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Our friendship in the Cape Liberal Party with the PAC is largely a result of the campaigns over the years before against Congress Movement control of Non-White politics in this area. As a result of this activity we had made very close friendships with dissident members of the ANC: people like Mchosa, Mkokoti and Gila and several others. These people had been strong ANC members and had now broken, and by 1959 they had been steadily building up a strong branch or series of branches of the Pan Africanist Congress. Their building up was quite a systematic piece of activity, which culminated in an announcement that the PAC would launch a campaign against passes and that this would consist of the people involved in it leaving their passes behind and then walking up to the Police Station and asking to be arrested.

Now, ~~what does this mean~~ with our experience of previous ANC campaigns, I don't think any of us really thought that this would be a successful or substantial campaign. And this feeling was strengthened by the seemingly hurried way in which the campaign was called. But we did know that the leaders of the PAC from other parts of South Africa had been in the townships and had given instructions to their branches here, and we had heard from several young PAC members of very high hopes of a successful campaign. Although none of them seemed to be wildly optimistic, they did feel that the campaign would have to be called soon and that the call would have to go out suddenly so that the police would have no chance to break it up and arrest the leaders.

One of the young men that we know very well was Philip Kgosana, an intense, very intelligent young man, who was at the time a University student, and was living in Langa. To enable him to study and to supplement a grant that he had been given through the Quakers in Jbg, he worked as a sales agent for Contact, and in this way came into regular contact with me, Patrick Duncan and Randolph Vigne, who struck up a close friendship with him.

Another PAC man who was rather close to leading Liberals, was Nana Mahomo, who was the only man here who was ~~in~~ a member of the national executive of the PAC. Mahomo was quite a close friend of Vigne's and was seen quite frequently in our office. I found that these people, young PAC particularly, although they disagreed quite substantially with the Liberal Party, certainly seemed to have quite a close affinity with the more radical members of the Party. In fact they attended several of our forums, where we used to have a speaker come along and address us on certain subjects; they would come in for discussion sessions. In this way, we got to know them and found that they were impressive young men, and certainly very independently minded. But none of this convinced us that they were going to have a successful campaign against the passes.

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We thought that this would be a demonstration of a few days and would peter out after that.

On the Saturday of ^{March} 19, there was great excitement among Africans right through Cape Town. We heard then that the campaign had been called for Monday, and we were told by a young African that they were all going to go to prison on Monday and that they were prepared to. But again, on the Saturday and on the Sunday there were meetings all the way round in the area. There were very big meetings called in Langa on the Sunday and Nyanga, Nyanga East and West, the two locations. Nyanga East, the Divisional Council location, and Nyanga West the Municipal location. The meetings there were strangely not heavily attended by Security police who had such a fixation about the ANC that they had almost overlooked the PAC and treated it as ~~if~~ rather a joke. In fact they tended rather to leave it alone because they felt that this was weakening the ANC.

Well, this was the build up to it. The meetings on the Sunday were very good meetings. We got reports on them from our Africans the next day - our Liberal Party Africans. And then on the Monday morning, as is now I think part of political history, in Nyanga East 2000 or 3000 Africans walked in procession down the road to the Philippi Police Station and there they surrounded the Station and told the Police that they had left their passes behind, that they were not carrying passes any more, and demanded to be arrested. The Police refused to arrest them, but did arrest some of the ringleaders, including the chairman of the movement here: Christopher Mkokoti.

In Nyanga West a similar demonstration took place. I believe they joined the general procession to the Philippi Police Station. And in Langa I think about 3000 to 4000 Africans went off to the Police Station, and among the leaders was young Philip Kgosana. Kgosana was again told by the Police that they were not prepared to arrest them and they were all sent home and they were told the Police would come and talk to them at a meeting at Nyanga that night.

My contact with this campaign started on about 4 p.m. on Monday. By that time, we knew that something had taken place; we knew that there were people who had gone to the Pass Offices and it did sound quite impressive. We were keeping a close watch on this. I got an urgent phonecall at my office from Pat Duncan who asked me to come to the Contact offices as soon as possible as there were a couple of young Africans who wanted to talk to me very urgently.

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Realising that this was part of the general developments, I rushed up to the office and there met Philip Kgosana, who was in a state of great excitement and considerable tension. Pat Duncan ~~was~~ explained that Kgosana had come to him at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and had described the events of the morning and had said that Nana Mahomo, who had been delegated by the PAC to leave the country as soon as the campaign started to represent them overseas, had told the PAC leadership that if they needed any help from outside the organisation, they were to go to the Liberal Party or to the Black Sash. He said that both of these organisations were trustworthy and were the sort of organisation that would not try any control over them, but would genuinely try and assist them. Kgosana came and told this to Duncan who was naturally probably quite flattered about it, and had said that they did have very serious problems. He said that he felt that the campaign was going to gain in strength; he said that there was tremendously strong feeling in Langa for the stay-at-home; he said people had been highly impressed by the number who had walked to the Pass Offices; he said that this was going to be developed into a general strike; and he said that if this was going to be a success he was going to need adequate publicity for it.

Kgosana said that the accent on this campaign, which I want to emphasise, and it was repeated again and again in the following days, was that they wanted no violence whatsoever. The only way to get this was to get the co-operation of the Press in ensuring that violence was eliminated. He said that he was worried because thousands of people were going to gather in Langa that night. His understanding, as he told me then, ~~was~~ (this was before the events of that evening), was that the Police had said that they would talk to the people later in the afternoon or early that evening, and the people were expecting to hear from them.

