

https://dspace.org/

Youth Politics: The Political Role of AZANYU in the Struggle for Liberation: The Case of AZANYU Thembisa branch, 1980s to 1996.

Moloi, Tshepo Cyril

2006-11-16T11:18:44Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/1802

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Chapter Five

To negotiate or not to negotiate? 1990 - 1994

This chapter will look at how AZANYU dealt with the political transition that was taking place in the country during the early 1990s. The main focus will be on the split that occurred within AZANYU as a result of the opposing views which arose because of the question of negotiations. It will explore the impact that this split had on AZANYU as a youth organization, and its branches, particularly the Tembisa branch, and on its mother-body, and PAC, particularly in regards to the 1994 elections.

The chapter will argue that the conflicting views which arose within AZANYU emanated from the PAC's confusing position on the question of negotiations. Initially the PAC uncompromisingly rejected negotiating with the NP government. However, with the progression of time it agreed to take part in the negotiations. The chapter will contend that the PAC's dramatic shift from a revolutionary position to negotiations was primarily influenced by a section within the organization that could be described as 'moderates'. The latter, after assessing the rapidly changing political situation in the country and globally, adopted the view that negotiations were not only a viable option but necessary to settle the country's political crisis.

According to Nyatsumba, "the ANC and its allies, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the UDF, were not the only organizations to have been caught [flat-footed] by President FW de Klerk on 2 February 1990. Also caught napping were Africanist and Black Consciousness organizations such as the PAC, AZAPO and their respective allies".[1] President De Klerk on this day made a speech in parliament unbanning all the liberation movements, which had been proscribed in the early 1960s, the PAC, ANC and the SACP. He went on to announce the impending release of Nelson Mandela, and thereafter "declared his readiness to enter into negotiations with all of them to work out a new national constitution in which everyone would

[1] Nyatsumba, K. 'AZAPO and the PAC' in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.) *From 'Red Friday,* p. 9

enjoy equal rights".[2] For De Klerk this was intended to substitute revolutionary politics with negotiation politics.

De Klerk's initiative inadvertently sharpened differences within the country's political organizations to a point of threatening the intended peaceful settlement. Some managed to allay their members' fears about the negotiations and to convince them of the necessity to negotiate.[3] However, not all political organizations were equally successful in this regard. The PAC, for instance, found itself in a position where there was growing discontent within its affiliates.

Responding to President De Klerk's February pronouncements, PAC stated that these were "… basically aimed at liquidating the armed struggle and undermining international isolation and sanctions and sought to preserve white domination while de-escalating internal resistance". It further warned that "the acceptance of De Klerk's invitation to join a negotiating table "pre-packed" with puppet leaders … would amount to co-option and not a climate for genuine negotiations".[4] Notwithstanding this, it was not long before it reconsidered its position and expressed interest in entering into negotiations with the government. This had devastating consequences for the Africanist organization.

Before exploring the split that took place within AZANYU, an outline of historical background of the events that led to the split is necessary. The most obvious cause was the change in the PAC's political rhetoric. The PAC's main objective has always been to overthrow the South African government through the barrel of the gun - negotiations have never featured in its political rhetoric. As late as 1988 the chairman of the PAC and Commander-in-Chief of APLA, Johnson Mlambo "… reaffirmed the

[2] See Sparks, A. Letters from South Africa: The secret revolution, pp.58-9. nd.

[3] Nelson Mandela in his autobiography cites two different incidents when the ANC members registered their opposition to the negotiations. See Mandela, *Long Walk,* pp.573 and 581; also see Sparks, A. (1995) *Tomorrow is another country: The inside story of South Africa's negotiated revolution,* (London, Heinemann, 1995), p.121

[4] *Azania Combat: Official Organ of the Azanian People's Liberation Army,* Issue No. 10, Quarterly 1990

PAC's rejection of negotiations with Pretoria …"[5] To underline his point he remarked "The racists understand only one language, the language of the gun, and nothing else".[6] Similarly, the PAC's Foreign Affairs Secretary, Gora Ibrahim, declared that, "his organization intended to strengthen its military arsenal and to intensify the armed struggle inside the country". He asserted, "the PAC saw no grounds for negotiating with the government".[7]

The PAC went further to accuse the ANC of being traitors for accepting to President De Klerk's invitation to negotiate. Its information director, Walter Toboti, exclaimed "Some leaders of the ANC are tired of the armed struggle. They have become traitors selling out on the revolution".[8] This suggests that at this stage the PAC's main objective was clearly not to engage the government in a dialogue but militarily.

However, a sign of change in the PAC's militaristic rhetoric began to surface at an Africanist joint consultative meeting between the PAC and PAM held in Harare on 2-4 March 1990. It was at this meeting that the PAC declared that "it would talk to de Klerk if he agreed to the creation of the constituent assembly elected on the basis of one person one vote".[9] Explaining its newly adopted position, PAC stated that "the demand for a constituent assembly is not a tearful plea to a racist minority to change its heart and mind. It is an attempt by the African majority to clearly think through a possible democratic route to ensure their emancipation at the deliberate expense of white racist minority domination". It further asserted that "a constituent assembly should democratically discuss how the country should be run and representatives should express their opinions in terms of their mandate freely".[10]

---

[5] *Azania Combat: Official Organ of the Azanian People's Liberation Army*, Issue No. 7, Quarterly 1988

[6] ibid; University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers. Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, File A2248 BEMATH (PAC) *Azania: The Official Organ of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania,* Vol. 26, No. 2. 1988

[7] Swilling and Rantete, *Organization* in Robin Lee and Lawrence Schlemer (eds.) *Transition,* p. 214.

[8] *Cape Times*, 5 February, 1990

[9] Thloloe, 'No Negotiators' in *Work in Progress 72*, Jan/Feb, p.15; Swilling and Rantete, 'Organization' in Robin Lee and Lawrence Schlemer (eds.), *Transition,* p. 216

[10] University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers. Abdul, S. Bemath Papers. File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *Pac Position on the Constituent Assembly,* nd.

For the PAC the primary role of a Constituent Assembly, comprised of democratically elected representatives, was to draft a constitution for the country. After this it ceased to exist and the country is run according to the constitution.[11] PAC's secretary general, Barney Desai, noted that the PAC's call for a Constituent Assembly was premised on the principle that "nobody has the right to speak on behalf of the masses unless he or she has been elected".[12]

Although the PAC had showed signs of shifting towards negotiations it, nevertheless, emphasized that it would only consider participating fully in the negotiations if the government had met some of its demands. Primary among these were the removal (or abolition) of the five pillars of apartheid, which it emphasized were non-negotiable. They are:[13]

1) The Population Registration Act
2) The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts
3) The 1953 Bantu Education Act
4) The 1959 Promotion of the Bantu Self-Government Act
5) The South African Constitution Act (or Tricameral parliament system)

Notwithstanding this more flexible position on negotiations some of the senior PAC members continued to utter speeches which were anti-negotiations. For instance, Zephania Mothopeng (affectionately known as Uncle Zeph) remarked:

> We said it from the time we were established that we do not recognize the government, so the question of negotiations, as far as we go, does not arise. The question is one of repossession of our land from foreign colonial oppressors. It has nothing to do with negotiations.[14]

In similar vein, Jafta Masemola, the PAC's longest serving political prisoner on Robben Island addressing a 3000 strong crowd in Atteridgeville, declared that "the

---

[11] University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers. Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *PAC Position on the Constituent Assembly*

[12] *Cape Times,* 5 September 1990

[13] Swilling and Rantete, 'Organization' in Robin Lee and Lawrence Schlemer (eds.), *Transition,* p. 217

[14] See Hlongwane, ''To Independence Now' p.70

time [was] not yet ripe for genuine negotiations with Pretoria". He further reminded the crowd that "…Azania had been taken away at gunpoint and there had been no negotiations at the time … But now they (Boers) fear we will topple the white government, and so they want negotiations". Finally, he emphasized "we are free to use whatever method we choose, including the armed struggle, to obtain our goals".[15]

Such speeches readily appealed to the militant youth who were eager to fight the system for the return of the dispossessed land. Pumlani, cited by Bonner and Segal, noted that he joined the PAC because he "hated the white man and the PAC were fighting the white man rather than talking with him".[16] This became a dominant view amongst the militarily charged Africanist youth in the townships.

