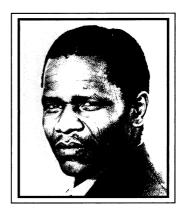
TAMBO, Oliver Reginald

Kantolo, Bizana, Pondoland, 27 October 1917 — Johannesburg, 24 April 1993

President of the African National Congress in Exile

Oliver Reginald Tambo was born in a village near Bizana in Pondoland. Although his father, a traditional polygamist, was himself illiterate, he realized the value of education. He determined that his sons and daughters should receive as much schooling as they were capable of absorbing. Tambo's mother, the third wife, became a Christian and converted the entire homestead to Christianity. With his father's support, Oliver was admitted to the Holy Cross Missionary School in Flagstaff, assisted financially by two benefactors in England. He matriculated in 1938 at St Peter's in Johannesburg, receiving top marks in the Transvaal province. He was then awarded a scholarship by the Transkei assembly of chiefs, the Bhunga, to study at Fort Hare University in the Eastern Cape.

Tambo, religious, quiet and unassuming, impressed his peers with his incisive mind, integrity and calm reasoning. He was elected students' representative of his residence. He obtained a BSc degree, after which he enrolled for a Higher Education Diploma. However, before he completed this course he was expelled for leading a student strike. His alma mater, St Peter's, nevertheless offered him a post as Mathematics and Science master. Tambo proved to be an immensely popular



teacher.

Tambo had attracted national attention in the black community for his principled stand. Walter Sisulu, then an influential real estate agent, indicated that he would like to meet him. Sisulu's office in downtown Johannesburg had become a social gathering place for educated young blacks in the metropolis. In Sisulu's office, Tambo renewed his acquaintance with Nelson Mandela and met other intellectuals such as Anton Lembede* and AP Mda*. This group initiated the Youth League, officially embraced by the ANC in 1944. Its mission was to reinvigorate the ANC, taking the movement's message of national unity and African nationalism to the masses. Tambo was the Youth League's first National Secretary and became its National Vice-President during the decisive period of 1948/9.

In 1948 the National Party, espousing a programme of systematic apartheid, was voted into power by a white electorate. In 1949 the ANC's annual congress adopted the Youth League's Programme of Action. Sisulu, Tambo and Mandela were elected into national executive ANC positions.

In 1952 Tambo, having qualified as an attorney, set up a successful partnership with Mandela. Encouraged by the Programme of Action, the 1950s were marked by a significant upsurge of popular participation in a succession of protest campaigns and activities. As a member of the ANC National Executive, and later as its General Secretary, Tambo was directly involved in the planning of events that included the 1952 Defiance Campaign, the 1955 Congress of the People, which adopted the Freedom Charter, the march of approximately 20 000 women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the extension of the pass laws to black women and the Sophiatown removals, and to demonstrate their resistance to 'Bantu Education', Coloureds, Indians and whites as well as the non-racial trade unions were also drawn into these mass actions. While the campaigns failed to change apartheid laws, the effect was to dramatically increase ANC membership to 100 000. The subsequent revision of the ANC's constitution in 1958 was steered by Tambo.

In December 1956 Tambo, along with the ANC President Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and 152 others, were arrested and charged with high treason. Tambo and Luthuli were acquitted in late 1957, but the trial dragged on for four years. In 1958, when a banning order against Luthuli restricted him to his home in Natal, Tambo was elected to the position of Deputy President-General. It was in this capacity that he chaired a meeting in which African nationalists confronted the ANC, objecting to the alliance with other race groups. They eventually broke away to form the Pan African Congress.

In March 1960, following the shooting at Sharpeville of 69 people who were protesting against the carrying of passes, Tambo was instructed by Luthuli to leave the country to set up a Mission in exile to promote the cause of liberation and to lobby support for the ANC. Two years later the ANC formed its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). After the arrest of Mandela and his successor Wilton Mkwayi, Tambo became the Supreme Commander of MK. He led the short-lived United Front (of the ANC and PAC) which, before it disintegrated, succeeded in persuading the Commonwealth to reject the membership of South Africa on account of its policy of Tambo apartheid. also eloquently addressed the United Nations during the Rivonia trial when Mandela and others accused of high treason were facing the death sentence. High-profile international attention may well have influenced the reduction of the sentence to life imprisonment.