We found out their immediate needs. He said that if the strike went on they would need funds, they would need food, they would need to build up a whole system of food supply to keep the people alive during the period. The other thing he said was that he needed our assistance in getting in touch with the newspapers. I then went away. I discussed it with Pat Duncan, and I also discussed it with Randolph Vigne, and I then told Kgosana that we would certainly do all we could to help, as long as the campaign was non-violent. If it became violent, we would not be able to help. He felt that this was a reasonable offer.

He was then taken over by one of us, I think Pat Duncan, to the Cape Times, where he issued a statement as the Secretary of the PAC, in the area. He had to do this, because of course, the Chairman, Mlekotho was by this time in prison.

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He then went back to Langa, and as we know, there the first riots took place that evening. The people had gathered in the expectation of hearing an address by the Police, and instead were told to disperse. There was such a crowd that it was impossible for them to disperse; there was a baton charge, and the riot ensued. I think three or four people were killed.

The next day, we saw some more of these young men. I think by that time Philip Kgosana had come in; we had established contact with Francis Mbelu, a young Swazi final year B.Sc. student at University. It was either that day or the next day that we also met Mlanli Makwetu. No these three young men were to take almost a leading part in the subsequent events, although of course many other PAC men began to figure as well.

By Wednesday, it was quite clear that the strike was spreading, and spreading very rapidly. I think that on Tuesday the stay-at-home was about 30 to 35% effective. By Wednesday it was well over 50% and a considerable amount coercion, not action violence, but I think threats of violence were then being made, ~~made~~ by the PAC. The way they got the strike working was to picket the bus stops and without actually saying anything, they just looked at the people catching the buses and more and more people decided not to go. But I don't think there was much coercion after that. The people seemed to be genuinely behind the PAC in this. And the moment that they began to see that the majority were going to stay at home, then it snowballed.

Of course, Sharpeville had intervened by this time. There was a feeling of great anger, but you must realise that on that Monday and Tuesday, things were still very confused and no-one really realised what had really happened at Sharpeville. They knew that dozens of people had been killed. I remember on Monday evening in the midst of all this other excitement, with all these reports coming in on the radio and newspaper ~~reports~~ ^{people}, on what had happened at Sharpeville, but we were still confused. Really our focus was on Cape Town.

The PAC then, by Wednesday, was running quite an organization. They had what they called their leadership. They had several layers of each. They worked it out at the beginning that as people got arrested, there should be people to take their place. And they had done this. They had their first, second, third and fourth layers of leadership. They also had what they called their "shock troops", gangs of young men who did a lot of the disciplinary work. These were not young thugs. They were young men who genuinely went round, stood at the busstops, generally assisted in going from house to house, urging people not to go to work. There may have been threats, that I don't know. I do know there was a tendency for the PAC to gather all the total and other unruly elements in the townships, as well, simply because they were the strong movement; and they were offering the excitement.

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Another problem which we felt had the potential for violence, was the Police were, by Wednesday, patrolling the townships in Sarcoens, and in Police vans, and the people in protest were putting up road blocks. These road blocks were stopping the Police from patrolling the area.

Now these events built up until about Thursday, when I think about 60% or more of the African working strength were out on strike (possible 75%). Then on the Tuesday night and early Friday morning, the Police conducted a series of raids in Langa and in Nyanga and took in several leading PAC people. Included was Philip Kgcoana, and he was taken to Caledon Square with several other young men who were the leaders at that time. Then at about 11 a.m. that morning, Patrick Duncan got a phonecall from a call box which urged him to go to Caledon Square as soon as possible. It was an African who phoned. Pat rushed to Caledon Square where he found about 4000 to 5000 Africans gathered, all demanding to be arrested with their leaders. This was quite a scene: Kgcoana had been arrested, others had been arrested, and all the African men had gathered, decided to come into town, had caught trains and everything else, had gathered outside Caledon Square and said, "Well, here we all are. Please arrest us."

Pat was then talking to them just outside the entrance of Caledon Square, when a Policeman came up to him; obviously a Security Policeman who had been trying to listen to the conversation. The policeman then said, "Mr. Duncan can't you ask these people to go away". Patrick said, "I am not in control of the people. You will have to ask their leaders that." So he said, "Would you mind coming up and talking to Col. Terreblanche. Col. Terreblanche then talked to Pat and said: "Mr. Duncan can't we do anything about asking these people to go away." This was just at the entrance of the building. Duncan said: "I am not in charge of the people here; you cause they are determined and want you to arrest them. They want their leaders back". Terreblanche then said, "We will have to talk the matter over with their leaders". Patrick Duncan then took two of their leaders (one of them was Manle Makwetu) and Duncan and I think one other young African went in with Terreblanche to the Police Station. Terreblanche asked them what their demands were. They said they demanded to be arrested. Terreblanche told them he couldn't arrest them all as he had no room in his jails for them. Makwetu then asked if Terreblanche would tell the people that he was not prepared to arrest them for not carrying passes, and Terreblanche said: "Yes I will tell them that". And Makwetu said, "Will you release our leaders when you have arrested?". Terreblanche said: "Yes, I will release them". Makwetu said, "Will you produce them?". Terreblanche then gave orders from his office that Kgcoana and the other young men should be brought to his office.

