

Peter Hlaole Molotsi

Hailing from the Orange Free State, Peter Molotsi¹ recalls the student organizations, such as the OFS African Students' Association in the 1940s, joining the ANC Youth League in the 1950s, the Defiance Campaign, the rise of the Africanist faction within the ANC, editing the World and later the Africanist, the philosophy of the Africanist faction, the formation of the PAC and his role as secretary for Pan African Affairs, his departure from the country with Nana Mahomo, the activities of the Presidential Council in Lesotho, Leballo's press conference that led to numerous arrests, and the setting up of PAC offices in countries in Africa and elsewhere.

My full names are Peter Hlaole Molotsi. I was born in Steinsrust in the district of Kroonstad, on July 18, 1929. I came from a politically minded family. My father was a primary school teacher and my mother a housewife. My father was reputed to have been a member of the old ICU (Industrial and Commercial Workers Union) of Clements Kadalie way back in the 1920s². There are stories I was able to get from him to which, as a child, I attached little importance. But later in life I began to see them as stories that must have influenced me. Those were stories of resistance to white domination, to foreign rule. That history was implanted in me early in my life.

I was born in a township, a municipal location. Although we owned the house, we owned the walls but not the piece of land where we lived. This was a small town, but location life was the same in those days. Under municipal rule, there was no black representation in the location council. After passing Standard 6 in 1942, I moved to Johannesburg and I grew up there. However, I continued to go to school in the Orange Free State at the Bantu High School in Kroonstad.

In the Orange Free State there were very few black schools. Indeed, in the whole country there were very few schools that went beyond Standard 6 for black children. There was no free or compulsory education for black children, although there was for white children. Black parents paid school fees, bought our books and stationery, and paid our teachers' salaries.

¹ Edited by Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane from an interview conducted by Brown Maaba, 7 January 2001, Kroonstad, SADET Oral History Project.

² The ICU was formed in January 1919 in Cape Town, when A. F. Batty, founder of the unsuccessful Labour Democratic Party, asked Clements Kadalie to assist in organising a permanent organisation of black workers to give him greater electoral strength. Kadalie, an immigrant from Nyasaland (Malawi), became Secretary of the Union, which had its base primarily among Coloured dockworkers and railway workers. Organising efforts in Bloemfontein were being conducted simultaneously by Selby Msimang, with the primary struggle there being around general wage increases for African workers facing cost of living increases after the First World War. The ICU was the first national African workers' organisation and political movement in South African history. From its initial base amongst Cape Town dock workers, the ICU extended its influence to all provinces by the mid-1920s; in the late 1920s the base shifted to Natal and by 1929-30, for a number of reasons, it had virtually collapsed into localised and weak factions that formed the basis for the more serious trade union organising work in the 1930s. Membership figures are difficult to verify, but there is good reason to believe ICU claims of 100 000 workers during the peak year of 1927. The ICU was instrumental in founding a tradition of black workers' militancy.

Black children who went to school were thus children whose parents could afford to pay. Students wore blazers and beautiful uniforms! The government of the day had very little to do with the education of black people. They probably subsidised teachers' salaries only. But they didn't manage the schools and we were not part of the Ministry of Education. Even though that was the situation, they always sent white inspectors to ensure that what we were being taught in our schools was safe for the white state. Our teachers, mainly children of Christian parents, had studied at missionary institutions. Although missionary-funded in part, Bantu High was not a missionary school as such. It was semi-autonomous and probably one of the most revolutionary schools at the time.

My teachers at Bantu High, who were 100% African, had a most profound influence on me. Even my principal was a black man, unlike in some other schools where all the teachers would be black but the principal would be white. Teachers at my high school were people with a clear sense of purpose, which at the time one couldn't easily discern. But with the benefit of hindsight I think our teachers were prepared to teach us and to liberate us. They were delivering two messages – the syllabus and purpose in life. They taught beyond the syllabus to prepare us to become future citizens of a South Africa that would be free. They delivered the message of liberation. We saw going to school as serving a double purpose – to make you literate and also to build you for the future of this country. The idea that this was our country was instilled in almost all the lessons. The student body was Pan African and made up of people from Botswana, Natal, the Eastern Cape, Lesotho and other places in the Orange Free State.

