

MAIN TOPIC

DISA/Aluka Topics #320 and 321: PAC—Before 1960s, and Sharpeville and 1960 Emergency

Links: These could be made later to "Life Stories" of any individuals mentioned

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Potlako Kitchener Leballo

P. K. Leballo (1924-1986) was a leader in the Africanist movement and later in the Pan Africanist Congress, serving as its secretary general from its founding in April 1959, and later as its acting president in exile. A man of high energy and mercurial temperament, he was responsible for much of the PAC's success before Sharpeville, as well as for most of its failings in the following two decades. This taped interview with Leballo by Gail M. Gerhart, a graduate student at Columbia University, took place in Nairobi on September 11, 1968. The original tapes are in the Cullen Library at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I'D LIKE TO START BY ASKING YOU SOME DETAILS ABOUT YOUR OWN INVOLVEMENT IN THE EARLIEST PERIOD. WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME INVOLVED IN THE ANC YOUTH LEAGUE?

I was first involved in 1946, and in fact I was— We had in 1945 in Kimberley— I attended the first foundation of the Youth League movement, 1945, where Dr. Nkomo was elected, became President. And in 1946 the real conference, the properly constituted conference, of the Youth League, ANC convened, where the late Mr Muziwakhe Lembede was elected President of the Youth League. He was a very powerful man, and a most militant nationalist.

WHERE DID THAT ELECTION TAKE PLACE?

It took place at Kimberley. Yes, in 1946.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING AT THE TIME?

Well, at the time I was still a student at Lovedale Training College in the Cape.

BUT YOU ATTENDED THE MEETING, DID YOU, AT KIMBERLEY?

Yes, I attended the meeting because at the time, in 1945, I became the chairman of the Youth League ANC in Pretoria, and at that time I was already a secretary of the mother body, of the ANC, in Pretoria.

NOW YOU LEFT LOVEDALE IN—

In 1947. I left in 1946 after we had—I had led a strike there of the students against the administration of the institution, and I went to Wilberforce Institute where I completed my teacher training certificate there, in the Transvaal. Wilberforce Training Institute.

HAD THERE BEEN ANY ACTIVITY OF THE YOUTH LEAGUE AT LOVEDALE?

Well, I would say that there was a nucleus. We were from the Transvaal, we had about 13 members of the Youth League there, and also we combined the membership of other provinces that attended the school. And I was the chairman then of the group at Lovedale.

I SEE. WHERE IS WILBERFORCE?

Wilberforce is at Evaton, about—let's see, about 100 miles— I'm sorry, about 50 miles from Johannesburg.

NOW WHEN DID YOU GO TO PRETORIA?

I was in Pretoria in 1945. When I left the army, I got to Maseru, but then I went to Pretoria. My sister was teaching in Pretoria, and I stayed in Pretoria.

AND WERE YOU INVOLVED IN THE YOUTH LEAGUE— Yes, I was involved in the Youth League— BEFORE YOU WENT TO LOVEDALE?

Well, I was at Lovedale before I went to the army.

OH, I SEE.

And then after I got my discharge I came back to Lovedale. But I was already involved in 1943, 1944. I was a member of the Youth League, but I held no important position, until 1945.

AND IN 1945 YOU BECAME—

I became the chairman of the Youth League in Pretoria, and also the secretary of the mother body, ANC, in Pretoria.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST MEET LEMBEDE?

Well, I met Lembede in 1945 in Johannesburg, and he was a practicing lawyer with the late Dr. P. ka Seme. He was a prominent politician and also a lawyer, an advocate.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST MOVE TO ORLANDO?

I first moved to Orlando in 1952, after the Defiance Campaign, after I had taken part in the Defiance Campaign. I went several times to prison, 5 times, then I was dismissed from teaching profession.

WHERE WERE YOU TEACHING?

I was teaching in Pretoria, was a school principal in Pretoria, at Lady Selborne.

IS THAT A HIGH SCHOOL?

Yes, it was— It was not yet a high school, but it had gone as far as Standard 7.

THEN YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN WAS IN THE PRETORIA AREA?

It was. I took part in the Defiance Campaign in Pretoria. I took part in the Defiance Campaign in Johannesburg. I took part in the Defiance Campaign— I led demonstrators— in Bloemfontein, and also at Ladybrand in the Free State.

AND YOU WERE SACKED THEN, WERE YOU, FROM YOUR TEACHING POST?

Yes, at the time I was still a school teacher.

SO AFTER THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN YOU MOVED TO ORLANDO— I moved to Orlando—
AND WHAT EMPLOYMENT DID YOU TAKE UP THERE?

Well, at that time I was employed as a driver for mine furnaces. I was driving a lorry for mine furnaces, people who were doing some copper(?) work, from Britain, and they employed me as a driver. And later of course I was also a commercial representative of certain firms(?), some coffee, and later I was an organizer of the African Chamber of Commerce. I had difficulty of having a permanent employment, because in fact nobody wanted me for my political views. So I was always given employment within weeks, and so then dismissed because of my political views, and then I go to the next employer for a couple of few weeks or so, and then I get dismissed again. (Laughter).

HOW DID YOUR POLITICAL VIEWS BECOME KNOWN TO YOUR EMPLOYERS?

Well, apparently I was more or less a strong(?) man in the African National Congress, because I did not in fact agree with the policies that were being pursued. And this was due to the fact that in 1949 at the conference of the ANC in Bloemfontein, it was the decisive conference where the program of African nationalism for positive action, also for the boycott of government dummy institutions was put through by the Youth League. And this program had succeeded, but the leadership failed—of the ANC—failed to carry out this program. Now I myself—at the time I was a leader of the delegation of the Youth League from Pretoria—and the Program of Action of 1949 was very much important because it was the turning point of politics, African politics in South Africa. But again the main issue in this was to carry out the Program of 1949, of African nationalism, on the basis of boycott, non-cooperation, and to struggle for real self-determination.

AT THE TIME OF THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN DID YOU ALREADY FEEL THAT THE PROGRAM OF ACTION WAS BEING COMPROMISED? OR DID THAT COME LATER?

Well, in fact it had been compromised. It had been sabotaged, by the so-called Communists, pseudo-Communists. At the time, you know, the Communist Party of South Africa was banned in 1950, and it decided to infiltrate into African organizations, particularly the ANC, to carry out their program. So they found that the militant Program of 1949, particularly to engage the African people into Defiance Campaign, passive resistance against the unjust laws, the so-called Communists at the time in fact stole(?) this program and made it one big strike in 1950, and we felt that it had been stabbed at the back.

All this was done because the leadership which we elected in 1949 at Bloemfontein at Magasa Hall was, the fact that the leadership was an old guard. The Youth Leaguers who were leaders, A.P. Mda, Sobukwe,

Mandela, and Tambo, and many others, Sisulu, these people didn't take up the positions. They refused to become members of the National Executive for certain reasons, so the program that had been fostered by the youth movement onto the mother body was not carried out.

So then in 1952 after we had met, being 17 of the most nationalist leaders in Bloemfontein, all of my comrades at the time like Sobukwe, Pokela, Mandela, Tambo, and many others felt that they had a number of commitments to accomplish, such as continuing their studies in law, as practicing lawyers and so on, and Sobukwe had to go to Standerton as a teacher. So then I shouldered the task of seeing to it that this program must be carried out, even at the expense of being expelled.

NOW IN 1954 YOU WERE CHOSEN HEAD OF THE ORLANDO YOUTH LEAGUE. WHEN YOU WERE ELECTED TO THAT OFFICE DID YOU HAVE ANY COMPETITION? WAS THERE ALREADY AT THAT POINT ANY COMPETITION BETWEEN YOUR NATIONALIST POINT OF VIEW AND OTHER POINTS OF VIEW?

Yes, well in fact, that was a bit later, but at that time I was already having very serious opposition of course within the ANC Youth League. And here the Transvaal Executive of the Youth League which was led by Mr Duma Nokwe who wanted to oust me from this position. In fact I was able to defeat them here and be elected against opposition both from the ANC mother body and the Youth League [inaudible] in the Transvaal. But in fact in '53 then I founded the Africanist movement and we were about three there when we gave opposition to the mother body, and used to have A .P. Mda who had some theoretical outlook, and lectures.

WAS HE STILL LIVING IN JOHANNESBURG?

In Johannesburg, at Orlando.

TEACHING, WAS HE?

No, no, no— He was at the time in Herschel, practicing, articulated with somebody else. He had left teaching then. And he was no longer, of course, the President of the Youth League, but he was working underground with theses (?) from the late Anton Lembede, because I was in fact a student of Anton Lembede and A.P. Mda. So he felt that since I had taken the burden of seeing to it that the program which had been envisaged by him and the late Anton Lembede, this program had to succeed.

WHO ELSE WAS WITH YOU AT THAT TIME? WHO WERE THE OTHERS AROUND YOU?

At that time when I started I had several fellows that are not here at the moment. They were very young people like Luabile, Mr Thipe, Mr Makhetha, Mr Tsolo, about 3, 4 of us. [Other early Orlando Africanists, according to Z B Molete in 1969: S Ngendane, Charles Lakaje, William Jolobe, Prince Vilakazi, Rosette Ndziba, Peter Molotsi. GMG]

And I used to have terrific opposition inside the ANC at the time we put forward this idea. They were again instructed (?)— Because the ideas from the late pseudo-Communist party of South Africa had so much infiltrated, they were almost— They had almost taken over the ANC at the time.

NOW I WANT TO COME BACK TO THAT, BUT LET ME PURSUE THIS FOR A MINUTE. IF THE OPPOSITION WAS SO STRONG TO YOUR IDEAS, HOW DID YOU COME TO BE ELECTED IN 1954?

This is very interesting because in 1954 what was important was that I was working from within the ANC, and in Orlando and the Johannesburg area I was the Secretary of the ANC mother body, and I was also the chairman of the Youth League. And all attempts— Because I am a good organizer, I was a good organizer, all attempts always to try and overthrow me from [inaudible] the mother body, I used to defeat these because I was a hard-working man. In spite of the fact that even people who usually supported me on these issues actually in that decision in fact didn't like my ideas as such, but they liked me because I was a great organizer myself. So I was always elected against the terrific opposition. But I would fail to go through, and also in the Youth League this was the position. So then in '53 I managed to build a very strong nucleus of African nationalists on the basis of African nationalism and Africanism as postulated by the late Anton Lembede and A.P. Mda. And although this was regarded as racialism, but the position was not as they thought, but I was able to gain more support, and the Africanist movement gained support. And in 1954, in fact in '55, in fact we even staged Lembede's Memorial Service in Orlando. And for the first time we had terrific support throughout South Africa. And I was the chairman of the Africanist movement.

CAN I GO BACK AND ASK YOU A QUESTION ABOUT MDA? WHY DID MDA NEVER ASSUME— HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE YOUTH LEAGUE AND THEN HE RELINQUISHED THAT OFFICE TO SOMEONE ELSE. WHY DID HE DECIDE TO RETIRE INTO THE BACKGROUND IN THE '50's?

Well, I would say that he— Although he did not take a little part, this was due to the fact that he had just finished his articles as a lawyer, and he was practicing in Herschel. In that also the government I think forecast its eyes on Mda, and he didn't want to involve himself in these political difficulties. And also his health was not good. And also we had entrusted him with the task of theoretical line, general line, to give to some of our Youth Leaguers. I felt that when I started the Africanist movement I should have somebody else theoretically and ideologically who was good, and therefore Mda was at the background at the time, going to ourselves throughout the country, and also in Orlando to give an ideological background.

DID HE EVER MAKE PUBLIC SPEECHES, OR SPEAK TO LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE?

No. We— He and ourselves also felt that in public speeches he might be found to be taking a very active part in politics, and hence his practice might collapse. So we felt that he should be on the background.

DID YOU SEE HIM REGULARLY— Yes, regularly— EVERY WEEK?

Well, sometimes weekly or monthly. He would come or he would go to some other places. Then he was involved in writing a great deal in our journal, *The Africanist*. And then in '45 ('55?) we were able to get Sobukwe also from Standerton where he was a teacher to come in, and he and Mda together contributed a great deal, even before '55, because they started some sort of a journal called the— This journal was called the Bureau of African Nationalism. Now the Bureau of African Nationalism— We were writing either 1, 2, 3 pages giving out the general line with a view to resuscitate the ideas of 1949 conference, our program of African nationalism.

WAS THAT BULLETIN CIRCULATED IN THE TRANSVAAL AS WELL AS— IT WAS PUBLISHED IN EAST LONDON, WASN'T IT?

East London, by [A. S.] Gwentshe. Gwentshe was one of our great nationalist leaders. He was the Chairman of the Youth League in the Cape.

WHAT BECAME OF HIM?

He was thrust(?) into exile, but he— I understand he has now died. He, Sobukwe, one Nyathi Pokela and A.P. Mda were indispensable in writing this pamphlet of the Bureau of African Nationalism.