When the young men were brought to the office, they all walked out together and the crowd put up a huge cheer when they saw Kgcoana. ~~They~~

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This is really I think where Kgosana got the reputation; where he became the sort of recognised leader of the people. He was then lifted shoulder high; they chaired him; and Makwetu picked up the portable megaphone which the police lent him, and announced that the police were not going to arrest them for not carrying passes. As a result, it was announced over the radio that the Chief of Police, backed up by the Commissioner of Police, had said that they temporarily suspended the need to carry passes. And this was, of course, the first triumph, the first great success that was won in this strike.

The people then lifted Philip Kgosana shoulder high and they carried him all the way back to Langa, amid scenes of intense jubilation. Unfortunately, Kgosana has subsequently attacked Patrick Duncan, I think more in bitterness than in anything else, for he was since thrown out of the PAC movement. But that day was definitely a great day for Patrick Duncan and for the young PAC people. Duncan at no stage tried to influence the PAC people. He simply acted as a negotiator. He gave good advice and in fact, his advice all the time was for a determined stand to be made. He at no time advised them to retract their demands or anything else like that.

That was of course, the first march on the Police Stations. They had considerable success, they had got their leaders released, and from then on the campaign took on a very different attitude. It became very much more belligerent.

Now, several things happened on the Friday. It was a very momentous day. The Friday the 26th I think. Later in that day at about 2 p.m. a group of older PAC leaders, led by Hudson Gila and Kedron Noboxa with about six others called in to see me. By this time I had taken leave from my office and was working full time on this Campaign. They called to see us to say that a very serious situation was developing in Nyanga East which had all the potential of violence and they feared that there would be severe violence that evening.

What they said had happened the previous night and also the night before, was that a number of African policemen dressed in civilian clothes, had walked up to people coming home from work or to people who were on strike, and had given them the PAC salute, which was LEWE LETHU, with the right hand upraised in an open greeting, and when the people had replied, these police had assaulted them. Several assaults of this kind were taking place. They said that they were very concerned about this and that they wanted to draw the attention of the Police to the fact that the people were preparing to assault these men that night, and the only way to prevent it would be to remove them entirely from the area and give an undertaking that this method would not be used again.

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Duncan immediately picked up the telephone and phoned up Col. Terblanche and said that this was a serious situation. Terblanche agreed and said that he was not aware that this was being done. And he said that he would like to see this deputation of the PAC. Now remember, here was a Police Colonel being prepared to see for the second time in one day, where he had actually negotiated with the leaders of a movement which was conducting an illegal strike. Duncan went with this body of men, who were all led into Terblanche's office, all given seats. There were six of them including Duncan. They walked in: Kedron Mabeza with his feet on; Mofean Gila and all these well-known people and political leaders. And Terblanche asked them to tell him their complaint. They told him about this beating up. He then said that he would investigate it right away and would see that it did not happen again. He then said that he also had a complaint. He said that the people were putting up road-blocks in the townships and they were being forced to break down these road-blocks and he felt that this also was going to lead to violence. The PAC leaders then said that if the police would patrol the townships only in patrol wagons and not in Saracens which they felt were provocative, they would get the road-blocks removed.

And they left on these terms. No other undertaking was made or given. The PAC undertook to remove road-blocks, and the Police undertook to remove the provocateurs. And that was that: the road blocks were pulled up and these strongarm squads disappeared.

When they came back from the Police, they interviewed me again and, as you realize I was chairman of the Party then, and I took no official part in any of these deputations. Pat Duncan, who was not an official of the Party was able to do this. Then they approached me and told me that there was a serious problem, that the food was going to get short: would we undertake to organize a food lift into the township if the strike became 100% effective by the next week. They were confident on the Friday that the strike was 100% effective, and their argument was that Chief Luthuli had then called for a One-Day token strike on the Monday and they felt that this would bring out the final group of ^{ANC} support and persuade them that the PAC were in fact in control of the situation in Cape Town and that from Monday onwards, no African would go to work. They felt that therefore there was a growing need for food to be supplied. He said that they had set up a complete organisation for the distribution of food and if we could get it for them, they were ready to ~~hand~~ hand it out.

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Another thing we learnt on that day was that Terblanche admitted to a Fresca man or it might have been to Duncan, that the crime rate in the townships had gone down to almost nothing. That although the townships was almost entirely under the control of the PAC, and the township officials had had no influence whatever there, there was no crime, ~~xxxx~~ the township was completely orderly, except for the provocations from the police every now and then.

Now, another incident that day, was my discussion with Ronald Segal, who was in a state of near hysteria by this time. He approached me and said that the Liberal Party was making a grave mistake aligning itself with the PAC, and that the ANC was horrified at the way we were behaving with the PAC, and he personally wanted to warn me that we were riding a tiger, and that we were associating with a bunch of racists. And that the PAC had in effect destroyed a whole carefully worked strike campaign by the ANC. Well, I told him this was absolute nonsense, and he said that I would see how much nonsense it was. He said that the whole country would come to a standstill from the Monday. He said the ANC was going to bring the whole country to a stop from the day of the One-Day token strike ~~by~~ called by Luthuli. He said that this was the beginning of the end; that the Government would fall; everything was going to happen within the next week. Well, as we know, the next day Segal and Olive Tambo both left the country. I at that time told him that he was talking absolute nonsense and that we were quite happy to continue in exactly the way we were.

