

My first awareness of politics came in '47 - no '48 - when I took a course in N.A. This was taught by Ntloko, and there was a text by Hanley (?) I had always known most of the facts, e.g. that Africans had 3 reps. in parliament, but I'd only accepted these before, as facts one had to memorise, without thinking of their implications. During this course I began to realise the realities, e.g. that these 3 who, no matter how good they were as speakers, had no effect on policy. N. was an AAC man and the AAC was very influential at PH in those days. Most of us agreed with the AAC, except that we knew they weren't natst. and we were natsts. It wasn't an organ of the African people.

Did G. Pitje help guide you? He was the one who had had the connection with the early YL, the Tvl; he was our link with that. He had known Lembede.

Did he give you docs. of the early YL, statements of Lembede? No, we never saw these. We drew up our own docs. It was all conveyed merely through discussions.

Did you favour the '48 effort to reunite AAC with ANC? Yes, very strongly. We wanted ~~an~~ unity - not a federation, but total unity. This was also the case later when we were in opposition to ANC and Madz's group wanted to federate with us. We wanted unity; we felt the fed'ns. were always weak.

What was your role at the time of the P of A? The program was drawn up by "at PH by Pitje and myself". It was then taken to the Cape conference at Qtown in June 1949, and was approved by the Cape Province, then led by Calata and Matthews. At Bloemfontein and there I spoke in its favour. As far as I know, no other versions were offered for consideration at Bloemf; I don't know of any version coming from the Tvl. The final version was not very different except the clause calling for a one-day strike was inserted - ironically, I think Calata proposed this clause. Now we felt that Xuma was our man; we thought he was a good leader and could be kept if he could be tied to a program. He was in the habit of acting very independently on his own.

Judgement. We went to Bloemf. prepared to support Xuma, but we found somewhat to our surprise, that the conference rejected him.

Was there opposition to the Prog. from the Left? We went there believing that there would be, but in fact they did not oppose it.

Language: I remember in '49 that everybody spoke in his own lang. and there were no interpreters. Xuma always used English - he refused to use Xhosa or to be identified in any way with one ~~of the~~ ethnic group.

The ethnic question: (This raised in several different contexts.) Tribalism we considered our "enemy number one". But this wasn't a factor between PAC and ANC. We have always wanted to wipe it out by encouraging intermarriage. The Nats want to reverse this. (See below)

Did you feel that the ~~the~~ DC followed from the P of A? No. By this time the Prog was already being compromised; the struggle was always thereafter to bring the ANC back to the Prog. During the fifties it strayed far away; if the Prog had been followed, we would all be living different lives today. Deviation began with the strikes in 1950. These we concocted by the Left Wing; we felt they had nothing to do with us but were merely protests at the banning of the CP. A split was already beginning in our ranks; the YL was on the decline. Some were going over to the Communists. The main thing we didn't like about the DC was the leadership role taken by the Indians and Whites (sic). It was a ~~lesson~~ lesson we had learned, that whenever these groups were involved in any actions you had the Africans just "taking a back seat", sitting back and letting these people run things. We felt this had to be overcome and Africans had to learn to take the initiative, do things for themselves.

I recognised there were some ~~things~~ non-Africans who fully identified with us and were prepared to sacrifice, but as a matter of principle we couldn't let these people take any part, because the psychological effect on our people would be bad.

When this split began, we knew that WMS had gone over, NRM had gone over; ORT we knew "was resisting". I myself was Nat. President

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- no, Nat. Secretary - of the YL elected at the '49 conference with GP. We saw this happening but we knew we were just too weak to prevent it.

What was it about Communism that attracted Africans of your generation? Firstly, it was the "militancy". They had a press that vigorously aired the grievances of Africans - exaggerated them in fact, just as the Post etc. now exaggerated rape and murder. This impressed us. Secondly, we knew that if someone was a Communist, he had no colour prejudice; he accepted you as another human being. You just knew it. A Communist would listen and frankly criticise what an African said, treating his arguments on merit, showing where you were weak. The Liberals were different; they never wanted to risk hurting anyone's feelings, so if they were critical of what an African said, they would just keep quiet and that was no help to anyone. But we knew the Communists would never accept Nationalism and that is what we held against them.

The split began around 1950, and it centered in a way around the competition between Marks and Thema, for the Tvl. Presidency. Thema wanted to run; we backed him because we knew he was a natst. and Marks was a Communist. But it was very difficult to attack JBM. The people did not care that he was a red; he was well-known, popular, a good speaker; the people were for him. He was a strong leader and a very "hardworking man".