My political consciousness thus developed in high school. There were various student formations at my school, like the debating society, the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), and the African Student Organisation. Student associations were found in every province. There was the Cape Peninsula Students Union (CPSU), the Cape African Students Association (CASA), the Natal African Students Union (NASU), the Orange Free State African Students Association (OFSASA), and the Transvaal African Students' Association (TASA). There were also regional groupings such as the Central Rand African Students Association (CRASA) and the Orlando Students Association (OSA). In every big city, town or village there were such groupings that were central to our early politicisation. They were the centres of conscientisation – of giving us knowledge not available in the school syllabus. Some of the pressing issues discussed included the cost of living and schooling and injustices in the country. I was a leader of TASA and the Orange Free State African Students Association. I was also a member of CRASA and OSA. As a member of these various student organisations I got to know people from Orlando High, St. Peter's, Madibane High, etc. We used to meet during holidays and comradeship developed among us and with such people as Peter Raboroko, who was our senior.

I finished my matric in 1949 and returned to the Transvaal. I had financial problems but I wanted to study. Some of my classmates proceeded to Fort Hare. I started working for the Bantu Press. I was involved in politics as well and became a member of the ANC Youth League in Orlando in the early 1950s. I wanted to associate with like-minded people. In Johannesburg there were people who were already at university. I got to know some of them – people like

Nthato Motlana and others from Fort Hare who were very active during those days. They were agents of conscientisation. Whenever Fort Hare closed, and when high schools closed, there was considerable interaction. It didn't matter what standard one was in, the aim was the same. There was general agreement on the question of liberation. We all started from there. This was the time when ANC Youth League branches were forming everywhere. The ANC Youth League itself was formed in 1944. When I completed matric it was five years old. I became chairman of the Orlando East branch of the Youth League.

In the 1950s, I was an active participant in the Defiance Campaign against Unjust Laws, which went on for about 6-9 months. I served as an unofficial social worker, looking after the dependants of the people who were jailed, visiting their homes, finding out the needs of families, of dependants. I was also imprisoned with some of my colleagues and charged under the Suppression of Communism Act. I served my prison term at the Boksburg/Benoni jail.

Dr. Moroka was ANC leader; then Chief Luthuli came to power. But anybody who speaks about the ANC Youth League at that time must mention Anton Lembede, who was the dominant spirit. His teachings, his writings, his pronouncements were spread to all levels of the Youth League. I got to know Lembede through the Youth League lectures. I got to hear about him through A. P. Mda, who organised groups of select people into what later came to be known as Africanist groups. Membership of the Africanist group was by invitation. I was part of the group in Orlando East, with Prince Vilakazi, William Jolobe, Mavimbela, Tshitsha, etc. We were all invited to the lectures by A. P. Mda. Lectures were held on various topics dealing with the struggle. Study cells were formed. That's how I came to know about Lembede. I also periodically came across his writings in publications like *UmAfrika*, *Inkundla ya Bantu*, *Umthetheli*, the *Bantu World* and so forth. There were also writings by Jordan K. Ngubane.¹

After that I discovered that it was important to write. I worked then for the Bantu Press until I eventually became the editor. I was a freelance reporter at the beginning. Then I became a proof-reader. Then I wrote pieces. Even as a proof-reader, however, I wrote pieces.

The newspaper changed from the *Bantu World* to become the *World*. The paper used to come out in about three languages. One issue would be in English, the next in isiZulu, and the last in Sesotho. I was responsible for the pieces in Sesotho. I had more latitude in Sesotho than in English.

The *Africanist* was a bulletin that became the mouthpiece of the Africanist group within the ANC. I became the editor of the bulletin in 1955 and was succeeded three years later by Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe. The Africanist group was at loggerheads with the SACP who, although members of the ANC, had their own newspaper. So, as members of the ANC, we also decided to have our own newspaper. The ANC was a large umbrella embracing everybody from left to

¹ Jordan K. Ngubane was one of the leading figures at the formation of the Youth League in 1944. Ngubane eventually left the ANC and became a member of the Liberal Party.

right, from up and below, from within and without, moving in endless circles. The Africanist group became convinced that the struggle would not come to an end unless a decisive stand was taken.

The Youth League from which we came reached the same conclusion: that unless there was a clear ideological line, we would always be moving in circles in the manner we had done from 1912 until Lembede, Mda and the Youth League entered the fray. We were a generation that wanted to bring matters to a head, to a conclusion. We looked back at the history of the African people's struggle from 1912. It was a struggle of petitions, begging, and appealing to the oppressor all those years. We didn't think that we should continue to petition. We wanted to introduce a radical shift in thinking. We refused as children of the same God to pray to people who were not God themselves. We came to the conclusion that all along we had been appealing to the human side of the oppressor. But, in fact, the oppressor had no heart, no human feelings. So we wanted to adopt other methods.

