azanyu meeting in Langa all the women sat on a bench in the back during elections and they were very reluctant to run for office. An Azanyu member compiled a list of names and put some of the women's names on the nominee list. Some of the women protested but then relented. They had to be encouraged by the male members to stand for an election. It is rare for women to take up a position of leadership even at the level of a local PAC branch but women do most of the administrative work. The gendered division of labor in the home, in the workplace, in everyday life is replicated in political settings. In meetings I attended, women usually functioned as the secretary and sometimes they brought young children with them. Women and men sat

separately during meetings. When the branch met current affairs were discussed or the ideology of the PAC was analyzed, women were usually silent. It was not that men dominated discussion but women did not participate.

At the Fifth National PAC Congress in 1996 there was an effort by PAWO to increase its representation on the national executive committee from five to fifteen members, in essence to include the entire executive of PAWO. AWO/PAWO outlined its recommendations, some of which were to increase women's participation, set a minimum of women delegates to the PAC congress, and increase the recruitment of women to PAWO. AWO/PAWO distributed a newsletter for the Congress expressing their support for Stanley Mogoba as president and reiterating the need to strengthen women's presence in PAC. As AWO/PAWO stated its demands, I could see the audience was displeased with the recommendations. After the session was over I observed that the PAWO newsletters had been strewn all over the floor of the auditorium. A male PAC member told me that women in AWO/PAWO are "lazy" and they should go and "organize women" themselves. Women were not taken seriously, and it was obvious that women were not well represented. Moreover when the executive of PAWO spoke to the floor, there weren't any women outside of PAWO who supported her recommendations.

Women are more attentive to the needs of other activists in a way that men are not. On the day of the 1999 elections, the members of the PAC Rockville branch volunteered to stand duty at different polling stations throughout Soweto. A woman head of the branch realized that the volunteers would be on duty for twenty-four hours. Most of the volunteers were young, between 18-25, and she realized they had to eat and drink at some point during their shifts. We bought "*boerwoers*" (sausages) and powdered juice for the

volunteers. It was she who bought the food with her money, cooked the food with her daughter and sister in her home, and went to almost every polling station in Soweto and distributed the food to volunteers. She remarked during this long day that men would never go through such measures to feed people or see to it that people, especially the youth, are cared for. To her it was important that these volunteers were cared for because they were young and because they were doing political work for the organization. She commented about it by saying "we are Africans and socialism is in our blood." While she lamented the financial sacrifice, she felt compelled to do it because as a woman it was part of her political contribution. It was a political effort that she felt confident men would not feel expected to fulfill.

The home is also where the contradictions of gender relations are expressed most succinctly. The informality of political situations makes the home a natural setting for meetings, coordinating of logistics and planning events. However, it is women who are usually imposed upon in such cases since it is they who must host and feed visitors. After branch meetings, PAC members would gather at someone's house and speak about what happened at the meeting or go over the next meeting's agenda. Activist women had long days, they worked, came home to families, cooked, attended meetings, and then participated in meetings about meetings. When fellow activists showed up, tea was served and food was shared when available, regardless of the time. This responsibility falls on the shoulders of the woman; I never saw a man serve tea or cook for visitors. Some women did not define their accommodating, feeding and protecting of cadres as political work. They viewed it as an expression of sympathy for an organization but not deep involvement. An activist from Gugulethu in her mid-forties explained her experience.

I didn't start to be a PAC member until 1990. I was in the underground since 1976. I was active but not a deeply involved member. I was a watchdog because we cannot all be active in an organization, we used to harbor cadres here in my house. They would come and sleep here, I was just a person who just stood on the line for those in the underground, so that is how I was active in 1976.

However, this form of political work, providing accommodation, assistance and refuge, is critical to a movement's survival. The sexual division of labor provided the template for this kind of political work by women. The political work of women that was based in the community, directed to the youth and sustained other activists did not trespass the structure of gender relations in the organization or in the home. The political work of women was thus distinctive in that their relationship to activists and to the organization was informed by a particular dynamics of gender. In other words political activism can empower some women individually, but as a whole it did not challenge the dynamics of power that keep women's political work tangential to the political routes that lead to leadership.

The attitudes of Africanist women toward their families, their neighbors, and political activism raises a question about whether values of reciprocity are distinctively derived from an ideology of Pan-Africanism. That is to say, are Africanist women unique in their weaving together of politics and kinship? I would argue that the Africanist women are not unique in how they stretch kinship and in the way they see themselves in relation to their communities. Women from other political perspectives exert their political identities through gender and culture-based roles. However, Africanists unlike other activists women from different political perspectives, continuously rationalize their

actions through the lexicon of Pan-Africanism. There is the contention among Africanist women that Pan-Africanism can be lived, experienced, and contributed to.

Chapter Six

Mawethu (My Nation, My people)

In this chapter I trace the subjectivity of Black women within the narratives of South African Pan-Africanism. My argument is that Africanist women censor their individual narratives, displacing the nexus of gender, race and class within their own stories. I use subjectivity to refer to Africanist women's sense of position stemming from their experiences. Subjectivity arises from the specific trajectory of a woman's life and how she defines it vis-a'-vis her community. The subjectivity I address is shaped by Pan-Africanism which, as an ideological critique of colonialism reinforces and deletes particular histories. I look at subjectivity in relation to the power to exercise agency specifically as women. The histories of Africanist women contribute to the predominance of race in their construction of their subjectivity. Africanist women's subjectivity reveals some of the contradictions in the positionality of Black women within a nation that is upheld as sacrosanct by nationalism. Africanist women express a standpoint that reinforces the Pan-Africanism they profess however, here I address the silences in Africanist women's lifestories and discuss how this contributes to the problematic relationship between gender and nationalism.

The subjectivity of Black women in Pan-Africanist narratives appears to be invariant and I argue that this obscures the complex interplay of different modes of domination. Africanist women have not yet integrated an engendered perspective into the narrative of Pan-Africanism. In discussions with my subjects I observed the centrality of their families and communities in their perceptions of themselves as African women. Africanist women's narratives give us a view of the organization of gender relations in

multiple contexts. However, I contend that what Africanist women omit in their stories is as important as what they profess to. I agree with Aretxaga who wrote that "the politics of nationalist women affects not only the sphere of gender relations, representations, and symbols but also historical narratives, and national discourse" (Aretxaga 1997:11). In analyzing women's reflections on the past I am exploring the "historicity of identity" which is manifested in the narratives they tell (Malkki 1990:54). By addressing the gaps in these Pan-Africanist narratives we can illustrate the incoherence of nationalism and the contradictions it presents for a critical analysis of gender relations.

At differing historical junctures Pan-Africanism has been a prominent discursive device in "Black political culture" (Gilroy 1993). Gilroy argues that within the intellectual traditions of the Black Diaspora, there has been "more interest in the relationship to roots and rootedness than in seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation" (Gilroy 1993:19). I agree that the "black subject is fragmented and differentiated" but it is the subjects themselves, in my case Africanist South African women, who author their subjectivity within their narratives (Gilroy 1993:35). In the regime of a movement there is a critical dialogue between shared and personal political identities (Robnett 1997). For the Africanist women, we can look at critical events in their histories that formed a certain subjectivity and activism furthering this political subjectivity. I look at certain women's stories and see the relationships between lifestories and South African Pan-Africanism. Whereas I agree with Bozzoli that "subjectivity is not only important as it manifests in organization"; this subjectivity lies in its creative force in the everyday experience of lived Pan-Africanism (Bozzoli 1991:2). Women's accounts express the "fusion of the personal and collective into a dynamic discourse" that

is articulated through the metanarrative of Pan-Africanism (Malkki 1990:37). I look at how Pan-Africanism as a specific illustration in South Africa, and at how as a liberatory project it is related to the subjectivity of women.

