



# Nigeria and the Elimination of Apartheid in South Africa: An Assessment of Regional Diplomatic Initiatives

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## ABSTRACT

Between 1960 and 1991, few issues attracted Nigeria's diplomatic attention than the obnoxious apartheid policy in South Africa. Apartheid was a policy consolidated by the white minority supremacist government in South Africa in 1948, which emphasized separate development among the races in the country. As Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria considered her own independence as incomplete as long as the dehumanizing policy which treated Africans like sub-human beings was in vogue; hence, she was enthusiastically committed to its elimination. Nigeria devised workable diplomatic methods and strategies such as sanctions, boycott, threats, financial assistance and collaboration with the international community toward the actualization of the goal. Eventually, in 1990, Nelson Mandela, the symbol of African resistance and other political prisoners were released from prison and the apartheid machinery was reformed. In 1994, Mandela was inaugurated as the first black President, after winning a landslide victory in the first multi-coloured election in the country. However, in recent times, South Africa has been contending for the leadership of the African continent against Nigeria, instead of complimenting Nigeria's leadership role on the continent, while some misguided South Africans have engaged in alleged xenophobic attacks against African nationals in South Africa, including Nigerians. The paper suggests that the two countries should cooperate rather than compete with each other and that South Africa should support Nigeria's aspiration for a permanent seat at the United Nations as a reward for Nigeria's support for her in the dark days of apartheid. This paper adopts a historical analytical method.

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## Introduction

In Africa's leadership horizon, some countries have been struggling for prominence. They all have the goal of leading Africa and of being its chief spokesman on a number of sensitive issues. Over the years, some of these countries have been Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Zambia and Tanzania. But because they do not command enough tangible and intangible capabilities to lead the continent, they could not make much headway. Shortly after independence in 1960, Nigeria had tried to show the world that she was the leader Africa needed. The country took upon herself to champion a lot of issues bordering on Africa's progress and development. It is doubtful if Africa would have experienced complete decolonization in the last century if there was no country like Nigeria. Nigeria brought her towering size, large population and abundant economic resources to bear on the hegemonic question in Africa and even in world affairs. All these efforts were subsumed under the country's foreign policy since Africa has been made the centrepiece of Nigeria's foreign policy (Akpan-Umana, 2000).

In line with the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and several resolutions of the General Assembly which all affirmed the principles of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of race, Nigeria unrelentingly unleashed her diplomatic arsenal against apartheid which was South African state policy of institutionalized racial segregation, oppression and

exploitation in which freedom of movement and other aspects of social, political and economic rights of non-whites were denied. In fact, the commitment for the elimination of apartheid became a national ethos and all regimes in Nigeria since independence zealously pursued its elimination. Eventually, in 1994 Nigeria's diplomatic efforts yielded dividend when South Africa became a democratic country.

This paper is divided into eight sections. Section one is the introduction, section two discusses the historical background of South Africa, section three looks at the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the consolidation of apartheid, section four discusses the reactions to apartheid, section five looks at Nigeria's diplomatic initiatives and the elimination of apartheid, section six considers the elimination of apartheid and entrenchment of democratic rule in South Africa, section seven examines Nigeria and South African relations in the post-apartheid era, while section eight is the conclusion.

### Historical Background of South Africa

The earliest recorded inhabitants of South Africa were the San (Bushmen), the Khoi (Hottentots) and the Bantu groups such as (Nguni, Xhosa, Tembu, Zulu, Pondo and so on), whose descendants now comprise most of the country's black majority. The San were hunters and gatherers while the Khoi were pastoralists. The Bantu groups like the Nguni were both pastoralists and farmers. The social organization of the San and Khoi consist of small bands of people, but they had a

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great sense of territory. The Bantu groups lived in chiefdoms, some small and some large, but their social organization tended to be fissiparous (Abasiattai, 1997).

Although the Portuguese were the first set of Europeans to sail round the Cape, they did not settle there. The first white settlers in South Africa were the Dutch, who established a victualling station for the sailing ships of the Dutch East India Company on the site of present day Cape Town in 1652, under the governorship of Jan Van Riebeck. Some years after this station was established, a number of the company's staff (Free Burghers) were allowed to grow crops for sale to the company, and further settlers were brought from Holland to strengthen the farming venture. The need for labour resulted in the importation of slaves from Mozambique, Angola, Dahomey, Madagascar, Indonesia and Malaya. In addition, French Huguenots fleeing religious persecution were also absorbed as settlers. In the process, the indigenous Khoi and San were used as servants and labourers by the settlers (Boers). Initially, the prejudices between the people were mostly cultural and not racial. Mixed marriage and liaison between the Boers and the black population took place and led to the emergence of a group known as the coloured (mixed race) (Abasiattai, 1998).