I'M SORRY I KEEP DIGRESSING, BUT CAN YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT POKELA? WHAT BECAME OF HIM?

Well, I think it is very difficult, but the point is he was the acting National Secretary after I left Maseru, and apparently he— When he had gone somewhere in another district in Lesotho called Butha-Buthe to go and fetch some grain for some of our men in Lesotho who had [inaudible] in Lesotho after serving certain prison terms in South Africa, on his way back to Maseru he was abducted by the South African police, [inaudible] assaulted and carried half-conscious into South Africa. And that was the position. All our protests and so on did not succeed because the Lesotho government was apparently conniving with the South African police to have Pokela detained (?).

BEFORE SHARPEVILLE, THOUGH, IN THE LATE '50's, WHAT ROLE DID HE PLAY IN THE PAC? HE WASN'T IN THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, BUT WAS HE AN OFFICE-HOLDER?

Yes, well, before Sharpeville he was chairman of this Herschel— Yes, he was the chairman of the Herschel district, region of the PAC.

IS THAT IN THE EASTERN CAPE?

That's the Eastern Cape, yes, South-eastern Cape. That's right. Herschel.

LET ME GO BACK TO THE TRANSVAAL. BEFORE THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE IN 1955. IN THAT PERIOD, '53, '54, EARLY '55, CAN YOU DESCRIBE FOR ME THE GENERAL STATE OF THE AFRICANISTS' ORGANIZATION? WHERE DID YOU MEET? WHO MET? AND WHAT WAS YOUR INTERNAL STRUCTURE?

Well, sometime between '54 and '55, the Africanist movement was already strong. And I was still the chairman of the Africanist movement, and also the Secretary of the Youth League, ANC, in Johannesburg, in Orlando area, and so on.

THE SECRETARY OR THE CHAIRMAN?

The Secretary of the Youth League ANC, and the chairman of the Africanist movement. That's right. And it was very strong at the time. I had, well, yes— One of the things I forgot to mention was Selby Ngendane who was my secretary in the Africanist movement, and then we had— It was myself, Selby Ngendane, Charles Lakaje, Peter Molotsi, and Mr Makhetha, Mr Gallant and many others. And then in '55, then, by the time they were organizing the Congress of the People at Kliptown—we used to call it the Kliptown Charter— And this was also organized by the former pseudo-Communists in South Africa, and—

I WANT TO GET TO THAT IN A MINUTE, BUT LET ME STICK TO THE AFRICANISTS— WHERE DID YOU MEET?

We met in Orlando, in different places in Johannesburg, and we decided—

IN PEOPLE'S HOMES, OR—?

Well, in my house there was a place there in Orlando, they used to call it the home of Africanism, or the University of Africanism. 142 Adams Street in Orlando, not far from Donaldson Center. We also meet in Donaldson Center, sometimes we meet in Johannesburg, in Bantu Men's Social Center, and mostly the headquarters of the office was at my place. I had a house there which was given to me—142 Adams Street—which was given to me by a certain lady who was a teacher in the United States, and I looked after the house. But I used it for the promotion of the Africanist movement. We used to have lectures, political—and indoctrination of the youth in the country by night, and so on.

DID MDA COME TO YOUR HOUSE?

Yes, usually he would be there from 6 until 6 in the morning, giving the—

DID SOBUKWE EVER COME, BEFORE HE MOVED TO JOHANNESBURG DID HE EVER ATTEND THOSE MEETINGS?

No, he only attended when he came to Johannesburg. He came to the Africanist movement in 1955. I can say the end of 1954. Then he became a member of the Africanist movement. And in fact, we were opposed to the Kliptown Charter. We organized the many Youth Leaguers, Africanists as we put it. We distributed our journal, *The Africanist*, and we even— We so opposed them that it was even a physical fight there at Kliptown. We were very strong at the time.

I'VE HEARD AND READ A GREAT DEAL ABOUT ALLEGATIONS OF COMMUNIST DOMINATION AND COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE ANC. AT THE TIME, WHEN YOU LOOKED AT THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ANC, CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES OF THE KIND OF THING THAT YOU SAW THAT CONVINCED YOU THAT COMMUNISTS WERE INFLUENCING OR DOMINATING THE ANC?

Well, I wouldn't say that the Communists as such— I would say that insofar as we were concerned, we knew that in 1950 when the so-called Communist Party in South Africa was banned, they infiltrated into the ANC to take it over, or to destroy it, or to use it. But the fact was that we also knew that they were not true Communists. And at the same time they took over the leadership. They had a great influence on the leadership of the ANC. They refused—

They were in fact opposing the program of nationalism and Africanism within the ANC. This program was the program of boycotting parliamentary—indirect African participation in parliament. Also, they were also not prepared to accept a boycott of Advisory Boards and other government institutions where Africans were helpless but involved in indirect representation. And at the same time they were advocating for indirect representation in parliament. They had their former members of the late Communist Party representing Africans, about 5 of them in parliament, like Sam Kahn, [Brian] Bunting, and a few others. And we said that the Africans were pressurizing the mother body that we do not believe in indirect representation. And we believed that 3 white people there cannot do anything in the parliament of 156 people. And that we stand completely for total abolition of the present system in South Africa.

So this was the influence of these fellows who came from the former Communist Party in South Africa, that insisted that we should be indirectly represented. And they also were insisting that— for the abolition of the Native Representatives' Council, which was a sort of an African parliament. And this was one of the—the toy (telephone) yes, all these dummy institutions which the Program of 1949 sought to abolish, and put the African people on a dynamic revolutionary program. But this was insisted by the old guard and even by the former members of the so-called Communist Party in South Africa.

DID MANDELA AND SISULU AND NOKWE FOLLOW THIS POINT OF VIEW, OR DID THEY FAVOR A BOYCOTT OF THE DUMMY INSTITUTIONS?

No, they were already captured by these pseudo-Communists. They didn't favor it because they were— The reason why the struggle was so bitter between the Africanists and the mother body, it was because Mandela, Sisulu, Tambo and others had turned against their promise of 1949.

NOW THIS IS SOMETHING THAT REALLY INTERESTS ME, THAT I HAVE TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN WHY THESE MEN DID SUCH A REVERSE? HOW AT THE TIME OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION THEY WERE LEADING [That's right] THE NATIONALIST VANGUARD, AND 5 OR 6 YEARS LATER THEY WERE BRINGING UP THE REAR? [Yes] HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS CONVERSION?

It's so difficult, but the position was that— Well, apparently, you see the— This Communist Party of South Africa, the so-called Communists, it was never a real one. It was composed of rich Jewish people, you know, bourgeois elements, and these people were giving a lot of money to Mandela, Tambo. Particularly they were sponsors for them to article them for, you know, they were to become lawyers. They gave them a lot of money for—to furnish their offices, to give them this, you know, the money—I don't know what you would call it—in order to enable them to article themselves as lawyers.

When Sisulu [who] has never been an intelligent man or a better politician— He could only follow the line that Mandela and Tambo were able to say that he should do. But Tambo and Mandela were completely in the clutches of the late Communist Party in South Africa, and some liberals in Johannesburg: who were opposed to the Program of 1949. And they were able to say this program was racialistic and chauvinistic and all that, and so they were able to be taken—to be put that side against the Africanists. So they were crushing the people that they had said must keep up this Program. But they said we were too extreme, and yet this was not the position.

WHO WERE THESE WHITES WHO—

Well, there were so many like, you know, Slovo, Mrs Slovo. You find [Braam] Fischer, the present lawyer Fischer. You find also Dr Dadoo in the Indian Congress, and his group there. And you find a number of them in Johannesburg who were very rich, staying in Lower Houghton, the richest part of Johannesburg, and their money was very important because they were even using the money to [inaudible] the people's secrets. And if they wanted this man to be elected, they would do so. There was so much bureaucracy, and you could not even change the structure of anything else because bureaucracy and patronism (?) was developing.

So the Africanist movement gained ground because they refused to accept the program that we will see the Africans marching to real emancipation of oppression in the country. That was the position. And Mandela and Sisulu were opposing this Program of '49 vehemently, particularly the boycott of dummy institutions like the NRC, the Advisory Boards, the indirect representation of these white fellows, due to parliament. We were clashing very violently. We were actually questioning them how had it happened that today they must support the line that is against the 1949 Program.

Now A.P. Mda was the advocate of this program, since the late Anton Lembede had died. He was the first architect and A.P. Mda had taken it from him. Now in Bloemfontein all these people, all of us who were under the leadership of A.P. Mda— So Mr Sobukwe who was among these people, could not follow Mandela and company. We called upon him to come from Standerton and I felt that myself, as a great organizer, I was not able to lead, I was too violent and ruthless, so I felt that a man who is a bit cool, like Sobukwe, highly educated and an intellectual, he would be able to come and assist us. I'm just a good

organizer, and so we had to get Sobukwe to come. And Mandela and these other fellows were opposing us because they had sold over to the liberals, to the pseudo-Communists, and all those who were dubbing us racialists because of trying to carry out the decision of the nation of 1949 Program as such.

LET ME ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT SOBUKWE IF WE CAN FOCUS ON HIM FOR AWHILE. LET ME JUST ASK YOU SOME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, AND THEN I WANT TO ASK YOU SOME MORE GENERAL ONES. DID SOBUKWE EVER KNOW LEMBEDE PERSONALLY? DO YOU KNOW?

No, he did not know him. He never saw him.

DID HE KNOW MDA?

Oh yes, oh yes. They were great friends. And in fact even when we were going to [inaudible] to go to prison, Mr Sobukwe and myself instructed A.P. Mda and left him behind to continue giving the ideological and theoretical line to the layers of leadership that we had left behind when we went to prison. He was trusted by us that he would give this ideological clarity to our own forces.

NOW SOBUKWE WAS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE S.R.C. [Students' Representative Council] AT FORT HARE.

That's correct

DID HE PLAY ANY PART IN THE FORMULATION OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION, THAT [Yes] YOU KNOW OF?

Yes, he did. Because A.P. Mda got down to Fort Hare— There was a Youth League there at which he— Mr Sobukwe—was also the chairman, and his secretary was Mr [Godfrey] Pitje—he's a lawyer now. And Mda got down to formulate this, and he also met Mandela, Tambo, and also he met us. We discussed these things, and he formulated the Program of 1949. But I would say that what actually Mda was doing was merely to try and keep it with the times, because this program was formulated by the late Lembede. It was accepted twice in the Provincial conferences of the ANC in the Transvaal, but whenever it got to the National Conference in Bloemfontein it was rejected. But in 1949 when it was piloted by Mda it succeeded. So in 1947 the late Lembede died, and there was a lull in the Youth League, and— until when Mda came up again and he was able to resuscitate this Program and give it, you know, a powerful push(?)

NOW SOBUKWE LEFT FORT HARE IN 1948 OR 1949—

In '49, November '49.

AND WHERE DID HE PROCEED FROM THERE?

In 1949 he left. In '50 he went to Standerton, in the High School there, where he was a teacher.

WHAT SUBJECT DID HE TEACH?

Well, I know that he also taught history, and English. English I know perfectly well that he did that. And they were with Pokela there, and he was there until the Defiance Campaign [when] he got into some trouble. But in '55 when I got to know that he would be in Johannesburg as a lecturer, then we got him to come, and he attended the first Memorial Service, the second Memorial Service, of the late Lembede at

Orlando, sponsored by the Africanist movement. Now when he was at the Wits, then he became a regular member of the Africanist movement, and he became the editor of *The Africanist* then.

THIS MAY BE A HARD QUESTION TO ANSWER, BUT IF YOU CAN TURN YOUR MIND BACK TO WHAT HE WAS LIKE THEN, DID HE SEEM TO YOU TO BE A PERSON WHOSE IDEAS WERE MORE OR LESS ALREADY FORMED IN 1955 WHEN HE CAME TO JOHANNESBURG, OR DID YOU HAVE THE FEELING THAT HIS IDEAS KEPT DEVELOPING AFTER— TOWARDS THE BEGINNING OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PAC?

I would say that his ideas had already been made up, because he was never happy that the Program of 1949 was not implemented. And when I came up as an advocate of the implementation of that Program, in fact he and A.P. Mda were assisting me. But at the time they did not want to come out openly because the African National Congress was so ruthless against opposition. We were preaching for the implementation of this Program, but at the same time he was teaching. And they assisted me in writing the ideas, and to see to it that the movement would succeed within the mother body, to take over the ANC. But when it failed to take it over, then we would have a different organization. So his mind was already made up.

And this, of course— When he came to the Africanist movement— He's a very humble man, but very genuine, and he worked with me and all other comrades there, and he was in fact a man who didn't even wish to hold important positions. In fact even when we were going to the Conference, he felt that many delegates would still propose me as the national President. And we discussed it together and I told him that I am going to canvas myself for him to become the national President, because as he understands my position from the beginning of politics, I am a good organizer and I am a good platform man, and so on, so in this case I can assure him that under all circumstances I would be elected Secretary, and now we'll see that he must get the Presidency. And so this was the position. A very good man.