On the Sunday evening, I called a special meeting of the Liberal Party executive in the Cape, and I put the whole situation to them. I explained how necessary it was ~~is~~ if violence was to be avoided, that we organise a proper food supply. I was then given immediate support from the Party executive; I think I was given a promise by the executive of about £100, and immediately the next day, I got some of my most active workers, including some of my best women workers to start a collection right away to raise money for food. Now that collection within five or six days, raised by these people in Cape Town, amounted to something like £1,500. They did it in several ways: they got promises from members; we called meetings quickly in each branch (I know I addressed one meeting on Tuesday that week and where we raised £60 - £75 in one meeting). We raised most of the big money came from business men. Several businesses in town gave very big donations up to more than £100. We got very rapid help from wholesale food suppliers who gave us cost price food. We were able to hire trucks at very low prices from Coloured people, particularly and Indians, who were anxious to help. Indian shopkeepers were very helpful; the Muslim community asked if they could add their help to the work we were doing. But the organisation of the food lift became an organisation in itself within the Liberal Party.

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This was set in train when the money started to flow in.

On the Monday was two things. It was the day of the token strike called by Chief Luthuli all over the country, and that in turn brought out every African in CT. A very small handful went to work. The other thig on Monday was the funeral... of the people killed in the Langa riot the week before. It started with a visit to our office by Philip Kgosana, Francis Mbelu and two or three other young PAC people. Kgosana was by now travelling with all his lieutenants. They came into see us at about 10 a.m. on that morning. Kgosana was very worried. He said that his experience of the previous Monday was that unless there was some form of crowd control, there was likely to be an outbreak of violence at this funeral. He said that feeling was running very high. He said that if we looked out into the streets, we would see every African in CT walking towards the trains to attend the funeral, and that he expected about 50,000 people at Langa at this funeral. And he said that the slightest disturbance could lead to a very very serious outbreak of violence.

He appealed to us to find a loudspeaker service that we could get out to this service, so that all the people could listen to all the speeches and they could be controlled in this way. We then rang up several loudspeaker firms, and finally we found a man in Seapoint, a Scotaman, who ran a small broadcast service, and he said that he would be prepared to go into the township, which was a most courageous decision. He said that he wanted a guarantee that he would not in any way be penalised by the Police for doing this. We then rang up Ferblanche who said that he would be delighted if this man would go into the township. But he said that the Police could not stop him from going into the township, but beyond the gates of Langa they had no control, and therefore they could give him no protection whatsoever, and we should make this absolutely clear to him.

We told this man, who came in from Seapoint to see us and met Kgosana. Kgosana assured him that he would be given PAC protection. He said that he would be met at the gate, escorted by the PAC, and would not be molested in any way whatsoever. Kgosana guaranteed to see that he was protected.. Kgosana was able to give a guarantee but the Police could not.

This became a pattern for visiting these townships after Monday. PAC protection was always available for Liberals etc who went in, and any White person, or anyone not of that township, would have to go to the PAC for protection, as the Police could give them no protection.

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The funeral did take place and I instructed my Liberal people that no-one must go, but Mr. Vigne felt that it was essential for someone to go with the man who was in charge of the loudspeakers, in order to assure him that other people were prepared to go in with him. I was away - I had some other work on - and Mr. Vigne and Mr. Duncan felt that if I knew this situation, I would agree to it. Vigne went in with Joseph Moutlo and Basist Maraj, three Party members. They were met at the gate by PAC men who drove with them and frequently, when they were looked at by the people, this man would say: These are our friends. They were then simply greeted, grinned at, and there was at no time any attempt to molest them in any way. In fact, Vigne told me afterwards that the only violence he saw in the whole day, was on the Grand Parade when some Coloured people started a bit of a fracas with the Police.

Tuesday saw the strike almost complete. This was now an 100% African strike. Unfortunately, the Coloured people did not come in. This was purely African. Ships were already beginning to gather in the bay as there was no-one to work the cargoes. All the evidences of the effect of the strike was now being felt: milk was not being delivered, newspapers were not being delivered; Africans had all but disappeared from the streets and shops of Cape Town. That was the position on Tuesday - which was the peak period of the strike.

On Tuesday night and on Wednesday morning, the arrests took place throughout South Africa. This was when masses of COB, other Congress people, Liberals and others were rounded up and taken to prison. In the course of these arrests, the Police conducted a series of raids in Langa and Nyanga, which so aroused the people, that they began to gather at about 8 a.m. and eventually they decided almost spontaneously to march towards Cape Town, having decided to get their leaders out again. But because of the success of the Friday march, many thousand more felt that they should move into town.

The first batch, in fact the bulk of them, went in by train. It is a fallacy to say that they all walked; many thousands came in by bus or by train. Later, crowds of them decided to march, and they started to walk out of the Langa gates and Kgeesara was then driven by a newspaper reporter up to the front of the crowd and then he led them in. My first knowledge of this - first of all I was very tied up in the early part of the morning, because we had just heard of the arrest of the national chairman of the Party and of several other Party leaders outside Cape Town. I was sure that my own arrest was imminent and also that of Pat Duncan, so I was hurriedly moving round trying to put everything in order so that the strike could continue, and that our arrests would not disrupt it. I went up to the Liberal Party office at about 11 a.m. I was met by a very excited Mrs. Myrna Bloomberg (Mackenzie) a newspaper reporter who had been working closely with us, who informed me that all the Africans in the townships were marching on Cape Town.