The PAC's gradual shift towards negotiations was concluded on 10 March 1990 at the PAM's special congress held in Bloemfontein. At this congress Mothopeng reiterated his organization's demand for an elected constituent assembly. Addressing the congress, he remarked "such an Assembly, based on one-man-one-vote in a unitary state and on a common voters' roll, would be the most democratic method as its members would be representatives of their constituencies'.[17]

Although Mothopeng's address had thrown light on the position the PAC was taking it was, however, Desai's speech that defined the PAC's stance. Desai refuted allegations that his organization was against negotiations. He retorted "it is not true that [my] organization rejected negotiations as the media reported". He remarked that "… his organization was prepared to discuss with interested parties the drawing up of a new constitution for the country". In conclusion he noted "…the PAC was committed to democracy and the quest for social justice".[18] Despite the change in the PAC's rhetoric, it still remained united.

---

[15] *Azania Combat: Official Organ of the Azanians People's Liberation Army,* Issue No. 10, Quarterly 1990

[16] Bonner and Segal, *Soweto,* P.146

[17] *Citizen*, 12 March 1990

[18] ibid

The first sign of an imminent split within the organization began to show in June 1990. This was after the PAC (internal) general secretary, Benny Alexander presented the document titled the 'Economic policy of the PAC: An exploratory, diagnostic and contingency exposition' at the luncheon of the African Council for Hawkers and Informal Business (Achib).[19] Nyatsumba writes that "the draft economic document made at least three interesting points, all of which constituted radical departures from PAC's policies".[20] The document stated that:

- The African liberation Movement has failed to overthrow the South African state through revolutionary means. The military and police force of the state is intact and is there to protect the political and economic interests of European settlers.
- The liberation movement does not have a strong military presence either in South Africa or in neighbouring states to promote and protect the interests of the Africans, especially their economic interests.
- Negotiations were inevitable.

On the last point, the document contended:

> Successful political negotiations will only provide minimum opportunity for the African liberation movement to continue to struggle for true political and economic independence. It does also appear that the negotiation stage is unavoidable. What is important is not to make the African people to have too [many] expectations out of it. But to make them aware that whatever positive outcomes that can be scraped out of these negotiations should be scraped, but only as means for further struggling.[21]

This draft document, Nyatsumba observes "created considerable controversy, particularly among the PAC's youth wing, AZANYU. The latter publicly criticized the document and called its author an 'agent of the Central Intelligence Agency

[19] *New Nation*, 15 June 1990; Nyatsumba, 'AZAPO and the PAC' in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.) *From 'Red Friday,* p. 97; Hlongwane, Unfinished Autobiography, p. 58

[20] Nyatsumba, 'AZAPO and the PAC' in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.) *From 'Red Friday* p. 97

[21] Swilling, and Rantete, 'Organization' in Robin Lee and Lawrence Schlemer (eds.), *Transition,* p.219

(CIA)'.[22] Swilling and Rantete note that this was after Alexander refused to comment on the document when he released it to the press.[23] Leading the attack was the secretary general of the youth wing, Carter Seleke, who "reaffirmed the PAC's economic policy as the repossession of the land, to establish a socialist order whose intention is to redistribute wealth to the African people'. The youth organization further argued that "the PAC did not recognize the government and there can be no negotiations between master and slave".[24] However, in a surprise turn of events AZANYU withdrew its criticism of the document and reconciled its differences with the PAC-internal.

In July, in its bid to strengthen relations within the PAC, AZANYU held a press conference where it retracted its scathing attack of the economic draft document. Seleke told a press conference that "after consultation with the internal PAC national executive committee, the youth organization was now satisfied that the said document [was] merely a discussion paper and still under discussion by the various structures of our party, the PAC". He declared: "[AZANYU] withdraw [the] previous statement on the document. We further condemn in strongest terms the continuous wild speculation … about the division or wedge between the PAC and AZANYU". The draft document was re-titled the "Proposed Economic Policy: An Exploratory, diagnostic and contingency exposition".[25] The public spat between AZANYU and PAC (internal) suggests that there were growing divisions within the Africanist organization. However much the PAC tried to suppress them they managed to emerge.

An attempt to bridge these differences could not undo the damage. Members within the youth organization had developed irrepressible opposing views between those who were against the negotiations, who referred to themselves as the Revolutionary Watchdogs (RW), and those who believed that the negotiations were inevitable. The

---

[22] Nyatsumba, 'AZAPO and the PAC' in Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.) *From 'Red Friday,* p. 97; *New Nation*, 15 June 1990. This draft document was written by Professor Sipho Shabalala, a University of Zimbabwe lecturer and deputy director of the PAC's economics department

[23] Swilling and Rantete, 'Organization' in Robin Lee and Lawrence Schlemer (eds.), *Transition,* p. 219

[24] Nyatsumba, 'AZAPO and PAC' in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.) *From 'Red Friday,* p. 97

[25] *The Star*, 18 July 1990.

latter were derogatively labelled the 'reactionaries' or *Amazabane* (potatoes).[26] Hlongwane recalls:

> It was during this time that a rather large section of PAC members, mainly from AZANYU and PASO, with a sprinkling in AWO and NACTU, began to refer to themselves as Revolutionary Watchdogs. The Revolutionary Watchdogs were driven by the view that the youth should play a watchdog role in the liberation to ensure ideological continuity as well as guard against any form of deviation.[27]

In his *Unfinished Autobiography,* Hlongwane writes that "the notion revolutionary watchdogs was interpreted by us to mean we were vigilant against any deviations from the line of the PAC. That line was that the armed struggle was the principal method of struggle".[28]

The RW's view was clearly outlined in an interview with two leading figures in AZANYU, Ntsie Mohloai and Jack Mawanda. The two were later to assume leadership roles in the splinter group, the RW. Responding to a question: How do negotiations fit into the overall strategy of the PAC? They responded:

> … We do not recognize the negotiations between the ANC and the government. At the moment there is no change. The ruling class has only adjusted by co-opting some of the oppressed. The genuine aspirations of the people are not addressed. Our struggle is for social change not just to replace FW de Klerk. It is to make sure that the natural wealth of the country is rationally and productively utilized. We will mobilize, politicize and consolidate our support. Our armed struggle will not stop. … Under no circumstances shall we have contact with an illegitimate racist regime, except at the point of transfer of power. Our objective is the total seizure of political power, the recovery of our land and means of production.[29]

---

[26] I was told that the name *Amazabane* was drawn from an African expression that one rotten potato rots the rest. In other words *Amazambane* were destabilizing the organization.