LET ME GO BACK A MINUTE. HE BECAME THE CHAIRMAN—THE ANC CHAIRMAN—OF THE MOFOLO BRANCH [Yes] AT SOME POINT. CAN YOU REMEMBER WHEN THAT WAS?

Yes, I remember, that was '57 and '58.

WOULD YOU HAVE DESCRIBED THAT AS AN AFRICANIST BRANCH?

Yes, it was an Africanist branch, because we had taken almost all the branches, although we used to receive some assistance there, but—

WHO PRECEDED HIM AS CHAIRMAN OF THAT BRANCH?

Who preceded him? No, I don't think there was any because it was a new place. I don't think it because— They— I don't remember anyone. It was always— Oh yes, oh yes, it was one Mr Tshabalala, but later he, Tshabalala, was a member of the Africanist movement.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME IN THE WAY OF HUMAN INTEREST DETAIL ABOUT SOBUKWE'S FAMILY? WAS HE MARRIED THEN, IN THE MID-50's?

Yes, well, he met his wife when he was still a student at Fort Hare, and his wife was training at MacVicar Hospital at Lovedale. I knew the wife was a student sometime there, and the wife comes from Durban. And when she completed she became a nurse in Durban, and Sobukwe was teaching at Standerton. And in the course of just a year before he left Standerton he got married to her. That's right, but it was not such a big wedding. It was just a quiet one, only his friends.

WERE YOU THERE?

Yes, I was there. Only his few friends were present. And then he has got 4 children now.

WAS THAT IN STANDERTON? WAS HIS WEDDING AT STANDERTON?

Yes, he was still teaching at Standerton at the time. And then he has got 4 children. Two twins,.....and....., one set of twins, boys, and also the eldest daughter and the eldest son, at the present moment. They did stay at Mr Letlaka's place in Maseru, but now they are staying at my house in Maseru. Yes, they're with my family there, but the wife comes once in a certain time to see them and to take them down to Robben Island to see her husband. That's right. She's still a nurse somewhere, in the Jabavu Clinic in Johannesburg, at some other place there, I don't remember.

WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF SOBUKWE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD VIOLENCE AS A POLITICAL METHOD OR A POLITICAL PROSPECT? DID HE HAVE ANY PHILOSOPHY REGARDING VIOLENCE OR NONVIOLENCE?

Well, I can say that the position was that Sobukwe had always believed that we will gain our political power through an armed struggle, through the battle of the gun. But we together, after discussing this, we came to the conclusion that after a thorough analysis of this racist regime of South Africa, the apartheid regime there, that there is no alternative but ultimately to engage ourselves into an armed struggle. But then—

WHEN DID YOU DISCUSS THIS? REACH THIS CONCLUSION?

Discuss this? We discussed this in September 1959 in Bloemfontein, in our first National Executive meeting there, and also at some other meetings of the National Working Committee. But first Sobukwe felt that we had to educate the masses. We must start with some type of action, with the first action [which] will be to get our people to reassert themselves as human beings, and that, you know, objection to certain names of "boys," "Jimmy," "John," and all those things that all businesses and other places where Africans were not addressed properly. The Status Campaign, we called it, the Status Campaign. The Status Campaign to reassert African personality by means of showing the oppressors that we didn't accept the position.

WAS THIS SEEN AS A STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT?

Yes, of development. Then the next item in the program of liberation was the pass laws campaign, and the next one was now to be an armed struggle. Now, these were the stages in which we assert(?) our program, and he himself had actually felt that this should be the position.

DID YOU THINK IN TERMS OF ANY KIND OF TIMETABLE? OF HOW MANY YEARS, OR HOW LONG A STRUGGLE DID YOU FORESEE?

Well, yes, we did say that it would be difficult to set an exact timetable, but as politicians, you know, and revolutionaries, [we] would be able from time to time to set a certain goal that, like '63, when we said in 1963 we will see our freedom. We should be able from time to time to set a pace. But we also believed that the regime in South Africa is not so strong or terrifying as people think it is. Historically we know the Boers, how they are. They are outwardly become so strong and terrifying, and yet we know inwardly they are weak. And therefore we felt that at the time when we would be taking an armed—taking arms—it would not take us very long.

WHEN YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THE REVOLUTION IN THE LONG RUN, WERE YOU INFLUENCED IN ANY WAY BY A FEELING OF ANY HISTORICAL PARALLELS ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD? OR DID YOU LOOK IN ANY WAY TO THE IDEOLOGIES OR EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD? DO YOU SEE WHAT I'M GETTING AT?

Well, I would say that—

I MEAN NOWADAYS THERE ARE SO MANY REVOLUTIONARY HEROES, CHE GUEVARA, MAO TSE TUNG, AND SO FORTH, BUT I THINK 10 YEARS AGO THERE WAS LESS OF THIS. BUT DID YOU HAVE ANY IDEOLOGICAL OR REVOLUTIONARY HEROES?

Well, I would say that we were— One of our heroes was the late Lembede, Muziwakhe Lembede, Anton Lembede. But we drew a great inspiration from Dr Kwame Nkrumah, up to this day, the leader(?) of Africa. All progressive revolutionary peoples they still believe that he is the still(?) the outstanding expert of the African revolution. We, that's why in our flag you will see it has got the star where Ghana is. Whatever might have happened there, but we are convinced that unfortunately he has been [inaudible] of Africa and his own people. That's why we've got into difficulties. But we drew our great inspiration from him.

And at the time, of course, we did draw some inspiration from Kenyatta here, for what he had been fighting in this country here against the colonialists, and we still respect him for what he did. And also, well, from outside Africa, I don't think we did have— We read about Castro, we also read about Lenin, we also read about the Chinese revolution, but we felt that they— What had happened in these countries, the revolutions of these countries, are good to us as reference. We can always take them as a reference to our own situation, and up to now we don't believe in supplanting, transplanting something from Cuba or from Moscow or from China into South Africa. Firstly we look at the situation, and the experiences of these revolutions can just be used as reference in our own revolution.

WHEN YOU LOOKED OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA, AT GHANA AND KENYA, I PRESUME AT THE MAU MAU MOVEMENT AND THINGS LIKE THIS, WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION DID YOU HAVE? YOU HAD THE BANTU PRESS. DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

Well, insofar as the press in concerned, we didn't have anything— They had been too hostile. But we were in contact with President Nkrumah and Toure as early as 1954. And also on the basis of ideological clarity, and also we had Nkrumah, and even had the contact here also with Mboya, Tom Mboya.

WHAT FORM DID THAT CONTACT TAKE?

Well, the form was that he used to attend the All African People's Conferences in Accra, and we had some journals and pamphlets that we were able to [inaudible] the struggle of the Mau Maus under the leadership of Mzee Kenyatta. And this was very much publicized in Accra, in the Convention Peoples' Party of Dr Nkrumah at the time. And we were able to get more information out of here through Accra. And support from Ghana here in giving independence was very substantial, financially and otherwise. And we got our information through Accra. And Nkrumah and Toure used to send us some ideological clarity on Pan-Africanism, and also Sharpeville. That's right.

WAS THAT BEFORE THE 1958 ACCRA CONFERENCE THAT YOU—"

Yes, we were in contact with him before that.

WITH NKRUMAH?

With Nkrumah. I think he delighted us more than anything else. The fact that when Sobukwe put forward the—our ultimate aims of the continent, he— We also had it in our policy a continental government. We stand for the union of African states. So you can see that the influence was very great. But in any case he himself was very highly delighted, Sobukwe, and even before that he had sort of a union government for all Africa.

HAD ANY OF YOU READ THE WRITINGS OF GEORGE PADMORE?

Oh yes. George Padmore, I must say George Padmore and President Nkrumah did a great deal in sending us ideological literature and so on.

WAS THE 1958 ALL-AFRICAN PEOPLES' CONFERENCE IN ANY WAY A TURNING POINT?

It was a turning point. It meant a great interest in Africa as a whole, and in fact that was the beginning of the OAU. The OAU was founded on the basis that the 1958 All-African Peoples' Conference had a very serious impact.

DID IT INFLUENCE THE PAC'S IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT?

A great deal. We were highly influenced by that.

IT CAME, DIDN'T IT, BETWEEN THE BREAK IN NOVEMBER '58 AND THE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE [Yes] IN APRIL 1959 [Yes]. WHEN YOU WERE FASHIONING THE STRUCTURE AND THE APPEAL OF THE PAC AT THE TIME THE PARTY WAS SET UP, WAS IT YOUR FEELING THAT PAN-AFRICANISM AS A PLATFORM WAS SOMETHING THAT APPEALED GREATLY TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN MASSES? [Well—] YOUR PROPAGANDA STRESSED, YOU KNOW, THE UNITED STATES OF AFRICA [Yes] AND THE UNITY WITH THE REST OF AFRICA.

Well, I think there's no doubt that it appealed a great deal, and particularly in that we were quite clear on the philosophy of Pan-Africanism, and we were able to show the— Pan-Africanism, how it would succeed, show the purpose(?) of emancipation not only of South Africa but of the rest of the continent, and ultimately a socialist revolution of Africa. And also we thought that Pan-Africanism was not racialistic. It was a philosophy that envisaged a non-[racial] democratic socialist society. And for the first time when we preached(?) it in South Africa, I think we were able to succeed.

The fact [is] that in South Africa Pan-Africanism is equated with the PAC. And people felt that for the first time in South Africa through the PAC that the PAC had put forward an alternative government. When all the other parties, the ANC, had never challenged the present regime there. They had always fought for equal rights and all the rest of it, but we had put forward an alternative government to that which existed there. So in the circumstances, we put forward an ideal to overthrow that regime. And the people were able to follow us. But we had difficulty because, you see, our opponents were misinterpreting us in our policies, saying that we were racialists, and yet this was not the case. That's right.

THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS I CAUTIONED YOU ABOUT BEFORE WE BEGAN, THAT I WAS GOING TO AVOID SOME THINGS THAT SEEMED VERY IMPORTANT [That's right] BECAUSE I FELT I HAD A GRASP OF THEM ALREADY [That's right]. THIS QUESTION OF WHETHER THE

PAC'S POLICY WAS, QUOTE, "RACIALISTIC," OR NOT, I THINK I PERSONALLY HAVE COME TO TERMS WITH— (Tape ends)

LET ME ASK YOU ONE MORE QUESTION WHILE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT GHANA. AT THE TIME THE PAC WAS FORMED, WHEN YOU THOUGHT ABOUT GHANA DID YOU THINK OF IT AS A SOURCE OF POTENTIAL MILITARY SUPPORT AS WELL AS MORAL SUPPORT?

Well, we thought of political and moral support. And we had always envisaged that if—in an armed struggle Ghana is one of the first countries that will assist us. That's right.

NOW LET'S GO BACK TO THE AFRICANIST MOVEMENT [Yes]. WHEN WAS THIS GROUPING CALLED THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FORMED WITHIN THE AFRICANIST MOVEMENT?

What we had in the Africanist movement— Well, later it was the formation of the PAC, we had an internal grouping(?), but in the Africanist movement we had what we called the Inner Circle. We didn't call it a Central Committee or an Executive. It was called the Inner Circle, only some of the people were not even known by the general membership of the Africanist movement. But Inner Circle was headed by me and a few other members in it who were above board, who were members of this Inner Circle, which we would say is— You would call it an Executive or Central Committee of the Africanist movement, but we called it the Inner Circle.

WHEN DID THE INNER CIRCLE ACTUALLY FORM?

The Inner Circle was formed in '54, 1954, January. That's right.

AND IT CENTERED, DID IT NOT, IN THE TRANSVAAL, OR IN JOHANNESBURG?

It was centered in the Transvaal, in Johannesburg.

WAS THERE ANY CONTACT WITH PEOPLE, WITH AFRICANISTS, IN THE OTHER PROVINCES?

Yes, because the Inner Circle members—A.P. Mda was on—and Pokela was one, the late Gwentshe was one, and also Sobukwe later he became one, and [Victor] Sifora, which I had forgotten, was one. He was a teacher at Wilberforce Institute, Mr Victor Sifora, a very powerful member of the Africanist movement. And we had contact with other nationalist members in other provinces, but we were sending them literature and some of the important discussions and the general line to be taken. And they were making contributions sometimes, mostly under pseudonyms, because some of them were teachers, lawyers, and all these—

I'VE SEEN THIS IN THE AFRICANIST.

Yes, so that they should not be dismissed. And we had a very big membership in the teaching profession, and doctors, hospitals, and government departments, people who contributed underground.

WAS THERE MUCH OF AN AFRICANIST GROUP IN THE WESTERN CAPE, IN THE CAPE TOWN AREA, IN THE MID-'50's?

In the mid-'50's—

OR DID THAT COME LATER?

Not many, but there were a few there.

WHO WAS THERE IN THOSE DAYS?