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I shot up to the ~~Exxy~~ Contact offices, and by phone calls and by every other method, we learnt that this was happening. At this time, of course, there was almost a permanent group of PAC people in the Contact office. This was the town office of the PAC, virtually. They were in constant with one or other Liberal Party leader: myself, Duncan or others. So they were getting information from call boxes as the march progressed. In fact the Contact office was so recognised by this time as the office used by the PAC in Cape Town, that leaders of the movement were using the number to phone up and report progress. It was partly used at that time to coordinate the ~~mass~~ gathering of the people from the trains and buses and of the march itself.

There was so much confusion at that time, that one must give ones personal experience before trying to see broadly what happened.

At 12 o'clock I decided it was time to go down to the place where the people were gathering. So with two or three other Liberals and one or two PAC men, we walked down to Caledon Square and into Buitenkant Street, where there was an amazing sight. Buitenkant St., is the leading past the Caledon Sq. Police Station. It is a wide street, and when we got there, the entire area in front of the Police station was jam-packed with Africans, who had climbed on to the roofs of nearby houses and buildings, and who were moving up and gathering in hundreds; they were marching up in procession. Each group of about 50 being led by usually a very young man - obviously the "shock troops" as they called them. The discipline was quite amazing: there was no talking; no laughing; no signing. Not like an ANC or Congress movement gathering. Absolute silence. The most amazing silence. People just simply gathers and gathered and gathered. There was no deep anger; just a quiet determination.

At about 12.15, the Police through loudspeakers, ordered the people to disperse. No-one moved. Then they were given a final warning, and then a whole squad of thirty or forty policemen, moved out of Caledon Square armed with the long riot truncheons - three foot long heavy sticks, - and behind them were policemen armed with guns. The policemen gathered in a line outside the Station and an announcement said that if the people didn't disperse in three minutes ~~in~~ they would be charged. I stood there like most others: I was terrified. I was standing right in the middle of this crowd, and we all stood, not a person moved. In fact, the police were so crowded up by the people, that I doubt whether they could have moved to make a baton charge.

They stood there looking rather stupid for about 10 minutes, and then they dispersed and no further attempt was made to break up the crowd, which showed that a baton charge is not possible in a solid crowd of people, not one of whom is prepared to move out of position.

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We now reached the situation where something like ten to fifteen thousand Africans were gathered outside the Police Station, where no police action could move them. The whole of Cape Town was agog at the sight of this huge demonstration of strength and solidarity by the African people.

At about 12.45, after having stood there since we were told to disperse, there was a sudden huge increase in the number of people gathered outside. We didn't know what had caused this, but then the word spread around that Philip Kgoana had led about another 15,000 people over De Waal Drive, and that a few thousand of these people had come forward to join the crowd outside the P. Station, and that the rest were still standing on the drive waiting to come and swell the numbers outside. Then there was a murmur from the crowd, and Kgoana and two or three others were led by the Police through the packed mass of people, up the steps of the Police Station. From our distance away, you could see the uniformed police officers. He seemed to be discussing something with the Police officers, and then he turned to the crowd and was given a loudspeaker and he spoke to the people. A slight cheer went up, then a louder cheer, and he was then raised on the shoulders of the people and he was carried away and the whole crowd dispersed and followed him.

This was a great mass of people, thousands of them, walking down the street as they dispersed, cheering this young man, and they all started to walk back to Langa.

I then joined several PAC leaders. Everyone was giving the *Iswe Detini* sign. All the PAC people were giving this greeting in the streets. It was quite a triumphant occasion. We then walked back with these leaders to our office in Parliament Street, where we saw another amazing sight. Parliament had by this time been ringed with armoured cars; right up Parliament Street, all the way down into Spin St, and right up at the top near the Governor-Generals residence. There were armoured cars, troops, Saracens, everything right round the place. Behind the gates of Parliament was a gathering of anxious looking members of Parliament. I have never seen a more tense situation. In fact, the situation outside the House of Assembly was far more tense than the situation outside Caledon Square Police Station.

We then went with the leaders and we discussed the whole event and they reported back to us what had actually taken place outside, between Kgoana and Col. Terblanche.

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Kgosana had walked into town over the De Waal Drive at the head of thousand of Africans. About three miles behind him were another batch of eight or ten thousand coming from Nyanga, also walking to catch up and join in this demonstration outside the P. Station. As Kgosana came down at the head of this crowd, past Caledon Police Station, the idea was, not to march on Caledon Square, but to march on Parliament. And he got down past Roeland St. Gaol, past the robot at Buitenkamp St., and got just near the top of Plein St., he was urgently asked to stop by a Security Policeman - an officer or warrant-officer - who begged him not to lead the people on Parliament. He pointed to the armoured cars and machine guns outside which they could then see, and said there would be a blood bath. If Kgosana had chosen to lead the people on Parliament, I doubt whether machine guns or anything else would have stopped them.

But Kgosana did stop. He was persuaded by this policeman to go alone to go outside Caledon Square to talk to Col. Terblanche. Which, in fact, Kgosana and several other leaders did do. Several thousand Africans did break from the ranks and joined in and walked behind him. They walked down to join the crowd outside the Police Station.

He was then asked by Terblanche what he wanted. Kgosana then presented the demands of the PAC. (As you know, the PAC launched this Pass Campaign in conjunction with a set of demands which they made on the Government) Kgosana very dutifully presented the demands and said: This is what we want. Terblanche said to him: I cannot negotiate with you because I am not empowered to do so. You will have to present your demands to the Minister. Kgosana then asked what assurance he would have that he could put the demands to the Minister. Terblanche then said: I will give you my promise that you will see the Minister to put these demands to him, but I cannot allow you to do this ~~while~~ while you have this show of force behind you.