We felt that although the ANC was making an effort to protect and advance the interests of African people, it needed to be strengthened. And the Youth League, of which all the Africanists at the time were members, was designed to strengthen the ANC. We wanted to raise the standard of political consciousness and turn the Youth League into a formidable arm of the liberation struggle. We didn't intend to stand up against or to break away from the ANC. We intended to appeal to the younger people, who were relatively better educated than their parents, to join and re-inforce the ANC. The aims of the Youth League as represented by us during those days were totally misunderstood, however, by docile people who were used to being kicked around by white people. To get them out of the "*Ja, baas!*" mentality was a difficult struggle that resulted in direct confrontations within the organisation itself.

We spent time studying Africanism and Pan Africanism, so that when the thing developed, it developed as a result of serious study. First, Africanists upheld that this country belonged to the African people. Africa for the Africans! All other people who lived in Africa would have to recognise that this was a continent of Africans. If their loyalty was to Africa only, then they too would be accepted as Africans. But in those days most white people had one foot in Europe. There were whites in this country whose loyalty was to Britain, or Germany or Italy or some other European country. They looked down on the indigenous people. We wanted respect. From the very beginning, therefore, we started from the premise that Africa was for Africans; that Africa had its own history, legends and mysteries. People came from Asia to Africa. It doesn't matter how but they came. And people also came to Africa from Europe. The indigenous people did not come from anywhere. The indigenous people were Africans. They were part and parcel of the great African continent. They were the children of the soil. Humanity in Africa was one. Everybody is an African who was born here and whose loyalty was only to Africa!

At that time there were lots of tensions between the Asians and the indigenous people. That's why you had this thing in 1949, the Durban riots¹. The interests were not the same. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi is a clear example. He came to promote the rights of Indians in this country; rightly so. Much as he's highly respected, however, he was an Indian leader of great reputation who didn't pretend to be a leader of African people. There's nothing I know that he did for the Africans, even in the Anglo-Boer War. It was not until people like [Yusuf] Dadoo emerged that we had new Indian leaders equally dedicated to the struggle of African people.

The Africanists never had an attitude towards Coloureds. The Coloureds were taken as Africans because they had not come from anywhere. They were children of the country with no other place to call home. They did not come to Africa like Europeans or Asians. They were part of the African experience indigenously. Dr Moroka was not a black man by pigmentation. Sisulu was not a black man by pigmentation. J. B. Marks was not. They were Africans and nobody queried that. They were African people who happened to be light in complexion.

The second point of departure was simply the idea that Africans had never had any part in drawing the boundaries that now separated them. They had the right to live anywhere in Africa. And we spelt it out, where they were supposed to live: from Cape to Cairo, Morocco to Malagasy. This was the area of the African people, their God-given land as natives of this continent. We looked beyond the borders of the so-called Union of South Africa. We stressed the concept of continental citizenship – not unlike the United States of America, made up of fifty-one states, or the USSR that stretched from Moscow to Vladivostok, with about fifteen different time zones. Africa stood out as a case of paralysed weak states and colonies. We did not like the weakness that we were identified with. We needed to turn that around and form the United States of Africa!

When the PAC was formed, some journalists called Josiah Madzunya the father of Africanism. The PAC never called him that. The movement had no father. We were all comrades, by definition on an equal footing. And when we formed the organisation, we elected Sobukwe leader; he was the brainpower. Robert Sobukwe was a scholar whose leadership was a continuation of Lembede's and Mda's. He had the uncanny ability to articulate issues in a

¹ The so-called Durban "riots" took place in January 1949, and resulted in the deaths of 149 people and injuries to over a thousand people. The events exposed tension between the African and Indian communities in Durban, and prompted both African and Indian leaders to develop a new relationship between the two communities. The result was the so-called 'Doctors' Pact', signed by Dr Xuma of the ANC and Dr Yusuf Dadoo of the SAIC.

manner acceptable to the masses. He commanded respect from, and was fully endorsed by the masses and intellectuals alike, such as the lawyer Godfrey Pitje and Dr A. C. Jordan¹, who both knew his thinking because he had been their student at one time or another. I mean, even those who differed with him respected him.