[27] Hlongwane, 'Independence Now' p. 73. AWO stands for African Women's Organization. This was the PAC's women's structure

[28] Hlongwane Unfinished Autobiography, p. 57

[29] *New Nation*, 10 August 1990. Mohloai and Mawanda were AZANYU's vice president and national organizer, respectively

Although the differences within AZANYU had come out into the public, the latter, at this stage, had not split. However, it was not long before this changed. Prior to this the PAC, in an attempt to bridge the gap between the opposing views in its ranks and to conscientize its members (and the public in general) of the need to participate in the negotiations, initiated a Congress of the People which was held in Share-world outside Soweto on 7-8 July 1990 under the theme 'Which comes first, Unity or Negotiations?'[30] In its discussion document on a negotiated political settlement, PAC stated that "…it believed that peaceful methods of resolution of the conflict should be pursued whenever possible and it is on that basis that [it] believes a negotiated settlement is only possible under certain conditions".[31]

PAC's role in this congress was seen by some within its affiliates as a way of trying to persuade its members of the necessity of taking part in the negotiations. Hlongwane believes that "the hidden agenda was to gradually prepare PAC activists and the public in general to accept to engage in the negotiation process". He continues "this [was] evident from the position papers presented by the PAC, one of which dealt with the question of a constituent assembly".[32]

In September (1990) the government wrote a letter to the PAC inviting it to take part in the negotiations. Taking into cognizance the recent developments taking place within the PAC, the government's invitation was bound to pull it asunder. Anticipating this, the PAC called a special consultative conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, on the 20th of the same month to discuss the government's invitation to hold exploratory talks. Despite the signs of optimism shown by some senior PAC leaders, such as Moseneke and Mlambo, that the conference would reach a decision on the government's invitation, the conference ended having not reached an

[30] Hlongwane, 'To Independence Now', P. 70. According to Hlongwane this congress also attracted other organizations such as AZAPO and the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA).

[31] University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers. Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *Pan Africanist Congress of Azania Discussion Document On a Negotiated Political Settlement,* 7-8 July 1990

[32] Hlongwane, 'To Independence Now', pp.70-71

agreement. The decision was deferred to December when the PAC would hold its national congress.[33]

Of significance, however, was that the PAC did not reject the invitation outright. Instead it reassured the government that it would discuss the invitation. In response, Dr. Gerrit Viljoen, acting State President and Constitutional Development Minister said "the government found this response encouraging, meaningful and positive".[34] Despite its undertaking to the government, PAC had still to consult with its branches. And this was to cause further discontent within the organization.

Reflecting on this event, Hlongwane remembers that Mothopeng, after receiving the invitation from the government, in his capacity as the President of the PAC referred the letter to the branches to be discussed.[35] Tebogo Mphahlele recalls that in Tembisa, PAC structures met every Thursday at Thembi Mall to discuss the issue, and individuals would also discuss it amongst themselves.[36] Mashishi, who in 1990 was the general secretary of the branch of Tembisa PAC-internal, remembers that a branch meeting was called in Tembisa to discuss the invitation. The meeting, he remembers was addressed by Alexander.

He recalls that Alexander in his address raised the question 'to fight or not to fight?', and went on to remind the branch about the collapse of the Soviet Union and the pressure exerted by the neighbouring states [on the liberation movements to negotiate].[37] Alexander's address suggests that some in the PAC leadership had carefully assessed the rapidly changing world politics and decided to take part in the negotiations even though it meant sacrificing the organization's unity.

Members were given an option to choose between negotiations or war. Atkinson notes that "[PAC] leaders were under severe pressure from sympathetic foreign governments to negotiate; world isolation was a worse fate than selling negotiation to

[33] Nyatsumba, 'AZAPO and the PAC' in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.) *From 'Red Friday,* p. 97;

[34] *Sowetan*, 25 September 1990

[35] Hlongwane, 'Independence Now' p.73

[36] Interview with Tebogo Mphahlele, Tembisa, 23 January 2005.

[37] Interview with Simon Mashishi

its dissidents".[38] This did not help to defuse the widening differences within the organization. Instead it inflamed them. These soon played themselves out. While the PAC was preparing for its December congress, the organization's President, Mothopeng, fell ill and passed away on 23 October (1990).

Ironically it was at Mothopeng's funeral that divisions within the PAC were clearly displayed. Hlongwane recalls: "Later during the week of the funeral of PAC President, Zephania Mothopeng, there was a youth rebellion, which further blew publicly at the funeral service at Orlando Stadium when the leadership attempted to exclude AZANYU among the speakers".[39] By the time the PAC held its national congress differences within it had widened.

The PAC's national congress which was held on 7-9 December in Share-world, outside Soweto, opened amidst disagreements and rebelliousness, which brought the organization's unity near to a breaking point. This was evident when some of the members of AZANYU at the congress condemned leaders of the external mission for accepting indemnity in order to attend the congress. By the time the PAC held its national congress it had been legalized but some of its members had not yet been indemnified against prosecution for their violations against security laws.[40] These leaders, some having been in exile for nearly three decades, were not received as heroes. The youth chanted slogans condemning the call for a constituent assembly, chanting 'one negotiator, one bullet.[41]

---

[38] Atkinson, D. 'Brokering a miracle? The multiparty negotiated forum' in Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.) *South African Review 7, The Small Miracle: South Africa's Negotiated Settlement*,. (Johannesburg, Ravan Press,1994), p. 20

[39] Hlongwane Unfinished Autobiography, p. 58

[40] *The Star*, 6 December 1990; Thloloe, 'No negotiators' in *Work in Progress 72*, p. 14; Hlongwane, Unfinished Autobiography.

[41] Thloloe, 'No negotiators', p.14.

Nyatsumba notes that the congress ended with the hardliners winning the day – the government's invitation was rejected.[42] However, the congress adopted some telling resolutions. Among them was that:[43]

- There is no principle, tactic or policy barring us from seeking a democratic solution to the country's problems
- The PAC will not negotiate with the de Klerk regime unless negotiations are preceeded by an election for constituent assembly …
- The PAC is prepared to negotiate only the modalities of creating the constituent assembly…
- The PAC remained committed to continue the struggle for liberation in all fronts, including the armed struggle.

The PAC reiterated its position that it was willing to negotiate, but the government had to meet its demands first. This suggests an appeasement position because on the one hand its focus had shifted to negotiations which suited those in favour of them and, on the other hand, it was making demands that the government needed to undertake before it could enter into negotiations, which allayed the fears of those against negotiations.

However, most significantly the congress elected Moseneke as the organization's second deputy president. He was to play a leading role within the organization in advocating a negotiated settlement rather than a revolutionary approach.

The PAC's vacillation between outright rejection of the negotiations and acceptance that they were inevitable served as a final blow to the PAC's unity. It was clear that the organization was on the verge of splitting. In a desperate move to close the widen gap within the organization, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of AZANYU

[42] See Nyatsumba, 'AZAPO and the PAC' in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.), *From 'Red Friday,* p.98

[43] University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers. Abdul, S. Bemath Papers. File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *Resolutions on Mr. De Klerk's invitation to talk*. PAC Second National Congress, 7-9 December, Share-world, outside Soweto

took a decision to expel some of its members from the organization. This caused the split within AZANYU.

Having outlined the historical background of the developments that caused the split within AZANYU, the chapter will now explore the impact this split had on the organization, particularly the PAC in the run up to the 1994 elections.