Pan-Africanism: The narrative of *Azania*

Firstly, I want to distinguish between Pan-Africanism as a metanarrative and a constellation of ideas and experiences from the political organization of Pan-Africanism within the PAC. The nationalism of Pan-Africanism demonstrates how “the lived- in present provokes the past into narration transforming it in the process” (Malkki 1990:54). As a narrative it is an instrument of a liberation movement as well as a way of constructing and articulating a political subjectivity. The narrative is creative and strategic, which means you “can’t build alliances without mystifications and mythologies”(Appiah 1992:175). The narrative of Pan-Africanism selectively appropriates elements that can legitimate the nationalism of a liberation movement. Linkages between identities and space are constructed or deconstructed (Gupta 1992). The *Azania* constructed by South African Pan-Africanism is an “imagined geography of a nation that allows it to exist as a political entity”(Gupta 1992: 71). This is found in the redundant emphasis on land in the metanarrative of Pan-Africanism.

According to Gilroy, the emphasis and urgency on roots in Diasporan Pan-Africanism was related to the need to “construct a political agenda where rootedness could be identified as a prerequisite for the cultural integrity that could guarantee nationhood” and statehood (1993:12). Gail Gerhart (1978) defined South African Pan-Africanism as an “orthodox nationalism” in contrast to the “liberal and nonracial” nationalism of the ANC. Orthodox nationalism defines South Africa as a “country

belonging to Africans by right of first possession, and on the grounds they are the great majority of the population”(Gerhart 1978:13). Pan-Africanism constructed an African subjectivity out of which it could legitimate African sovereignty. Pan Africanism defined an African as an “indigenous person of Africa and one whose allegiance is wed to Africa, and accepts majority rule of Africans”(Mothopeng 1990). This nationalism framed Africans as a “conquered nation” and “occupied nation.” South African Pan-Africanism refuted the name ‘The Republic of South Africa’ and enlisted a new one “*Azania*.” The “dissenting narrative ” of Pan-Africanism reconfigured Africans as more than “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” So when the first Pan-Africanists in the 1950’s began to formulate their narratives, the first proclamation was that “Africa is a Black man’s continent.” As “African men wanted their humanity back” liberation movements embellished the resistance of men.

Malkki (1992) wrote that this sense of indigenusness and nativeness also serves to tie a people to a singular place. Within the South African Pan-Africanist metanarrative, identity is “sedentarized”(Malkki 1992). As we have noted the central motto of South African Pan-Africanism is “*Izwe Lethu I-Africa*”, which translated means Africa for the Africans. Land constitutes the “heritage of the African people” and therefore the “central objective of the national liberation struggle is the repossession of land.” For some Africanists “Africans are the land” and for others the “land is their heritage from God.” According to early Africanists the “material needs of Africans depended entirely on the land such that in a free Africa the state shall own the land in trust for the people” (Makwetu 1959).

In 1959 the PAC's objective was to "unite and organize the oppressed African masses" and at the time it was believed that there "were no true classes among Africans" partly because all Africans had to carry passes. Thus all African subjects were made uniform by virtue that the junction between land, identity and nation was ruptured. A founding member of the PAC once said, "the relationship to the soil is inalienable. We (Africans) are produced by the soil." The following demonstrates the genesis of the Pan-African narrative of *Azania*:

Our liberation struggle is about the land and its resources. We, the African majority have been ruthlessly exploited since the arrival of the white settler minority in 1652.

A 45-year-old teacher from Rockville, Soweto, echoes this sentiment:

The struggle began in 1652, not in 1948 or 1913 with the Land Act. When the Europeans came to Africa we took them into our houses, they had sores from the sea and we nursed them. *Shaka (Shaka Zulu)* gave them some land, but he said you belong to me, you are my people. They went further, they did things incorrectly.

Women invoke the past to validate present political identities. Africanism is then not invented but inherited. As one activist explained,

As Africans we practiced socialism. For example, if you didn't have land you would go to the chief and ask for land. He would show you the land, you would cultivate it and others would help you. You are born being an Africanist, it is what we did then, it is what we do now and it is what we will always do.

Thus the land, race and nation are intertwined in the metanarrative of Pan-Africanism. A nationhood of Africans is constructed by Pan-Africanism and it claims to “look beyond the narrow confines of class, race, tribe and religion”(PAC Bulletin 1993). This construction of *m'afrika* is in opposition to the invented categories of identity of the South African state. This is a discourse that arises out of a resistance to identities that are superimposed and coerced. Pan-Africanism was more than the rhetoric of a liberation movement; it was a way to fashion identities and establish agency.

From the Africanist perspective colonization eroded the position of African women in the “traditional” household, undermining her role as the “mother of the nation.” Within this telling of the historical encounter, African women’s lives are undifferentiated in the pre-colonial environment; they simply existed as mothers. There is no appraisal of any of the patriarchal relationships that existed in pre-colonial agrarian societies. In the African past, gender is not acknowledged as a site of retrospection. As the story of colonization has muted the lives and voices of native women, the stories of resistance and victimization eclipse the specificities of women’s lives. Women are either absent in these earliest narratives of Pan-Africanism or homogenized as mothers. Later, as the political discourse developed, gender became a theoretical appendage to race.

A flyer by Africanists within the ANC Youth League reveals how women were located in the early movement as “traditional” mothers

We call the housewives and the mothers.
 Let us speak of the fine children that we bear and of their stunted lives.
 Let us speak of the many illnesses and deaths and of the few clinics and schools.
 Let us speak of high prices and of shantytowns.

An early Africanist flyer assailed the pass laws and lamented the feeling of African men who come to find their wives absent, taken away by the police for not having passes. The state assault against the “dusky daughters of Afrika” was a challenge to African manhood.

A political project can present a perspective on the past that bears on the discourse of gender in the present. Therefore, as a senior member of AWO/PAWO remarked, motherhood is not the point of criticism but “it is the first and last place women are assigned.” While the most obvious dichotomizations appear to be between Africans and whites, I hold that this is the easiest cleavage to contest. Those asymmetries are inherited by Pan-Africanism, not created by it. Pan-Africanism inverted the narrative of the South African state by contesting histories and subjectivities.

Silence of gender in political memory

Gilroy argued that “in the exploration of race and nationalism we examine the social relations within which people act and their junctions with forms of politics which articulate themselves through historical memory’s traditional roots”(Gilroy 1991:246). A common experience throughout the stories of the women was forced removal, that is, mandates by the state that uprooted them from where they were born, lived and worked because of the residential segregation administered by apartheid politics. Between January 1959 and March 1962, 7,289 women and 18,931 men were returned to the homelands from the Cape Peninsula (Goldblatt and Meitjies 1996). The state ceased the construction of family housing in the African townships of Langa in 1955, Nyanga in 1962 and Gugulethu in 1972 (IDF 1981:81). The policy of the state was to “rid Africans from the Cape Peninsula as far as possible”(IDF 1981:77). The removal of Africans from

“black spots”, areas of Black owned farms, was frequent. The stories of women help in understanding where structures of feeling bind space, time, and memory in the production of location (Gupta 1992:76). When Africanists refer to each other as “sons and daughters of the soil” they are reaffirming that “nation and culture are perceived as existing in soil”(Malkki 1992:29). Indigenousness and nativeness also serve to tie a people to a singular place. Land has been the omnipotent theme in South African Pan-Africanism and resonates in the stories of displacement of South African women. However as a woman activist stated “when it comes to land, it is an equal issue for women and men.” I wish to demonstrate through women’s words how “people often think of themselves as being rooted in a place and how they derive their identity from the rootedness”(Malkki 1992:27).

Women began their personal narratives at different points but the experience of forced removal was for all traumatic. Everywhere it provoked a sensibility that contributed to political activism later in life. During one interview with an Africanist woman from Khayalitsha she recounted her lifestory very calmly and described her son’s death in the same calm manner. However, when I asked her about her experiences of “forced removal” to the Eastern Cape she became emotional and broke down. I was taken by surprise because she did not cry after relating the story of her son’s death. Although she was in her mid-forties, the experience of being uprooted as a teenager was an indelible part of her memory. The following is part of her story:

My father worked on a farm for five rand a week. We were told we have to leave because the area was for whites and Coloureds. They only gave us brown bread, sardines and a tin of jam. They didn’t give us money to go to the village in

Transkei (Eastern Cape). We went with our feet to the village, my mother had my sister's child on her back and I had another child on my back. We went a long distance and I asked my mother where is this place. She said see that mountain; it is after that mountain.

