



Parker House  
Boston, Massachusetts  
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Oliver Tambo is President General of the African National Congress of South Africa which since its inception in South Africa in 1912 is the oldest liberation movement in Africa. Born in Ntlamvukazi, in the district of Bizana, Transkei, he had his primary schooling at the Holy Cross Mission School in neighboring Flagstaff before going on to high school at St. Peter's College in Johannesburg, an Anglican (Episcopalian) school for black children. He graduated from St. Peter's College with the highest grades recorded among pupils of all races anywhere in the country in that year, and went on to the black university of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape where he gained degrees in Science and Education. He then studied Law at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and after graduation opened a law practice in partnership with his close friend Nelson Mandela.

Both became active in the African National Congress, Oliver being elected Deputy to the then President General, Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Luthuli. On the death of Chief Luthuli, Tambo succeeded him as President General of the ANC, while Nelson Mandela took over the leadership of the guerrilla wing of the movement after the South African Government outlawed all its activities. Nelson Mandela in a message sent from prison and read by his daughter Zinzi at a function in Soweto on February 10, 1985 described Oliver Tambo as "Much more than a brother to me. He is my greatest friend and comrade for nearly 50 years. If there is anyone amongst you who cherishes my freedom, Oliver Tambo cherishes it more, and I know that he would give his life to see me free. There is no difference between his view and mine."

The African National Congress followed a policy of nonviolence from 1912 until 1961, the year following the Sharpsville Massacre.

While Mandela functioned underground until his capture and life imprisonment, the ANC Central Committee sent Tambo abroad to head the movement in exile, which he has been doing since 1961. Today he is based at ANC Headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, while his wife Adelaide maintains the family home in London, England, which he visits during his journeys all over the world on behalf of the ANC. Both Oliver and Adelaide Tambo are devout Christians — Oliver is Anglican (Episcopalian) and Adelaide is Catholic and they have three children. Their daughter Nomathemba, aged 27, has a degree in English from London University, their son Dalindlela, aged 25, is a graduate in Political Science from the American College in Paris, and their daughter Tselane, aged 22, is a student at the American College in Lugano, Switzerland.

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