I became the PAC's secretary for Pan African Affairs. I was supposed to engender studies of African political structures and develop groups that would have knowledge of what was happening in each African country – their political formations, women's formations, youth formations, and labour formations. I was developing expertise on Africa. We discovered most people in this country had no knowledge of Africa, which they used to think of as some far off place. They did not think of themselves as part of one entity but as people who lived on some island detached from the African mainland. In the Africanist movement we had links with several African states and with leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, even before the formal launching of the PAC.

Then there was the idea that we didn't live in an empty world: that there were other people who lived outside the continent with whom we needed to have links. So S. T. Ngendane became the PAC's secretary for Foreign Affairs to deal primarily with people outside the African continent. Sobukwe's cabinet was intended to stay in touch with Africa and the world, formulating and introducing within South Africa a new worldview altogether and a bringing into being of a new type of self-confident and assertive African.

The government of the day, the Afrikaners or *Maburu*, were consistently and persistently hostile to the PAC. Yet, paradoxically, they respected PAC ideas. When Sobukwe was in jail, Minister of Justice B. J. Vorster² said Sobukwe was the only political prisoner and the rest were thugs and common criminals. That is why Vorster introduced the Sobukwe Clause – an amendment to the General Law Amendment Act³. He had a grudging respect for Sobukwe and the PAC. It had something to do with Afrikaner nationalism. *Maburu* had a better understanding of African nationalism than the English-speaking section of the country. But when *Maburu* discussed this in parliament, they expressed a preference for the ANC because they thought it had the potential to be manipulated.

Maburu lived in such trepidation of the PAC that they banned it eleven months after its formation. It was only eleven months old when it was crushed! Had the PAC operated for three more years aboveground, the story might have been different. But the PAC was never allowed

¹ Dr Archibald Campbell Jordan was an African novelist, linguist, and academic who began his career as lecturer at Fort Hare University, and later lectured at the University of Cape Town, the University of California (Los Angeles) and ultimately Wisconsin, in the USA. Dr Jordan was initially in the ANC, before becoming an active member of the Non-European Unity Movement.

² B.J. Vorster was Minister of Justice between 1961 and 1966, when he replaced Verwoerd as Prime Minister.

³ Various amendments were made to The General Law during the decade to introduce more stringent security laws, including the so-called "Sabotage Act".

to develop and implant itself among the people of this country. The PAC was the reason why the other political movements were banned. It's a miracle that it survived at all under these conditions. It should have died then.

The name of the organisation emerged during its December 1959 inaugural convention. The man who came up with the name was A. B. Ngcobo. The PAC salute, the raised hand, was saying "colonialism this far and no further. This is our land, *izwe lethu!*" At the time the political temperature had risen and events were compelling the PAC to act more resolutely than its counterparts to channel the anger of the African people. There was a move by the regime to extend pass laws to African women; that needed an immediate response and an emphatic "No!" Therefore, the PAC prepared for an anti-pass campaign.

Plan one was that we would mobilise people to leave their passes at home, to fill the jails of the country, to remove the sense of fear and to break down the system of mass imprisonment. The only way the system could be broken down was to fill the jails with countless numbers of people so that the prison system would not work. If there was no system of imprisonment, then the people would be free. And the idea was that it would be a snowballing movement; that Langa and Sharpeville would begin the process. As the jails began to fill up, the regime would move the imprisoned people to other areas. But wherever the prisoners were moved to, there too people would defy the system and the movement would spread like that from north to south. When all the country's jails were full the regime would have no place to send the prisoners and would be compelled to come to terms.

Plans two and three would culminate in forced negotiations. This is how it would work: In the course of the next three years we would set up more branches and mobilise at the same time. At that stage we were not armed; we did not have guerrillas and we did not have arms. We would thus depend on sheer force of numbers to compel *Maburu* to come to the negotiation table. The Sharpeville shootings¹ took us by surprise. Within six months a meeting was held inside the country that opted for armed struggle. *Maburu* thus precipitated our change of strategy by killing people. Once they killed people, the people called for revenge. We were the first organisation to take to arms. The ANC followed suit with the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

The decision was taken by the PAC at a meeting held in August 1960 inside the country. The meeting was held in and around Paarl, if I remember well, because at that time I was not in the country.