For close on a decade Tambo led a movement that suffered a number of setbacks. In independent Africa, the multiracialism of the ANC was considered too moderate. The Western countries, many of which were investing in the South African economy, were wary of the ANC's armed struggle and its alliance with the South African Communist Party. A number of attempts by MK to infiltrate South Africa in significant numbers failed, which led to growing dissatisfaction in the military camps. Tambo's skilful and sympathetic handling of the frustrations of the cadres and his calling together of representatives of all the ANC structures in exile to discuss the way forward in 1969, affirmed his leadership of the ANC. For the first time whites, coloureds and Indians were included in executive structures. However, this decision disturbed a small group of Africanists who eventually broke away. Owing to the skill and high standing of

Tambo, however, the split was contained, and the breakaway movement ultimately collapsed.

From 1976 onwards, following the school students' uprising in Soweto, the ANC was challenged by the large influx of young refugees. The international publicity given to the tragic event led to increased funding, particularly for education purposes, from sympathizers and admirers of Tambo, such as the Scandinavian countries and other anti-apartheid organizations in the West.

Throughout the eighties, while the PAC in exile foundered under the burdens of disunity, assassinations and poor leadership, the fortunes of the ANC advanced. Inside South Africa there was strong resistance to the 'tricameral parliament', which incorporated coloureds and Indians into the legislative assembly. As a result of this the number of deaths in detention, assassinations and cross-border raids by South African structures increased. In his Radio Freedom speeches, Tambo declared a 'people's war' against apartheid and called for townships to become 'ungovernable'. In 1985, as resistance to apartheid reforms spread, a State of Emergency was declared and thousands of activists were detained. In the meantime, international sanctions were beginning to hurt.

In the late eighties Nelson Mandela, imprisoned on Robben Island, began to discuss possible negotiations with the South African government. During this time Tambo's task was to visit a number of countries to explain, through the Harare Declaration, the necessity for this unexpected move. This historically important

task proved to be Tambo's last; after three decades of stressful manoeuvering in exile, this was ultimately to cost him his life. In September 1989 Tambo suffered a severe stroke. When he returned to South Africa a year later, following the unbanning of the ANC, he was very ill. Mandela was elected President of the movement at the ANC Congress of 1991. Tambo, his partner, was appointed as National Chairperson. Two years later, a fortnight after the assassination of Chris Hani*, Oliver Tambo died.

ANC members and supporters paid homage to Oliver Tambo for his integrity and for his remarkable 30-year leadership of the African National Congress in Exile - a large, 'broad church' which he had held together skilfully and sensitively. But even before that era, ever since he joined the organization in 1943, Tambo had been critically involved in every milestone in the history of the ANC.

Oliver Tambo was survived by his wife Adelaide, a Member of Parliament in South Africa's first democratic government, and his children Thembi, Dali and Tselane, who returned with their parents to settle in South Africa.

Adelaide Tambo (ed.), Preparing for power: Oliver Tambo speaks. London, 1987; - Sheridan Johns & R. Hunt Davis Jnr, Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress: The struggle against apartheid 1948-1990. New York, 1991; - E.S. Reddy (ed.), Oliver Tambo and the international community. New Delhi, 1991; - Chris van Wyk & Luli Callinicos, Oliver Tambo: They fought for freedom. Cape Town, 1994.

LULI CALLINICOS

THAELE, James M.