Despite this scenario, friction occurred between the Boers and the Africans as a result of cattle theft and acquisition of land of the Africans. In a bid to prevent future skirmishes, Van Riebeck planted a hedge of almond tree to separate the settlement between the Africans and the Dutch from the mouth of the South River in Table Bay, along the Liesbeck River to the mountain behind Wynberger. It has been said that this hedge also marked the first attempt at separate development or apartheid (Parker and Pfukani, 1975, Abasiattai, 1998).

It should be noted that the introduction of slavery in the Cape Colony was a significant development because it created a servile class which the whites looked down upon. As the farming enterprise of the Boers grew particularly because of the practice of pastoralism, the settlement expanded north-east and brought them in contact with some Bantu groups like the Nguni and Xhosa who were also pastoralists and were equally expanding south ward. This triggered series of confrontations between the races known as the Kaffir Wars.

In 1795, Britain formally acquired the colony and brought an end to the rule of the Dutch East India Company. By this time, the socio-economic condition of the Khoi and San had become deplorable since they were engaged as slaves by the European settlers. The British began its Anglicization policy with the introduction of British education, judicial system, Christianization and so on. In 1820, Britain deliberately introduced about 5,000 British into the Zuurveld region in the Eastern Cape as permanent settlers, all in a bid to checkmate the movement of some Boers who had trekked out of the vicinity of the Cape Colony to assert their independence. The Boers resented British rule, mainly because of the relatively liberal attitude of the British towards "non-whites" as demonstrated in the Cape liberalism policy, which was at variance with their white supremacist policy. The abolition of slavery in 1833 by Britain, which made labour situation difficult for the Boers finally convinced them to move away from the area of British authority. This resulted in their undertaking a mass-migration out of the Cape Colony from 1836 known as "the Great Trek".

The Boers first established an independent Natal Republic in 1840, after winning the battle of the Blood River against the Zulu. Unfortunately, the British still regarded them as British subjects who could not escape from British jurisdiction. Therefore in 1843, British annexed the territory. This caused them to trek again to establish the Transvaal and Orange Free State (Uwechue, 1991, Abasiattai, 1997).

In 1870, the richest deposit of diamond in the world was discovered in Kimberly in Orange Free State while gold was discovered in Witwaters and in Transvaal region in 1886. These developments transformed the economic landscape of South Africa from a rural agrarian society to an industrialized one. Following the keen competition by individual miners, Cecil Rhodes acquired a monopoly of all Kimberly diamond through his company, De Boers Consolidated Mines. By this time, the Boers had changed their nomenclature to Afrikaners and also evolved their own language - Afrikaans (a language based on Dutch and in part on the non-whites' languages). The establishment of the independent territories consolidated the white supremacist policy of the Afrikaners. (Parker and Pfukani, 1975, Abasiattai, 1998).

After several conflicts between the British, the Afrikaners and the Africans, the Union of South Africa emerged in 1910. The Union had four provinces, namely: the Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State and the pioneer government after the arrangement was headed by Louis Botha assisted by Jan Christian Smuts. By this time, the population was classified into the whites, blacks, coloured and Indians.

#### **The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism and the Consolidation of Apartheid**

One feature of the revival of the Afrikaner nationalism was the formation of an organization known as Afrikaner Broederbond (Brotherhood) in 1918. The organization was made up of educated elites and other categories of Afrikaners. In 1921, the organization became a secret society and membership was important to anyone who wanted to aspire to any position of authority. Following the death of Botha, his deputy Smuts took over the mantle of leadership. As a result of the 1924 strike embarked upon by the white trade union, Smuts party; the South African Party lost the election to Hertzog's Nationalist Party in coalition with the Labour Party (Abasiattai, 1998).