5.1 'Will the real PAC youth wing please stand up?'[44]

In 1991 AZANYU held its national congress on 26-27 January at Cala, in Transkei. It adopted a resolution to redefine the relationship between itself and the PAC. It unanimously accepted that it should be incorporated into the component structure (of the PAC), as opposed to being an affiliate. But most significantly it agreed to a resolution to expel from the organization Mohloai, Mawanda, Mpuka Radinku and Vuyani Mbinda. The latter were in the NEC of AZANYU. The organization accused them of "pandering tribalism, regionalism and factionalism, and for endangering party security by being enemy agents".[45] In addition, the organization noted that Mohloai, who was then the deputy president of AZANYU, was also expelled "for the embezzlement of the organization's funds".[46]

Reflecting on these developments, Lebea recalls:

> You see, we had our congress … they didn't become part of that congress. They in fact now ran parallel structures. We had AZANYU, they had their own AZANYU; we had PASO, they had their own PASO. They were repudiating anything which the main PAC was saying ...[47]

---

[44] This title is borrowed from an article in the *Sunday Times Extra,* 30 June 1991

[45] In 1993 Jaki Seroke alleged that some of the Revolutionary Watchdogs' leaders were known to have worked with the "system". He cited the former Watchdogs leader Ntsie Mohloai, "who had worked for the Information Bureau during the State of Emergency in the 1980s". See *The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 17 to 23, 1993

[46] University of the Witwatersrand Historical and Literary Papers, Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *AZANYU media statement, E.P. Herald*, 30 January 1991; *Citizen,* 30 January 1991

[47] Interview with Nhlanhla Lebea

The expelled members responded by convening their own AZANYU congress on 23-24 June in the same year in Soweto.[48] The organizers of this congress claimed that the "congress was attended by 800 delegates from 100 AZANYU branches".[49] On the question of negotiations and the constituent assembly the congress agreed to a resolution that "it (AZANYU-RW) perceived the negotiations and the constituent assembly as a strategy of imperialists to safeguard their interests in occupied Azania".[50] In addition, the congress adopted the slogan 'One Settler, One Bullet' as their official guiding policy.[51] It insisted that the slogan "addressed the problem of settler-colonialism which was established and is still maintained by the gun".[52] This suggests that the RW was uncomprisingly in favour of a revolutionary method in engaging the government. Finally the congress elected its N.E.C. The following people were elected:[53]

President	Ntsie Mohloai
Vice President	Mawanda Jack
General Secretary	Mpuka Radinku
Financial Secretary	Adelaide Monama
National Organizer	Fezile Qogi
Publicity Secretary	Mayaya Mole
Educational Secretary	Bheki Mdlala
Labour Secretary	Ncedi Nkosi
Sports and Cultural Secretary	Fefe Taunyane
Foreign Affairs Secretary	Vuyani Mbinda
Political Affairs Secretary	Steven Tshitshonga
1st Additional member	Siphelo Somdaka

[48] University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers, Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *AZANYU media statement*

[49] *Sunday Times Extra,* 30 June 1991

[50] I am indebted to Ntsie Mohloai for giving me the document covering the AZANYU congress held on the 23-24 June 1991 in Soweto. I have a copy of this document in my possession

[51] See, Hlongwane, 'Independence Now', p.70. This slogan was first introduced to the Africanists by members of APLA

[52] ibid, p. 70

[53] ibid

This marked the spit between AZANYU. Reflecting on how this split arose, Lebea, who was in the faction opposing the RW, observes:

> [Before] the issue of negotiations started there was the election of [Clarence] Makwetu which became an issue [for] some of these militant youth, who were saying 'No, he's related to Mandela'. In fact, Mandela even praised him [for having being elected as the PAC president]. These youth were saying 'No, this one is a relative of Mandela, we don't want him'. That came with the question of negotiations at CODESA. This issue raised a lot of questions [like] 'to negotiate or not to negotiate?' 'Be part of CODESA or not?' Then there was that view that said 'No, don't negotiate at all. Negotiations are a sell out settlement'. But [there was another view] that said CODESA was going to be able to establish a constituent assembly, which was going to propose elections. Then that became a problem now. These [were] ideological problems. Because AZANYU was a lot advanced in terms of political debates … Those debates became much [more] acute in AZANYU and robust as well. Then incidentally we had a congress then these views, and the [different] tendencies, displayed themselves. The views of the Ntsie's [Mohloai], the Mpuka's [Radinku] – we were all in the NEC of AZANYU – they said 'No, this is a sell out'. But we said let's debate these issues. We were saying 'understand that the PAC is a liberation movement. It is not … necessarily that the PAC was established to overthrow the regime, like it happened in Mozambique and Angola. It is a different situation now, and we have different challenges. The Frontline States say 'negotiate; we are not going to accommodate you. These guys didn't understand these things. They were saying 'You are selling out. *Ni nga mazambane* (you are potatoes). We [are Revolutionary Watchdogs].[54]

The split within AZANYU caused confusion among the Africanists. They found themselves in a difficult position of having to choose between the opposing views propagated by the RW and *Amazambane*. In an effort to normalize the situation, the PAC distanced itself from the RW and their views. A newspaper report read "Moseneke immediately distanced himself from the Soweto group and said the resolutions adopted [at the RW congress] were obviously inconsistent with a clear PAC commitment to political solutions within a Constituent Assembly"[55] This

[54] Interview with Nhlanhla Lebea. CODESA is an acronym for Convention for a democratic South Africa. CODESA represented the first formal negations forum between the government and the ANC and other political parties. See Mandela, *Long Walk,* p.587

[55] *Sunday Times Extra*, 30 June 1991

position was supported by the PAC "Youth Affairs" in Cape Town. It claimed that the "Cape Town AZANYU and not the Soweto AZANYU were the genuine article". It further pointed out that "the Soweto group's congress was led by people who had nothing to do with the PAC youth wing".[56] The differences within AZANYU had reached an irreconcilable level.

Flowing from this the RW decided to cut ties that they might still have had with the "main" PAC and the "other" AZANYU. This was evident when they organized the PAC National Consultative Conference independently of the "main" PAC. The conference was held on the 30 November 1991 at the Lethukuthula Hall in Katlehong, in the East Rand.[57] Hlongwane, who was in the RW faction of AZANYU, recalls: "Through this conference, the Revolutionary Watchdogs dissociated themselves with all positions taken at the undemocratic 1990 PAC congress held in Share-world".[58] The National Consultative Conference further noted that:

> "The PAC's 1959 National Mandate – viz. the Pan Africanist Manifesto, the 1959 Constitution, the Disciplinary Code and the Inaugural address by the founder President, Robert Sobukwe, invariably, forms the basis of the Azanian revolutionary struggle…"[59]

The conference went on to "dismiss the constituent assembly as a bourgeois concept which is in contradiction with the 1959 National Mandate and inimical to the interests of the Azanian masses". "The land question", the conference warned, "was non-negotiable and the constituent assembly could not guarantee the unconditional return of the land to the dispossessed African masses, the establishment of a socialist order and the unification of Africa by scientific socialism".[60]

---

[56] ibid

[57] I am indebted to Ntsie Mohloai for giving me the document covering this national consultative conference. I have a copy of this document in my possession

[58] Hlongwane, Unfinished Autobiography, p. 59

[59] *PAC National (RW) Consultative Conference*, 30 November 1991. I am indebted to Ntsie Mohloai for giving me this document to use as a reference. I have a copy of this document in my possession

[60] Hlongwane, Unfinished Autobiography, p. 59

Finally the conference agreed to a resolution to convene the second constitutional and revolutionary congress of the PAC based on the 1959 National Mandate in 1992. This congress was to be organized by the RW's National Steering Committee made up of Malungisa Siyothula (chairman), Tsietsi Molebatsi (secretary general), Edison Molefe (treasurer), Sandile Sibeko (organizer), Livingstone Gobodo (legal affairs), Victor Petu, (publicity secretary) and three additional members, Kgositsile Mabuza, Ngwato Mamabolo and Monde Ngwenya.

This committee, according to the RW, was formed to "challenge the current unconstitutionally elected leadership [of the other 'AZANYU']".[61] The leadership of the 'other' AZANYU was made up, amongst others, by Molefe Modiga (Chairman), Kraba Malile (Vice Chairman), Sikhumbuzo Zingitwa (General Secretary), Nhlanhla Lebea (Finance Secretary).[62] Even though the RW faction had decided to go it alone, it still considered itself as the PAC. "Cutting ties with the main PAC" does not imply that the RW faction abandoned the PAC and formed itself into a new and independent organization. Instead it continued to adhere to the PAC's philosophy as reflected in the organization's basic documents.