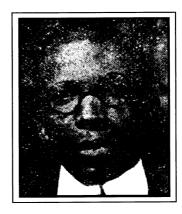
Basutoland (Lesotho), 1888 — Cape Town, 3 June 1948

Politician, journalist and teacher

James M. Thaele was a student at the Lovedale Institute before he continued his studies in the United States of America where he obtained a BA and a BSc degree at the Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania respectively. He returned to South Africa early in 1920 and settled in Cape Town. He called himself 'Professor' and started a one-man college which trained black people for the Junior Certificate and matriculation examinations. At his college, which did not exist for very long, he encouraged his students to consider higher education at black institutions in the USA.

Thaele soon became a well-known figure in Cape Town and the Western Cape rural districts. His clothes were striking: he favoured a white helmet, white suit and white gloves and carried a walking stick. His colourful and pompous language always drew attention. With the help of his brother, Kenneth, he established a strong branch of the ANC in Cape Town and was elected as president of the Western Cape ANC in 1924. He joined the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) in 1923 and in 1924 he was a member of the ICU delegation to Bloemfontein which effected the contentious agreement to support the National Party leader, J.B.M. Hertzog* during the general election of that year.

As a student in the USA Thaele came under the influence of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Society.



Shortly after his return he launched a black rural settlement scheme (African land settlement scheme) with the aim of moving blacks living in towns to the country districts. His speeches and all that he wrote reflected a militant race consciousness, and distrust and disapproval of all whites, including missionaries. He condemned paternalism and readily used the slogan 'Africa for the Africans'. He was in favour of non-cooperation with the government and supported Mohandas Gandhi's* passive resistance campaign. He had no time for white Christian churches and supported the idea of amalgamating all the black independent churches into one united ANC church.

Thaele did not always see eye to eye with the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and its adherents. At the beginning of his presidency of the Western Cape ANC he could rely upon the support of the Communist activists Elliot Tayeni and Bramsby Ndobe. In 1927 he described the communists as true friends of the oppressed. By 1930, however, Thaele was referring to the CPSA as a 'white man's party' and insisted on the suspension of communists from the ANC. His stance

was strengthened when a special meeting of the ANC executive committee suspended Ndobe from his post as secretary of the Cape provincial branch of the ANC in September 1930.

Thaele subsequently also suspended Ndobe's supporters who then formed the Independent ANC (Cape).

Thaele made his mark in national politics. In 1925 he was the 'Minister of Education' in the ANC 'cabinet' under President-General Z.R. Mahabane*. At the ANC's annual congress in 1927 he was elected as a member of the National Executive Committee. From 1930, however, there was a noted decline in his political activities, partly because he was resisting accusations against him with regard to his alleged contravention of political laws.

Thaele remained President of the Western Cape ANC until 1938, but in that year he was defeated in an election. He tried unsuccessfully to fight his defeat and then disappeared from the political scene.

As a journalist Thaele was the editor of *The African World*, a minor newspaper which existed for a brief period only. He wrote articles for among others the ICU newspaper, *The Workers' Herald*.

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J.E.H. GROBLER

THEILER, Gertrud

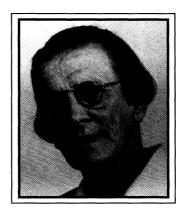
Pretoria, 11 September 1897 — Still Bay, 2 May 1986

Zoologist, researcher and teacher

Getrud Theiler was the younger daughter and third of the four children of Sir Arnold Theiler* KCMG, founder and first director of the Veterinary Research Institute, Onderstepoort, and his wife, Emma Sophie Jegge. Gertrud Theiler's younger brother Max achieved distinction in 1951 as South Africa's first Nobel Prize winner for his research on yellow fever.

After matriculating at Pretoria Girls' High School Gertrud Theiler spent a year at Rhodes University College, and from there proceeded to the South African College, Cape Town, graduating with a BSc degree in 1918. She spent several years overseas doing postgraduate work in helminthology, initially with Prof. O. Fuhrmann at the University of Neuchâtel, where she obtained her DSc in 1922. Later she studied at the schools of tropical medicine in Liverpool, under Prof. Warrington Yorke, and London, under Professor R.I. Leiper. She wrote four scientific papers on this research, of which the first, on the nematode parasites of South African equines, is highly regarded and frequently consulted even today.