At this time I was in Standerton but I was coming frequently to Jhb, as early as 1950. We had the Bureau of African Nationalism, circulating our ideas. I received those from PKL (at another point he says he didn't think he met PK until '54) and I contributed pieces. Cape people were also involved in it.

By 1950, the YL was declining, being absorbed into the ANC; and there was the split starting. It no longer had the strength it had had in 1949. You had people like PDN, who had gone over. We knew he was attending Communist meetings, of the Communist YL, - they were operating here and there, at St. Peter's.

When you came to Jhb in late '54 were your ideas any different than they had been in '49? Had you rejected anything, e.g. from embedism, or added anything? No, I hadn't rejected any of it. But I was hesitant to draw attention to myself as a critic of the ANC. What was your role in the DC? I had spoken publicly for it; ~~now~~ once Tambo came to Standerton and we addressed a meeting together. "I didn't launch"; we had received instructions from Jhb to wait and we were about to launch within a week or two at the time the camp was called off. I had in the meantime been dismissed from my job for speaking out.

The camp was called off because the leaders got cold feet. When these laws were passed, it became clear that they weren't really prepared to sacrifice.

Now I got to Jhb and met PK and his groups. I felt that we were up against strong forces and we shouldn't make ourselves targets until we had built our strength. PK was already getting expelled and so forth. I didn't want to be expelled. But PK was a "fighter". (This said with a note of real admiration.) He was always for barging ahead. He could never hold his tongue.

This group had begun The Africanist and they invited me to be the editor. P H M had been editor until then.

In trying to put our point of view across in Congress we were very frustrated because of the leadership situation in the ANC. By this time the real leaders were banned and could not speak openly. Therefore we couldn't directly attack them personally, and there was no way they could personally reply to us in public. We knew however that it was they who were responsible for the course of events in the ANC. While these banned men were behind the scenes, men of much lesser calibre - total fools - were actually in the leadership positions in Congress. We had no respect for any of these people; yet there was no point in personally attacking them, because they were simply carrying out instructions from banned leaders, saying what they had been told to say by the big boys. They tended to be

dogmatic and there was no point in trying to engage them in argument. Our tactics in the face of this were to try to use every meeting and conference to speak directly to the people, to "hammer home" our "line" with all the persuasiveness we could. Pretty soon they got wise to this and began to exclude us from conferences.

But we were up against a situation that has always pertained in S.A., i.e. that the masses will automatically follow a leader or orga. that they have a loyalty to, without thinking about the weakness or wisdom of particular policies they are told to support. This is particularly true of the women; they're simply hopeless. "We knew that our numbers were small", and it would be hard to put our views across.

I was Chairman in Mofolo, and their tactic there was to have their men with a rival branch, and when conferences came they would recognise him as a delegate instead of me.

We didn't put much faith in Luthuli. He was a gentle old man, but he didn't have much political sense. He was politically naive. I don't suppose there was ever a speech of Luthuli's delivered at conf. that was in the original form in which he had drafted it. Do you think there was an element of cynicism in the ANC re the Alliance, a belief that it was tactically wise, practical in terms of getting money, organizational help? (But leaders were really natst. at heart?) No, they were actually convinced of the correctness of multi-racialism.

Why did the Africanists run Madz for Tul Pre in 1958? I'm not clear on exact sequence of events here. Madz was never part of the "inner group" in the Afst mut. He had a following of his own. He had been important at the time of the '57 bus boycott, and he was a critic of the ANC. He wanted to be with us. He had confidence in his own ability to lead in the ANC. He was actually backed by an odd collection of people like the late P.Q. Vundla and B. Legwate, people who sympathised with us, but were only on the periphery of our own mut. We didn't accept them as members, but they suggested that Madz be run

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and we thought we could "use" him, to let him draw the fire and to test our strength through him.

Madzunya was not an educated man. He probably didn't grasp the full import of our philosophy. His thinking was rather primitive - he wanted to put spears and shields on our flag" (laughter) Also he didn't trust middle-class educated people like us; he said such people would never be willing to suffer and sacrifice.

Why did you believe the Africanists could win out eventually? We thought this for a long time. At the time I came to Jhb there was still no feeling that there might have to be a break and a separation.