Seshi Chonco, a lecturer at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), observes otherwise. He writes that the conflicting views within the PAC resulted in the emergence of various philosophical factions in it. He notes that "…there are some activists in the organization who … believe the PAC should retain its philosophy of African Nationalism". This faction is made up of those who adhere to the Sobukwe philosophy. Others in the organization, he continues, "believe the organization should embrace the programme of Maoism".[63] The Sobukwe faction, he explained, exists and has support "[comprising] of people who joined the PAC at its inception …". [And] among the youth this faction *is* also supported by the AZANYU RW faction.[64]

---

[61] *PAC (RW) National Consultative Conference document.* See, *The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 17 to 23, 1993

[62] University of the Witwatersrand Historical and Literary Papers, Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *AZANYU media statement*

[63] 'PAC hampered by lack of programme'*, South View*, November 8 to November 14, 1990, P.19

[64] ibid

Chonco's observation is correct. But the section advocating for the Maoist philosophy was insubstantial and did not have any significant influence within the organization. It soon dissipated. On the contrary, the section adhering to the Sobukwe philosophy remained influential. It is this section which stood for "the total overthrow of white domination in all its forms – political, social, economic and cultural, and the restoration to the African people of their inalienable right to land, and their right to self-determination".[65]

Amidst the disagreements, confusion and finally the split within the PAC's youth structure, negotiations through CODESA 1 and 2, mainly between the ANC and the government were on course until the ANC suspended them in June 1992 following the mass killings of people in the Vaal township called Boipatong.[66] However, prior to the suspension of CODESA 2 the government had started talking with the PAC about the possibility of suspending the armed struggle following a spade of killings by APLA of whites. The talks between the government and the PAC began in April (1992). Despite this the PAC "insisted that it was not negotiating".[67] Although at this stage there is no evidence to suggest that the PAC considered the possibility of suspending the armed struggle, nevertheless, it continued to accommodate the possibility of negotiations. It was later in the year that it considered relinquishing the armed struggle – but this was fiercely opposed by the hardliners within the organization.

In the same month, PAC held its third national congress on 3-6 at the University Of Transkei (UNITRA) in Umtata, Eastern Cape. At this congress it resolved that it was "not was opposed in principle to resolving the legitimate struggle for national liberation and self-determination through the mechanism of genuine negotiations". In addition, the congress unanimously agreed that "the leadership of the PAC is fully

[65] University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers. Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *Izwe Lethu –The land is ours: Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.*

[66] See Mandela *Long Walk*, pp.593-98; Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country,* pp. 133-152

[67] Atkinson, 'Brokering a miracle?' in Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.), *The Small miracle*, p.18

mandated to pursue negotiations with the declared policies of the organization".[68] However, most importantly, it noted that there were divisions within the organization which hampered the effective functioning of the party in the implementation of its programmes …" To deal with these it mandated the NEC to "establish a Special Committee to resolve this problem once and for all …"[69]

A committee under the PAC's political affairs secretary, Jaki Seroke, was set up. Reflecting on the cause of the divisions, Seroke remarked: "when the liberation movements were unbanned, many people rushed to join the PAC as an outlet in which they could advance their anger without understanding PAC policies. They thought we were just here to fight and nothing else. What they don't understand is that politics lead the gun".[70]

To deal with the divisions engulfing the organization, the committee opted for a modest approach: to educate their members about the politics of the PAC. Seroke recalls "we felt it was our duty to educate our members politically. Some, on realizing what the PAC stands for, left the misleading group of the Revolutionary Watchdogs and joined the PAC".[71] Seroke's view suggests that the PAC at this stage was earnestly considering abandoning the armed struggle for a peaceful settlement. However, this position was not taken until in late 1993. It appears that the Special Committees' intervention gradually managed to cause a rift within the RW faction.

Momentarily two opposing views emerged within the RW faction on whether it should continue to operate within the PAC for the "consolidation of the PAC for confronting the revolution" or "to transform AZANYU into a revolutionary party".[72] One section believed that their political duty was to consolidate the PAC. This

---

[68] University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers. Abdul, S. Bemath Papers, File A2248 BEMATH (PAC), *Resolutions of the third national congress of the PAC*, April 1992

[69] *The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 17 to 23, 1993

[70] ibid

[71] ibid

[72] Official letter addressed to members of the AZANYU (Revolutionary Watchdogs), No date. Signed by AZANYU RW's Financial Secretary, Disebo Monama. I am indebted to Ntsie Mohloai for giving me this letter to use as a reference. I have a copy of this letter in my possession

section argued that as "members of the organization (PAC) they had to guard, propagate and maintain the name, principles and the ideology of the organization". It further asserted that they "as members of AZANYU, an independent affiliate of the PAC (flowing from the 1991 congress resolutions), resolved to work tirelessly in strengthening the PAC".[73]

The other section, on the other hand, favoured a breakaway from the PAC. It argued that 'by calling ourselves PAC and at the same time oppose the PAC, we are contributing to the strategy of confusing the African masses". It also noted that "by remaining as AZANYU, we are failing to provide the African masses a political home to [those] who see that the PAC, ANC and AZAPO are selling out because AZANYU is a youth organization".[74] Notwithstanding its strong argument, this view fell away because it had no support. Many within the RW felt that the differences prevailing in the organization did not warrant a breakaway. Hlongwane remarks:

> The Revolutionary Watchdogs were further divided … some were toying with the idea of establishing a Marxist, Leninist and Maoist party, and this did not take off as the majority of us were opposed to the formation of an alternative to the PAC …Those of us who were opposed to the formation of a parallel Pan Africanist movement were of the view that differences in the PAC were party contradictions that could be resolved through a protracted struggle for the soul of the party.[75]

The differences within the RW faction further sowed confusion within the Africanist youth. At this stage the Africanist youth were divided into three strands: those who believed that negotiations were inevitable, those who favoured the revolutionary approach, and the new faction that propagated for the formation a new party. I was told by some of my informants that this confusion resulted in some of the most dedicated Africanist youth to become disgruntled and decided to abandon politics. Tebogo Mphahlele remembers that "in 1992 youth became demoralized".[76]

---

[73] ibid

[74] The agenda for the 1993 AZANYU Congress to be held in Uitenhage on the 27-28 February 1993. I am indebted to Ntsie Mohloai for giving me this document to use as a reference. I have a copy of this document in my possession

[75] Hlongwane, Unfinished Autobiography, p. 68.

[76] Interview with Tebogo Mphahlele

Meanwhile the government found the PAC's recent position on negotiations encouraging. On August 11 (1992) the government held exploratory talks with the PAC at the Airport Sun Hotel and the two parties agreed that a follow-up meeting should be scheduled for Pretoria on August 18.[77] Describing these talks the Constitutional Development Minister, Roelf Meyer, said they were "fruitful and constructive". Ibrahim, for his part, remarked that "… his organization had never been opposed to negotiations, but had wanted them conducted within a democratic forum which would write the country's constitution".[78] Atkinson notes that "by-mid August, the government and PAC had agreed that a new constitution would be drafted by an elected body". This resulted, she concludes, in the PAC declaring that "this concession would end its commitment to armed struggle".[79] This concession was nevertheless vehemently opposed by hardliners within APLA.