The Nationalist government had since its inception not only improved upon previous laws put in place to promote racial discrimination but also resorted to the enactment of a wide range of laws which gave the government far reaching power to lay the foundation for a largely separated society in South Africa. Before his emergence as the President, Hertzog had been the author of the 1913 Land Act when he served as the Minister of Native Affairs, and had already become noted by then as a leader of the revived Afrikaner nationalism. As Minister of Education in the Orange River Colony during the two years before the Union, he had angered the British because of his uncompromising stance on the policy of bilingualism in schools. In several speeches, he expounded his "two stream policy" - his belief that Afrikaans and English culture should flow in parallel streams; and that no attempt should be made to fuse them. The Hertzog government passed the "Civilized Labour Law" which carved out areas of the economy that were reserved for whites against competition by African workers (Uwechue, 1991, Akpan, 2000).

In 1933, elections were held again and Hertzog and Smut of the Nationalist Party and the South African Party respectively teamed up as the United South African National Party and won the elections, thus, Hertzog again became the Prime Minister, while Smuts became his deputy. The new government pursued policies similar to those of the previous government. For instance, in 1936, the government passed the Native Population Act, which drastically weakened the political rights of the Cape Province by removing those who were qualified to vote from the ordinary voters roll and giving them, instead the right to elect three white people to represent them in the House of Representatives. In 1939, the United Party undertook a drive for national autonomy and white hegemony (Abasiattai, 1997).

The parliamentary election of May 1948 was won by the Afrikaner nationalists Dr. D.F. Malan. He declared that his government would pursue a policy of apartheid. Apartheid means "separateness; segregated, separate existence and development". The word gained political meaning in 1947, when a group of leading nationalists, then teaching at Stellenbosch University, began to use it as their election slogan. It was not until they had formed a government that the National Party leaders and ideologists began to look for theoretical basis for this slogan and tried to explain in detail what practical forms this "segregation, separate existence and development" should assume and how it should be put into effect (Uwechue, 1991).

The system of apartheid was built around some obnoxious legislation as follows:

1. The Population Registration Act – this legislation introduced a rigid system of race classification so that every person could be put into a separate watertight compartment.
2. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act and the Immorality Amendment Act - it prohibited marriages or sexual relations between members of different races.
3. The Group Areas Act, provided for total residential segregation between the different races.
4. The Native Laws Amendment Act – the law restricted African visits to white areas in which they were not resident or employed up to 72 hours without permit, therefore, it was a criminal offence for them to be there at all, even if they happened to be the wives or children of the person they were visiting. It also empowered the authorities to remove any African who was unemployed, "idle or undesirable" to one of the reserves of Bantustans.
5. The Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act - gave the authorities powers to order an African to leave an area if they considered his presence to be detrimental to peace and order.
6. The Industrial Conciliation Act and Native Labour (settlement of Disputes) Act – prohibited "mixed" trade unions, and prevented Africans from operating trade unions on the same basis as whites.
7. The Jobs Reservation Act enabled the Minister of Labour to reserve any category of work for a particular race. This was used mainly to secure jobs for whites and in the Cape for the Coloured – always at the expense of Africans. The policy of consolidating the "colour bar" in the industry, kept Africans from holding skilled and even semi-skilled jobs. Legal framework was entrenched that completely barred Africans, including non-Europeans, from skilled jobs. Africans received low wages that was just possible for them to pay their taxes and their wages were fixed by law.
8. The Bantu Education Act and the Extension of University Education Act – the legislation not only established different

curricula and standards for the education of whites and blacks, but also limited the amount of money to be spent on African education by the state. Also separate universities were established for Africans, Coloureds and Asians on the erroneous belief that education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live. In short, to the Afrikaners, the blacks were uncivilized barbarians unfit for responsibility or intercourse. The frustration endured by Africans because of this Act led to many disturbances which culminated in the Sharpsville Massacre of 1960. The students uprising in Soweto in 1976 was also a reaction to this Act (Akpan, 2000).

Also, in order to achieve the ideals of these obnoxious laws, the government resorted to state terrorism and consistently enacted a wide range laws which gave it enormous powers to humiliate, harass, coerce, intimidate, incarcerate, liquidate or banish persons or organizations it considered opponents. Some of the security laws were the, Internal Security Act, the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the Terrorism Act of 1967. The later was aimed directly and primarily at suppressing any resort to arms by the oppressed black majority. Under the law, the term "Communist" was applied to all persons and organizations aiming to bring about any political, industrial, social or economic change within the Union by the promotion of disturbances and disorder, by unlawful acts or omissions or by the threats of such acts...or by means which include the promotion of disturbance or disorder. Any person declared to be a Communist was supposed to be arrested, deported, evicted, restricted in movements and barred from political activity (Uwechue, 1991, Abasiattai, 1997, Akpan, 2000).