When I queried her on what this experience taught her, she answered:

The truth is we are the people of this land, but we are staying in shacks. We haven't got anything. The people who are part and parcel of this land are not eating the fruits of this land.

This woman's narrative begins with the story of her family and, as an activist, she continues the narrative with the story of her "people." In this we can extrapolate the contours marked by poverty and displacement, centered on the variables of race and class. Another activist from Gugulethu explained her "forced removal":

As a child I grew up in Kensington but after 1962 the council told my mother we were going to be removed to Gugulethu. We were evicted by force by the regime. Life was very tough and the houses we were given were half-way houses, with no floor, ceiling, electricity, only two doors back and front. My mother told me we can't go back because Blacks must stay together, Coloureds must stay together and Indians must stay together.

Many families of PAC activists were targeted for deportation from Cape Town in the Western Cape to the Eastern Cape and this mass displacement of people accelerated their politicization. An Africanist described it as such:

PAC members were deported to Eastern Cape for their activities. It was a heartbreaking thing because the government would deport whole families and give them only two loaves of bread and two tins of sardines, they would just put

you on a train. Then later some of them came back to Cape Town and they had to go stay in squatter camps.

For many of the Africanists in Cape Town, their early lives were disrupted by these forced removals from ethnically and racial mixed neighborhoods like Kensington, Bonteuwel, Welcome Estate, and Retreat to Black townships like Langa and Gugulethu. For women who grew up in the Eastern Cape, their rural experience fueled their political identification with Pan-Africanism. The impoverishment of the Eastern Cape and high level of migration and landlessness were factors that accounted for the high rate of grassroots insurgency in the Eastern Cape where millenium movements have been common. Such factors is what forced many Xhosa speakers to migrate to the Western Cape even though there were enormous restrictions on their mobility and working conditions. As a Coloured preferential zone, Blacks were marginalized and vulnerable to pass raids, a constant pressure for impoverished families. Many of the Xhosa speakers I met in Cape Town were also fluent in Afrikaans, which is spoken by the Coloured community. When visiting my host's husband at his office, a homeless shelter, he told me there was time when "we couldn't speak Xhosa." The 1960 anti-pass demonstration in Langa that ended in mass shootings of demonstrators was the first show of Pan-Africanist activism. This was a reflection of the particular grievances that Africans in the Western Cape felt, particularly regarding the severe restrictions on their employment. An Africanist man told me that women did not participate in these anti-pass demonstrations because a lot of the grievances were "held by men and related to work." The rise of entire communities of informal settlements where shacks make up most of the housing has had

a significant impact on the potency of Pan-Africanism. A 77-year-old Africanist and community educator from Langa described her forced removal in 1934:

I was born in the first African township in the Western Cape, Ntambeni. It was mixed with so called Coloureds, Xhosa, Zulus and Sothos, everything. This township (Langa) was built in 1926, we were forcibly removed against our will to Langa. Langa was so damp, they had to hire people to dump sand to make it better. They said they moved us because we were living in huts. That is a lie we lived in two, three and four bedroom houses.

She gave this reason for the PAC's formation:

There was the ANC Youth League here in 1948, then the nationalists came to power and made everything tough. We stood up, we marched and we singed *Malan Hamba* (Malan Go). Our young people were in the ANC, but there were tensions. There was a meeting in Orlando (Soweto) and word came we are getting out of the ANC. They felt the land belonged to all of us, their (ANC) slogan was we must live side by side, but whites had no problems. There was a Jewish Congress and an Indian congress so we started the PAC, *POQO* (Pure, independent). Everybody then began saying *Izwe Lethu* (Africa for the Africans).

When asked about what issues she faced as a woman, she replied:

It was tough we had to carry passes. As Black women we were treated the same, they would hunt you down like animals, they didn't treat us like human beings. You couldn't just walk around here without a pass they would arrest you and give you a fine.

An activist from Khayalitsha who grew up on a farm in the Eastern Cape said:

At that time my parents were working very hard. They were working in the field and from the field my mom used go to the Boers house to clean and do the washing by hand. At that time I thought I would never go and live on a farm, rather I stay in the squatter camps instead of living on a farm.

Even for women who grew up in the urbanized communities of Soweto, in Johannesburg, there is a salient memory of coercive relocation and loss. An activist originally from Alberstonville described her memories:

From there we moved to different areas, we stayed in shacks, built with corrugated iron before they built four room houses. The locations, that is what the places were called by the settler regime, locations because we were located there. There were called *nkuku* which means informal settlement.

An activist from Rockville, Soweto gave a representative response of the visions of most Africanist women in the PAC:

The land is the main reason I joined PAC. I want to see the land go back to its rightful owners if the PAC takes over and I believe it will happen. I believe we are poor because we don't have the land. When you have land you have, food, you have gold, you can build a house. If the land can be taken back by the African people, there won't be any more poor. So that is my dream when I talk about liberation.

To Africanist women, the present political situation in South Africa has yet to deliver the liberation or freedom they envision for themselves. A unionist from White City, Soweto commented:

It is clear we have not achieved our goal of liberating *Azania*. People can be fooled once, but they can not always be fooled. We have people who are squatters in their own country and that is what we were fighting for, that everyone should have access to land.

For Africanist women, land is central to their sense of identity as Africans.

Forced removals and the pass system were the instruments by which they became homeless in their own land. The sense of displacement provoked a sense of collective powerlessness and Pan-Africanism gave expression to these specific grievances of a “moral community”(see Anderson 1983). Women phrase their recollections not as individuals but as an *amaafrika*. When women activists recount the Langa massacre, it is to show continued show of support for Pan-Africanism, not to lament that women were discouraged from participating. Narratives are not bifurcated along gender lines. Women reflect on families, communities, but not on specific relations where gender is an axis of differentiation. Women’s subjectivity is yet to be historically and politically meaningful and women are complicit in this marginalization of their own perspectives. As a woman, gender identity is sublimated in comparison to the Africaness that elaborates the we, and consequently regards gender as superfluous. When I asked an Africanist teacher about some of the things that Africans endured during the apartheid era she gave me an example of the process men had to endure to get a pass:

You had to go to town to get a stamp, but they could rearrest you on the way there. When you reach the office there were so many people crowded in. In our culture elders and the youth are separate, but there imagine my father and my brother running around a *kraal* (yard) from the police. When they got a job they had to stand on line, an elder and a junior, take off their clothes and expose their genitals to the white inspector before they can get a permit to work.

From this passage we see how the policies of apartheid disrupted “traditional” culture and importantly altered the relationships between junior and elder men. I use this example

because as I noted earlier, when I probed women about stories, most of the memories were of others and of men.

Taking Sides: The Woman or The Nation

One day walking through Johannesburg, my host asked me how my interviews were going. I explained that they were going well and I described some of the questions that I posed to my subjects. She then asked me “did “*Dikeledi*” tell you about her rape?” and I said no, not at all. I was surprised because in my interviews I always raised the issue of sexual violence because it was so virulent in South Africa. “*Dikeledi*” and I discussed rape but she never mentioned her experience. Rape was discussed abstractly and politically, but not as part of her story. Sexual violence, and exploitation of PAC women by male activists was something I hesitated to broach as a subject because it was intensely personal. However I realized that it was very much related to difficulties that activists face when they attempt to weave women’s interests into their political organizations. When male activists approached me romantically, one activist gave me a stiff warning saying “ don’t become a PAC girlfriend.” At the time I was not sure what he meant by this but later I realized that being a PAC girlfriend was different from being an activist. I asked a male activist about the possibility of interviewing his girlfriend, he said sure but that she was not “ politically aware” although she was PAC. She had undergone training in Zimbabwe and was even integrated into the South African Defense Force (SANDF). PAC members attacked his girlfriend in 1994 during the conflicts over the PAC’s suspension of armed struggle and the debates over the elections. She was in the company of people who were supportive of the PAC’s participation in the elections. I was curious to understand why that she was not as “politically developed” as her boyfriend was.

although she had been through so many upheavals as a member of PAC. What my friend was conveying to me was that his girlfriend entered PAC politics because of her relationship with him and that is what a "PAC girlfriend" was. A sexual relationship with an activist, even an abusive one, brands a woman politically and changes the course of her life.