Kgosana, being inexperienced, then agreed to disperse the crowd and return later in the afternoon with five PAC leaders to see the Minister and present their demands. He then dispersed the crowd.....and lost the greatest opportunity an African leader has had in South Africa for fifty years or more.

We heard what had happened and we were very upset about it. We put it to the PAC leaders who were with us who agreed with us, that this was an absolute trap. That Terblanche, in effect, whatever his good intentions, would be let down by his own Government and by his own Police Force. That Kgosana would never get an opportunity to present his demands, and even if he did put them they would not be acceded to. We urged these PAC men to tell Kgosana not to come back to town. To stay with the people. As long as he stayed with the people he would have power and influence, and he would still possibly have a chance of getting some concessions from the Government.

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So our attitude was that that Kgosana was walking straight into a trap by going back.

He was contacted in Langa, but flushed with the success of his march, suffering from absolute over-confidence, he refused to listen to the advice of his other leaders, and with four other young men, he went into town at about 3.30 and, as we all know, he was arrested immediately he walked into the police station.

The march had taken place, the people had been dispersed, their last great opportunity had gone. Immediately they got back into the townships, a military police cordon was thrown around Nyanga, Nyanga East, and Nyanga West and Langa. It was a tight military cordon which cemented the strike by ensuring that no Africans could either leave or enter the townships. Inside the township, the control was entirely PAC; outside there was the besieging army of South Africa. In fact it was a state of seige.

We realised the situation. We were able to assess it very quickly from reports. Although people could not move in and out easily, the phones were not disconnected and we were being telephoned constantly from these townships and were kept informed of the situation.

We now realised that the next urgent stage had started; and that was the supply of food to the people. They had been on an almost 100% strike now for three days; there was a serious food shortage. We had several hundred pounds raised already, and on the Wednesday afternoon, we sent in our first lorry loads of food. We worked the food supply system, by dealing constantly with young PAC leaders. These chaps managed to get in and out of the townships; I don't know how, but they did it. The first supply started on the Wednesday afternoon after the march. Francis Mbelu and Makwetu came in with a list of the food that they needed in Langa. We then sent out a truckload under the charge of a Liberal Party member - I had about six White Party members who took part in this - six (White members, a couple of Coloured members and one or two Africans also took an active part. All of these people took turns to go in with the trucks)

What happened was: we would get a list of requirements from the PAC leadership, either in Nyanga East, Nyanga West or in Langa. We would then telephone the wholesalers (we dealt with two big whole sale firms), and we would give them this list and would then arrange either for the wholesalers truck or one of our own trucks which we had hired, to go along at a certain time. A PAC man would arrive at the Contact office, from which we conducted this whole operation as it was a bigger and more convenient office. We would then send this list down, the truck would be loaded, the PAC man and a Liberal would climb into the van or on to the back of it. It would drive to the township, be met at the gate by a PAC man who would tell the people: This is a friendly truck. In they would go to a central point, and from this central point the food would be distributed.

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On Wednesday, the first two loads went in, to Langa. The next day we got the first loads in to Nyanga East and Nyanga West, and on the Thursday afternoon we got about two truckloads into Langa. The Thursday and the Friday was an intensive period of food supply, because we knew that eventually they would realise the quantities of food that was going in and they would refuse to allow them. We did get permission, of course. We phoned up and Terblanche had said that we would be allowed to send food in, and as long as we were only sending food in, he would do nothing to stop us. What happened, the truck ~~was~~ would get to the military point at the entrance to the township. It would be searched for I suppose weapons, or other things; it would then be allowed to drive in. After about Thursday, it would be cheered down the road by Africans in the townships, because they realised that this was their lifeline; this was all the food that they were going to get.

By Friday, we had raised something like £1,500, but we realised that this was not going to be enough, so we began to ~~request this from the community~~ look desperately for other sources of funds. On Friday morning I received an urgent call from the Christian Council Secretary in CT, asking if I would please come to Claremont that afternoon and address an emergency meeting of the Council as they had been informed by the Africans that the only organisation that they were prepared to deal with was the Liberal Party. That any help that was given to the townships, must be done through the Liberal Party and no-one else.

So I went along to the meeting in the vestry of St. Xavier's Church, Claremont. The Chairman of that meeting was the Archbishop of Cape Town, Dr. Jocet de Blank, and I was asked to tell them how they could assist. I told them straight away that we wanted money, and after some discussion they agreed that they would provide funds, something like £400 or £500. The very next day we sent in the first of the Christian Council loads of food, which contained a rather nervous person who went along to see that it was delivered properly. We assured him that he could do this, and he was happy.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday were the main days for the supply of food. In that period we must have shipped in about £1000 to £1200 worth, of mealie-meal, rice, milk, vegetables, mainly bulk foods, ~~meat~~. I remember Saturday was a terrible day, it was raining all day and most of that evening. Sunday was almost as bad, but we knew that on Saturday and Sunday something was brewing again. Something more definite was going to be done by the Police to try and break this strike. By now it had been going on for almost two weeks. On Saturday evening we encountered our first opposition from the Police and the Army to taking food in. A couple of our trucks were stopped; they were sent to other gates and there was a definite harrassing tactic. They were sent from one gate to another, and finally they were allowed in after about two hours. This first truckload we had difficulty with unfortunately was a truck provided by the Muslim community in CT. We did get it in eventually.

