

A pan africanist congress history essay

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South Africa during the time of apartheid was a separation between the native black Africans and the white Europeans. The Pan Africanist Congress was an organization that pursued the interests of the black South African people, unlike the multiracial interests that the African National Congress pursued. The people in the PAC are mainly Africans. They fought for the rights of the native, black South Africans. While fighting for the rights of the black South Africans, the Pan Africanist Congress faced conflicts. Today the PAC exists as a political party that represents the African minority. The Pan Africanist Congress is an organization that fought against apartheid in South Africa during the second half of 20th century. The Pan Africanist Congress was founded on April 6, 1959 at Orlando in Soweto. Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe was elected the founding president, and Potlako Leballo as secretary. The Pan Africanist congress was originally a part of the African National Congress, but there was a division between those who supported all races and those who supported the black South Africans. One of the main reasons for the development of the Pan Africanist Congress was the adoption of the Freedom Charter by the African National Congress in 1955 (" Pan Africanist Congress"). The Freedom Charter wanted equal rights of all South Africans, black or white. This opposed what the PAC wanted for South Africa. They wanted South Africa returned to the native South Africans, and they did not want to give rights to all the races in South Africa. Most of the people in the Pan Africanist Congress were those who wanted to break away from the African National Congress, and some were members of the Youth League of the ANC. The Youth League of the ANC was formed under the leadership of Anton Lembede in 1944. The members of the Youth League were open to all of those who " lived like and with blacks" (" Pan Africanist Congress of <https://assignbuster.com/a-pan-africanist-congress-history-essay/>

Azania"). The Africanists believed that the members of the ANC, because of its large number of white members, had diluted the traditional black position of the ANC. The Pan Africanist Congress is the only official South African liberation movement recognized by the United Nations and the Organization for African Unity (O'Malley). One of their first campaigns was the " Status Campaign". It was aimed at weaning the black population of the subservience of the white man. They referred to the white man as the " haas" and the whites referred to the blacks as " boy" or " girl." The purpose of the Pan Africanist Congress was to fight for the rights of black South Africans. They had a goal ending the white domination in South Africa and returning it to its " rightful owners" (" Pan Africanist Congress(PAC)"). The Pan Africanist Congress had different goals and principles as a way to end apartheid. They insisted that the struggle for national liberation must be against racist capitalism, only the destruction of the system of racial capitalism can destroy apartheid, and the black working class is the driving force in the struggle (O'Malley). The Pan Africanist Congress fought against apartheid by using non-violent protests and campaigns. On March 21, 1960, many Africans in Sharpeville for anti pass campaign, they were protesting the law that was passed that required blacks to carry passes. During the demonstration the police open fire at the protesters. The violence caused 69 people to be killed and 180 to be wounded (" Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)"). Also there were two people killed in Cape Peninsula when the police open fired at the crowd. The shooting incident at Cape Peninsula had a bad effect. A week of protest and stay-away actions followed and on March 30, 1960, 30, 000 black marched to Parliament. These events led to a massive government crackdown. All public meetings of more than two people were

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prohibited and a state of emergency was declared. On April 8, 1960, the PAC and the ANC were banned. In response to the demonstration and the violence, the government outlawed the Pan Africanist Congress. In 1961, after the Sharpeville massacre and the Cape Peninsula shooting, the PAC launched a military wing of the organization called Poqo. This wing of the PAC was later renamed the Azania Peoples Liberation Army, and it was used as an armed struggle against apartheid. They resorted to violence a lot ("Pan Africanist Congress of Azania"). After the Sharpeville shooting, the PAC was banned, so it went to Tanzania. There was a lot as arrest of most of the Transvaal PAC leadership. The fall of the PAC came about when the PAC organization had to be move, and they moved it to Tanzania. This was much to the dislike of Potlako Leballo. He wanted the organization moved to Lesotho. He moved the organization there after he was released from prison, and he became the acting president of the Pan Africanist Congress. Leballo attempted to overthrow the government from outside the country. One of the most widely publicized attacks by Poqo members occurred on November 22, 1962 in Paarl when a group of Poqo members tried to free their comrades from a Paarl prison ("Pan Africanist Congress of Azania"). The attempt failed. Two whites were killed and four wounded. This is one of the few instances in political history of South Africa where whites were attacked in their own neighborhood. Leballo planned a massive revolt fro April 8, 1963, during which thousands of Poqo supporters were to attack strategic points and killed whites indiscriminately. The police seized a complete list of Poqo members. The publication of these names allowed for the South African police to wipe out most of the organization. By 1964 nearly 2, 000 members had already been sent to prison, and the Poqo had basically disappeared

from South Africa. By the mid sixties the Pan Africanist Congress had ceased to be an important participant in South African politics. The PAC was also given little publicity, attempts to form diplomatic and political ties with foreign states have not been very successful. In 1979, Leballo was forced to resign because of his dictatorial leadership. A group then broke off of the PAC and formed the Azanian People's Revolutionary Party. When Mlambo took over the reins of the Pan Africanist Congress, it appeared to have a revival. (" Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)") Today the Pan Africanist Congress is a minor political party in South Africa. The PAC became legal again in 1990, and they adopted the name the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. Azania is their name for South Africa. In 1994, the Pan Africanist Congress took place in South Africa's first multiracial election, and they had five seats in the National Assembly . They gained only a small percentage of the votes. They had an even smaller percentage in the 1999 election (Ebrahaim). The Pan Africanist Congress believed in the rights of the native people of South Africa. They did not want any of the power in the hands of the white people. While the white people of South Africa discriminated against the black people, the PAC was trying to gain the rights for those people. The Pan Africanist Congress had many struggles with the government of South Africa, and eventually turned violent. Within the organization there were power struggles which lead of the downfall of the organization which only caused to be revived. Today the Pan Africanist Congress exists as a political party that represents the native people of South Africa. Their presence spans over half a century, and it still exists today as a political representative in South Africa.