In 1967, apartheid policy had run berserk to the extent that a white taxi driver refused to let a blind girl and her Coloured nurse ride together in his cab; white Coloured children were forbidden to appear together in a Red Cross pageant and a cabinet minister refused to attend any reception where black or Coloured might be present. Even an Afrikaner poet, Bretten B. Breytenhach, was not allowed to bring his Vietnamese wife into South Africa to meet his parents for fear of contamination (Akpan, 2000).

#### **Reactions to Apartheid**

Africans resisted the discrimination and the concept of segregation in South Africa. However, the nationalist movements failed to stop the apartheid system when it was first introduced. Their activities which revolved around passive resistance, petition and entreaties were met with repression, arrest and detention. The African National Congress (ANC), which was established in 1912, assimilated the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence for its liberation. The absence of militancy forced Robert Sobukwe to break away from the ANC and establish the Pan-African Congress (PAC).

By 1961, when South Africa became a republic, Nelson Mandela, a young activist and some of his colleagues agreed that violence was inevitable. The group decided to form *Umkonto We Sizwe* (The Spear of the Nation), an underground movement committed to violence and sabotage. In reaction, the minority government became more repressive and clamped a lot of the nationalists into jail. However, this did not demoralize the freedom fighters. The propaganda of the South African government was that the nationalists were Communists and agents of Eastern European imperialism.

Initially, countries in the Western Hemisphere looked at the apartheid issue in South Africa from the prism of the Cold War (Akpan, 2000, Erim, 2003).

The emergence of independent countries in Africa change the indifferent attitude of the Westerners. These countries used every available opportunity at the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other international fora to unmask the Pretoria regime. Nigeria was the foremost African country that played the leading diplomatic role. However, it should be noted that apartheid policy attracted mixed reactions from other countries of the world. While the United States, Britain, France, Canada and other countries did not openly condemn it, Communist countries like the former Soviet Union, China, Hungary, Romania among others, were vociferous in their condemnation of the policy. Economic reasons were mainly responsible for the complicity of the advanced capitalist countries in sustaining apartheid policy; since many of the European capitalist countries had huge investments in South Africa (Ota, 2013).

### **Nigeria's Diplomatic Initiatives and the Elimination of Apartheid**

In line with Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy, the country stoutly opposed apartheid and unleashed her diplomatic arsenal to uproot it. Nigeria's stance was forcefully expressed in the speech made to the Sixteenth Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly by Dr. Jaja Wachukwu, Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Affairs, on the 10th of October 1961 thus:

The other problem that faces Nigeria – one we are committed to deal with in accordance with our foreign policy – is a racial one. We have been talking about the atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb and all sorts of bombs, but there is a particular bomb everybody knows and which perhaps more devastating than any of those bombs: that is the bomb of racial discrimination and refusal to accept the black man on terms of equality. Nigeria is determined to use its independence to see to it that every black man is considered on terms of equality with any other human being anywhere in the world....(Nwachukwu, 1991: 64).

The commitment to the eradication of apartheid manifested in several international organizations. At the United Nations, Nigeria became one of the initiators of that organization's effort to eliminate apartheid which the General Assembly condemned as a "crime against humanity" and the Security Council described it as a "crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind". As with decolonization, the United Nations began to take a very active interest in events in South Africa following the Sharpsville Massacres of March 1960. This was also the year of Nigeria's independence and the beginning of its participation in the United Nations activities. Nigeria's diplomatic initiatives in this regard took many forms and included contributions within the United Nations system and the use of the organization to articulate its views on apartheid, mobilization of international opinion against it, securing of support for the oppressed African majority and helping to articulate their demands (Nwachukwu, 1991).

In March 1961, at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference, Nigeria championed the cause of expulsion of South Africa from the organization. Nigeria noted strongly that if the Commonwealth was truly a free association of

nations containing a wide variety of races, there was no place in it for a racist regime.