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On Sunday, one of our people who had been listening in to the police and army radio wavelength, heard them instructing saracens and other vehicles to move up for what was obviously a preparation for some large scale action, to be taken against the people. So on Sunday we expected trouble, and we got it, when they refused to allow any more of our vehicles in to the townships. And that was the end of our food supply. We telephoned the Police, we did everything, but were simply told that ~~had~~ they had decided to stop this, that it was simply prolonging the strike. The more food that went into the township, the longer the strike would go on, and they were not prepared to let food go in in this quantity. I think they were surprised at the amount of food that got in, and this was enough food in those three days to keep everyone in Langa and Nyanga fed.

I would like to comment here on the extremely efficient organisation of those first few days. The PAC got this food, they rationed it, they went round to the houses, and they saw that every person got their food. It broke down by about Friday, Saturday, because all this time there were arrests being made. The police were making forays into the townships, they were patrolling the townships with armoured cars. The armoured cars would go in and they would make another arrest, and they were picking off the leadership of the PAC.

By Saturday and Sunday, in Langa they were down to their ~~last~~ third or fourth layer of leadership. In Nyanga, there was a young man of about 18 in charge of Nyanga West; he told us he was about the fifth layer. And they were still maintaining an organisation despite these arrests.

By now it will be obvious that there was only one effective organisation in the townships, and that was the PAC. The ANC had almost disappeared. In fact, Mlandle Makwetu told one of our leading LP members that one of the ~~strikers~~ applicants for PAC membership at this time was Mr. Oscar Mpetha, who had expressed support of them. And when Makwetu was asked what he would do with Mpetha, he said he would "have his guts for a necktie". That was the attitude of the PAC to the ANC leadership.

The only hold-out by the ANC was in Langa. On the Thursday or Friday April 1st, a man called Johnson Ngwevela came in to see me in the Contact office. He had been sent to me by one of the COD people who was not arrested by that time, and was told that I was the only person he could see about food supply. He said that his position was very serious in the townships; he said there was a group of ANC people who felt very bitter about the situation and were not prepared to accept any food from the PAC. He said they realised that it was an embarrassing situation for them, as he realised that this determination would not receive sympathetic treatment from us, but was it possible for us to let them have a supply of food.

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I agreed then, right away. I actually made an order. He had transport, so I rang up the wholesaler and he went down and got all the food he needed for the 250 people and he took it in and fed them. But other than that, all the people in the townships were run and looked after by the PAC. There was, in effect, no ANC left by this time, there was only PAC.

This takes us up to Sunday. I have given very brief accounts of a very involved period. At this time we were being approached by all different organisations: the Muslim community, the churches, individuals, because we were in effect, the only people who could get food into the townships. There was one other attempt made on the Saturday by the Black Sash, which caused quite a bit of ill feeling, because of the way in which it was handled. It was done on a sort of charitable basis, and the PAC said they did not want to have food on this system. I can only clarify it in this way, by saying that a Black Sash group led by Mrs. Stott, had organised a truckload of food, and had gone in to Nyanga East and with a few PAC people, and when they got in and delivered the food they proceeded to lecture the PAC on how to conduct the strike and the fact that they should now really go back to work and so on. This caused a very bitter reaction from the PAC, and in fact, these women were told in no uncertain terms that the people liked the food but not the advice.

In all our dealings we took the attitude with the PAC that they were conducting the strike; they were conducting it non-violently, and that was all we asked of it. We said that the strike is on; the need at the moment is for food and that is what we are dealing with. We are not giving you any advice on how to run this operation unless you ask for it. And in fact, they did ask for it on occasions, as I have shown you, and we were able to be of very substantial help.

Monday 4th April. On that morning at about 10 or 11 o'clock, we began to get desperate phonecalls from Nyanga East, and they told us that hundreds of police had arrived in the township and were going systematically through the houses beating up everyone they found there. This was a complete, thorough, systematic attempt by the police to beat the people back to work. A lot of these policemen were young roughs from the Transvaal. I am saying this quite factually. They were brought down here. I understand not too many Cape police were mixed up in this frightful business. These men went through the townships with riot sticks, pickhandles and with crowbars; they broke down the doors of houses, they beat everyone. Facts again: the Rondebosch Cottage Hospital alone had that evening dealt with 60 cases of injuries, some of them very serious - fractures and other things. One of our Liberal Party members was on strike in the township - a former schoolteacher - had both arms broken by the police. And we, in fact, collected some 60 statements from the people after this event, of police violence. We were getting information all the time as the police moved down; people were phoning us, asking and begging us to try and do something to help them.

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In the meantime, similar action action was taking place in Langa and on the streets of Cape Town. This is where most people saw it. Any African seen idling or walking around the streets of Cape Town, was immediately set upon by the Police and beaten up. Patrick Duncan himself was involved in an incident himself, where he stopped a policeman from beating up an African; was told not to interfere. All through CT that morning there were systematic beatings of the people.

Unfortunately for the S.A. Government's reputation, on that day all the foreign journalists who were sitting in Joh'burg thinking that they were covering the main events, realized that CT was the centre of activity, and had flown in on Sunday and Monday morning into CT. So this whole army of foreign correspondents descended on to CT just as these actions were happening. Several of them actually saw the police beating people up on the streets. Those that didn't were quickly assisted by the Liberal Party to get the factual account of what had happened. They were told to come into the Contact offices and arrived there at about midday just as these frantic phone calls were coming in. We gave them the telephone and told them to speak to the people themselves, and they got first-hand accounts of what was happening in the townships. In fact, because of these accounts, the representative of United Press International, was I think, a few days later deported from South Africa. He sent in his report of these telephone conversations and that ~~report~~ conversation actually took place in the Contact office.