When I was in Khayalitsha my host asked me if I liked the girlfriend of a mutual friend. I responded that I didn't know her that well but I had sensed some tension when I met her. My host said to me "we (PAC women) can't stand her because she has no respect." I inquired to what she was referring to and she said "she is not really PAC but she got her job because of PAC." I realized that she was referring to the fact that the young woman was a member of the South African Defense Force (SANDF) and she integrated as a member of APLA. I came to learn many women were integrated into SANDF as members of APLA even though there were questions surrounding the authenticity of their membership. After more questions I understood that there had been a branch meeting and the young woman got into an argument with my host and other older Africanist women. I was not clear on what the argument was about, but what angered my host was the fact that the young woman did not show enough respect to the organization. To the older women, the young woman had a job and a good one where in a place like Khayalitsha, this was an important thing. The older women believed that the young woman received her job because of her relationship with an APLA combatant and not due to her own political merit. In their opinion she was not grateful enough to them as older women and to the organization that gave her the opportunity.

Moreover, I recall meeting a woman in Khayalithsa and she appeared to be an enthusiastic Africanist. She was highly critical of the ANC and seemed politically assured. After my encounter with the woman another Africanist told me, that the woman “just became PAC” after dating his friend, a PAC man. By this time I was not surprised anymore because I was becoming familiar with this dynamic. I realized that there was more to women’s stories. To be a “PAC girlfriend”, a “PAC wife” or to be an activist did not shield women from abusive relationships with men. I was struck by the fact that women refrained from telling these stories as part of their narratives. I once interviewed a woman who just recently returned from exile and who had suffered a nervous breakdown. While in exile she lost a husband to another woman and had problems with alcohol abuse. During the interview I asked her about her experiences of sexual harassment or abuse while in exile and she told me “I don’t want to talk about it.” Later on her friend explained to me that the activist’s husband abandoned her in exile after years of abuse and publicly flaunting a mistress. She had suffered sexual harassment by other activists and all these things contributed to her psychological breakdown. I was to hear other stories about Africanist women accommodating PAC men and these men using them for various favors.

In Cape Town I visited the PAC parliament offices with a friend, a PAC activist. We were sitting in the offices waiting to speak to the Vice-President, Dr. Phisoa Moema when a man entered the hallway. My friend said, “what is he doing here? He is a rapist. I asked how he knew. He then told me that the man raped an Africanist woman, a member of APLA and he was not punished for it. What I did not understand at the time was that first, the Africanist woman was a soldier, trained to defend herself and second, that she

informed the organization about this person but there was never anything done against him. I asked my friend why the woman did not retaliate against this man since she was a soldier and he answered that he did not know. I reflected on the question of what a woman should do when the nation you defend violates you.

An Africanist woman once told me, "I hate men" and I initially did not understand this revelation. She was such an extraordinary activist and consistently worked with men in the structures of the PAC. She was able to differentiate between personal relationships with men and political activism. She let people think she was still with her husband because she did not want "PAC men" to bother her. When I interviewed her she spoke positively of her husband's support of her political work and never mentioned his abuse and philandering. From her narrative, her family life seemed intact and harmonious although I knew different from our other discussions. When we spoke as two women we both exchanged stories about personal relationships, so I knew how her husband treated her. However during the interview she left all these details out, saying:

Let me say a person has a right to do what they want to do. No one has the right to tell a woman what to do and what not to do. It is women who must decide what they want to do in their own house. If she wants to kneel down and carry food let her do it. We should not coerce her or instigate her into revolting against her husband.

Relationships between husbands and wives are "off-limits" politically, erased from narratives.

During a trip to Greepoint Prison with an Africanist woman and a young ex-APLA combatant I overheard a conversation that relates to the complexities that face

activist women. The young man mentioned another woman, “*Nothemba*”, from Cape Town whom he suspected of being an informer. She was a member of the PAC and he stayed with her when he was underground evading the police and she accommodated him after he received amnesty from the TRC. “*Nothemba*” had a boyfriend who was a policeman and thus she was put in an awkward position as a member of the PAC. Some of the principal targets of APLA were policemen and the police were outwardly antagonistic against PAC members. However being the girlfriend of a policeman shielding her from suspicion from the authorities but it also meant that her allegiance to the organization was always questioned. The ex-APLA member suspected that perhaps it was she who led the police to his hiding place where he was subsequently captured. The Africanist woman who was escorting us to Greenpoint firmly told the young man that he was wrong and that “*Nothemba*” was innocent of any kind of betrayal. The young man asked the Africanist woman what were the reasons that “*Nothemba*” acted nervous around him. He was sure that her nervous demeanor was a sign of a guilty conscience. She told him that she was hiding something but it was not what he thought, it was fact that she was HIV-positive. The young man was shocked and said that he was going to get tested and if he caught anything from “*Nothemba*” he was going to hurt her. Then we asked him if he ever slept with “*Nothemba*” and he denied it but said he slept in her home and used her cookware.

Later that night the Africanist woman and I discussed the situation. She was sure the young man had sexual relations with “*Nothemba*” although he denied it. However for me the whole story was indicative of the ways in which activist women are perceived by their male peers. They are either “suspicious” or “trustworthy” depending

on whom they have relationships with. Activist men are quite aware that in a sexual relationship power dynamics are unequal and in most instances a woman's political ideas are consistent with the thoughts of the man. In this case there was no proof that "*Nothemba*" worked against other activists and unfortunately it was her illness that caused her to isolate herself from PAC activists.

In an interview I conducted with a member of AWO/PAWO she mentioned that one of the topics she wanted to address was domestic violence but that Africanist men were not receptive to her ideas. I asked her about the reasons why Africanist men were reluctant to work around this issue. She replied it was because she knew of men in the PAC who were guilty of it. It was the men's position that such things were "private" and not politically worthy of mobilization. Within the Pan-Africanist narratives of colonialism race, class and national asymmetries are politicized. In women's personal narratives experiences of sexual abuse and violence are depoliticized and this directly shapes how gender interests are calculated into nationalist programs. I realized that when a woman has to choose between her allegiance to herself and her loyalties to her "people", Africanist women like many other women, choose the latter.

I gained access to stories about women in two ways, from the subjects themselves and from other activists who confided in me about the experiences of women in the PAC. The way Africanist women tell stories of their lives is indicative of three things: South African culture and the ideologies of gender that define women in relation to others, particularly men; the politics of apartheid which forced the African community to draw together, making internal differentiation less fracturing; and the deep rifts caused by divergent political camps. As Africanist women chose to become politically subversive,

challenging the apartheid state, their Africanism also challenged traditional gender relations. However the subversion was selective; there remained areas that were undercritiqued and unexamined. While activists merged the personal and the political in the liberation struggle, this was not an even process. Where apartheid made many women's dreams inaccessible, gender relations also played a part in curtailing women's possibilities. Pan-Africanism and women's subjectivity contradict each other when the violations exists within the community and the home. Moreover so much of African women's lives is either broadened or confined by the dynamics of the home.

So in talking to Africanist women, they often spoke of public life, their life of struggle and the histories behind them. At the same time they spoke sparingly about the relationships that really demonstrated the contradictions of gender. Histories of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and abandonment came to my knowledge over tea, dinner, taxi rides, on the bus or through gossip. It was rare that women themselves confided these experiences even though they impinge so much on a woman's subjectivity. Whereas a feminist analysis or a gender critique is very useful in dealing with those undisclosed issues, Pan-Africanism as it is articulated is inept at capturing those subtleties of women's lives without a deeper reformulation. It is important that issues like domestic violence, sexual abuse and harassment be raised because so many Africanist women say "we are treated just like the men." The view that "personal oppression is unimportant" inhibits women's political activism and obscures many of the dynamics that continue to oppress women (Beall et al 1988:102).