It also strongly advocated in the United Nations and other international organizations for an order to ensure that pressure was brought to bear against South Africa and to suspend cultural, economic, educational and sporting links with the apartheid enclave. In 1963, the Security Council imposed a voluntary arms embargo against South Africa while the General Assembly called on states to end diplomatic relations with South Africa, close their ports to South African vessels, boycott all South African goods and ban all exports to that country and refuse landing and passage facilities to all aircraft belonging to or registered in South Africa. Nigeria not only complied with these sanctions, it went further to call for mandatory arms and economic sanctions against South Africa. The former was achieved in 1977, when the Security Council, of which Nigeria was a member, made the arms embargo against South Africa mandatory (Garba, 1991, Nwachukwu, 1991).

Within the UN system, Nigeria was represented on the Special Committee Against Apartheid and served as Chairman of that body from 1974, with the exception of a six month interlude in 1975. The Special Committee, which had 18 members, was charged with keeping racial policies of the South African regime under review and reporting on such to the General Assembly and the Security Council, the holding of meetings and hearings, the organization of international conferences, special sessions and seminars on apartheid and the monitoring of implementation of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, promoting sports, cultural and other boycotts. Nigeria also served as Vice-Chairman of the Committee of Trustees for the United Nations Trust Fund for Southern Africa which was set up in 1965 to provide legal aid and relief to victims of apartheid on the basis of voluntary contributions and on the Advisory Committee of a related body, the United Nations Education and Training Programme which provided for Southern African and Namibian students to study abroad. In addition, Nigeria was also represented in the Oil Embargo Committee set up to monitor compliance with the embargo on supply of petroleum products to South Africa (Nwachukwu, 1991, Fawole, 2003).

Within the broader context of racial discrimination, the United Nations had established under the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, a Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This body composed of individuals nominated in their own personal capacities and entrusted with monitoring and reporting annually to the General Assembly on issues related to its mandate and making recommendations as it deemed fit. Nigeria was represented in the Committee. Nigeria's diplomatic collaboration resulted in adoption of the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. Nigeria was also represented in the group that considered and took action on reports submitted to the Convention on behalf of the Human Rights Commission.

During the period of the Nigerian Civil War, which lasted from 1967 to 1970, the country did not slack in its commitment to bring apartheid to an end. The support of the apartheid regime to the Biafran War efforts made Nigerian leaders to view South Africa as a threat to the security and the survival of Nigeria. It was against this background that after the Civil War, the tone of support for freedom fighters

became extremely militant and combative. Nigeria rendered strong moral, financial and material support to the freedom movements like the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Materials came in form of military trucks, medical supplies, blankets and money. The leaders of these organizations were also asked to visit Nigeria and use the country freely as a base. One of such prominent figures who sojourned briefly in Nigeria is Thabo Mbeki, the first black to become Vice-President and the second black South African to become the President of that country. Nigeria's role in the anti-apartheid and liberation efforts became more pronounced when General Gowon, the country's military ruler was elected OAU Chairman at Addis Ababa in mid-1973 (Fawole, 2003).

General Gowon sought to link Nigeria's security to the independence and freedom of Southern Africa. All subsequent governments after Gowon toed the same line of thinking. Such stance launched Nigeria into a leading position in Africa. Earlier, when Britain wanted to sell seven Wasp helicopters to South Africa in 1971, Gowon condemned it as a total disregard of African opinion. This was promptly followed by Nigeria's withdrawal from the eight-member Commonwealth Committee of the Security Problems in the Indian Ocean. Nigeria continued to orchestrate the systematic isolation of apartheid South Africa in the 1970s especially from global sporting events. The country led the African boycott campaigns against South African participation in the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, and the Davis Tennis Cup competition, and in 1976 World Amateur Squash Championship.

Nigeria's diplomatic support resulted in the 1974 recognition of the ANC and PAC by the General Assembly, as authentic representatives of the majority of South Africans. Both parties were subsequently invited to participate in General Assembly proceedings as observers. Although apartheid had not been destroyed by the time Gowon was overthrown in 1975, opposition to apartheid had become an article of faith among Nigerians and the succeeding regimes led by Generals Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo built on the legacy (Aluko, 1990, Fawole, 2003).