¹ The Sharpeville massacre on the 21st March 1960 was a watershed in South African political history. On March 21, 1960, Robert Sobukwe, leader of the PAC, initiated widespread anti-pass law demonstrations. At the model township of Sharpeville, thousands of people gathered at the police station where passes were to be destroyed. In the early afternoon, seventy-five policemen fired some 700 shots into the crowd, killing 69 Africans and wounding 180. Among them were women and children. Most of the dead had been shot in the back. In Langa outside Cape Town, about 10 000 people participated in the protest. Police shot on the crowd killing two Africans and injuring 49. This led to public outrage throughout the country, precipitating riots and strikes and mass demonstrations. The government declared a State of Emergency. Both the ANC and the PAC were outlawed. Some 20 000 people were detained.

Poqo¹ was a crude formation, but it was out of the Poqo struggles that the decision was taken by people who met at Paarl, by delegates who came from various parts of the country. That was the beginning of the underground.

Poqo was not sophisticated because we didn't have experience. There was more anger than thinking. People were angry at the time. You look at the Snyman Commission Report and you can see what people were compelled to confess to. But Poqo was formed as the military wing of the PAC at the time. The Sharpeville shootings occurred in 1960, and the decision to take armed struggle was taken. By that time the strategy had changed. That's where the term protracted struggle came in; it would take a longer time than originally envisaged. The term protracted struggle comes into use from that time. The decision to launch a country-wide revolt in April 1963 was taken before the Sharpeville shootings. By 1963 Leballo was no longer inside the borders of South Africa. Leballo had been detained in 1960 and deported to an area near the borders of Mozambique. So he had to battle to get into Lesotho. By 1963 the PAC was already infiltrated by police agents. That was the first thing the regime did. Not only did they ban the PAC, but they arrested the leading activists and infiltrated the organisation which was not yet 11 months old. The PAC was not even operating systematically yet. It was still being formed. And the regime responded quickly. And remember, the regime was in complete control of the means of communications – postal, telephone, telegram and running messengers. Everything was in their favour.

During that time the Presidential Council had been set up and there was an attempt to stabilise the authority of the PAC. Lesotho was chosen as the headquarters because it was the nearest place to go for safety. Nobody who was arrested in Lesotho would be handed over to South Africa. The South Africans used to sneak in because international law prohibited them from doing certain things. But, Lesotho is completely surrounded; so politically it was not the right place to do things. Add to that the inexperience of the new people coming in. I was told that there were people who came in and worked for the Presidential Council, among whom were people who were infiltrators. And they took all the information as though they were going to spread it among the branches inside the country. Unfortunately these people were in fact spies sent by the regime to infiltrate. So, the lack of experience in operating an underground movement, hasty planning, and the regime's success in infiltrating the PAC led to the rounding up of all the agents of the PAC who were in the country. That was a blow from which the PAC never really recovered.

¹ Poqo was formed in the Western Cape in early 1961 in an effort to revive the PAC after its leaders had been sentenced to terms of imprisonment following the 1960 anti-pass campaign and state of emergency. It soon became the military wing of the PAC, and its members carried out a number of actions in the period 1961-1963. (For more detail refer to SADET (eds), 2004, pp 257ff.)

Leballo was roundly censored for going on the air and making claims about the PAC's plans to have a revolt in 1963. The Johannesburg *Star* reported this wild statement made by Leballo, and this destabilised the security of the organisation as a whole. That, we referred to as the "Maseru Debacle"¹. We don't know why he made that statement. It was not authorised. We really don't understand what happened. One thing is certain, I cannot believe that Leballo was bought by the police to make that statement. It must have been a serious political misjudgement. It was a serious blunder. He was not removed as acting president of the PAC because the organisation had nowhere to meet to take that decision, and because some of the leadership of the organisation was still inside the country while others were outside. It is something that would have happened in the course of time. But it didn't happen at that time. And, if you notice, Leballo's political career began to decline from that time. And the fact that he was always acting president shows it was a transient position. He was never appointed permanent president. He was acting all the time.

Leballo was not removed from power after the Maseru Debacle because we were waiting for a consultative conference. This was because after the organisation had been banned and decimated, the highest authority was the consultative conference. That's why they didn't remove him. The next consultative conference was at Moshi in 1967², where he was endorsed as leader of the PAC in exile. Leballo was a motivator. He was eloquent; he was an orator, an able speaker, and he was a mobiliser of people. So he had those qualities that were good. Those are the things that many people who knew him remember. When he sort of fell down, many people remembered that he had a record of enormous contribution to the cause and he had sacrificed much for the cause.