Race as a Text

Gilroy remarked that “the liberation of Africa operates as an analog for the acquisition of Black autonomy in general”(Gilroy 1993:123). Race is a “metalanguage” and the politics of Pan-Africanism affirms the juxtaposition of race and nation in their expression of nationalism. It was very important in the construction of their subjectivity as African women and political identity as Africanists. Race as the locus of domination was naturalized in the relations between communities and individuals. Appiah argues that “we must first acknowledge that race and history and metaphysics do not enforce an identity”(Appiah 1996). He writes that we select the parameters of our identity and we bestow the proportionality of race to our identity. However he is aware that being African “has a context and a meaning”(Appiah 1996:177). I gather from the women’s stories that race is a deep sediment in the subjectivity of women and that history does not determine identity but it can be formative. For Africanist women race is a major vector of domination and it is manipulated interchangeably with nationality and culture. Race is an important element in what Malkki (1990) calls the “standardizing” narrative in that it orders histories and dichotomizes perspectives. In South Africa race has remained integral to the vernacular of Pan-Africanism. Race and “its attendant imaginary politics of community, affect and kinship provides an example of how traditional ties are created and recreated out of present rather than past conditions”(Gilroy 1991: 246).

In studying how women discuss race I am not sketching a specific “Black woman standpoint” as Collins suggest for African-American women (Collins 1989). South African Pan-Africanism is a challenge for Black women who may want to develop an “independent specialized knowledge.” However I agree that “concrete experience as a

criterion for meaning” is pertinent in the lives of Africanist women (Collins 1989). It is also from their experiences that women intermittently redefine Pan-Africanism and their subjectivity in relation to it (Collins 1989:758). Gilroy discussed the theoretical tension in modern Black thought between essentialism and pluralist perspectives. I think South African Pan-Africanism has yet to develop a pluralist analysis in how it broaches gender, and this hampers the subjectivity of women of the movement. Though Gilroy says that “essentialism can be promoted by a brute Pan-Africanism”, in the South African example the brutality lay in apartheid and the way it disorganized communities and undermined identities (Gilroy 1991).

Some women did integrate their subjectivity as women with race but their gender was highlighted in relation to particular situations. An activist from Langa who worked as a domestic worker poignantly recalled:

I was working as a domestic and there was another lady there too. One day I told her why don't you just kick that white lady, her madam. She said the police will come and arrest me. I told her to just kick her because after all she is a woman and she must first understand that she can't take you as a little girl. You are a woman and she is also a woman.

In this case, the Black woman wanted to reaffirm her womanhood as a sign of her rights but the invocation of gender did not change the dynamics of race between her and her employer. For other women the challenge of being a woman was grounded directly in the systems that the South African state imposed. Women see the continuities of race in their lives and for many, race permeates the past and present. A 35-year-old unemployed single mother from Soweto described her feeling toward herself as a Black child like this:

Before I used to say to my mother, why am I not white because I used to see white children eat ice cream in town. They get everything they want but Africans must always struggle to get what they want because even now I am still struggling to get what I want.

A 77-year-old activist from Langa gave an account of an incident where she felt it was hard to be a Black woman because of the racism of her employers. She said:

I was a second cook and I was working with a white lady from Holland. She would holler at me all the time and I told her why don't you go back to Holland and leave a Black person alone in her own country. I told her get out. God created me and leave us Black people alone.

An activist from Soweto described her boarding school experience as being her rite of passage into politics.

At school we were taught by whites from overseas. We were treated like animals, they picked apartheid very well, there were vineyards full of fruit and we as students were not allowed to eat them, only to work in the fields or water the plants. We were told that the fees we paid were not enough so we had to walk long distances to work in the fields. This is because we were Black and this is how I came across this apartheid thing in which I became involved.

Race is implicitly conveyed when people interpret relationships and it becomes a prism through which people articulate multifarious experiences. The conclusions that women gather about their own histories are important to the kinds of political projects they invest in. While race is a relational concept, women use it as a prism through which they reflect on themselves and analyze situations. Pan-Africanism draws on race to conjure political identities. Women read race, transpose it and sometimes give it more

momentum when they conflate it with nation, culture and subjectivity.

When I asked Africanist women about their dreams for the future, the most common desire was that they obtain a job and that their children have better lives than they do. Unless Pan-Africanism as a political formulation can develop concrete solutions to the problems of women, contradictions of race and class will weaken it. From women's narratives we can see the way they complement and are complemented by the ideology of Pan-Africanism. However I think that women's subjectivity is deeper than understood by Pan-Africanism and when this subjectivity is fully explored, African women can really test the parameters of nationalist projects.

The narrative of "*Azania*" has entered a new phase in struggle but unfortunately for Black women, there is much that has remained the same. An Africanist said "as a woman your life is so strenuous, but then after a while you don't feel it anymore." I think it is this numbness that creates some of the political fatigue that inhibits real change for women when it comes to a transformation of gender relations. Where do Black women turn when their nation turns on them, and what will be the political formulas that nationalist women devise to deal with these contradictions, remains to be seen.



Figure 2. Emblem of the African Women's Organization (AWO/PAWO).

Conclusion

***Mmangoana o tshwara thipa ka fa bogaleng* (The child's mother grabs the sharp end of the knife)**

Histories of Black insurrection have overlooked the distinctiveness of defiant Black women. This project documented the stories of transgressive South African women who challenged the South African state and trespassed the limitations placed on Black femininity. This dissertation attempted to demonstrate the political radicalism of Africanist Black women through their activism. Examining the ways in which Pan-Africanism was lived day-to-day by Africanist women provided an opportunity to see how gender conventions operate within political spaces. This study looks at the convergence between politics and kinship, paying attention to the experiential dimensions of Pan-Africanism. By observing the politicization of the everyday we find the precedents for political relationships. There are continuities between the relationships between men and women in the home, community and in political organizations. My objective was to present the point of view of activist Black women, but more specifically my interests lay in a particular political perspective, that of Pan-Africanism. South African Pan-Africanism has had a specific trajectory but it remains part of a long history of Black political thought. Pan-Africanism is a global assertion of Black liberation which is differently articulated at specific junctures. These women unabashedly struggled for a nationalist agenda and in doing so they raise many queries about the relationship between race, nationality and gender.

African women like Black women in the diaspora have struggled to push for theories of liberation that encapsulate race and class without sublimating a gender analysis. A nationalist agenda simultaneously defends continuity, represented as culture, and change expressed as a popular struggle. In charting the political evolution of the Pan-Africanist C.L.R. James, Robin Kelley wrote that James viewed "Black nationalism as an essential element of the Black freedom struggle"(Kelley 1996:116). Pan-Africanism is an articulation of Black liberation that has been contentious in that it draws so much upon the dynamics of race which in itself invokes critiques of essentialism. A study of Pan-Africanism as it is manifested in the everyday is important because it underlines Robin Kelley's idea that "Black people have had their own unique revolutionary tradition" (Kelley 1996:107). Pan-Africanism is paradoxical in that it was initially articulated outside of Africa and within the African diaspora. It was then imported into Africa and propagated by Africans within liberation movements. In other words, the scattering of Africans in the Western Hemisphere contributed to the development of "Black radical thought" out of which Pan-Africanism emerged (Robinson 1983). What was so compelling about Pan-Africanism in the South African context was its reaffirmation of roots, homeland and origins. Pan-Africanism was an ideological negation of the South African state and a reassertion of an oppositional historical consciousness. South African Pan-Africanism's central emphasis on land is important in that it retained the linkage between "culture, identity and material struggles"(Kelley 1996:104). As a fluid expression of nationalism, Pan-Africanism remains syncretic and integrative.