In his speech at the OAU Extraordinary Summit in January 1976, in Addis Ababa, the Head of State, General Murtala Mohammed observed:

First, we call attention to the diabolical role of apartheid. The main elements of that criminal doctrine are too well known to this Assembly to necessitate any detailed analysis. Suffice it to say that the whole rationale behind this doctrine which the United Nations had aptly condemned as "a crime against humanity" is the perpetual subjugation of the Africans in order to create a paradise on earth for the white. When I contemplate on the evils of apartheid, my heart bleeds and I am sure the heart of every true blooded African bleeds. When we talk of these evils, we are assured of "sympathy" of the Western countries, but when we call for sanctions to end this shame of Western civilization, suddenly the glitter of gold in the form of high dividends becomes more convincing in consideration than the lives and well being of Africans (Garba, 1987: 102).

One of the most innovative manifestations of Nigerian government's active commitment was what came to be known as the South African Relief Fund, which was set up in

1976. The essence was to create a common purse in which Nigerians could make voluntary contributions. The Chairman of the fund's board of trustees was the Governor of the Central Bank.

Huge amount of money was realised through this process. After the Soweto's massacre of 1976, the United Nations Security Council affirmed in Resolution 392, that apartheid "seriously disturbs international peace and security". Nigeria went further and offered sanctuary to as many of the "Soweto kids" as could make their way to Nigeria and put them in schools and colleges.

In August 1977, Nigeria, in the collaboration with the UN hosted the World Conference Against Apartheid in Lagos. The conference was attended by representatives of about 40 Western countries. In particular, the presence of Mr. Andrew Young, American Ambassador to the UN, from the United States of America demonstrated the Carter's administration's commitment to Africa. The Prime Minister of Norway, Mr. Odvar Nordil, whose country hosted the 1973 UN – OAU Conference on Southern Africa, was also present. Other participants included the leader of the Liberal Party in Britain, David Steele, and Prime Minister Olaf Palme, then opposition in Sweden. The African liberation movements were represented by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe); Oliver Tambo of the ANC of South Africa; and Sam Nujoma of South West Africa People's Organization (SAWPO) now, Namibia (Garba, 1991, Fawole, 2003).

In his speech at the opening of the conference, General Obasanjo observed that:

...In this regard, we are compiling information on all those governments which pretend to be Africa's friends but allow themselves to be used as weapons laundry for South Africa – all for limited economic advantages. We are mounting surveillance on all those enterprises that depend on our raw materials and markets, but continue to help our enemies. Such enterprises must decide now to choose between us and our enemies and all that goes with their choice. We have festering sore on which these flies have landed and they are feeding in full glare of the world. When we move to destroy these flies, no one should complain (Fawole, 2003: 84)

He also noted that:

Foreign contractors who are known to have links or connections with South Africa are already barred from taking part in any tenders of any kind or nature, for any transactions of construction work in Nigeria. An economic intelligence unit has been set up to ensure successful implementation of this policy (Fawole, 2003: 84).

One serious issue that dominated the conference was the question of nuclear collaboration and arms transfers to South Africa. The liberation movements, particularly, the British anti-apartheid movement, had irrefutable evidence of such collaboration, and in spite of strong opposition from Western delegation, Nigeria authorized the Secretary-General of the movement to testify before the plenary session to that fact. The upshot of his presentation was a new force on the growing external support for the South African military and security forces. Nigeria also set up various discussion groups to find ways to stop this collaboration. The most important outcome of these discussions was the recommendation to set up the World Campaign Against Military and Nuclear

Collaboration with South Africa. The work of the team became invaluable, particularly in informing the world in the minutest detail about the South African military and nuclear capability and the complicity of the countries assisting them (Garba, 1991, Fawole, 2003).

The seminar led to the famous federal government's clampdown on multinational corporations, the nationalization of Barclays Bank and later British Petroleum. Nigeria felt that there was need for the Federal Government to take specific action to show displeasure at the activities of multinational corporations that operate in both Nigeria and South Africa. Also, foreign contractors with links or connections with South Africa were barred from tenders of any kind either for sale, auction or purchase of goods or construction in Nigeria. The Conference also accepted that the apartheid system was being sustained by the economic and political support which the industrialized countries continued to give South Africa to the tune of 7 billion Dollars annually. Studies showed that there were more than 400 British companies with nearly 1000 subsidiaries operating in South Africa; and that 17 per cent of total foreign investment in the country belonged to American companies. The Lagos conference not only succeeded in anticipating the ways to bring international pressure to bear on the regime, it even went ahead to take some action. On the 4th of November 1977, the Security Council passed Resolution 418, imposing a mandatory embargo on the export of arms to South Africa, invoking for the first time in this context, Chapter VII, designating the racial situation in South Africa a "threat to international peace and security". The following month, it set up by Resolution 421, an unprecedented committee of all council members to monitor and supervise the embargo (Nwachukwu, 1991).