On returning to South Africa in 1924 Gertrud Theiler taught Biology for 15 years. After two years at Jeppe High School for Girls, Johannesburg, she obtained a lectureship at the Huguenot College, Wellington, and in 1935 was promoted to the professorship in Zoology and Physiology, a singular achievement. In 1939 she lectured temporarily at Rhodes



University College. The following year she accepted a research post in the entomology section, Onderstepoort, and began the studies on African ticks that occupied her for some 25 years. These studies were documented in over 40 scientific papers and reports, including a review, completed in 1962, of all the species known to occur in the Afrotropical region. She became well-known throughout the world to other researchers in the field, many of whom visited her, and she could always be relied on to give enquirers valuable practical assistance. Officially she retired in 1967, but continued working at Onderstepoort as an honoured guest until 1983, when increasing deafness and failing sight forced her to give up.

In recognition of her services to parasitology she was awarded the Senior Captain Scott Medal of the South African Biological Society in 1960, and the Elsdon Dew Medal of the Parasitological Society of Southern Africa in 1975.

Extremely knowledgeable about all forms of nature, she served for 30 years on the council of the Wild Life Protection and Conservation Society of South Africa and was Chairperson of the editorial commit-

tee for their magazine, African Wild Life.

A founder member of the Austin Roberts Bird Sanctuary in Pretoria, she often spent her Sunday afternoons there, quietly weeding. Her holidays were usually spent with close friends (and sometimes overseas visitors), touring in leisurely fashion far afield, stopping where they fancied to cook their supper and then sleep in the open. Even at home she preferred to sleep on the stoep, guarded by her much loved Dobermanns.

In private life Theiler was very much an outdoor person, kindly, generous and public-spirited, but also capable of sparks of mischief. Physically rather short and wiry, she was usually dressed in an opennecked shirt, pullover and slacks (or khaki

shorts in summer), and often bare-foot. In her youth she played various sports, reaching interprovincial level in hockey. Later she coached the Odd Bods Women's Hockey Team for many years.

The last three years of her life were spent at Still Bay with her close friend Andria van Gass. Gertrud Theiler never married.

Dr Theiler, renowned veterinary biologist. Veld, Summer 1967; - T Gutsche, There was a man: the life and times of Sir Arnold Theiler KCMG of Onderstepoort. Cape Town, 1979; - Obituary: Journal of the South African Veterinary Association, 58, June 1987.

J.B. WALKER

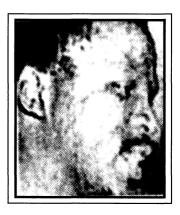
TIRO, Abram Onkgopotse

Dinokana, Zeerust, 1947 — Khale, Botswana, 4 February 1974

Activist

Abram Onkgopotse Tiro grew up in Dinokana, a small village near Zeerust. He attended the primary schools at Dinokana and Motswedi and matriculated at the Barelong High School in Mafikeng (then Mafeking). His parents resided in Dinokana where his mother, Maleseng, still lives today (1999). Tiro had two brothers and one sister.

After completing matric, he enrolled for a degree in the humanities at the University of the North, where he was elected President of the Student Representative Council (SRC) during his final year. At the University's graduation ceremony in 1972,



Tiro delivered a speech that was characterized by its sharp criticism of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and later became known as the 'Turfloop Testimony'. The authorities of the time were angered by Tiro's outspokenness and this speech precipitated his expulsion from the university. Despite demonstrations by the student body under the new SRC, Tiro was

not readmitted.

After he was expelled from university in 1973, Tiro became involved in the activities of the Black Consciousness Movement. This was an ideology developed primarily by black students after 1968 to encourage blacks to liberate themselves psychologically from the effects of institutionalized racism and white liberalism. In 1969 he was a founder member of the South African Students' Organisation (Saso), and in 1973 he became its national organizer.