African nationalism, communism, Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness were the major theoretical formulations of the South African liberation struggle. These ideologies analytically juxtaposed race, class, and nationality in distinctive ways. The African nationalism of the African National Congress and the communism of the South African Communist Party oscillated in their emphasis between race and class since the 1950's. Moreover, the landmark position of the African nationalism of the ANC, etched in the Freedom Charter, that "South Africa belonged to all that live in it", extracted race from South African nationality. However, the Pan-Africanism of the PAC invoked an *Africaness* that layered race, class, nationality, culture and history in an identity and in a struggle. Black Consciousness moved a step beyond by deessentializing race, making Blackness a political identification and an affiliation with the oppressed. As a discourse of critique and transformation, gender enters the political sphere later and then it became part of an aggregate of issues that the liberation struggle sought to address. Gender was not part of the initial critique against the South African state posed by African nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness. The analysis of gender by liberation organizations was diminished in certain ways by activists who thought that gender was not a point of contention. Their position was that contradictions of gender could only be resolved during the political struggle, such that an analysis of gender was often developed in the midst of struggle and activism. Consequently the activism of women contributed to the emergence of a gender analysis within political projects; however, women's activism did not necessarily transform the gender dynamics of an organization.

Within South Africa, women's participation was necessary for the mobilization of communities and constituencies. Since the 1950's women's political and community activism was discussed in terms of their affinity for their families and their specific interest in the maintenance of the household. Women's activism was closely defined with their position as wives and mothers. As organizations were banned and student activism burgeoned in the 1970's, women's activism entered a different phase. The militancy of young women was evident in the demonstrations by students in townships. After 1976 as young women fled South Africa and entered the exile camps, the parameters of women's activism widened. The 1980's were another watershed for women's political participation, because it was women in civic organizations and trade unions that became the backbone of township resistance to apartheid. However as women's activism continued to develop, gender dynamics in political organizations were inconsistent. So much of women's activism in the PAC was "behind enemy lines", grounded in links of community and kinship. Because of the way politics is differentially defined, women's activism in the PAC was not transparent in the same way as the political work of men. From the experiences of Africanist women, I argue that feeding activists, hiding cadres, and the mentoring of young guerillas is as politically meaningful as holding political office. The social reproduction of activists and their families is integral to the maintenance of an organization and the continuity of an ideology.

As Africanist women began to independently question the integration of their status as women within the PAC, gender as a legitimate forum for theory and mobilization emerges within AWO/PAWO. The establishment of AWO/PAWO was

recognition of the maturation of political activism by Africanist women. Offering an organizational resource for women, it served to reproduce this activism of women. As 1990 saw the unbanning of the PAC, AWO/PAWO was able to step up its advocacy for the PAC, but most importantly for African women. In the aftermath of two democratic elections, the PAC is rebuilding itself as a political party. For Africanist women this has meant the stalling of their activism and the greater call for AWO/PAWO to rework its thesis of relating gender to Pan-Africanism. However as teachers, community workers, trade unionists, professionals and mothers, Africanist women continuously express Pan- Africanism outside the PAC.

An important outcome of Africanist women's activism is a shift in self-perception and a reassertion of an identity. Africanist women are able to reconnect with their African identity and live out their notions of *Africaness* through political work. The Pan-Africanism of the PAC reinforced Africanist women's sense of themselves as African women. Being African was what a person is and what a person does. This is where nationalism becomes a daily renewal of identity and social life. Women I encountered often referred to the South African ethos of *ubuntu*, that is, a person's humanity is only realized through the humanity of others. The histories of South African Africanist women shows that race and gender are experienced together, but race appears to carry more political and ideological weight. Gender is an explicit variable in the lives of Africanist women but it is not contested nor reflected upon in the similar way race and class is. A middle-aged Africanist man asked me "what more do women want", pointed to his wife and stated that she was happy. I realized that gender dynamics are easily "naturalized" by men and women. When I spoke to

Africanist women their remarks about race and nationality were very forceful but they realized that relationships between men and women are more intractable. Therefore from the political histories of women it appears that race is a more privileged space of resistance than gender. Nevertheless Africanist women live in a society where gender is a terrain of struggle in ways that are nuanced and overt.

Most importantly Africanist women demonstrate that a gender identity cannot be extricated from relations of race, community, culture and class. Pan-Africanism uses culture to historicize particular gender ideologies, some of which positively reinforce family and kinship. At the same time Pan-Africanism as a political discourse posits alternative models of gender relationships, but in the everyday lives of Africanist women, gender hierarchies remain steadfast. So Africanist women are in a contradictory relationship to feminist paradigms because of the centrality of culture to South African Pan-Africanism. The discourse of "Womanism" seeks to articulate African women's empowerment, but acknowledges the historical specificities of Black women and grounds their perspectives in the history of the communities in which they struggle. Africanist women primarily choose to define themselves even though this may be done in contradictory ways. These contradictions are predictable considering the history of South Africa and the fact that political change came only in 1994.

The gender identity of Africanist women was expressed in the context of relationships, and the strength of those relationships were a testament to the strength of women. I overheard a young activist tell an older Africanist woman who had mentored him " You can beat me. You can yell at me but I will never leave you, you are my mother." For Africanist women a major rite of passage is motherhood both biological

and fictive. This is a great marker of identity, and the nationalism of Pan-Africanism gives reverence to African motherhood. One of the emblems of AWO/PAWO is a picture of an African woman superimposed on the African continent holding an AKA-47 rifle (see Figure 2). In viewing mothering as a political act and pointing out the informal ways in which women reproduce nationalism I wished to broaden our view on what is political. Related to mothering is the place of age in the lives of African women generally. Older Africanist women who “are done with the business of being women” carry a great deal of authority and leverage over young men and women (Ramphela 1992:81). I found myself drawn into this system because I was perceived as a young woman and was not given the deference bestowed on older women. When some of my informants found it challenging to define Pan-Africanism or Africanism, they would bring up examples of what they did and what they do. In this context Africanist women more fully demonstrate the nature of Pan-Africanism than many of the documents published by the PAC.

Black women in South Africa who were politically active engaged in a struggle without precedent, such that their political engagement was theorized as practiced. In South Africa where the “African nation was known as boys and girls”, political activism was an act against emasculation, but for women it simultaneously reinforced and challenged gender ideologies. The political arena can defeminize individual women, remaking them into combatants, cadres and comrades but this does not negate the existence of hierarchies of gender within political organizations. An Africanist women told me that women who rise in political organizations are ones that “imitate patriarchy.” To press forcefully for women’s interests can lead to political isolation for

activists. Politics is both a gendered context and engendering process whereby men and women advocate for political projects differently. Moreover as the political work of women is implicitly associated with their “roles” as mothers and wives, the merit of their contributions is undervalued in comparison to men. Women’s political work was multifaceted as exemplified in the anti-pass campaigns, whereby women were propelled towards politics out of a wish to be with their husbands or the desire to be financially independent in order to care for their families. However, while the traditional roles of women provided the conduit for such politicization, women stretched these roles as they gained a broader understanding of their positions as Black women. Even so women are perceived as political novices and their political development continues to be perceived as derivative rather than an outcome of individual growth. In this way, leadership is made inaccessible; women’s political work and efficacy are rewarded only in ways that are consonant with gender roles.

All the liberation ideologies in South Africa voice a narrative and all narratives are selective. There are many narratives that exist within a single liberation organization and I wanted to show that for Africanist women, Pan-Africanism is a complement to their subjectivity. The reasons that some women choose not to divulge some of the personal challenges that could illuminate their experiences of gender are varied. From my subject’s narratives I gather there is a deep admiration for strong and independent women. As I have shown, even for married women, there was a constant struggle over resources. There is a stigma attached to women who aren’t able to regroup, be resilient and take care of their families. Pan-Africanism also elaborates these ideals of strong women. For my subjects, their sense of themselves as African women is reinforced by

Pan-Africanism and this is more important than building a critical gender analysis. For more educated women a gender analysis may be more pertinent as they are more conscious of the theoretical gaps in nationalism. However for the majority of the Africanist women I interviewed their sense of themselves is not individualistic. Their subjectivity is shaped by their families, community, culture and political attitudes. The stories of women, the stories of the PAC and stories of Azania are interrelated, a multiplicity of converging narratives. Stories and narratives have been historically elemental to Black political thought because they inform perspectives, which generate paradigms of Black liberation.