On the economic front, several major Western banks complied with the recommendations of the conference. The First National City Bank of New York and Chase Manhattan Bank announced the cessation of syndicated loans to the South African Government and its agencies. The Midland Bank in Britain followed suit, and in late April 1978, the Banking Committee of the US House of Representatives voted to stop all United States export-import bank loans to South Africa. By all accounts, the Lagos Conference was a great success, and the results went far beyond expectations of the organizers. Organizing the conference in 1977 was additionally significant in view of the protests a year earlier and continued brutal repression of school children by the police. The apartheid regime in South Africa had also increased its armed aggression against Angola and the Frontline States as well as growing military intervention by the same regime in Southern Rhodesia. These and other political events made the conference timely, and its decisions helped to shape future developments in the continuing effort to free South Africa. In many ways, the conference marked a turning point in the struggle against apartheid, galvanizing, for the first time, people at the grassroots from the United States to Europe and Australia. The campaign reached its climax during the Commonwealth Heads of Governments' meeting in London in 1977, when Nigeria succeeded in pressurizing the Conference to adopt the Gleneagles Agreement. Under the Agreement, all Commonwealth governments undertook to "actively discourage" sporting links with South Africa. For Nigeria and some other African countries which withdrew from the 1976 Montreal Olympics,

it was a further indication of their position on apartheid (Nwachukwu, 1991).

It was realised that for apartheid to crumble, it was essential to combine international and internal pressure. The liberation movements like the ANC and PAC adopted the urban guerilla strikes, a strategy that created occasional panic among the erstwhile complacent white community in South Africa. As a result of Nigeria's effort, the UN took further action against the racist regime in sporting and other boycotts. For instance, in 1977, one year after Nigeria had led a walk-out from the Montreal Olympics, the General Assembly adopted the International Declaration against Apartheid in Sports. In protest against existing sporting links between New Zealand and the racist regime, Nigeria led a successful walk-out from the Edmonton Commonwealth Games in 1978 (Nwachukwu, 1991).

Other diplomatic strategies spearheaded by Nigeria included boycotts and mobilization of opinion to expel South Africa from international organizations and preventing its leaders from receiving international recognition accorded through state visits. While the latter strategy was broadly successful, it was breached by some Western countries. In 1984, Nigeria sponsored an internal seminar on the Legal Status of Apartheid Regime and other Legal Aspects of the Struggle against Apartheid in Lagos. For Nigeria, the question of sanctions was crucial and all-embracing, the country regarded peaceful means to avoid racial war and limit armed conflict in South Africa as the primary option. Nigeria therefore wanted the rest of the world, particularly the Western industrialized countries that were South Africa's greatest trading partners, to impose mandatory economic sanctions against apartheid regime. In 1986, in a statement to the 41st Regular Session of the General Assembly, the Nigerian External Affairs Minister, Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi, requested for universal action against apartheid. In 1989, at the General Assembly, Nigeria called for a Special Session devoted to the question of apartheid. The General Assembly endorsed it and the Special Session was held in December that year under the Chairmanship of Nigeria's former External Affairs Minister, Major-General Joseph Garba, then President of the General Assembly (Nwachukwu, 1991)..

### **The Elimination of Apartheid and Entrenchment of Democratic Rule**

After decades of consistent and effective diplomatic initiatives, South Africa began to shed its ambivalence about transforming itself. Once this was done, its transition became evolutionary and proceeded in a guided manner. President F.W. de Klerk unbanned all anti-apartheid organizations on the 2nd of February 1990, and released Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners a week later. President de Klerk who came to power in September 1989, made a clean break with racist policies of his predecessor, F.W. Botha. The negotiations between the white minority government and the anti-apartheid organizations led to the formation of a multi-party Transition Executive Council (TEC) on the 12th of July 1993. The TEC organized the "liberation election" of April 1994 that was duly won by the ANC led by Nelson Mandela, who was inaugurated as the first black President of the new South Africa on the 10th of May 1994, after formal endorsement by the new parliament a day earlier (Bukarambe, 2004).