Another thing about the ANC we objected strongly to was the Consultation Committee with its system of representation. Only two from the ANC and two from each of the other, much smaller groups. In any arrangement like this we knew the ANC would be taking a back seat even though it represented millions.

What was A.P.'s position during this time? This was one man we have always admired for his brilliance and clarity of thought. He has a gift for language, a way of using words to express ideas with complete clarity. He can "untie mental knots". One could go to him with any problem, and he would analyse it for you, untie it. We tended to always accept his advice on anything. Compared to him all of us were political babies. He had been around so long. He had more knowledge of the S.A. situation than any of us. He had read widely. He knew much more about Communism than we did. We could always go to him and get a clear "analysis" of the situation; that was his greatest strength. He could also advise on action, organization. He advised us to organize secretly, through cells, to build up our strength before coming out in the open. He was very much influenced by the writings of Lenin, Did he actually cite Lenin? Yes. We were always amused at how he could oppose Communism so strongly, yet use the principles of Marxism to prove his case for nat.ism. (laughter). On the fights with the AAC it was always AP who could outline to us the line of argument. I first

met him when I was at PH.

He was bitterly against the breakaway. He told us how the other groups had failed - Mosaka's ADP and so forth.

I did go to look for him at R Engcobo around the time of the break, but I can't remember when it was or who I was with. Was I going to Grahamstown to work on my riddles? But we didn't find him at home and we said we were just going ahead anyway. Even P.K. said so, and he was a great admirer of A.P.'s. But A.P. wrote us to say he disapproved. I seem to remember it was 1957 when I went there. We did get him to attend our NEC meeting in Sept. 1959, however, and he was quite impressed there with our success - even though we did not yet have the 100,000 members we had predicted. He was impressed with the success of our inaug. conference. He didn't attend that, but he was in Jhb. at the time. He gave us a wonderful talk that night, on organization.

In the days of the early Africanist mut., we had cells in the Rand area, East London; we were weak in Natal because the ANC was very strong there, and weak in P.E., weak in the Western Cape. When we got to P.E. on our tour in 1960, you could only whisper that you were there from PAC (laughter) because the ANC was so strong there. It was like a religion and religion was strong there. You were more afraid of the ANC than of the police in P.E. Capetown had no orga. at all. We felt strongly that if we could build our strength in the Tvl. then other things would follow.

By the time of the break I had accepted the necessity of it and the fact that we were not going to be able to capture the ANC. Our numbers were too small, and their methods were too successful. To what extent is it true that PAC believed in violence or rejected non-violence? We didn't have any faith in non-violence because the penalties had become too high. It was no longer a useful technique. We still believe, however, in the potential power of massive non-collaboration. Philosophically, we didn't hold to non-violence. Is it DuBois who said there are three types of beliefs about violence?

One is the communist one, that no change can be accomplished without violence; the second is the pacifist's view that violence is never justified, no matter what; and the third, which was our view, was that violence might sometimes be necessary and couldn't be ruled out. I didn't think in 1960 we were in any position to launch violently, or that our people were prepared for it. Passive resistance we felt, could only succeed in more advanced, modern countries, where demonstrations have been shown to bring results. In the US, for instance, I am critical of black radicals who have gone beyond the use of non-violence - after all, non-violence is legal in the US and brings results. Why go beyond it? This isn't justified. But in S.A. the use of passive resistance has been ruled out by the harshness of the laws against it. Students can't even stage a march. Other means then become legitimate. I think I came to this conclusion after going to prison. It is not true to say PAC promoted violence; we always stressed non-violence. We urged the police not to provoke violence by mumbling orders like 'disperse in three minutes'. Philosophically we were not in favour of taking lives. We thought we could win by means that fell short of this.

When you said "We are ready to die for our freedom, but not yet ready to kill", did you mean philosophically, or did it have the double meaning of "we don't possess the means of killing"?

(He laughed as though he realized I was getting at the propaganda element in his many ambiguous public statements.) I think I meant philosophically we weren't ready. We knew if there was violence it would only work against our cause. We believed that if we followed our plan, with the leaders in front, with sincerity, conviction, and strength that the power of our example would be enough to mobilize the masses to action, to non-collaboration. (He acknowledged the distinction between non-collaboration and passive resistance was vague here, but we didn't pursue it.)