Among my informants there was some diversity in the levels of political activism. For women in their forties, activism was ignited by the turbulence of the 1970's and more specifically, the student uprising of 1976. Their participation in the PAC followed their student activism. My informants were also distinguished by the political backgrounds of their families. The vast majority of the Africanist women from Cape Town came from families where there was PAC involvement, or who were present during the Langa massacre in 1959 or were members of *POQO*. The state clampdown of *POQO* formations in the Eastern and Western Cape in 1960's reveals the depth of PAC history in the Cape Peninsula. Most of my informants in Cape Town had experienced the trauma of forced removal. Another difference among my informants was the extent to which their level of education and professional status refined their articulation of Pan-Africanism. Professional Africanist women were able to define Pan-Africanism and critique gender dynamics more thoroughly. They were able to see the ideological fissures in the political application of a Pan-Africanist

thesis. These same women were better able to defend Pan-Africanism and convey its relevance for South Africa.

AWO/PAWO was described as “top heavy” because of the concentration of educated women in its leadership. When this leadership, composed of accountants, economists, educators, unionists and social workers press for greater representation for women in the PAC, contradictions surface. During my research in 1999 an AWO/PAWO congress was planned. I was very enthusiastic about it because it would give me an opportunity to meet Africanist women from all over the country. My host and I were about to make hotel reservations for the congress when she was informed by a NEC member that it was cancelled. There was no formal notification about the cancellation and my host was quite upset over it. The breach between the AWO/PAWO leadership and PAC women was one that I began to assess. One of my subjects, an executive member of AWO/PAWO discussed some of the perceptions that Africanists held about the leadership, for example that “we speak English well, dress nicely, live in Gauteng, and spend time abroad.” In discussing the reasons for the congress’s cancellation my host suggested that maybe it had to do with accommodations. She said, “I am an African. I don’t mind sleeping on the floor and washing from a basin.” An important element of this social distance between the leadership of AWO/PAWO, and grassroots Africanist women is class. Class divisions between Africanist women were rarely discussed because it dissects the *Africaness* that Pan-Africanism presupposes.

As professional Africanist women pressure for more representation in the PAC leadership, other Africanist men and women complain that they are not representative

of PAC's constituency. Some Africanist women have complained it has fallen on these women to keep gender on the PAC platform. It seems that middle-class women are relegated the task of merging gender into a Pan-Africanist dialogue, speaking on behalf of other Africanist women. An Africanist woman explained it to me, "women have to go to where women are" that is, dealing with the issues that are most pertinent to all South African women. Africanist women have to confront the problems of employment, housing, education, health care and sexual violence. They have to decide whether to undertake this task aligned with the structure of the PAC, or independently as African women.

The ways in which women politically engage themselves reveal that a gender analysis is necessary in the study of all social processes. Even within political formations that appear to address gender theoretically, there is always a contradiction between analysis and practice. Political activism can sometimes broaden women's perceptions about their possibilities and potential, yet many women, undertaking political work because they were needed at a critical time, did not change their views about the relationships between men and women. Pan-Africanism nurtured their identities as African women while their participation was much needed. However as liberation movements have become political parties, gender has to be rethought and the terms of women's activism has to be redefined. Ultimately it has to be women activists who must develop new ways of inculcating gender theory into political organizations.

The radical direction that Pan-Africanism took in South Africa, specifically in regard to engagements by APLA, demonstrates how race and nationality are much more

than historical constructs. Walter Rodney once remarked that “the color of our skin is the most fundamental thing about us”(Rodney 1975:16). He was not advocating for a transcendent Blackness but was recognizing that the axis of power and wealth were inextricably linked to race. That is, the dynamics of race made Black individuality almost impossible. Race is an emotive and volatile element in historical consciousness and within political narratives. Instead of dismissing Pan-Africanism as a form “radical racialism”, I contend that it is a variation of nationalism that amalgamates race, nationality, class, gender and political agency.

Mahmood Mamdani acknowledged the differentiation in political identity between a “native” and a “settler.”⁶ Within the “regime of rights”, the “native did not belong to any civic space but to an ethnic space” (Mamdani 1998). Frantz Fanon wrote “it is the settler who has brought the native into existence and perpetuates this existence”(1963:36). For Fanon it was the colonial encounter that constructed the native and the settler. Apartheid furthered the dichotomy between the settler and the native, adding race to its formula of domination. South African Pan-Africanism regenerated questions about who is a “native” and who is a “settler.” The “native” was undeniably an African and a “settler” was historically a non-African. How long will Afrikaaners and other Europeans be “Boers” and what will be the future criteria for judging one to be “*m 'afrika*”? Will the alignments of race and class continue to be the screen through which these categories take shape?

⁶ Mahmood, Mamdani, “When does a Settler Become a Native? Reflections of the Colonial Roots of Citizenship in Equatorial and South Africa” (Inaugural Lecture at University of Cape Town 13 May 1998).

However as differentiation among Black South Africans expands, will Pan-Africanism be able to deliver a new narrative and reconstruct race in the context of the “new South Africa”? The question remains how would a state that espouses Pan-Africanism advocate for gender equity? Further, would Africanist women develop new paradigms that supported women’s empowerment and would the PAC be receptive to this. The history of South Africa shows that gender is not transcendent and activist women in South Africa continue to cling to the political traditions sown by the liberation movement. In the new South Africa will the solidarity of African women be bisected by class, culture and politics? The experience of Africanist women whom I have observed suggest that political activism can be highly variable. Women demonstrated their political will and fortitude in ways most readily available to them.

In June 1999, the second democratic elections in South Africa took place. Because I had been in South Africa months before the elections I was privy to the opinion of Africanists who felt frustrated by the elections. Many PAC members did not vote in the 1994 elections because they felt the negotiations were illegitimate or they felt disaffected by the suspension of armed struggle. This election was also viewed by some Africanists as a “done deal” because of the predictions of a landslide by the ANC. Africanists complained about the PAC’s lack of money and the lack of media exposure during pre-election campaigning. In Soweto, it was rare to see any campaign posters from other contending organizations and the ANC used a popular song at the time “*Vula Indlela*” (Open the door) as part of their campaign. The night of the elections I was in Soweto and we waited for the election results. The PAC had just garnered 0.6 percent of the votes meaning that they received fewer votes than in 1994

and lost seats in parliament. Reports described the end of the PAC and predicted its doom.

However subsequent events of 1999 showed that the legacy of Pan-Africanism will not be left to an organization but to individuals. On a South African Defense Force base, in Bloemfontein a former APLA soldier Sibusiso Madubela killed eight white soldiers. There were different explanations of the events, some suggesting he was despondent over the death of his father and his superiors had denied him an extended leave to attend the funeral. There was a funeral for Sibusiso in the Eastern Cape, and it was attended by PAC members and former APLA soldiers. Africanists explained to me that what happened at Tempe was an example of the “new South Africa” and the difficulties former liberation soldiers were having adjusting to the integrated SANDF (South African Defense Force). For the public it was another example of how the PAC and APLA view white South Africans. The killings at the base confirmed the view that Africanists are violent towards whites and the PAC condones that violence. To me the event revealed that although the PAC was unsuccessful at the polls, the dialectics of race and rage are still powerful in South Africa. Moreover Pan-Africanism’s fusion of race and nation is one that will outlast the membership of the organization. The event triggered the memory that South Africa has a history of diverse political struggles and it is now charged with the task of negotiating these histories.