Subsequently he was offered a post as a History teacher by Legau Mathabathe, the headmaster of the Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto, where he introduced his pupils to Black Consciousness aspirations and started a campaign to conscientize them by encouraging them to question the validity of the contents of the history books prescribed by the Department of Bantu Education. This school became known as a 'cradle of resistance' and produced the likes of Tsietsi Mashinin, one of the student leaders who spearheaded the 1976 Soweto uprisings.

Tiro was also instrumental in establishing the Southern African Students' Movement (SASM), of which membership also included students from neighbouring countries. This was an offshoot of the Black Consciousness Movement and its aim was to influence the direction of Southern African student politics. In 1972 he was elected Honorary President of the movement at a congress in Lesotho.

However, it was not long before the government started pressurizing school principals who had offered employment to expelled students to dismiss them. After Tiro had lost his teaching post, the apartheid government used its powers to silence or restrict Saso's leadership. Those

affected included Steve Biko* (who had become Saso's leader at its inception), Bokwe Mafuna, Strini Moodley, Saths Cooper and Harry Nengwekhulu. Nengwekhulu had returned to South Africa only shortly before after spending nearly two decades in exile in Botswana. Biko, the father of the Black Consciousness Movement, together with other black leaders, had broken away from the white-dominated student body Nusas to form the black-led Saso.

Travelling to all parts of Southern Africa, including Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, Tiro now realized his ideal of winning support for the Black Consciousness philosophy. However, towards the end of 1973 he got wind of the fact that the police were planning to arrest him and fled to Botswana, where he played a leading role in the activities of the SASM, Saso and the Black People's Convention (BPC). While living a simple life at the Roman Catholic Mission at Khale, a village no more than 20 km from Gabarone, he was instrumental in forging links with militant revolutionary groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1973.

Throughout his life he showed a commitment to working for the well-being of the underprivileged. He believed that 'the primary source of income for blacks is land, and we need to restore land to the dispossessed'. Perhaps the fact that he had spent his childhood in the rural village of Dinokana had sharpened his appreciation for the importance of land.

On 4 February 1974 Tiro was completing an application form to continue his studies through Unisa when a student known only as Lawrence handed him a parcel supposedly forwarded by the International University Exchange Pro-

gramme. As he was opening it, the parcel bomb exploded, killing him instantly.

Tiro's remains were exhumed by the Azanian People's Organization and his family and returned to Dinokana for reburial in 1998. Unfortunately the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) failed to conduct an in-depth formal investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.

In a tribute to Tiro the President of the Azanian People's Organization, Mosibudi Mangena, described him as a man of strong convictions who refused to compromise his principles; a person of simple tastes who could not accept the way black people had been dehumanized by the apartheid policy; a man who lived by the motto that it is better to die for an idea that will live than to live for an idea that will die'.

Sowetan, 10 November 1997, 24 March 1998; -Personal information: Mosibudi Mangena (Azapo President) Johannesburg, Pandelani Nefolovhadwe (Azapo Deputy President).

JOE MDHLELA

TSHIWULA, Alfred Zacharia

East London, 1890 — Port Elizabeth, 1958

Labour unionist and politician

Practically nothing is known about Alfred Zacharia Tshiwula's family and his formative years. He was educated at St Matthew's College in Keiskammahoek and then practised as a school teacher for a short time.

During this time he also honed his journalistic skills. He became a special contributor to and correspondent for *The Daily Dispatch*, an East London daily.

Tshiwula was elected General Secretary of the Cape Native Congress in 1919, organizing Congress branches in the Cape Province and Transkei. He also worked as a commercial traveller representing several Cape Town firms for whom he sold furniture, instruments and jewellery.

He took up residence in Port Elizabeth's

New Brighton township in the 1930s. He was employed as a clerk by attorney Archibald Marock from about 1937.