### **Nigeria and South African Relations in the Post-Apartheid Era**

After the very warm and cordial relations between Nigeria and South Africa under the leadership of Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, the present state of relations in the era of Jacob Zuma could be said to be lukewarm. While Mbeki's presidency was more predisposed to addressing continent-wide issues in collaboration with Nigeria, President Zuma appears more predisposed to focusing on regional issues in Southern Africa. This results in a situation where the trade unions and even other governments are not quite happy with the ANC government in South Africa, hence the need for South Africa to focus on local issues. In the economic aspect, South Africa's business relations with Nigeria have been skewed in favour of South Africa. For instance, as of March 2016, when President Zuma addressed the joint session of the Nigerian National Assembly, he disclosed that South Africans owned more than 120 companies in Nigeria. Notable among these are its telecommunications giant MTN, Multichoice, Shoprite, Food Concepts Plc, and Stanbic Bank, most of these companies are thriving and make huge profits which they repatriate home (Agbu, 2010, *The Punch*, 23rd February, 2017).

However, for some times now, many Africans including Nigerians living in South Africa have come under a spate of violent attacks in the hands of South African youths. The attackers have complained about African immigrants taking jobs away from black South Africans. It was also claimed that some of the immigrants were bringing drugs into South Africa and also engaging in prostitution there, consequently, businesses of many migrants were looted. Official sources indicate that no fewer than 116 Nigerians have been killed extra-judicially in South Africa in the last two years, and this scenario has been regarded as xenophobia. This development is absurd and does not augur well for the development of the continent. Global response to the new wave of attacks has been swift and strong, and many foreign governments and international labour and human rights organizations have been condemning it as a violation of the declarations of the United Nations on the rights of migrant workers to protection in their host countries. The Nigerian government has also expressed deep concern over the attacks which has affected many Nigerian immigrants (*The Nation*, 9th, March 2017).

It is hereby strongly suggested that both the Nigerian and South African governments should work together to resolve this problem. This can be done under the aegis of the Nigeria-South African Bilateral National Commission that needs to be reactivated. The framework for a settlement should include the right of documented immigrants to the protection of the South African security forces. Those not documented should either regularize their stay, or leave the country. The Nigerian government should also enlighten would-be Nigerian migrants on respecting the law of South Africa and the need also to desist from dubious acts that some Nigerians are noted for. The South African government should protect the lives and property of foreigners, create more jobs for its nationals and educate the citizens on the need for peaceful co-existence and accommodation (*The Nation*, 9th, March 2017). Most importantly, some Nigerian immigrants that engage in acts that are inimical to the interest of South Africa should be warned to desist from such acts.

### **Conclusion**

The study has discussed the advent and evolution of the European settlers in South Africa and how the white minority

later introduced the apartheid policy in the country. The central policy of apartheid was the exclusion of Africans from the mainstream economic, social and political life of the country. The Afrikaans enacted many laws to make apartheid an enduring reality of the South African development.

Nigeria considered her independence as being incomplete as far as apartheid endured in South Africa and assumed the leading task of eliminating apartheid in South Africa.

The country's foreign policy became increasingly "mono-maniac" and relevant diplomatic strategies were adopted towards achieving the objective. Nigeria collaborated with the international community and initiated boycott of South Africa from major global sporting events. Also, embargoes and economic sanctions were ready strategies adopted by Nigeria. Even though Nigeria situates in the Western part of Africa, she became an honorary member of the frontline states and made enormous financial and material contributions in this regard. Nigeria also established the South African Relief Fund and the National Committee Against Apartheid to generate home support for the elimination of scourge.

As noted, South Africa has in recent times been competing with Nigeria instead of collaborating with her. For instance, South Africa has declared interest in the permanent seat at the UN which Nigeria is aspiring to represent Africa. Obviously, Nigeria is more eminently qualified in view of her population which is more than three times larger than that of South Africa, and the natural resources, as well as her peace keeping credentials. What is required of the two countries is sustained strategic partnership. Nigeria and post-apartheid South Africa are the two largest economies in the Sub-Saharan Africa; they should co-corporate to strengthen the continent's interest in this era of globalization.

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