I attended many hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I listened as judges decided the merits of cases where there may or may not have been acts of political violence. I attended the hearing of one Africanist who I had met while

visiting political prisoners in prison. He was testifying about his part in the killing of a farmer. I recall one of the judges asking this young man if he had a PAC membership card at the time of the killing. Members of the PAC who were in attendance that day made the point that being an African had nothing to do with holding a membership card or paying dues. They argued that the "*m'Afrika*" was "theirs." Pan-Africanism in South Africa offers the opportunity to explore what is Africa and who is an African. The liberation struggle in South Africa insisted on the political dimension of who is an African. The questions raised by this has repercussions for other conceptions of Black or African consciousness in the Black Diaspora and within Africa itself. Pan-Africanist African-Americans, Afro-Caribbeans and Afro-Latinos cling to an African identity. In critiquing theories of Afrocentricity, A. Sivandan wrote "A Black American is not a displaced African"(Lemelle and Kelley 1994:341). However when Africanists in South Africa called me an African, they were not alluding to an essentialized identity but to a political as well as a cultural identification. The nationalism of Pan- Africaism can concurrently forge "transnational identities" and direct political projects (Lake 1995).

My main point is that Pan-Africanism as practiced transcends the organization. Pan-Africanism is reflective of race and class polarization in South African society. For as long as race and class disparities in South Africa prevail, there will always be a niche for nationalisms and Pan-Africanism. Moreover Pan-Africanism challenges the idea of South African "exceptionalism", that it is different from Africa, and therefore related to the social history of Europe.

Currently the PAC is an opposition party that keeps the public focus on HIV

intervention, government corruption, poverty and most importantly land and housing rights. The threat of “land invasions” and “land wars” have loomed over South Africa recently. Homeless South Africans have squatted on land in Bredell near Kempton Park in Gauteng and near Khayalitsha outside Cape Town. The Bredell squatters reportedly paid members of the PAC R25 for plots of land. The government applied to the courts for eviction orders to remove the squatters, and their shacks were eventually torn down. The ANC spokesman, Bheki Khumalo said “ we are not a banana republic where you can wake up in the morning, invade land and break the law.”(Mail and Guardian 2001). A PAC official, Ike Mafole responded saying that the government “underestimated the anger of the indigenous African people who continue to live like aliens in their own country”(The Star: 2001). According to the PAC the “way to empower people is to give them their land.” In Zimbabwe, next door to South Africa, land invasions and violence against white farmers have already occurred. The threat of “Zimbabwean style land grabs” weighs heavily on the minds of governmental and oppositional leaders. The enormity of the housing crisis in South Africa provides a base from which the PAC can still articulate a relevant platform, one that emphasizes the redistribution of land and making the “poor more than a landscape for the rich.” The national executive committee of AWO/PAWO is still in office and women’s mobility within the PAC still needs to be redressed.

Before my departure from South Africa I attended the wedding of *Gugu*, the daughter of my host, *M’Afrika Sombu*. It was a traditional Swazi and Pedi wedding, with scores of Africanists present. On my way to the church, Regina Mondi, a traffic cop stopped us. The policeman told my friend, Jerry, that he was speeding and asked

him to step out of the car. They chatted and Jerry came back to the car and asked for 50 Rand. I realized what was happening and I was furious. It was the first time I had witnessed a bribe. Later at the wedding, I discussed the incident with a friend who was a former commander in APLA. I expected him to respond in indignation and agree that the bribe should not have been paid. Much to my surprise he told me "there was nothing else I could do." This nonchalant attitude was something that I noticed among many former activists, even those who were deeply active against the apartheid regime. On one hand, he would say, "politics are boring" but then laugh when I wished him a happy birthday calling it a "settler celebration." These are the contradictory positions that Africanists find themselves in, politically sidelined but holding on to the political legacy of Pan-Africanism.

This project is an answer to a comment made to me that "there are no women in the PAC." Certainly the number of men in the organization outnumbers women but that was the case for all the liberation organizations. There are certainly PAC women and their activism was important to the continuity of the organization. I have to add that this research would have been almost impossible had I not been an African-American. My cultural background granted me an enormous amount of accessibility into the homes and lives of Africanist women. It would have been very difficult to live in the townships and interact daily with people had I not been a Black woman. By being a woman I was accorded certain degrees of confidence and intimacy that women share with other women. However as a junior woman I was obliged to show a measure of deference to Africanist women. When Africanists in Khayalitsha heard a researcher was coming, they thought I was going to be a "big American woman" but when they

saw me they said “oh you are just a girl.” I spent a birthday in Cape Town and it was an Africanist woman who made me a Xhosa dress and the women who were my neighbors came and dressed me. Also I must add that because I was considered to be a young woman and a guest, I was escorted everywhere by Africanist men, especially in Cape Town. Without the guardianship of these gracious men I would not have been able to get much of my work done because of the perils of being a stranger in the townships. So in this regard the protection I gained because of gender ideologies were conducive to my project and well-being.

An extraordinary woman, *M’Afrika Vuyiswa Tindleni* who inspired this writing did not live to witness my research or read the final product. She was murdered in a carjacking in Khayalithsha a few months before my research. In Soweto, a visitor, “*Khaya*” came to the house where I was staying. He was young, secretive and worked hard to avoid me. Later I was told that he didn’t trust me. One day while watching television he pulled out a diary and in the diary was a picture of my dear friend, *Vuyiswa* who was killed. I asked him “so you knew *Vuyiswa*” and he answered “yes she used to visit me in jail.” For the next three months we lived in the same home, sharing food, exchanging PAC stories and riding the taxi in the morning to “town.” In a way “*Vuyiswa*” brought us together, she mothered me when I first came to South Africa in 1994 and she mentored, “*Khaya*” through his years as a young soldier and political prisoner. Her violent death represented the irony of South Africa, which is epitomized by the writing of Wole Soyinka who wrote, “The mothers of Africa/Are violated by their sons.” These same sons who once battled bravely against the apartheid regime now battle against the women in their communities. However, *Khaya* was an enormously

disciplined and committed Africanist, saying to me once “the PAC made me the man I am today.” There were instances when PAC activists were reluctant to speak to me because of suspicion that I was American spy or working for the CIA, and I remember *Khaya* telling them no, “She is my sister.” I am ever grateful for the way activists extended themselves to me in order for this research to succeed.

I visited Vuyiswa’s family in Langa in 1999. The last time I saw *Vuyiswa* was in 1997 at the PAC Congress in Venda with her daughter, Aluta. Aluta like her mother was a committed Africanist, a member of the student wing of the PAC, the Pan-African Student Organization (PASO). In the aftermath of the “tragedy” as her daughter called it, I witnessed the devastation caused by the loss of a mother. However because she was such a well-known activist, it was a tremendous loss for the community as well. What I realized was that her death was a deep wound against the political continuity of her family. For *Vuyiswa*’s family, their allegiance to Pan-Africanism was strengthened by the fact that the mother of the house was a staunch Africanist. I spoke to *Vuyiswa*’s cousin in 1999 and she said to me that after the murder she felt that “politics are dirty.” I wondered what effect *Vuyiswa*’s death had on the activism of her daughters and the rest of the women in her family.

In excavating the stories of Black women’s activism I wanted to highlight the importance of precedent and the centrality of gender in writing critical Black history. A critical Black history is self-reflective and acknowledges that ideological incoherence is not unnatural. When an Africanist woman could not remember where her activism came from she told me that “her ancestors wanted her to be an Africanist.” The political lineage of families was critical for women and men. Families camouflaged activists and

families nurtured activism. However the family can be an incubator of both resistance and oppression. An Africanist and “othermother” *M’afrika Sombu*, who aided me throughout this project remarked that she “was tired of inhaling the dust” a reference to working on the ground. African women want to see the fruits of their resistance. Rather than catalog their injustices, African women must transform their societies publicly and privately. Whatever their political orientation, I believe South African women will continue to coalesce and transcend the alignments that mute women’s interests. After listening to South African women’s stories of sacrifice, loss and enduring love for Africa I can say I am the least of my sisters.

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