The differences arising within the PAC and its youth structure affected APLA, and drew it into the middle of the dispute. Letlapa Mphahlele laments "APLA cadres found themselves caught between the two warring factions".[80] Atkinson notes that following the government's Foreign Affairs Minister's (Pik Botha) claim that a PAC delegation led by Moseneke had in November 1993 agreed to suspend the armed struggle the hardliners within the organization's military wing rejected this position and propagated for the continuation of the armed struggle.[81] Letlapa Mphahlele in his autobiography, 'Child of this Soil', writes about a meeting of the High Command of APLA, chaired by Morgan Gxekwa, which was held in Umtata, Eastern Cape where the latter unanimously agreed to defy the call to suspend the armed struggle.[82]

---

[77] *Pretoria News,* 12 August 1992

[78] ibid

[79] Atkinson, 'Brokering a miracle?' in Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.), *The Small miracle,* p.19

[80] Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil,* p.142

[81] Atkinson, 'Brokering a miracle?' *i*n Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.), *The Small miracle,* p.19

[82] Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil,* pp. 170-171

To register their disregard for the position adopted by the PAC's leadership, APLA commanders declared 1993 'The Year of the Great Storm'.[83] This precipitated an increase in the number of youth joining APLA. In 1993 APLA was still encouraging the youth to join its ranks. This was evident, for instance, at a funeral of one of the APLA cadres in Masokona, Venda, when the former APLA chief of operations, Enoch Zulu, called on the youth of the area "to join the armed struggle of APLA and go for military training".[84] This resulted in a spade of killings of whites, particularly the farmers.[85]

Ramogale recalls that at this stage he was involved in the recruitment of youth and transporting them to various places around the country. Reflecting on his role, he remarks:

> By then we were organizing internally. I mean I was personally transporting them to the North (Limpopo). And there was a colleague of mine who was working for the Lebowa Transport. He used to take them and put them somewhere in Tzaneen. When the armed struggle finished in 1992/93 [with the] killings of white farmers … I felt bad because those [killings were carried out by] some of the guys that I transported from Tembisa.[86]

At this stage some of the youth joined the PAC's Task Forces (TF). The TF's were trained internally in areas such as Transkei, Bloemfontein and Venda. Describing them, Mashishi remarks:

> People who were trained internally … formed the Task Force. And [in the] Task Force there were defensive units and offensive units. There were forces that wouldn't go and attack but would be in the community in case there was an attack from, say, the enemy or from any organization or any force that aligned itself with the enemy – [these were the defensive forces]. And there were offensive forces within the TF's. These used to go out and do the work. You see, if the organization needed money they would go there and obtain it in

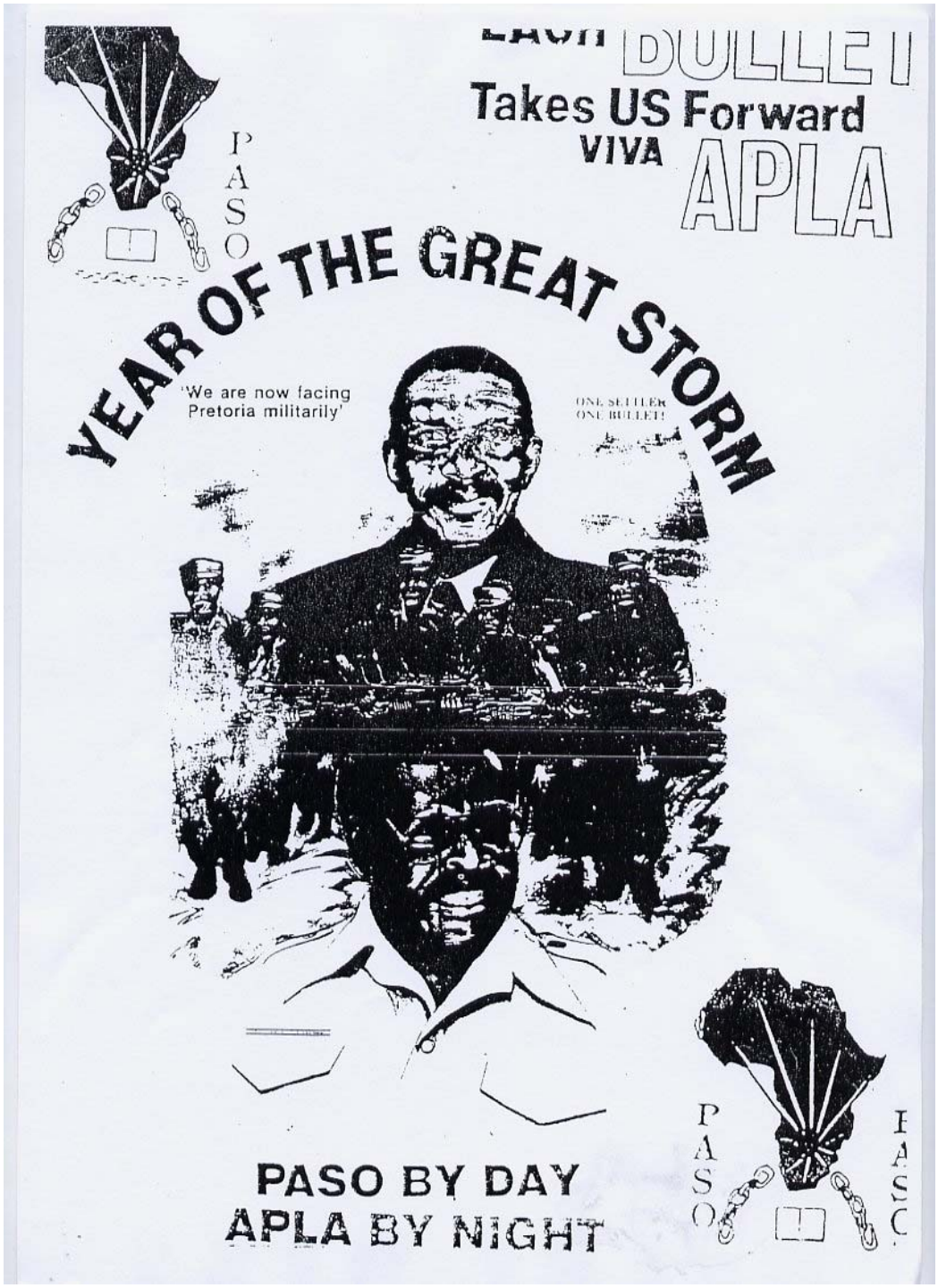
---

[83] Atkinson, 'Brokering a miracle?' in Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.), *The Small miracle,* p. 19

[84] *The Weekly Mail,* May 28 to June 3 1993

[85] See *The Weekly Mail,* May 28 to June 3, 1993; *The Weekly Mail and Guardian,* September 3 to 9 1993

[86] Interview with Simon Ramogale



* Private collection

> whatever means. We had [training] camps in Lusikisiki, at Port St. Johns, in Botshabelo, in Bloemfontein, in Venda.[87]

Bheki Nyandeni, then chairman of the Tembisa PASO branch, recalls that after 1993 was declared 'The Year of the Great Storm' he went to Transkei to receive military training. He recalls, "there were many of us from Johannesburg. When we arrived there we were divided into different bases. I was in base 56 close to UNITRA at a place called Ngangelizwe. We were trained to be members of the Task Force for a month. We were trained to protect our communities. We underwent physical training; shooting ranges. We were also taught about the differences between weaponry". He further notes that "it was at this stage that the slogan 'PASO by day, APLA by night' was popularized". He also remembers that it was emphasized that "every member of PASO was a member of APLA; every member of AZANYU, was a member of APLA".[88]

Marks and McKenzie note with regard to their study on Self Defence Units (SDU's) that in Tembisa there were other defence structures like the Task Team (Force), which was aligned to the PAC. According to them "very few people [were] part of this structure and members of the of the Task Team tend[ed] to participate in SDU initiated activities".[89] Against this background it appears that the AZANYU Tembisa branch continued to recruit for APLA even after 1989. To illustrate this in 1991 AZANYU held a memorial service for Thami Nzima who died in Tanzania in 1991. According to newspaper reports, Nzima left the country in 1990.[90]

Attacks by APLA against whites living in the country continued.[91] This highlights two points. First, that the PAC had lost control over its structures. Second, the