Those days there was— Well, Mahomo came later. If I could remember— There were certain fellows like Mgweba at the time. There were fellows like (Tsuma?), there was— a teacher there now. I can't remember. There was— Well, I wouldn't say there were many, but really there were a few fellows there. But these were the Youth League fellows, that's right, that we were able to contact. And they were able to contact some other people inside the ANC and elsewhere.

WHEN THE PAC WAS FORMED LATER—LET ME JUST DIGRESS FOR A MINUTE—DID VICTOR SIFORA PARTICIPATE IN ANY WAY AS A PAC LEADER?

Well, he was very prominent in the Africanist movement, only because that the Africanist movement mostly it was secret. But he came to the Conference and he was [there a] few minutes or an hour and he left to consult some of the leaders there, and he went away. He as a civil servant, we didn't want to involve him at the time. But he was a very powerful man.

I SEE. WAS JORDAN NGUBANE INVOLVED?

He was with us in 1949 at Bloemfontein, and he was one of those, of the advocates of the Program of 1949. And we also did contact Ngubane, but he was never interested(?). He was also a member of the Africanist movement, except when he joined the Liberal Party, that we started, you know— He was criticizing the fact that we were not quickly becoming influential, and his ideas became liberalized, and we put him a little bit away. But he was a good fellow. Very.

HE NEVER ACTUALLY JOINED THE PAC?

He did. He did join the PAC, sometime immediately after the Inaugural Conference. He took a membership.

HE'S A STRANGE PERSON ISN'T HE? I'VE READ SOME OF HIS WRITINGS AND I FIND THEM VERY—

He's very strange—

IT'S HARD TO TELL WHERE HE STANDS.

Because of liberal views he sometimes wavers. He goes this way and that, and he has never been an Africanist to the core. He's not of the die-hards. Even if— [inaudible] there can be quarrels or anything else, but the ideas can never change (laughter).

LET ME ASK YOU ABOUT ANOTHER RATHER CONTROVERSIAL PERSON. WAS JOSIAS MADZUNYA EVER A MEMBER OF THIS INNER CIRCLE?

No. He was never in the Africanist movement. Never.

NEVER IN THE AFRICANIST MOVEMENT?

No. What happened to him is that he was an opponent, he—of ANC leadership. But his difficulty was that he was leading a tribal group from Vendaland. His—

FROM WHERE?

From Vendaland. He's a Venda, from somewhere, from the Bapedi-land somewhere, in the northern Transvaal. Now he had a group of loyal people that supported him. And therefore when he became an opposition man from his own branch in Alexandra township, he found the Africanist movement opposing the ANC, so he just jumped in, in '58. And his purpose of coming in it was— He himself— We also used him as an Africanist. We wanted him, to use him in opposing some of the programs in the ANC.

DID HE HAVE A LARGE PERSONAL FOLLOWING?

He had, but this was tribalistic. That's why he had the difficulty, because he could only have a following from his area, or those who speak his language. But we used him in some Provincial Conference, to try and put him as a candidate because we knew that we would either get him to accept the Africanist movement's ideas, or destroy him if he could not toe the line. But at least he was not an evil insofar as we were concerned. We were able to bring him back after— To protect(?) him to the Africanist movement after the break in '58. Before '58 he didn't belong to the Africanist movement, but he was a great sympathizer.

THE PRESS CERTAINLY PORTRAYED HIM AS AN AFRICANIST,

He was built by the Africanists, and we were in the background. The press even thought that I myself in fact I was building Madzunya in order to become the official president of the new organization that we would have. And yet this was not the case. Madzunya never knew what was going on inside the Africanists. We were meeting in public meetings and having a united front against what we termed to be the enemy, the ANC and the government at the time. So that even when we came to the Conference, he came being prepared, you see, that he would be elected as the President. But because he did not know the amount of work done by the Africanists— We did not want to create northern(?) enemies, or to create unnecessary strife at the time, so in the Conference he could not be able to even get a single seat in the National Executive. So this defeat exposed him to the press, because the press was building him up. But we had always said that since the press did not build us up, and therefore it cannot destroy us. And he himself believed that the press had built him up, but he was so on, and he would actually become leader of the new organization.

WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AFTER THIS INAUGURAL CONFERENCE?

Well, in the Conference there, he didn't contest the Presidency because so— The atmosphere was so big, so tense, that we could not. Also he didn't contest my position as National Secretary, but he contested all the others from Treasurership down up. In the Treasurer- ship we almost gave in because he only lost by one. Then the rest of all the other positions he failed, he didn't come in. He got substantial votes, but I think he antagonized himself with delegates when he came out with a ready-made flag, and also boasting that he would become the President, and all that. So he did not, he did underestimate the machine of the Inner Circle of the Africanist movement. And he was also not able to organize in different provinces. That was his difficulty.

BECAUSE HE LED A TRIBAL—

Yes. So we were able to organize ANC branches in all the provinces, the Youth League branches, and so on, because we had membership in the universities, teachers, and so on. So we were very strong.

WHAT WAS HIS EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?

Well, educationally, somebody else who had done— He has passed Standard 5 [Molotsi says 7. GMG].

YOU RAISED A POINT THAT I WANTED TO ASK ABOUT, AND I MIGHT AS WELL ASK ABOUT IT NOW. YOU SAY HE CONTESTED THE ELECTION FOR SOME OF THE VARIOUS POSTS. CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO ME HOW, AT THE INAUGURAL CONVENTION, HOW THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE WAS CHOSEN? HOW CANDIDATES WERE PUT UP AND SO ON?

Well, the position was that the chairman there, who was the Cape (?) officer— The arrangement was that we are going to elect by show of hands, not by ballot. And I was the man who nominated Mr Sobukwe, and he was elected by acclamation.

DID YOU GIVE A NOMINATING SPEECH OF SOME KIND?

Oh no. There are no nominating speeches. No canvassing at that time. The canvassing goes out some 2 or 5 days to different delegations and so on, all to the provinces who [inaudible]. So when we got at the Conference there, there were other people who were also canvassing. The canvassing for nominations is not done publicly. Each person goes to those people that he thinks can support him, and all the rest of it.

DID ANYONE ELSE CANVAS FOR THE PRESIDENCY?

Yes. We—I and the internal committee people canvassed for the Presidency, and also for myself, and also for the other members of the National Executive.

WHAT I MEAN IS, WAS THERE ANY OTHER PERSON WHO FANCIED HIMSELF RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY?

No, no. Except for Madzunya who had thought so. That's right. Otherwise no other person.

NOW HOW, WHEN YOU GOT DOWN TO— DID ANYONE CONTEST THE NATIONAL SECRETARY, THE POST OF NATIONAL SECRETARY?

Also, yes. Well, whether this was accidental or not. [A. B.] Ngcobo, a member of the present National Executive, did contest my position. And the arrangement, because he was in the internal committee, was that if any of the candidates we are canvassing for— If you are earmarked for this position and this position and that position, if you are nominated, because you are not earmarked for this position you must decline. So he didn't decline when he was nominated for the position of Secretaryship. So some members shouted at him to do so. He refused. He had apparently asked some people to canvass for him, which was dishonest because he was in the delegation of Natal, so this was arranged accordingly. But in the question of voting, the two people who seconded him and himself they were three, and I got 1400 votes and I defeated him.

DO I UNDERSTAND YOU THAT THE INNER CIRCLE OR THE WORKING COMMITTEE OR SOME SUCH HAD, PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE, MORE OR LESS DECIDED WHO SHOULD TAKE WHAT OFFICE?

Well, only 2 days after all delegates had arrived from different provinces— But in the Inner Circle we had already decided that Sobukwe would be the man, 1 would be the man, and we felt, well, we must give Natal 2 or 3 positions and so on, and the other people. That's right.

WERE ALL OF THE MEN WHO BECAME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, WERE THEY ALL PERSONALLY KNOWN TO YOU [At the time?] AT THE TIME?

No. With the exception of one, Nyaose, J.D. Nyaose. I never knew him until when the man was elected. I never knew him as far as I know. (Here we refer to the list of the National Executive of the PAC, page 15 of *The Africanist*, May/June 1959). Oh, well, this one was co-opted after— No, this one was co-opted.

HOWARD NGCOBO?

No, this one.

MABOZA?

Maboza. At the Conference, after the election.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT? HOW WAS THAT?

Well, Mr Maboza— After elections the President and ourselves decided that the Conference must agree we co-opt Mr Maboza.

WAS THAT BECAUSE YOU NEEDED SOMEONE FROM PORT ELIZABETH?

Yes, we needed someone else there. He was— Because of this man here, Nyaose. You see we had had somebody else we had decided in the Inner Circle of the Africanist movement, called Nyobo. Now Nyobo was a trade unionist, in the Cape, and we felt that he should be the man elected—

WHAT WAS HIS FIRST NAME?

What is his first name? I think I forget.

THERE ARE SO MANY NGCOBOS.

No, that one was Nyobo.

OH, HOW DO YOU SPELL THAT?

N-Y-O-B-O, not Ngcobo, Nyobo. So then because of some confusion which had taken place at the Conference as a result of this man, Ngcobo, not keeping to the position we had asked him, there was now an atmosphere of electing people as they wished. So Mr Nyaose, who was a trade unionist there, I didn't know him, but he had— His union had opposed some kind of so-called Communist strike in Johannesburg, which we also opposed—£ 1 a day, which was £ 1 a day, and the strike for the day, for 2 days. Now he was leading a union—Bakers. So he made a speech that his union will not support this SACTU, you see, which is controlled by the ANC, this SACTU trade union controlled by ANC and the former members of the Communist Party. So because he did that, he supported the Africanists, and for that he was praised for the action he had took, that his union members will not participate on strike that day. So when he came to Conference, I myself I didn't know him. Many people knew him, so at the door he paid a membership, at that Conference there. You see, when he paid a membership, apparently he came in, and when he was nominated, because this Mr Nyobo, and Madzunya—Madzunya also contested this position of Mr Nyobo—so then— Now we wanted trade unionists, and this man was nominated.

When he was nominated, I made an objection. And we were already on the platform, with Mr Sobukwe and so on. Now Mr Sobukwe said to me that you know— I said now but you see the membership here— I have received this— Somebody gave me a membership someone who had joined there— And this man he joins today at the door and he must be nominated. How can he? So Mr Sobukwe said now listen, this conference— You see we are so much opposed and indignant by this man from being nominated or elected, they are going to say that this conference was undemocratic. So the best way— We better leave this because, you see, we are facing a hostile press and all this, our enemies and so on. Immediately(?) the people want him elected, let him come in. So you say you don't know him. You were supposed to have known him— Yes, but I can't. Then in the struggle there, he, that Nyobo, was defeated. And Madzunya also was defeated, and this man got in by one vote, Mr Nyaose. Yes. And then also [Nana] Mahomo got in by a very narrow margin. He was opposed by Mr Madzunya. This Mahomo here. (Referring to list). Then this one he was alright, Hlatswayo. Yes I know this— All of them, these men here. They were elected, with the exception of this one, number 8, who was co-opted. He was not elected.

THIS MAY BE REPETITIOUS, BUT CAN YOU REPEAT FOR ME WHICH OF THE MEN ON THIS LIST WERE IN THE SO-CALLED INNER CIRCLE?

Here? The Inner Circle here. None of these people were in, with the exception of myself, this one—

MOLOTSI AND NGENDANE WERE?

Yes, were in the Inner Circle. That Ngendane—

WHAT ABOUT MOLETE?

Molete was not in. He came very late in the Africanist movement, came in '57, '57. Molotsi, Ngendane, were in the Inner Circle.

WHAT ABOUT MOTHOPENG, Z. L. MOTHOPENG?

No, no, he was not in the Inner Circle. He also came late in the Africanist movement.

CAN YOU TELL ME SOMETHING, ANYTHING ABOUT HIM, MOTHOPENG? I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM.

Yes, he was sort of a legal man. When we were drawing up the Constitution. But the Disciplinary Code belongs to the Africanist movement. It was just adopted by the National Conference. That was drawn by me and A.P. Mda. The Disciplinary Code for the Africanists, for the direction of the Africanist movement.

WHEN DID YOU DRAW THAT UP?

In 1954. And it was adopted by the Africanist movement, and later adopted by the Orlando Youth League which had been converted into the Africanist movement. So when the Conference came, Mothopeng, Molete, and Howard—the late Howard Ngcobo—who were writing the Constitution and so on, they—the Constitutional Committee, they adopted this. They decided that the Disciplinary Code was the beautiful document.

WAS IT ADOPTED INTACT, OR WAS IT ALTERED?

Exactly as it was, at the National Conference. They did make— What was the— Well, at the National Conf— Before the National Conference, of course, we made some amendments to the emergency clause. The— In 1959 Conference.

WHAT WAS THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE?

The emergency clause is in the— This thing here. I think I have it here. Have you got it? (He produces a miniature edition of the party's basic documents, about 2" x 1 and a half inches, with a light green cover).

YES, I HAVE IT, BUT I CAN'T THINK OF EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN.