An example of African dependence on Whites was once in NewClare

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when there was a women's demonstration against passes. We went there to try to persuade the police to grant bail for the women. Because we were Africans the police just told us to voetsak. Then a certain White arrived on the scene, a man named Vincent Swart, who had started some small organization for African rights. Because he was White, the police agreed to talk to him, and naturally the friends and relatives of the women there just flocked to this man, pleading with him to help with bail.

What did you say to young men who demanded they be given a chance to fight the Whites? This question never really came up, because right from the beginning we had promised action, we had told people the passes were going to be the target, the leaders were going to be in front. This would be sufficient.

A.P.: He had a power over words; he could manipulate words so that they said more than just their surface meaning. Like the slogan of the YL - Africa for Africans, Africans for humanity, humanity for God.

Who formulated the later slogan that anyone who considered himself an African and had his first loyalty to Africa would be considered an African, etc.? Was the ambiguity intentional? I suppose it was (laughter). This came from the earlier YL slogan, in which it was the first clause - Africa for the African and that always received all the attention. This was "our" formulation. Yours? Yes. It was so funny, because by this time Benjie and I were already friends, and he used to really get after me about this one. Also the late Patrick Duncan. They really opposed this idea, of a racially exclusive movement. They argued that you couldn't promote exclusivism, then hope that tomorrow the people you had organized exclusively would turn around and begin recognizing these other non-Africans as Africans. I could see this argument, but I still felt that history would bear us out and that we were choosing the correct course.

Is it true you at first favoured giving membership to poorer Indians? This is true, although the others just wouldn't accept it. There were a lot of very poor Indian workers; they hadn't come to S.A. of their own free will, they had no other home, they were themselves exploited and there was no way in which they exploited Africans, unlike the Indian merchant class. The merchant class was prejudiced and they were oppressors. Of course we considered the Coloureds Africans. A.B. was so strongly against this thing of including Asians.

A.B. and Ngubane were not on speaking terms.

You see, we knew we had to come up with a way of expressing our position that would be acceptable to varying types of people. We worked ~~v~~very hard to do this. Were you influenced by the views of Benjie and Duncan? Yes, I was. But I also knew that ordinary Africans, the people in the streets, the people who attended our conferences, were motivated plainly and simply by "naked" anti-white sentiment. "All of our people are anti-White, anti-Indian, even anti-Coloured; our people are anti-everything." Our people hate the Whites and there is no point in denying it. We had to attract these people to us; of course we had to take their sentiments into account. I couldn't say this kind of thing publicly. Hypothetically speaking, if PAC had come to power and then found that Indians persistently perpetuated their own ethnic subculture instead of identifying with the Africans, what would you have done? I wouldn't have been bothered by this, because I know that such changes take ~~six~~ time. People would have been allowed their own customs, foods, etc. But we would have legislated against all racial discrimination - in housing, schools, etc. Eventually barriers would break down, with children going to school together, and people living together. Some Africans would move to ~~Soweto~~ Hillbrow; "Benjie would move to Soweto". Of course these would be people who would cling to

their prejudices; we would have to be patient. I agree with Nixon that bussing children, for example, is going too far. You couldn't pass a law that a White man had to carry Africans in his car. You would, I think, at first also have to allow Whites to maintain exclusive clubs if they wanted. It would, ^{all} take time, but you would do away with all discriminatory laws. I'm critical of what the Kenyans have done with the Asians there.

Violence question: We always stressed publicly that we were non-violent. After all, we had to protect our followers from the consequence of possible violence. We didn't want to create trouble for ourselves, we had to protect ourselves. (This is not said directly, but clearly implied.) I myself never favoured the idea of anyone being killed. I sincerely believed that determined non-collaboration could do the job, since the whole economy rests on us. In prison I revised my views in this regard, however. Now that penalties even for passive resistance are so high, up to three years, we can no longer ask our people to engage in this kind of action; the return is too small.

We believed at the time of our campaign that a determined lead from us would bring success. Ordinary Africans like Madz.'s followers, didn't believe we were prepared to suffer. We thought that, just as in the ANC, the people were willing to follow the leaders almost blindly, in our case they would also follow when we had given the example. The government was always hammering on this point - that the big leaders called people into action, then let them go to jail and suffer while they stayed outside "riding around in big cars".

One of Leballo's strengths - there could be no doubt whatsoever of Leballo being prepared to suffer, prepared to go to jail. He was a "fire-eater." He raised money and he never spent a penny on himself. I had to give money to "the wife" because ~~xxxxx~~ P.K. would not give her money for food. He put everything he had into the organization. This is why I can hardly believe

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