On the 8th of April 1963 many people were arrested. But it was a PAC move, and the regime responded. What the regime did was something outside the control of the PAC. Their business was to smash, to disorganise, and to dislocate the plans of the PAC. Which is what they did and they had the machinery to do that. At that time there was no APLA (Azanian Peoples'

¹ Leballo made a careless press statement on the 24th of March 1963 to the effect that the PAC and Poqo were synonymous and that they were poised to launch an attack on the South African government with about 150 000 cadres in 1963. The latter would include attacks on police stations, the seizure of armouries, the blowing up of power stations and police stations, the setting alight of petrol tanks by garage attendants, and the poisoning of the food of white employers by their domestic servants. Leballo added that the killing of whites would be an inevitable part of the action. A few days after making the press statement, on 29 March, Leballo sent out two women couriers to post letters in Ladybrand giving instructions to the Poqo cadres in South Africa. The police captured the two before they could post the letters and the identities of many Poqo leaders were revealed. Mass arrests followed immediately. The British colonial police in Basutoland raided the PAC offices in Maseru on 1 April and seized a considerable number of documents. This led to the arrest and subsequent imprisonment of numerous PAC activists.

² The PAC's consultative conference at Moshi in Tanzania from the 19th September 1967 represented the first consultative forum outside South Africa after the Lesotho conference in 1961. Letlako was appointed commander-in-chief of the newly-formed Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA). The main shortcoming of the conference was the absence of the rank and file at the meeting. Only one person, Templeton Ntantala, represented the guerrilla units. The meeting was attended by members of the Executive Committee.

Liberation Army) to sit down and think militarily. Their thinking was predominantly in political terms and not in the military sense, despite the decision that we were launching a military action. Although the struggle would be military in action, the outcome would be political. I had left the country by then, so the decision to resort to armed struggle was transmitted to me as a decision taken inside the country. I had a mission to perform abroad. I didn't leave South Africa on my own; I had the authority of the president of the PAC. That was before he went to prison. The decision that I should leave was ratified by the organisation's working committee. The reason was I was the secretary for Pan African Affairs. My name was well known in African states, and I was the link with the rest of Africa. African states held the PAC in high esteem. In fact, at the PAC's inaugural convention, there were messages of support from such leaders of Pan African stature as Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Algeria's Ahmed Ben Bella.

I left with Nana Mahomo on the eve of the Sharpeville shootings; the Sharpeville shootings occurred the following day. I was in Bulawayo when I heard about the Sharpeville shootings. When we got to Malawi (then Nyasaland), there were people there who met us from the Malawi Congress Party, which was a successor party to the Nyasaland African Congress. In fact, we slept in the surgery of Kamuzu Banda, who was to become Malawi's president. The police were looking for us all over because the South African government had already broadcast the fact that we were abroad. There was something then called the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, under the British Empire. They were looking for us, with the help of MI5, the military intelligence of Britain.

We had left by the underground railroad, using documents we had stolen from the Nyasaland Labour Bureau in Johannesburg. We had contacts in the Labour Bureau, whose function was to recruit workers from Nyasaland mainly to work in the mines in South Africa. We had stolen the key to the Nyasaland Labour Bureau located somewhere in End Street, Johannesburg, several weeks before. We went in, stole the documents and stamped them accordingly. We took Malawian names. When we left South Africa, we were dressed like mineworkers returning home at the end of our contracts.

From Nyasaland we went to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and were received by TANU (Tanganyika African National Union), and then to Kenya where we were received by KANU (Kenya African National Union). We subsequently set up the first PAC offices in exile in Ghana, from where we operated. Our mission was to publicise our name all over Africa and the world and to ask for assistance for our struggle.

When we were joined by Vusi Make we decided to distribute the work. Nana Mahomo set up an office in London and Vusi Make went to the Middle East. I was given responsibility for Africa. Each one of us could develop his own style, depending on the availability of members of the organisation who began to drip in. In time we were able to count on PAC people who were abroad for study purposes or so like Stanley Letanka, Peterson, and Selby Mvusi. We had South African teachers already working in Ghana who would give of their time – people like Gumbi, George Chali, and Mdudu (who had taught at Madibane High).