Here, I'll show you. What is this now, oh yes, emergency, this one here. That one there. You have got it, I suppose. In fact now the party at the moment is run through that clause there. That was made in case we—the party is banned, or we go underground, or we go into revolution. Then the President can have the powers, you know, whenever—where the Constitution doesn't say anything, it can be— I got it from one of our chaps in prison. That's why it looks like this (referring to booklet).

THAT'S CLAUSE "B" OF ARTICLE 14.

That's right. So that whenever— Yes, clause "B" here, of Article 14.

TELL ME, WAS RABOROKO IN THE INNER CIRCLE?

No, he was not in the Inner Circle.

WHEN DID HE—

Peter, well, he came into the Africanist movement—'56,

AROUND THE TIME OF THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE?

Yes, immediately after the Congress of the People. And also the same time Mr Mothopeng came at that— And Ngcobo came in fifty— When was the Treason Trial? In '55 or-'56. But he was in Natal. He never attended any of our meetings. But we met him and gave him the general line, to organize underground for the Africanist movement in Natal. He and the late Howard Ngcobo. (Referring to list) I don't see him. Is he here? Howard Ngcobo? You don't have him? Oh, here he is, yes, there's A.B. That's right.

THIS IS YOUR LIST, NOT MINE. YOU SEE WHERE IT COMES FROM.

(Laughter) Yes, well exactly, that's right. So that was the position. The Inner Circle was composed of 3 people in the Cape, 4 people in the Cape, although Sobukwe came a little later. It was A.P. Mda, Pokela, Gwentshe—he's late—and then Sobukwe came in. He was already at Standerton. Then myself, Peter Molotsi, Ngendane, and Philemon Makhetha, and 3 others—and Sifora was also in the Inner Circle.

DID THE INNER CIRCLE MORE OR LESS CORRESPOND TO THE PEOPLE WHO WROTE ARTICLES FOR THE AFRICANIST?

No, it doesn't. We pick out, we choose the best brains, and we choose also more dedicated and more strong nationalists in Africanists, those whom we were convinced can never give in to any [inaudible] whatever the case might be. The hard core. That's right. Not [inaudible] from different provinces, or where the Africanist movement has more membership. Not at all.

I WANTED TO TALK BRIEFLY SOME MORE ABOUT THE INAUGURAL CONVENTION. NOW IT WAS THREE DAYS IN LENGTH, WASN'T IT? IT WAS OVER A WEEK-END?

Yes, was it not 4, 5, 6 and 7 [OF APRIL] Yes.

CAN YOU RECALL FOR ME SORT OF THE PROGRESS OF EVENTS AT THE CONFERENCE? WHAT HAPPENED THE FIRST DAY, AND WHAT HAPPENED THE SECOND DAY— TO THE BEST YOU CAN REMEMBER. I KNOW IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

Well, all I can say is that firstly, is that when the Conference opened, it was— First we started with the Credentials Committee. We elected the Credentials Committee to see the delegates coming from different provinces. And we— Because we had expected either Kamuzu Banda or President Kaunda to come and open the Conference, but due to difficulties in their own struggles, they didn't turn up. And Mr Sobukwe had prepared an opening address there, and we had delegates coming from all over the provinces. And the Transvaal had more delegates than all other provinces. And I remember there as the delegates were coming in, particularly the youth from the Transvaal, some members of the press wanted to run away, because they never expected some of the youth, those who were in the boxing clubs, football clubs, and a number of many others, even those that they call tsotsis [hoodlums] in South Africa. And because— And students, because we enjoy a great membership of the youth in the country. And I remember one of the reporters was Benjamin Pogrund. I don't know if you know him?

NOT PERSONALLY.

Yes. So we had the opening address, and then there was discussion after that, and immediately after this the Natal delegation arrived very late. We read messages of solidarity and encouragement, inspiration, from President Nkrumah, Sekou Toure. And I think as far as I could remember, the leaders of Africa. Then the following day we discussed the proposed Constitution. And, well, the ANC sent in some of its members, because they thought that we would not succeed even to have about 100 delegates, and so on. And yet we had one thousand and over four hundred delegates there. And then we discussed the Constitution, and the whole Constitution, and it was adopted after 2 days, 1 and a half days, and thereafter we then went through to elections. After the elections, the President made a press conference, had a press conference, and I think that was the position—that we collected a lot of money from people, sympathizers. We got in that Conference there over £900. And we were able to go ahead with our program from the onset.

YOU MENTIONED SOMEONE, I FORGET WHO, COMING IN AND PAYING UP AND BUYING A MEMBERSHIP AT THE DOOR. [Mr Nyaose] NYAOSE. I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND— IF THE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE WAS THE FOUNDING OF THE PARTY, WHAT WAS IT THAT PEOPLE ALREADY HAD MEMBERSHIP CARDS IN?

Yes. The membership cards were the Africanist membership cards.

NOW WHAT WAS THAT?

You see, when the Africanist movement was organizing, when we managed to organize the progressives(?) on a larger scale, then the Convention, we decided to have the membership of the Africanist movement, membership cards.

AND THE PEOPLE WHO CAME AS DELEGATES WERE PEOPLE WHO HAD THESE CARDS?

Who had these cards.

HOW WERE THE DELEGATES CHOSEN, SAY IN NATAL OR THE CAPE?

Well, in each branch they were choosing 20 delegates, irrespective of whether— The proportion was that a branch which should be— The branch should be 50 members, and for each 10 there should be a delegate. So in different areas people were having hundreds or thousands, but they could not have more than 20, 20 delegates.

AND DID THESE PEOPLE PAY THEIR OWN TRANSPORT TO COME TO ORLANDO?

Yes, they paid the transport.

DID ALL THESE PEOPLE STAY OVER IN THE CITY?

Well, we arranged accommodations with people in the townships there. We arranged accommodations because we had a very huge membership.

THIS SOUNDS LIKE A SILLY DETAIL, BUT WHEN I COME TO WRITE THE FINAL ACCOUNT I WANT TO GIVE SOME OF THE FLAVOR OF WHAT IT WAS LIKE.

Well, the point is that our own members— Because in Johannesburg and Orlando area we had a very large membership, and therefore we had prepared, because the internal committee of which I was the chairman had prepared for the delegates in different houses in the townships. Yes, in these houses people accommodated some, up to 5 members, others up to 8, 4, 3, 2 and so on.

DID YOU GET ANY ESTIMATE OF HOW MANY OF THE DELEGATES CAME FROM OUTSIDE JOHANNESBURG?

Well, I remember that, well, this would involve even the Transvaal, [inaudible] Johannesburg. Well I think in Johannesburg, the Reef, not necessarily Johannesburg, from Randfontein to Springs, we had about 500 and something delegates. And then the Transvaal as a whole, we had outside Johannesburg, we had approximately 200 and something. And then the rest of the delegates came from the Cape, Natal, and the Free State. Then they came to about a thousand and four hundred and something. That's right. So in the Transvaal, in Johannesburg, I can give you the Transvaal I know, were there approximately between seven and eight hundred. In the Transvaal.

AND THE CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE IN WHAT SORT OF—

In Orlando Communal Hall.

THAT'S A MUNICIPAL-OWNED BUILDING, ISN'T IT?

It's a municipal-owned hall.

I SEE. COULD YOU, AS A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, RENT THAT ALMOST ANY TIME YOU WANTED TO HOLD A MEETING?

But this was the first time we had got permission from the City Council of Johannesburg to rent that. We had to pay for the hall. Usually we used to use Donaldson Center, but because there were several—a

number of activities going on there, in the Donaldson Center, we had it in the Communal Hall. And we got permission from the Johannesburg municipality.

CAN YOU RECOLLECT THE WEEKS FOLLOWING THE CONFERENCE, WHAT THE NATURE OF YOUR ACTIVITY WAS? YOU WERE THEN MORE OR LESS A FULL-TIME ORGANIZER [That's right.] HOW DID YOU— I WANT TO GET SOME SENSE OF WHAT A DAY IN YOUR LIFE WAS LIKE AT THAT POINT. WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED THE CONFERENCE?

Well, I don't know actually what you mean by that, but the point was that— I say, you know, I was in very high spirits, and I had no office, and I broke part of my partitioning in my house, broke it— the dining and another part of the room there, made it one hall, put a table and machines and everything—

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FAMILY?

It was still accommodated there, but— And so I started voluming(?) more copies of the Constitutions, now membership cards, and the different provinces were there, according to the Constitution, so we had to break them into regions before the leaders went down, had to get instructions how they must organize, the policies and the programs of the party, that the program would be decided by the National Executive, and— The work was that way. But since I am the only one, the only paid official in the National Executive, I would be paid about £50 a month. And there was insufficient money and Mr Sobukwe was able to pay me because he was getting some money, but he used to have quite a little (argument?) with his wife. You know at the time he got his salary he was just paying for my rent, and also giving me some money because—as my salary and certain expenses. For the party he paid out of his pocket in order to finance some programs and work to be done, stationery and other things.

And I had a difficulty myself, because it was difficult for me to get employment. And at the time I was employed by an African Chamber of Commerce. I used a scooter, and this scooter I also used it for organizing, because although I was the National Secretary I continued to do the work like a National Organizer, in spite of the fact that we had one. So I had to use this motorbike to form as many branches as I could. Particularly in the places where the ANC was so strong, I would get there because I was really regarded as a strong man, stubborn, and usually those days we were even engaging ourselves in fisticuffs!(laughter)

So I was using a force to invade some of the branches, their meetings and all the rest of it. But I enjoyed this, because there's nothing that I enjoy—politics in my life— [more] than anything else. I have lived for that, and I always feel happy, particularly when there is some trouble or commotion, even right now in my party I believe in having some tough situations because I know that I'll always go through without difficulty.

YOU THRIVE ON COMMOTION—(laughter). WHEN DID THE PARTY, OR DID THE PARTY EVER GET AN ACTUAL HEADQUARTERS THAT WASN'T SOMEONE'S HOME? A RENTED OFFICE?

Well I would say that— Not at all. Because we did use Mr Nyaose's office in Johannesburg sometimes for a short period because we were working feverishly toward the launching of Sharpeville campaign, that led to Sharpeville campaign. But the headquarters was my house, the office where I broke part of the wall there to create an office. So we had everything down there, even for the campaign everything was there in my house. We turned it into National Headquarters. Because in town, you see, we would meet there as a matter of convenience because more of our members of the National Working Committee were working in town. So when they are there I would have to travel From Dube township where I was staying and go

and have a meeting there. That's right. But all the [inaudible] and everything was done at my place. And whenever the president also knocked off from the Wits he would come to the house and can cook there and at the same time go ahead with the work. Yes.

WAS SOBUKWE TEACHING ON A FULL-TIME BASIS ALL DURING THIS?

Yes, that's right.

WHAT DID HE TEACH AT WITS?

Well, he was a lecturer in Bantu Studies, Bantu languages.

BANTU LANGUAGES? A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ONES, OR—?

Yes, different. Well, he did Zulu. He also did a little bit of Xhosa and Sotho, but he specialized in Zulu.

BETWEEN THE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE AND THE BEGINNING OF THE PASS CAMPAIGN, ON WHAT OCCASIONS DID THIS GROUP OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEET AS A WHOLE?

We met in '59, September, in Bloemfontein. the first, the full national executive. We met in Bloemfontein and mapped out the status campaign and the pass campaign. But the national working committee was to work out the details in Johannesburg.

NOW WHO WERE THE MEMBERS OF THIS NATIONAL WORKING COMMITTEE?

It was the President, myself, Mr Mothopeng, Molotsi, Ngendane, Molete, Raboroko, Nyaose— But these people are candidated because they're in the proximity, of the area.

THE IDEA OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE—

The idea of the Working Committee, just four members and the President.

JUST BECAUSE THEY LIVED IN JOHANNESBURG?

That's right, so they attended the meetings of the National Working Committee.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THIS SEPTEMBER 1959 MEETING AT BLOEMFONTEIN FOR ME?

Well, I would say that the meeting took place there— Among other things we discussed the administration, in Bloemfontein, of the party. And after the administration was still liked, then we decided what type of program should be taken, for the people to launch the program. Because we could see that although we had succeeded in launching the party at the Inaugural Convention, but what was necessary quickly(?) was that the people were now awaiting to see what next, what we are going to do. So the ANC was working hard with its demonstrations, you know, and all that. So we felt that in view of the fact that the majority of our membership is the youth, and that the youth believes in immediate positive action, and that this was in line with what we had preached in the Africanist movement in the ANC, that what was important to us is action which must be unfolding until such time when we came in a position to bring down the regime there, to [inaudible]. So we felt that the economic struggle was also important, but we would start with the Status Campaign, to reassert the personality of our people, human personality. And then we then chose the pass laws, and third that on this date we will have to court prison and go to jail.

