



Tambo has been at the centre of political action all his adult life. He was born in the Bizana district of eastern Pondoland in 1917 and he attended a local mission primary school. At the age of 12 he entered an Anglican boarding school near Flagstaff and with mission sponsorship went to St Peter's Secondary School in Johannesburg where he set academic records.

2. He continued his studies graduating with a B.S.c at Fort Hare in 1941. He was expelled the following year during a student strike while studying for an education diploma.

3. St Peters hired him as a science and maths teacher and he became immensely popular with his students.

4. In Johannesburg he became drawn into the group of young militants pressing for a more radical direction in the ANC. This resulted in the formation of the youth league of the ANC and Tambo became its national vice president during the critical 1948-1949 period.

5. His level headed, politically astute and principled approach gained him much respect and in 1949 he was elected to the ANC national executive committee and returned to this committee in every subsequent election.

6. In 1952 he qualified as an attorney and established a joint law practice with Nelson Mandela.

7. Tambo was formally elected into the office of secretary general of the ANC in 1955 and although banned from 1954 he managed to carry on guiding the ANC in difficult campaigns against the Western Areas removal and introduction of Bantu Education.

8. At a time when conflict between the ANC's left and Ultra nationalist wings had become increasingly intense, he proved skillful in accommodating divergent strains within the organization and in maintaining the confidence of competing factions.

9. In 1958 with Lutuli banned he was elected to fill the new position of deputy president-general of the ANC. The ANC leadership became convinced that a total ban on the ANC was imminent and the national executive decided that Tambo should leave the country to serve as a foreign spokesman.

10. He left the country in March 1960 and since then he has headed the ANC's organization in exile living in London, Tanzania and Zambia.

11. On Lutuli's death in 1967 he became acting president general of the ANC and continues to hold this position.

12. Tambo has proved to be a durable resolute leader of integrity and one of the most widely respected nationalists among black leaders within as well as outside SA.

*It is widely thought that he has moved far to the left. What his future holds, no one knows. He is approaching 61.*