We raised funds, of course, from friendly African countries and from European countries too. The ANC was more favoured in Europe because it was a European-oriented organisation. The PAC was more favoured by the African states by reason of our Pan Africanist ideology. But African states did not command the kind of resources possessed by the USSR, which also backed the ANC – because of links with the Communist Party and highly respected people like Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks, and Edwin Mofutsanyane. On the other hand, the PAC received limited support from China – that was during the Sino-Soviet dispute¹ – which provided diplomatic training facilities and funds.

The PAC in exile worked with the ANC in exile for a while because it was possible to postpone our differences, even if we could not abolish them altogether. It was possible to form a United Front² because there were issues on which we agreed, like the boycott of South African goods and the cultural isolation of the country. The people inside the country were still very hot on differences, while those outside emphasised points of agreement. The marriage between the PAC and the ANC was dissolved, however, because of pressure from people coming from South Africa with different ideas, plus the impact of whites who favoured the ANC and had a distaste for black so-called racists that did not offer any place for them in Africa. The PAC slogan, “Africa for Africans”, was considered a threat! The ANC slogan, “South Africa belongs to all”, was considered less racist, more accommodating. But we could not agree that Africa was the dancing ground for all, including imperialist forces that could dance and jump as they pleased. Africa belonged to Africans; the rest would have to dance on one leg!

¹ During the second half of the 1950s, strains in the Sino-Soviet alliance gradually began to emerge over questions of ideology, security, and economic development. Chinese leaders were disturbed by the Soviet Union's moves under Nikita Khrushchev toward de-Stalinisation and peaceful coexistence with the West. Moscow's successful earth satellite launch in 1957 strengthened Mao's belief that the world balance was in the communists' favour, leading him to call for a more militant policy toward the non-communist world in contrast to the more conciliatory policy of the Soviet Union. In addition to ideological disagreements, Beijing was dissatisfied with several aspects of the Sino-Soviet security relationship: the insufficient degree of support Moscow showed for China's recovery of Taiwan, a Soviet proposal in 1958 for a joint naval arrangement that would have put China in a subordinate position, Soviet neutrality during the 1959 tension on the Sino-Indian border, and Soviet reluctance to honour its agreement to provide nuclear weapons technology to China. And, in an attempt to break away from the Soviet model of economic development, China launched the radical policies of the Great Leap Forward (1958-60), leading Moscow to withdraw all Soviet advisers from China in 1960. The Sino-Soviet dispute was also intensified by increasing competition between Beijing and Moscow for influence in the Third World and the international communist movement. Beijing's support for worldwide revolution became increasingly militant, although in most cases it lacked the resources to provide large amounts of economic or military aid. The Chinese Communist Party broke off ties with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1966.

² The South African United Front (SAUF) was formed in the aftermath of the Sharpeville and Langa massacres. It had become crucial for the liberation movements to speak with one voice. The SAUF was formally launched in London in May 1960. Tambo and Dadoo represented the ANC and the SAIC respectively, while Nana Mahomo and Peter Molotsi represented the PAC. Jarientundu Kozonguizi represented the South West African National Union (SWANU) and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) was admitted later. The SAUF was formed, firstly, to provide a voluntary structure within which the potentially destructive political rivalry between the ANC and PAC could be healed. Secondly, as both organisations lacked adequate financial and human resources in exile, the SAUF would allow them to combine and raise funds jointly. Thirdly, the SAUF's intention of isolating South Africa politically, economically and culturally from the international community would be better served by a single voice. (For more detail about the SAUF refer to SADET (eds), 2004, pp 429ff.)

Iris More and I had met in South Africa but we were married in Accra, Ghana, where we again met on her way to the Asian Women's Conference. We met there, in Cairo; then we met in London. We parted and she went back home to South Africa. Upon her return on a PAC mission later, we got married in Accra in 1962. I operated from Ghana until the formation of the OAU in 1963. At the formation of the OAU, as the liberation movements, we attended as petitioners to get recognition from the independent African states. In the years I was in Ghana I saw the PAC grow in stature. We operated a radio station there, so we could communicate with a wide variety of people in Africa and beyond. We had links with the agencies that distributed news to the world; we were being heard all over the world. We even managed to send messages to South Africa. Some people used to hear the messages here on the broadcasting station. But the regime here jammed up the broadcasts and when they did that we operated from Cairo as well.