So it was a very difficult decision because not all of us would have accepted to go to prison without any benefits, but we felt that should be the position. Although at the meeting some of us felt that we should engage ourselves in violence. We should collect as many weapons as we can, and it should be the beginning of a violent struggle. But the President and a few others also had a view that we were not yet prepared for a violent struggle, an armed struggle. It would take us a long time before we can reassert the minds of our people to make them understand that the regime there of the white man, really the white man was nothing insofar as we are concerned. It was just another ordinary human being like ourselves. And so we felt that, however, the question of violent struggle should not be completely excluded, but this should be the basis from which we should start. That's right. So we agreed on the program of I960 pass campaign.

AMONG THIS MINORITY WHO WERE PUSHING MORE FOR VIOLENCE SOONER, CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THIS— WELL, THE IMPATIENT ONES?

Well, the position here was that I think that I came with the idea of violence, because I was more in contact with the youth myself, as a man who was responsible for organizing the Africanist movement. And up to the Conference I was able to get the young people into the party. And they were tired of oppression, and also myself I was tired of oppression, always going to jail, and jail today for pass offenses, fighting the police every time, now and again, dismissed from my employment every time. Then I felt I should move a different proposition, that we must go into violence forthwith, and—

DID YOU PREACH THAT AMONG THE YOUTH?

I beg your pardon?

DID YOU PREACH THAT AMONG THE YOUTH WHEN THEY ASKED YOU? SURELY THEY MUST HAVE PRESSED YOU—

Yes, they— I was under heavy pressure, to the extent that the President didn't want to do—to go to Sharpeville, to lead the demonstration there. The pressure was so much, and at Sharpeville where we had organized the youth there, came and pleaded with the President. And when he refused I decided that I would escape and run away so that the day of the struggle there they had already collected their weapons. And I was of the opinion that as far as I knew that South African police were so brutal and inhuman— The only way is that before we are mowed down prettily(?) we should also fight.

WHO AGREED WITH YOU AMONG THE MEMBERS?

I think I was— I can say I was rejected by almost everybody, although they were in a position to discuss. But I was defeated completely.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY BACKERS AT ALL?

No, I had no one to back me on this question. But they did understand my argument. But unfortunately it was a democratic centralism we were discussing.

WAS THERE ANYONE WITH WHAT YOU WOULD CALL A PHILOSOPHICAL COMMITMENT TO NONVIOLENCE?

I beg your pardon?

YOU'VE EXPLAINED YOUR POSITION, AND THE OPPOSING VIEW THAT VIOLENCE AT THAT STAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN PREMATURE IN A WAY. PEOPLE WEREN'T READY FOR VIOLENCE AT THAT STAGE. WAS THERE ANYONE WHO HELD THE POINT OF VIEW THAT VIOLENCE, NO MATTER WHAT, WAS WRONG, AND THAT NONVIOLENCE HAD TO BE THE STRATEGY? THIS WAS AN ANC PHILOSOPHY IN A WAY, BUT WAS THERE ANYONE WHO WAS PHILOSOPHICALLY COMMITTED TO NONVIOLENCE?

Well, not at all. None of them was committed to nonviolence. But the President and Mr Mothopeng here did impress upon us a great deal that at the moment we were not prepared for a violent struggle, and we would be committing suicide. And although I can say that even without engaging ourselves into violence we would still be killed in greater numbers, because I know the mentality of the Boers, the Afrikaners. And however they were quite reasonable in their arguments, and we accepted this. But on that day the President saw to it— He sabotaged me because when these people we had arranged secretly with the organizers in Sharpeville to come and fetch me. Then he said— He also saw them secretly and said that I would be coming, he will see that I get a car to get there. And then he told me no, well, you will get a car, and to my surprise no car came. Instead he gave me another assignment and I never got to the place there. But because I had always been very bitter myself about the Afrikaners.

LET ME SEE IF I HAVE THIS RIGHT. HAD YOU BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE LEADERS IN SHARPEVILLE PERSONALLY BEFORE THE LAUNCHING OF THE PASS CAMPAIGN?

Yes. In the evening they had just left my office, about 8 o'clock. They left my office to Sharpeville.

THE DAY BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN?

Yes. Before the campaign, on the eve of the campaign,

WHY WAS SHARPEVILLE SO MILITANT?

Well, the organizational work was good. And also unemployment in the place, and the pass raids were too severe there, in the place there. People were being, you know, persecuted by the South African police more than in any other place because there are mines there. People made their own beer, and all these things, and you'll find a raid almost every day, people without passes, and also for having beers without permits, and a number of many other things. But the organizers were too efficient. They were very young there, and most of those boys there have also been with me in Lesotho. They came from my original place in Lesotho, and they knew me very well, because they knew also that I founded the Basutoland Congress Party myself. And—

WAS THERE A LARGE SOTHO POPULATION IN SHARPEVILLE?

The Sotho population there, in fact it's almost 90 per cent. And when we were issuing even circulars we only sent them in Sotho there. We didn't bother to have circulars in Sotho, Xhosa, Pedi and all, English and other languages. It was too easy.

THESE YOUNG CHAPS WHO LED THE SHARPEVILLE ORGANIZATION, WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE WERE THEY? WERE THEY WORKERS OR STUDENTS, OR—

A few were students, others were workers.

BUT ALL YOUNG MEN?

All young men.

CAN YOU EXPAND AT ALL ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHARPEVILLE AND SOME OF THE OTHER CENTERS? FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN THE DAY CAME OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE PASS CAMPAIGN, WHY WASN'T THERE A GREATER RESPONSE IN ORLANDO ITSELF?

Well, I will say that in Orlando—you know Johannesburg is a sophisticated place—and also at the same time we had a lot of opposition there. But the people were being [inaudible] inside the meetings we held on the eve of the launching, were being scattered by the government with these armored cars. And ANC was also holding its own meetings. But then I think the question depended on the people who were organizing, because I was to leave Dube and walk over to Orlando, and then we congregated people on the football ground, and I would be going that way. Now the youth had a great belief in me. Now another member here, in fact he didn't turn up at Orlando East. We had there almost 2000. So Mr Ngendane who was supposed to lead those people, he left the place and went and slept and told these fellows to go and sleep and he would come later. So when— By the time I got there, most of the people had gone back. But at least by the time we were surrendering ourselves the number was not quite as [inaudible] it ought to have been. As I say, Orlando— The youth there concentrated after the arrests in some sabotage activities, you know, cutting wires, telephone wires, electricity, rediffusion(?), and blocking railway lines for people not to go to work, and all sorts of things, and so on.

AFTER THE 21st OF MARCH?

Yes, after the launching on 21st of March.

AT WHAT OTHER CENTERS WAS THERE A SIGNIFICANT DEMONSTRATION ON THE 21st?

Well, Cape Town was very good. The organizers there were very good, and apart from that it has always been a very strong area. Those people when the Africanist movement was formed, they quickly— We quickly got terrific support in the Western Cape. Also because of frustration of people there. They move out people from Cape Town, sending them to Transkei, and all the rest of it. And we had very big support there. And I think if a mistake was not made in the Cape Town demonstration, it could have really created a very hard situation, because the leadership there also went to prison.

And then a young man who was a student there, by the name of Kgosana, Philip Kgosana, and he was in the committee at the time, and he had just been elected secretary of the region. He was carried shoulder high—high, by the marchers. Now because of being young, I think he was either confused or, you know, over-excited, and when he got to parliament buildings, instead of carrying out the President's instructions that he cannot enter into any negotiations with the government, he agreed when he was called by the then Minister of Justice or something, Erasmus, and asked to go into another office there, for negotiation and discussion and so on. So when he got there he was arrested. He never returned back to the people. So as a result these people here they had no one to lead them, and the direction was not there, and that was the collapse of the demonstration there.

Whereas in Sharpeville the police opened fire, in Cape Town this was not done. Then this man could have said, according to his instructions, well, we cannot enter into any discussion with the government. You better fetch Sobukwe from prison to come and discuss with you. As far as we are concerned we enter into no negotiations. Now this fellow did this, and this was the position. But otherwise in Cape Town we put up a wonderful struggle there.

I'VE SKIPPED OVER SOMETHING IN TIME THAT I WANT TO GO BACK TO. CAN I GO BACK TO THE SEPTEMBER 1959 MEETING OF THIS EXECUTIVE? [Yes] WHERE IN BLOEMFONTEIN DID YOU MEET?

We met in Bochabela location.

IN SOME KIND OF HALL?

In a house, in a big house of one of our members there.

THAT'S RIGHT, IT WAS A SMALL GROUP. WHAT WAS THE EXACT DATE OF THAT MEETING, DO YOU REMEMBER?

I can't just remember, but it was September. Oh yes, it was 15th of September.

I SEE. WAS THERE THEN ANY OTHER FULL MEETING OF THIS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE GROUP BEFORE THE PASS LAUNCHING?

Yes, this whole National Executive meeting took place on the eve of the annual National Conference in December 1959.

IN DURBAN?

No, no. It took place in Johannesburg, at my house, at our office.

OH YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE PAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Yes. Where the decision to launch this pass campaign was taken and ratified by the National Conference.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THAT DECEMBER CONFERENCE FOR ME?

Well, I can say that in this conference there— We had already decided in the National Executive that we are going to direct the conference on the basis of our decision in Bloemfontein that we must go into positive action, an unfolding program of positive action in the pass campaign. So our decision there— We decided first in the National Executive meeting before the conference started that when— We know that there will be so many resolutions in conference, but we would see to it that only one resolution must come out. We will hammer the question of persecution, you know, against our people on pass offenses, and how the passes have made us even worse than slaves in South Africa, And so that the pass campaign will be a triumph(?) but it will be the beginning of an unfolding program of positive action until an armed struggle has developed, and until we have achieved national liberation.

So when we got to the conference there, before we got to the conference, somebody here—Mr Mahomo—suggested that it is possible that after the campaign of the pass laws the party might be banned or it might go underground, or engage itself into revolution. So we [inaudible] consensus(?) we must also get the conference to approve of an emergency clause whereby the President can direct the party by special decree, and that this decree can always be delegated to whoever has to act on behalf of the President, or according to the hierarchy, whoever takes his place, or he's incapacitated or he dies, or anything happens. Then this person can direct the party. So this was agreed, and we got to the conference.

So many resolutions were put forward, after a number of speeches and the President's address along this direction. And we had to, I and—I think—Mr Mothopeng, Mahomo and Molotsi, we went into Resolution

Committee and discussed in the Resolution Committee that we submit this resolution which is so specific on the question of the pass campaign, and that all other resolutions have to converge on this one or be dropped for the future, and so on. So we came to the conference, and this resolution, was appealing to the people and commended by the National Executive, and it was accepted.

AT THAT POINT DID YOU HAVE ANY CLEAR IDEA OF HOW MANY MONTHS IT WOULD BE BEFORE YOU WOULD LAUNCH THE CAMPAIGN?

No, no.

THAT WAS INDEFINITE?

No, it was left to the President and the National Executive that this must depend on the question of organizational work and on the prevailing situation, because we knew that the ANC might anticipate, or it would use its stunts which were so old, of always creating unnecessary strife and somethings, demonstrations and all the rest of it. So it must be so timely that we should not be incapacitated by them. So we chose— They had chosen the 31st of March, and we chose the 21st of March. But we did not say, we did not announce that date until the 18th of March, because—

BUT YOU DECIDED IT. WHEN DID YOU DECIDE ON THE 21st OF MARCH?

For the date? We decided in National Working Committee. It was the President and the National Working Committee.

AT SOME POINT IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY?

No, no. We decided in— in January.

IN JANUARY?

That's right.

BUT YOU DIDN'T ANNOUNCE IT UNTIL—

We didn't announce that. We then started the campaign. We talked in the Cape and Natal, and then we were issuing pamphlets and so on. And we said the date will be given by us.

YOU SAID IT WOULD BE A PASS CAMPAIGN, BUT THE DATE WOULD BE ANNOUNCED?

That's right.

BEFORE WE LEAVE THIS DECEMBER ANNUAL CONFERENCE, LET ME CLARIFY ONE OR TWO THINGS. WHO ATTENDED THAT BESIDES THE EXECUTIVE?

We were the National Working Committee of these people that I've said they were closer to the President because of the area, proximity. The President, myself, Mothopeng, Molotsi, Ngendane, Molete, Raboroko, Mahomo was also present. He wasn't— No, no, Mahomo was not there. And Nyaose.

NOW I'M TALKING ABOUT THE DECEMBER ANNUAL CONFERENCE, YOUR FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Who attended?

YES. WASN'T THIS A MASS MEETING OF DELEGATES?

Yes, it was a mass meeting of delegates.

THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. HOW MANY DELEGATES ATTENDED, AND WERE THEY THE BRANCH CHAIRMEN, OR—? WHO WERE THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO THAT CONFERENCE?

Well they usually— they were the branch chairmen and secretaries, and treasurers, our own, selected in the delegations. And they were about 800 and something delegates at that conference.

NOW THAT WAS HELD IN— WHERE WAS THAT HELD?

The 20th of December, 1959.

IN ORLANDO?

In Orlando.

THEN THAT WAS YOUR ONE AND ONLY ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

That was the first Annual Conference of the PAC, yes.