---

[87] Interview with Simon Mashishi, 12 April 2003; Also see, Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil,* p. 163

[88] Interview with Bheki Nyandeni

[89] Marks, M and Mckenzie P. 'Political Pawns or Social Agents?' *Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation,* Paper presented at the Confronting Crime conference, Cape Town, September 1995 http://www.csvr.org.za/pubslist/pubspolt.htm

[90] *Sowetan,* 21 June 1991

[91] See Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil,* pp.170-3; *The Weekly Mail*, May 28 to June 3, 1993; *The Weekly Mail and Guardian,* September 3 to 9 1993; Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country,* pp. 192-93; 'APLA and the PAC', *South African Foundation Review,* February 1993

divisions within it had widened further to include dissenting voices within its military wing. In view of the escalating military activities by APLA the government accused the PAC of double-speak and of failing to control APLA, and warned that it would only talk to the PAC once it had distanced itself from APLA.[92] The PAC refused and argued that APLA was a separate entity.[93] This resulted in Moseneke's resignation from the organization citing as the reason that "the PAC did not want to embrace the ballot".[94] Moseneke represented a section in the organization that can be described as 'moderates'. The latter had accepted that negotiations were the only viable option to settle the country's crisis.

It is the contention of this chapter that the PAC's dramatic shift to negotiations illuminates the dominant influence that the 'moderates' had within the organization. The latter comprised of activists who had either been imprisoned on Robben Island (and released prior to the unbanning of political movements) like Moseneke, Clarence Makwetu, those who were involved in the trade union movement, such as Alexander and Patricia De Lille, and some leaders within the PAC-external mission such as Johnson Mlambo.[95] The 'moderates' had finally accepted that the political situation in the country had rapidly changed and it needed a new approach. This is evident in their position on the question of negotiations. In 1993 Moseneke declared that the PAC was now "refocusing on the ballot as a route to power". And Makwetu remarked "[the PAC] wanted a negotiation forum established urgently to the pave the way to an elected constituent assembly"[96]

Following the election of the PAC leadership in December1990, which was led by Makwetu (president), Mlambo (first deputy president), Moseneke (second deputy president) and Alexander (general secretary), the 'moderates' began to set the tone

---

[92] See *The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 3 to 9, 1993

[93] Atkinson, 'Brokering the miracle?' in Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.), *The Small miracle,* p. 19

[94] ibid

[95] Alexander was a member of SABMAWU. See, Markham, 'Organizing local authority workers' in *South African Labour Bulletin*; 'Formation of PAM' in *Front Line*, February 1990

[96] Atkinson, 'Brokering a miracle?' in Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.), *The Small miracle,* p. 19

which the PAC (both internal and external missions) were to follow. Nyatsumba remarks:

> Under the leadership of Makwetu, Mlambo and Moseneke the PAC began looking at the unfolding political process anew. The new PAC leadership realistically assessed that negotiations were inevitable and that the PAC could do more inside rather than outside the negotiation room".[97]

At this stage the PAC's position on negotiations was clear - it was to enter into negotiations with the government. However, the government refused it entry unless it suspended the armed struggle. In order to strike a balance within its structures especially APLA, the PAC, demanded a "mutual cessation of hostilities" before it could suspend the armed struggle. After the drafting of a declaration on the cessation of hostilities, armed struggle and violence, in late 1993 the PAC gave in to the mounting pressure to suspend its armed struggle.[98] Its deputy president, Mlambo noted that "by suspending the armed struggle we were showing our commitment to peace …"[99]

Notwithstanding this, the decision to suspend the armed struggle was seen by some within the organization as a sign of capitulation on the part of the PAC. Members of APLA felt betrayed. Johannes "Joe" Mahluza, who was an APLA cadre, explains:

> When we heard that the armed struggle has been suspended we were traumatized. We couldn't think properly because what we had always told ourselves was that we were not scared of these Boers; we would fight and beat them. But other people, who were in the leadership [perhaps], saw things differently.[100]

This decision for some meant going against the philosophy of the founder president, Sobukwe, who insisted that the "land would not be returned on a silver plate – it has

---

[97] Nyatsumba, 'The PAC and AZAPO' in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds.) *From 'Red Friday,* p. 98

[98] ibid, pp. 27-28

[99] *The Weekly Mail and Guardian,* May 6 to 12, 1994

[100] Interview with Johannes Mahluzi

to be fought for".[101] The growing discontent within the PAC structures continued. It filtered down to the branches.

In Tembisa the AZANYU branch was also divided into two factions between *Amazambane* and the RW. Teboho Mphahlele, who was in the RW faction, recalls: "in the township most of the youth felt that it was not a problem to enter into negotiations, but a few individuals were against [negotiations]".[102] Leading the RW in the township were people like Peter Nthipa Mashiane, Peter Moropane, Tshueni Ramutla, Skwaere Molefe and Mphahlele.[103] It appears that these individuals' position was primarily influenced by their close relationship with the RW factions in Soweto, Vosloorus and Daveyton. Mphahlele told me that they usually attended RW meetings in these areas. And his close relationship with Mpuka Radinku – one of the key members of the RW, with whom he was studying at the Vista University, Soweto campus, appears to support this point. It is possible that they drew their influence and support from these other groups because the majority of Africanists in the township supported *Amazambane.*

Despite their small number they had an influence in certain sections in the township. Nyandeni recalls:

> In Tembisa there were sections, which were divided between the watchdogs and *Amazambane*. We were not allowed to go to other sections. We fought each other. For instance, sections such as Mpho, Lekaneng, Mthambeka were known to be the sections in which the Watchdogs were very strong. And *Amazambane* were strong in the whole of Tembisa.[104]

Mphahlele concurs with Nyandeni: "the RW faction in Tembisa held its meetings at the Multipurpose Centre. Sometimes we held sectional meetings. And the RW was predominant in sections such as Lekaneng and Mpho".[105]

---

[101] *The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 17 to 23, 1993

[102] Interview with Tebogo Mphahlele

[103] ibid

[104] Interview with Bheki Nyandeni

[105] Interview with Tebogo Mphahlale

In Tembisa, as in many other townships, the tension between the two factions at certain occasions took a violent form. Mashishi, who supported *Amazambane,* remembers the time when he was attacked by members of the RW in the township:

> There was an RW meeting at the St. Vincent Roman Catholic Church in December 1991. I was from Durban [and] didn't know about the new developments in the township. [Some] of the activists were standing outside, others were inside. It was difficult to identify who was an RW and who was not. I left. But I returned to the meeting to find out what was happening. Unfortunately, when I arrived there I was already labelled. They assaulted me with iron bars to an extent that I was unconscious. Well, some had guns, but none dared to shoot. They left me there.[106]

Incidents of violence also occurred in other townships. For instance, in Daveyton, in the East Rand, a violent confrontation erupted involving the PAC and the AZANYU RW members. Tsietsi Molebatsi, secretary general of the RW's national steering committee, remarks:

> … The bodyguards of the PAC president, Clarence Makwetu had fired on 'two Africanists' when they had marched past Makwetu's house on September 4. Africanists were rallying the streets of Daveyton. They happened to have passed along Makwetu's street.[107]

The PAC national organizer, Maxwell Nemadzivhanani, confirmed the shooting, and went on to claim that "the Watchdogs were posing a threat to the president's family". According to newspaper reports he further alleged that the latter "had staged a protest in which the slogan 'One Makwetu, One bullet" had been chanted".[108]

Notwithstanding the sometimes fatal confrontations between the two Africanists factions, the PAC went ahead and joined the negotiations at the World Trade Centre (WTC), in Kempton Park, in 1993. After months of talks between the ANC, government and other political parties, especially from the former Bantustan states, negotiations at the WTC moved quicker. On 3 June the multi-party forum voted to set a date for the country's first national, non-racial, one-person-one-vote elections. The

---

[106] Interview with Simon Mashishi

[107] *The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 17 to 23, 1993

[108] ibid

date was set for 27 April 1994. In July the forum agreed on a first draft of an interim constitution.[109]

Despite this some members of the organization felt that the PAC was not ready to participate in the elections. Hlongwane remembers that "in 1993 participants at the pre-congress meeting of the [organization's] NEC could not reach consensus on whether the PAC was to participate in the elections". He notes that, one member of the NEC recalled that: "the position presented by the NEC to the congress (for taking part in the elections) was opposed by some members of the NEC as well as some APLA leaders". "The party', he continued, "voted for participation".[110] The PAC's indecisiveness on whether to participate in the elections or not confused its members, and this cost it in the elections.