I was replaced in Ghana by Elias Ntloedibe. Some time in 1964 I went to Dar es Salaam to strengthen the mission there. The PAC headquarters were still in Lesotho. I helped set up headquarters in Dar es Salaam because most of our refugees and freedom fighters and students were passing through Dar es Salaam. In addition, it was unsafe in Lesotho, which is completely surrounded by South Africa. Lesotho was vulnerable, a danger spot. The communications in Lesotho were completely controlled by South Africa. The economy of Lesotho was virtually controlled by South Africa. The funding was completely controlled by the South African banking system. You could use the diplomatic levers of Lesotho, that's all they had, and nothing else. When PAC headquarters moved to Tanzania, as in Ghana we shared offices with ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union). That was before the split in ZAPU with the formation of ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union).

But then my health became so bad because of the weather that I had to receive medical attention in Nairobi. I was advised that for purposes of better reaction to medication I should get to a cooler place. Dar es Salaam is very hot and Nairobi cooler. I had first met Professor Gwendolyn Carter at Wits when she was on a visit to South Africa and I was addressing a PAC meeting at Wits. When we met again in Nairobi she arranged for me to go to the United States because the doctors treating me said I would need a long time to rest, something like three years. Then I thought I must use that time to further my studies, which in South Africa had been suspended for a long time. Incidentally, most of us in the PAC were student calibre, right from the president himself. He was a graduate candidate and most of us were at that level. At leadership level we were all post-matric and we were just hanging to complete this, to complete that. That was the situation. That's why I left for the United States.

Then it became necessary also in the United States to establish representation. The PAC didn't have a permanent representative there. So I came in to act as a representative of the party in the United States and at the United Nations. We operated from my house in New York City as a temporary party office and it was registered like that at the US State Department. Our permanent office was on 43rd Street and the ANC office was not far from there. We also registered at the UN, where I was once again a petitioner; that was the status of representatives from the liberation movements. We could not vote but we could have our say. So that's why we were called petitioners. I can disclose to you now that we negotiated the removal of Sobukwe

from Robben Island. You know, it's no longer a secret, he was poisoned while on Robben Island. I petitioned the secretary-general and appeared in his office at the UN and so we exercised pressure to have Sobukwe removed from Robben Island because of his health. They placed him under house arrest in Kimberley. We raised funds and furnished his house with the help of the PAC branch there. Then he also engaged in studies and we urged influential people to finance his study programme which enabled him to complete an economics degree.

In the US, I became healthy again. I think it had to do with the climate there. I decided to further my studies. I completed my liberal arts degree in two-and-a-half years at the University of Rochester. I was now doubling up as a graduate student and a PAC representative, educating the public and calling for support and raising funds. And then we also engaged in a programme to raise scholarships to support our students scattered all over Africa. Those were major activities, bordering on full-time activities because we had to pursue the petitions. You make up petitions and you must pursue that. You must persuade. You must go and bring the latest information, etc. There were also annual reports to produce so that the State Department could follow your activities. You were not supposed to be subversive and so on; we were to keep our operations clean, so to speak, and not engage with groups that were hostile to the United States. This doesn't mean we could not have contacts with all groups there, as long as we knew how to keep ourselves separate from internal affairs. We worked with the Black Panthers, for instance, a group you could call hostile to the United States government. But we went there as a matter of solidarity. We took no action against the United States government, nothing.

After I gained my liberal arts degree from Rochester, I moved back to New York City and did a master's degree in Education at Fordham University and a PhD at New York University. In my time in the US I lectured in several universities on African literature, history and political science. I was an assistant professor for a long time and then an associate at several summer schools. That became my chosen profession alongside my life in the struggle.

In 1967 we had a consultative conference at Moshi, Tanzania. I travelled from the United States to that conference. From time to time the organisation needed to consult and to consolidate its strategies. This was the second consultative conference in exile after the one in Lesotho. The most important decision was to intensify the armed struggle. A number of decisions were taken, but the big one was to intensify the armed struggle, both inside the country and to enlarge our army – which steadily grew to become APLA. APLA was established after the Moshi conference in 1967. But it was a continuation of the Poqo activities. We had had no experience in the Poqo days. So APLA was not founded as a new organisation. It was just improved until it became an effective organ. The first bases of APLA were in Tanzania and then Lusaka. At first APLA's headquarters were in Dar es Salaam. ZANU used to have camps in Tanzania and the PAC took those over. We were very close to the Mugabe group, even before they had an army of their own, because they shifted their armies from there to Mozambique. So they left their camp to us.