AND YOU PICKED DECEMBER, EVEN THOUGH YOU HADN'T BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR A YEAR— ?

We were just— We had not yet even— We had not existed for a year, but since we had— We felt that the conference must be held in view of the program that we said should be ahead(?)

DID IT COINCIDE IN TIME WITH THE MEETING OF THE ANC? THE ANC WAS MEETING IN DURBAN.

Yes, meeting in Durban.

AND DID SOME OF YOU PEOPLE GO TO THE DURBAN CONFERENCE?

No, we didn't go.

YOU WERE COMPLETELY—

No, we didn't go.

LET ME COME BACK TO SOMETHING I THOUGHT OF WHILE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE DELEGATION OF LEADERSHIP, IF THE PARTY WAS BANNED AND SO FORTH. WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE TASK FORCES? WAS THIS ONLY A THEORY THAT NEVER MATERIALIZED?

Well, the Task Force really was sort of organizers. Those who were chosen, with some understandable ideological clarity and the program of this campaign, because these men all over the provinces used to be

brought to Johannesburg where they are indoctrinated by the President and myself, how they must organize for the pass campaign. And we cleared up (?) people in ideology. Boys there were chosen, and they were the people who were the organizers of these. Although most of these I later turned them into organizers of Poqo after that. But it was because they were chosen because of clarity in ideology, and also because they were well-indoctrinated and they understood the program and what should happen, and how to direct people in the struggle. Also others were chosen as Task Force leaders— No, no, well, Task Force leaders, those were later, I chose them later. But at that time the regions' chairmen, secretaries, branch secretaries and so on, were chosen as leaders in the campaign. When the marches take place, they must lead.

DID MANY OF THESE PEOPLE ACTUALLY TRAVEL TO JOHANNESBURG [Yes] TO CONSULT WITH YOU?

Yes, except that after they had traveled once, then they only received instructions. They themselves were able to carry out the work. They— It was sort of a seminar where they spent 5 days in Johannesburg under this discussion, being thoroughly indoctrinated along these issues.

WHEN WAS THAT?

This was, it was, I think it was between the 5th, between the 5th and 11th of January.

I SEE. IT WASN'T STAGGERED. IT WAS EVERYONE COMING [Yes] AT ONCE?

Well, they were chosen by each region, and branches. We have asked that so many must come for the purpose of political education.

HOW WERE THEY CHOSEN IN THE PROVINCIAL—

Well, they are chosen by each Executive Committee, of the branch, and the region approves. They choose the best militant fellows or good organizers, and also those who hold important positions of ability, so that there should be no deviation.

ROUGHLY HOW MANY PEOPLE CAME TOGETHER AT THAT JANUARY "SEMINAR"?

Well, I had Donaldson Center. We had about 230 or 240, somewhere about that. That's right. And these were to be the leaders, to teach the other elected Task Force people who would do— So in each place they would send either 3 or 2 or 4, or as much as they could afford, as many as they could afford, in their own files(?) to send them up.

YOU REFERRED TO A REGIONAL LEVEL WHICH WAS TO APPROVE THESE PEOPLE.

Yes

WHAT WAS THAT REGIONAL LEVEL?

It's a regional Executive. Because there's a regional Executive, a branch Executive, branch executive and then region composed of about 15, 20, 30, 40, or 50 branches, or 100 branches.

THE COUNTRY WAS DIVIDED INTO HOW MANY REGIONS?

We had the country into 16 regions.

SIXTEEN REGIONS?

One-six, yes, 16 regions.

AND WAS THERE ONE PERSON WHO WAS A CHAIRMAN IN EACH REGION?

Yes. In each region there is a chairman, usually called a deputy chairman, a deputy president—a chairman, he's also a deputy president— and he's also a member of the National Executive, ex officio. And they only meet with us once in a full National Executive meeting. I have to summon them to come, and we deliberate together.

DID THOSE SIXTEEN REGIONAL HEADS EVER MEET ALL TOGETHER?

They met us in Bloemfontein once. They only met—

AT THE SEPTEMBER '59 MEETING?

Yes, '59

THIS IS SOMETHING I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT. IT'S VERY INTERESTING. NOW WE'VE TALKED A LOT ABOUT THE URBAN CENTERS, THE CAPE TOWN AREA AND SHARPEVILLE AND SO FORTH. DID THE PARTY HAVE ANY SPECIFIC STRATEGY FOR THE RURAL AREAS?

Well, I can say we were very strong in the cities, except in the Cape in the rural areas we were also strong. And in Natal, not strong, in the Free State not— In the Transvaal also. We had left out that strategy, but due to the time factor that we were so few months, about 10, 11 months, we went into positive action, we didn't have sufficient organizing machinery at the time. Immediately after the founding of the party, we then concentrated on the question of finding means and ways to launch a positive action, because we felt that we'd been elected on the basis that we will go into positive action as soon as we have left the ANC.

AND YOU FELT THAT THE RURAL AREAS WOULD COME ALONG LATER?

Yes, we felt that we would be able to organize the rural areas, but we didn't have sufficient funds, we didn't have sufficient transport, and we did this with— We had no single car, and we had only one Gestetner and one typewriter. And a typist there was a fellow who died, William Jolobe, a good typist, we attended school together at Lovedale. And we actually relied on the actual membership themselves, because our party relied on the members to organize more than anything else, because we had no—

DID ANY OF THE BRANCHES OR ANY OF THE REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL OFFICERS HAVE ANY TYPEWRITERS, MIMEOGRAPH MACHINES OR CARS AT THEIR DISPOSAL?

Yes, some of the regions did have typewriters and cyclostyling and so on, cyclostyling machines and so on.

BUT IN THE HEADQUARTERS IN ORLANDO YOU HAD ONLY THE ONE—

We had one Gestetner, and the typewriter only one, and that was all we had. In fact, we didn't even have a table, but it was the table— my table in the house which was used in the kitchen, and I put it there, and 2 or 3 chaps— We had bought nothing(?) (laughter)

LET ME CHANGE THE SUBJECT A MINUTE AND ASK YOU, ONE NOTICES WHEN ONE READS THROUGH THE LITERATURE ABOUT THE ANC THAT A VERY STAUNCH BASIS OF ANC SUPPORT WAS WOMEN. I DON'T NECESSARILY KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS, BUT IN THE PAC IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN SAY ABOUT THE PLACE OF WOMEN? WERE THEY LESS SIGNIFICANT IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP THAN THEY WERE IN THE ANC? AND DID YOU SPEND ANY TIME WORRYING OR THINKING ABOUT THIS AS A PROBLEM?

Well, I think they were not insignificant, or less, but the point was that, I think from the onset we based our organizational machinery on the basis of a revolution. And we felt that the young men at the time were more vital to the struggle, to an extent that it almost composed of young people. And the older people came in, and many women came in, we organized women, but as far as women were concerned— Of educated type, almost all educated women they came into the party. And then we— Our policy also appealed to older people. They felt that we would have this— But I can say we had more men, particularly the youth, than we had the women. That was the position.

The ANC had succeeded because of, I think, trade unionism about women, and all the rest of it. But I can say that we based our organizational machinery and policies on the basis of positive action, and we felt that young people are the people to tackle all problems, either nonviolence or violence. Because we knew that the ultimate end would be violence, and so people who were more strong— Even the older people usually say the young people must tackle these Afrikaners, and so on. So they joined in greater numbers, and they were able to organize the older people.

And we did not have a women's section. That's one of the things where it was not possible for us to show, you know, the strength of the women, because we didn't have a women's section, a youth section, so on. So our party is actually based on the youthfulness of it. We called it a youth party. We didn't talk about the old— And we felt that the older people will be coming up. They will come into our party. So that was the position. We don't have that in our party up to now (laughter).

CAN YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT THE TOUR OF THE CAPE REGION THAT YOU AND SOBUKWE MADE IN, WAS IT JANUARY 1960?

Yes. It was— No, no, it was February. Yes.

WHO WENT WITH YOU, AND HOW DID YOU TRAVEL, AND WHERE DID YOU GO?

We traveled by a combi from Johannesburg, the combi of Mr Howard Ngcobo from Durban.

A COMBI? WHAT'S THAT?

A combi is a what—a Volkswagen (van). A combi. I drove that myself, from Johannesburg. We got to Aliwal North, held a meeting, a public meeting, just with a group of the youth there, under Pokela who was a teacher at Aliwal North High School, and I gave them the general line of this campaign. And then we drove straight to Cape Town. And when we got there we went to different districts there, and saw different branches and committees, and then those culminated in one meeting, public meeting, which the President and myself addressed. Mr Ngcobo, Mr Howard Ngcobo, was present, and Mr Ngendane was also present. He was on a holiday there, but he joined us. So we were the only 3 members of the National Executive, including Mr Ngendane who we found in Cape Town. And from there we drove to Port

Elizabeth. Yes, Port Elizabeth. And we did not have a public meeting, because public meetings are not allowed. But people were getting out, by Mr [Elliot] Mfana and [C.J.] Fazzie, they were taken out— The rural areas— No, no, outside the city, to a big hall there, and we addressed the meeting by night. And then we got to Stutterheim, we addressed another meeting. And then we got to King Williamstown, we addressed another meeting, also a public meeting. Then we came back to Johannesburg, and that was all the meetings we addressed.

LET ME GO BACK TO CAPE TOWN. WHERE WAS THIS MASS MEETING HELD?

At Langa.

WAS IT OUTDOORS?

It was a public meeting, outside.

IN A SPORTS GROUND?

In a square, a sports— or a square of some sort there.

AND SOBUKWE—DID YOU BOTH SPEAK?

Yes, we both spoke.

CAN YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU FELT ABOUT THAT TRIP? OR WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT PARTICULARLY [Well, we felt—] THAT STICKS IN YOUR MEMORY ABOUT IT?

Well, we felt very much encouraged because of the response there. And we were in top form in our speeches there, and I remember even today there are still some people who imitate the way I speak (laughter). And we collected a lot of money, particularly at this public meeting here. You know, the big tins and this, the bath that we use for washing, money was just put so into them. We made almost about £250 there. And the response was so great that in fact in those areas we wiped out the ANC in those areas completely. People had never heard of such a fire before. It was so much a fireworks that they believed that freedom was overnight.

IT'S UNFORTUNATE, YOU KNOW, I LOOKED IN VAIN FOR PRESS COVERAGE OF THAT TOUR AND I FOUND ALMOST NOTHING. AT THAT POINT, WHAT WERE YOUR RELATIONS LIKE WITH THE PRESS?

It was still hostile, particularly Cape Town, it was also hostile. But some reports did come out of what we have said, and there wasn't a good coverage, but it was there. But all the journalists were against us, because we were also telling them that we didn't care for newspapers. We were saying that the press has not built us up, and it could not destroy us. So we used our own methods. People had to walk. They didn't depend on the press, and all the rest of it. To such an extent that we supplied everybody that— At least our own campaign could be in a position to shake that government almost to a toppling point.

YOU DID HAVE MORE OR LESS ON YOUR SIDE *CONTACT*, AND *THE BANTU WORLD* [yes] DIDN'T YOU COUNT THESE AS PAPERS WHICH—

Well, we did, but also the Liberals, we were not quite— They, you see, they were still not quite certain about us. But the *Contact* was sort of a weekly or a monthly, I don't just remember the paper, and it could not be able to give out— But it did give us some publicity. And the *World*, of course, sometimes, because

also the *World*, that was being used by the government to divide the ANC, and they had thought that we were believers in apartheid or something of the sort, for which they were disappointed that that was not the position. Because that's how they interpreted Madzunya, because Madzunya was [inaudible] an uneducated man, and sometimes he would make statements that would be believed that the man accepted apartheid, separate development and all those things.

THE "BLACK VERWOERD".

That's right, so these were some of the things. But otherwise we had no coverage in the *World* through the press being at that meeting.

WHO WAS THE MAN ON *THE WORLD* WHO SIGNED HIS ARTICLES "B.L."?

"B L" was Legwate. He was our member, but not properly ideologically clear, but our supporter. And he was an acting editor before Dr [Jacob] Nhlapo was appointed, the late Dr Nhlapo. He was some— He was an editor, and something of that sort.

NOW THERE WERE SEVERAL REPORTERS ON *THE WORLD* WHO WERE AFRICANISTS THEMSELVES, WEREN'T THERE?

Yes, like [Duke] Moleko was also an Africanist, and a few others.

DID MOLOTSI WORK FOR THE WORLD?

Yes, he once worked for [inaudible]. Yes.

WERE THERE ANY OTHER NEWSPAPERS THAT YOU EVER FELT YOU COULD USE AS A MEANS OF SPREADING YOUR IDEAS?

Not papers. Even the *Golden City Post* used to misinterpret us. But we didn't bother for that.

LET ME GO BACK TO THIS TOUR. I MEANT TO ASK YOU A FEW MORE THINGS ABOUT THAT. WHAT WAS THE DURATION OF THE TRIP THAT YOU DESCRIBED? DID IT TAKE YOU A WEEK OR TWO WEEKS, OR—?