Tshiwula tried his hand at community politics. He was elected to the New Brighton Advisory Board at irregular intervals, serving in 1935, 1939 and 1949. But he fell foul of the location superintendent, J.P. McNamee, because he criticized the administration of New Brighton, particularly the blatant favouritism and patronage in the allocation of housing and beer-brewing privileges. He made these allegations in the press in 1938. McNamee attempted to disqualify him from the Advisory Board elections because he was considered part of a subversive clique. Tshiwula repeated his allegations to the Smit Inquiry that visited Port Elizabeth in 1941. He thus made himself persona non grata with McNamee, who was of the opinion that Tshiwula was attempting to impugn him and his administration of the township.

Despite being branded an 'agitator', Tshiwula was actually a liberal in outlook and extremely suspicious of communists. He was nominated by the Port Elizabeth District for election to the Native Representative Council in 1942, but there is no evidence to suggest that he ever served on that body. Although he remained a member of the ANC, he became wary of the organization as it was radicalized in the 1940s.

Upon the recommendation of Revd James Calata*, the Secretary General of the ANC, Tshiwula was appointed election agent by Margaret Ballinger* who contested the Eastern Cape electoral circle Native Representative seat in Parliament. Despite her endorsement by the ANC, Ballinger received no support from that organization and relied heavily on Tshiwula to direct the 1937 campaign. He arranged meetings, and appointed and controlled election committees on Ballinger's behalf throughout the vast constituency. He ran a successful campaign that saw Ballinger elected by a narrow majority.

Ballinger was elected unopposed as Native Representative for the Eastern Cape electoral circle in 1942. But in 1948 she was opposed by the unofficial Nationalist Party candidate Dr P.J. Schoeman, who was supported by the maverick S.M. Bennett Ncwana*. Tshiwula again assumed control of Ballinger's election campaign although, unlike in 1937, he remained in Port Elizabeth to counter the influence of Ncwana. He co-ordinated affairs throughout the rest of the constituency through sub-agents. This time, Ballinger won by an overwhelming majority; a victory she owed in part to Tshiwula.

In between running campaigns for Ballinger, Tshiwula was encouraged by her husband, William*, to become involved in labour union affairs. He formed the African General Workers Union (AGWU)

in Port Elizabeth in 1939 and became its Organizing Secretary. He expended most of his energy in recovering arrears for members after wage determinations by the Wage Board. This reactive strategy meant that the AGWU failed to develop a strong membership and led a precarious existence. After the AGWU collapsed, Tshiwula became Organizer for the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) until its Port Elizabeth branch was taken over by members of the South African Communist Party. He then organized the Port Elizabeth branch of the South African Railway & Harbour Workers' Union (SAR&HWU) in 1943. It was subsequently obliged to reconstitute itself as a 'non-political' Non-European Staff Association in order to obtain recognition from the SAR&H. Tshiwula obliged but struggled to hold his ground against communist influences in the SAR&HWU. He also published the short-lived newspaper Ndavela ('I have appeared') on behalf of the association and it provided a mouthpiece for Tshiwula to air his views on trade union and Advisory Board politics. Tshiwula was eventually dismissed as an official of the association in 1947 after signing a promissory note without the necessary authorization. This effectively ended Tshiwula's involvement in trade unions.

Tshiwula's business ventures and other enterprises fared equally poorly during these years. He was appointed to manage Masizakhe Co-operative, a trading store, on behalf of its directors Neil Boss, Adolf Schauder* and P. Anderson in 1943. However, he was dismissed after being accused of bad management and financial irregularities. He subsequently embarked on a number of other unsuccessful business ventures towards the end of his life.

These included an estate agency in 1954. Eventually he was employed by a drycleaning business in 1957.

Tshiwula died in 1958. He had a rather chequered career in labour union organization and community politics, and his other enterprises were equally disastrous. Yet, he remained a prominent figure in New Brighton's civic affairs until the last.

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G.F. BAINES