Despite the disagreements, divisions and indecisiveness within the PAC (and its structures), PAC contested the elections that took place in April 1994. At the end of the election process, it managed to gain five seats in the National Assembly with 243 478 votes.[111] These results did not reflect the stature and following of one of the historic liberation movements in South Africa.

The PAC's poor performance in the elections reflected the deepened divisions within the Africanist organization. Most of the organization's members either did not participate in the elections or voted for other parties. Latlapa Mphahlele notes that "the PAC was not united as it went into the April elections". To qualify this statement remarks, "the organization's Western Cape region, under chairperson Theo Mabusela, voted overwhelmingly against going in. This was by far the PAC's strongest region. The fast-growing southern Free State region under Mofihli Likotsi also rejected the April elections, as did the Transkei".[112] PAC's problems were further compounded when AZANYU RW faction rejected the elections as well. Hlongwane recalls: "many

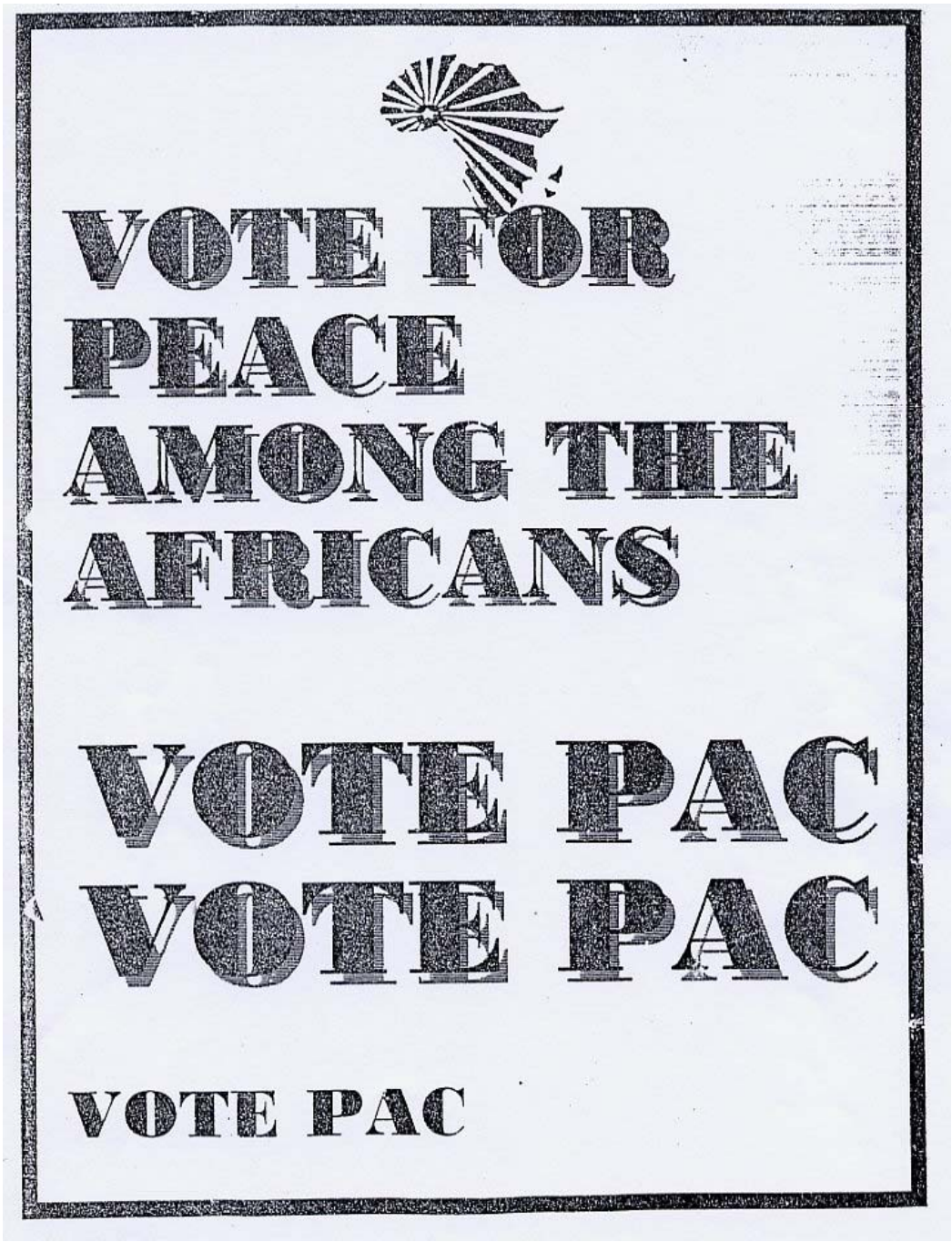
---

[109] Mandela, *Long Walk,* p.602

[110] Hlongwane, Unfinished Autobiography, p. 68; Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil*, pp. 172-173.

[111] Guelke, A. *South Africa in Transition: The Misunderstood miracle,* (London, IB Taurus Publishers, 1999), pp.116-120

[112] Mphahlele, *Child of This Soil,* p. 173.



* Private collection

of us did not take part in the 1994 national and subsequently in the local elections.[113] Mlambo, observes otherwise. He denies speculation that members might have decided to boycott elections.[114] Whatever the reasons the results show that the PAC gave a poor performance in the elections.

Conclusion

The transition period, which began at the beginning of the 1990s, ushered in a state of confusion, internal fighting, distrust, and finally irrepressible divisions within various political organizations. However, this was most visible in the case of the PAC's youth wing, AZANYU.

AZANYU having played a leading role in the revival of the Africanist politics since the beginning of the 1980s strongly held the view that the country's politics could only be resolved through revolutionary means. It based its view on the PAC's uncompromising position on the armed struggle against what it perceived as the minority racist government. For it this would guarantee the return of the "stolen" land to its rightful owners, the indigenous African people.

However, after the PAC's leadership changed its position and accepted that negotiations were necessary to resolve the country's political problems, AZANYU split into two factions. One faction was in favour of the negotiations, and the other faction was against them. This split affected all the PAC's structures. This was evident when the organization's military wing, APLA, was drawn into the fray. This resulted in the emergence of dissenting voices within the party's military wing. Some of the leaders of APLA defied the party decision to lay down the arms to enable it to negotiate in good faith.

The split also affected AZANYU branches in various townships. At branch level the split turned into violent clashes between members of the opposing views. Because of this a large number of active members of AZANYU either abandoned politics or

[113] Hlongwane, Unfinished Autobiography, p. 68

[114] *The Weekly Mail and Guardian,* May 6 to 12, 1994

resigned from the youth organization. Some even contemplated forming an alternative party to the PAC.

Of significance this split had devastating effect on the PAC's campaign in the national elections in 1994, and subsequent local and national elections. The confusion which had engulfed the party, because of the split within AZANYU, led to a low turn up for the PAC in the elections. A significant number of the PAC's supporters and members did not participate in the elections.