Well, we had thought that it would take us for about 3 to 4 weeks. But Molotsi and Mahomo, you know, summoned us with serious cables back to Johannesburg, only to find that— We thought that a serious situation was developing— Only to find that they were struggling to get out. They wanted to get permission to get out of the country, in that Molotsi felt that physically he was a weak man, he could not stand the conditions of prison, and they had thought of something we didn't think of, that they can come abroad to represent us when this campaign takes place. Well, although we did see that they were trying to escape the hardships of going to prison. But the President was very much angry when we got there, because he said now you see we have cut short our trip, our tour, and only for this thing here. He was refusing, but some people were in the end able to prevail upon him that they should be allowed to leave the country, to represent us outside when the campaign takes place, and they left. In fact, he agreed only on the eve of the launching. On a Sunday they left via Malawi, and on a Monday we were in positive action, in fact, they had even said that if he didn't give them permission they were just going to go on their own, you see.

Because the atmosphere was being charged now with the campaign(?) So many people felt that— Even the executives they started to develop cold feet. And the President said that gentlemen, even if you don't

go to surrender on that day, myself and P.K., meaning myself, both of us, I am convinced, as far as the two are concerned, we shall not betray the people. Even if we are followed by 3 or 2 or 5 people, we are going to lead. Because I think misapprehension was that most of these people here [refers to list] that organizational work has not been done properly. We were being pestered. Even Ngubane and A.P. Mda and many others said that we had not done spade work.

They said that the President was at the Wits and then the work was left to me alone, and all my comrades here were employed, and I was doing this work, and the people had some misgivings about this. But because always I used to say I am a barometer of African politics, and I knew that the success would be there, the same as it was the foundation, and also the last National Conference. These men here had said the organizational work was not done, and I said they can rely on me. I am doing the work, they are not on the spot, and I know this—I would succeed. And it(?) did in actual fact succeed.

DID SOBUKWE FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT THE DATE OF THE 21st?

He was confident, because he knew what I— what my work was, and he himself did no work then(?) Even most of his people who were—didn't even(?) conflict(?). He didn't know of the work, and he said since he had come to this conclusion. And when we returned from Cape Town, he was going to tender his resignation. And that there was no doubt even if we are followed by 3 or 4, principles are involved. We must go to prison on that day, whether we are followed by thousands, or hundreds, or tens or so, we will go. Even if we are followed by our own shadows(?)

WHY DID HE THREATEN TO RESIGN?

Because he felt that he should devote his full time in the struggle.

OH, YOU MEAN RESIGN FROM WITS.

Yes.

NOT FROM THE PARTY.

No, not from the party. From the University of the Witwatersrand.

DID HE RESIGN THEN?

Yes, he did this when we returned. No, no, he didn't— They got him from prison. He had no time, so they got him from prison after we were arrested, the day we were taken in he wrote to tender his resignation.

THIS DISPUTE ABOUT WHETHER THE LAUNCHING OF THE CAMPAIGN WAS PREMATURE OR NOT, DID IT REACH THE STAGE OF REAL CONFLICT?

No, it didn't, except that these members were coming to the President and myself, you know, making their own point of view and objections and all that. And they would say we know you are just interested to get into trouble, but we doubt you have made actual proper organizational work. And the President also was determined, he didn't want to listen to anything else, until when Mr Nyaose got to Durban and got Mr Ngubane. and A.P. Mda and wrote an express registered letter requesting us, the President, to postpone the campaign. And we— They were completely irritated(?) because we did not even answer this, and Nyaose was [inaudible] there. And he had gone to print circulars, but then he didn't print the circulars of the date(?). Instead he and the other people said that no, we shouldn't go ahead, we were not organized.

But we immediately(?) said the campaign must go ahead. There can be no turn back, the decision is irrevocable. That's right,

WAS THAT AFTER YOU HAD ANNOUNCED THE DATE?

It was before the date was announced.

BUT THEY KNEW THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE IN MARCH?

The people could sense that it was just about to be announced.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW IT WAS ANNOUNCED?

Well, the President called a press conference at Mylur House in Johannesburg, Jeppe Street, and the press came, and he announced the date and the method which the people are going to carry out the campaign and so on. So now this is going to go on, and he also warned the police that they should not be, you know, happy at their triggers and all that. And of course Mr Rademeyer, the chief of the police, replied [to] Sobukwe, but we were already in prison when the letter came, in which also he ridiculed Sobukwe and said that the law should be maintained. And we said that you must maintain the law properly, but we know that you are going to shoot. You'll be happy, you'll be trigger-happy. Your police are so selfish that they are going to shoot our people down. But we will also tell the people not to provoke the police. But we know they will be provoked by the police to get an excuse. So this was the position.

WERE YOU PRESENT AT ANY OF THE MEETINGS WITH THE SABRA [SA Bureau of Racial Affairs] PROFESSORS?

Yes.

WHEN DID THOSE TAKE PLACE?

I think this took place during the days of the Africanist movement, but it must have been early, I think early '58

BEFORE THE BREAK-AWAY?

Before the break. If not '58, then the end of '57.

I THOUGHT THAT WAS LATER. THAT'S WHY I WAS ASKING—

No, it was before. I was there, the President was there, Mothopeng was there, Raboroko was there, Ngendane was there, Molotsi was there.

THIS WAS IN JOHANNESBURG?

It was in Johannesburg.

CAN YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU REPLIED? THEY HELD A SEPARATE MEETING, DID THEY NOT, ONE WITH THE ANC PEOPLE AND ONE WITH THE AFRICANISTS?

Yes, that's right.

WHAT LINE DID YOU TAKE TOWARDS THEM?

I think here we were— We opposed apartheid. I remember my— Also when Professor Olivier(?) of Stellenbosch University, he said he was an African, I said he was not an African. I said they were not Africans, and that insofar as we know what according to our ideals Africans would mean— That since we believe on the basis of Africa will be Africa for the Africans, which means a democratic rule of an African majority, and that everyone and everybody else, irrespective of color or creed, who owes his allegiance and loyalty to Africa and who accepts the democratic rule of an African majority be regarded as an African. So insofar as Professor Olivier was concerned, he's an apartheid professor. They were not Africans.

They were still in fact struggling hard to perpetuate the status quo of *baasskap* and white supremacy in the circumstances. They are not Africans, and they said they were also Africans, you see. We said no, they can't be Africans. But I think we—The meeting broke down because that man insulted us. He said that in his opinion we were, he— We looked like— Our appearances, our point of view was that of wild animals. We were unreasonable and all the rest of it, so the meeting just broke down. They were trying to press on(?) us to accept apartheid, the so-called homelands and all the rest of it, and so on. And some [inaudible] said it was a terrible clash.

DO YOU THINK THAT THEY FELT THAT YOU POTENTIALLY WERE THEIR ALLIES IN SOME WAY?

Yes, they had a belief that the Africanists would accept such a policy, possibly with some amendments and so on. But they found us to be completely violent against their ideas. That's right.

I'M JUMPING AROUND HERE BECAUSE THERE ARE ONE OR TWO QUESTIONS I FORGOT TO ASK EARLIER. THAT WAS ONE. ANOTHER ONE IS SOMETHING THAT I KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT AND SEEMS TO BE IS SIGNIFICANT, THAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AFRICANISTS AND THE BASUTOLAND AFRICAN CONGRESS. CAN YOU DESCRIBE FOR ME, TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THAT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AFRICANIST MOVEMENT?

Well, the position is that Mr [Ntsu] Mokhehle was one of the advocates of the 1949 program in Bloemfontein when he was at Fort Hare. And we were together there, and well, the fact is that his ideas have always almost been the same as ours, because they were involved in the analysis of African nationalism and Africanism, and in the circumstances our solidarity up to now— Suppose that sometimes we have a difficulty to say that this man belongs to a different party and so on. And we work hand in hand because of the almost identical policies and so on.

DID THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE PAC BEING ABLE TO SET UP A HEADQUARTERS IN MASERU?

Well, I would say that that also accounts to the fact that I was myself a foundation member of the Basutoland Congress Party, and also a member of the National Executive there, and later secretary in the Transvaal of their party. And as a result the closer relations developed on the grounds that I being an Msotho, and I worked(?) close with Mokhehle on these ideas. And also Sobukwe being closer to him when he was at Fort Hare, and they were together there [inaudible] in the 1949 conference in Bloemfontein, and almost everything seems to have been in concert(?) as a result. Mokhehle has always been more sympathetic toward the PAC, and he supports us a great deal. And as a result that's why we have a headquarters there. Well, the advantage was that I myself as a citizen in that country, I was also

able to maneuver a number of things to get some advantage for my party to operate from the place there. That was the point,

NOW I WANT TO TOUCH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ON THE PERIOD AFTER SHARPEVILLE. YOU WENT TO JAIL ON THE 21st OF MARCH—

Yes.

AMD THEN WAS THERE A TRIAL?

Yes.

AND WHEN DID YOU COME OUT OF JAIL?

'62, May.

MAY '62. SO IN OTHER WORDS BETWEEN SHARPEVILLE AND MAY '62 YOU WERE COMPLETELY CUT OFF FROM POLITICS?

That's right —although we had our own contact in jail.

HOW DID YOU WORK THAT?

Our own people were coming, and we were using them. Even some of the people in prison there, we were able to smuggle a lot of directives and so on.

WHICH PRISON WERE YOU IN?

Well, we were first in Johannesburg prison, Number 4, they call Number 4 jail. And then we went to Sto— I'm sorry, we went to Bluesky in Boksburg, a jail there which was meant for low-type prisoners. And then we went to Cinderella again in Boksburg, where we were isolated there, the members of the National Executive.

BEFORE THAT YOU'D BEEN ALL TOGETHER?

Yes. And then we went to Stofberg jail in the Free State where we were building a dam there, and a bridge. Then Sobukwe and myself— Oh no, we were then sent to Witbank jail. From Witbank, Sobukwe and myself were singled out and taken to isolation cells in Pretoria, for a year now, until I left him in prison there in May 1962.

NOW WHEN YOU GOT OUT OF PRISON, WHERE DID YOU GO?

Well, I was exiled myself to Zululand, somewhere near (Sodwana Bay?), not far from the police (?) border, about 60 miles, between 60 and 80 miles from the police (?) border in Natal Province.

WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF JAIL, HAD THERE BEEN DURING THE YEARS FOLLOWING SHARPEVILLE ANY ATTEMPT TO REGROUP THE PEOPLE WHO WERE STILL OUT OF JAIL?

There was. There was, but apparently [inaudible] there was Mr Molete who was the acting President. He was not strong enough. He couldn't make it, until when I returned from exile myself, that the organizational work took root, and which led to the arrests of 1963 and so on. I organized this. I was still

in Lesotho, although sometime I would come in and out, but—into South Africa— But they used— Immediately I came out they became very active and rushed to the place, because they knew I would do the proper job.

NOW WHEN DID POQO—EXCUSE ME, I CAN'T PRONOUNCE IT CORRECTLY—WHEN DID POQO FIRST BEGIN TO MOBILIZE?

It started, I mean I built it in September '62.

BEFORE YOU BECAME ACTIVELY INVOLVED AGAIN, WAS THERE ANY EVIDENCE OF THE REMNANTS OF PAC ORGANIZATION DOING ANYTHING?

Well, the organizational work was still there, but no program yet had been decided. But the people were still trying to get Mr Molete and some few members outside to try and decide on a program, particularly the regions, but nothing could be done until when I came out

WHERE WAS MOLETE?

Molete was in Evaton,

HE WASN'T JAILED?

He wasn't! We sent him out, we paid his bail, we sent him out in order to go and act for the President.

I SEE.

That's right,

CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW POQO WAS BUILT?

It's very difficult, but as I say, it was built by— I instructed the task force, I again constituted(?) task force, and get it to work out a method where they can form up groups of fighters with pangas [machetes] and revolvers and explosives and other things. And that they must rely on their own efforts. They can steal weapons, they can get people who can sharpen these pangas, or themselves— Buy from backdoor from people who can sell these things, and then we can be able to raid the stations and places for arsenals where there are weapons, and so on. And Poqo its course would be to kill or be killed. The motto of Poqo was kill or be killed. And that in fact even some suicide squads were formed so that the [inaudible] could be.

WHAT WAS THE—

Almost on the basis of the Mau Mau, but in a more intensified and extreme manner.

WHAT WAS THE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION?

Well, the means of communication was for people to walk from place to place. But then at that time, people used to come to my headquarters and so on. And unfortunately they organized so many people in the [inaudible] to an extent that we even got the police spies, and they even knew the day when we were going to fight. So we were [inaudible] from these actions, because I think the mistake— We had not studied guerilla methods, of constituting a guerilla unit, an armed force, how to operate and so on. So I

think because many people joined the party at the time, it was so flooded(?) that we got into trouble. And that's how we had difficulties.