With these reports, we were so upset about it, that Pat Duncan immediately phoned up Col. Terblanche. Col. Terblanche at first denied these reports. Pat said then: But you can't deny it; it's happening all over the place. Terblanche then said: Mr. Duncan, this whole matter has been taken out of my hands. I can do nothing. So Pat said: Well, Colonel, I am going to Parliament and I am going to have this raised immediately in Parliament. Terblanche's reply was: Mr. Duncan, you will not be doing us a disservice if you do that.

I went straight away up to Parliament, where I got hold of Mrs. Ballinger at about 1.30 p.m. Monday. I reported to Mrs. Ballinger, and at the same time, a Dr. Zabow, who had been treating patients since early that morning, patients treated for serious injuries, had come into the Liberal offices to ask if something could be done to stop these assaults. He and I actually went and saw Mrs. Ballinger. He gave a medical report on what he had seen; and I gave reports of all the things which we had heard. She went straight away to see Erasmus, and caught him with the Commissioner of Police, Gen. Badeneyer.

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Erasmus was with Rademeyer when Mrs. Hallinger went up to him, at about 1.45 and she told him what reports had been carried in. He looked surprised, and he turned round to Rademeyer and said: What is happening? ~~Erasmus~~ And Rademeyer turned round and said to him: They are intimidating the intimidators. Erasmus then promised to lock into it. Well, the beatings stopped later that afternoon: obviously the orders went through. Those were the events of the Monday.

Well, that broke the strike. The people were so terrorised by that time ~~that~~. They were so frightened of a repeat of that police action, that they began to trickle back to work the next day. I think they might well have started without this thing. The strike could never have lasted longer than three weeks. We must remember that it was only in Cape Town out of the whole of South Africa where the PAC demonstration was so successful. These people did not have the backing of the rest of the country, and alone they could not have carried on. In the short period it lasted it was a magnificent demonstration of solidarity and organisation.

By Tuesday people were beginning to trickle back; they were allowed to go back to work; they were escorted. And on Wednesday, we decided that something more - that the overseas Press should be given a more thorough account of what was happening, and so we called a Press conference in a house in Rondebosch (we had a secret venue) and we arranged for ~~some~~ 5 PAC leaders to sneak out of their township and be available for interviews. The Press, at this time, were extremely anxious to meet PAC leaders, and by this time, most of the leaders were in gaol. We did get one very able man, Gordon Kalie, and another man called McIntjies. These two men and one other I collected just near Nyanga West. I picked them up on the main road where they had been hiding behind bushes, and brought them into Rondebosch, to this house. I then met the Press people at the venue at the Rondebosch fountain and led them down to this house, and they had a three hour interview with the PAC leaders.

It was an extremely impressive interview. These men had had a terrible time and they gave a first hand account of their beatings up; they gave a very clear account of ~~objects~~, what they were aiming to achieve and what they had done. It made a very great impression on these overseas journalists, and, in fact, this result was one of the most widely reported interviews of this whole PAC demonstration. This interview also helped to prove that both Erasmus and Eric Louw, two SA cabinet ministers, had told the Press a deliberate lie the day before. Because the Press, who had seen on the Tuesday morning in our offices, the backs of several people who had been sjamboked the day before, and had seen numerous injuries, that afternoon went to interview these two Cabinet Ministers, who both denied categorically that any violence had been used the day before.

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Then to cap this, the following day they had this interview with these PAC men, who gave a systematic detailed account of how the police had beaten up the people, on the Monday.

Well that was how the strike broke; and ~~that was how the strike broke~~ the chaos that followed led up to another story, and that is out of the need to provide help for children and people who were detained and their dependents, grew the State of Emergency Relief Fund, which was financed by Liberal Party money in the beginning, and eventually became part of the Defence and Aid Fund.

WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE LIBERAL PARTY AND THE PAC?

Well, I think you should realize that we probably came together through our mutual antipathy towards the Congress Alliance. Liberal Party has a long tradition of this alliance in OT, and the PAC had actually been formed and grown strong in this area because of a substantial breakaway from the AJO. We had this in common, we had known each other, but I think the real significance was that we trusted the PAC and they seemed to trust us. This was the most important thing: this was co-operation between equals. This was no White organisation telling Non-Whites what they should do. We had intense admiration for some of the leadership of the PAC and there seemed to be a very strong feeling of friendship towards the leadership of the Liberal Party here. Because of this, we were able to work quite openly, we were able to criticise each other without any feeling of dissidence (diffidence) and when it got down to actual working in the heat of the strike, this was the cementing thing. The excitement and the tension of that time, made it very easy to work together. I was surprised, and when I think of it today, I am quite astounded at the complete easiness of our relations with the PAC. We never doubted when we dealt with these people, with the leadership, that they were the men in charge; there was no order coming from some other organisation which we couldn't see.

They were able to make decisions. I think this was the important thing. When we wanted something done, when we wanted a truckload of food to go out, a PAC man would make a decision he'd say: This goes out at this time.

Another thing was the efficiency of that two weeks. I don't know whether it was just the tension, but if a PAC man said: I will be at your office at 3 o'clock, he would either be there at three o'clock, or he sent a phonecall to say that he had been delayed and would be there at 3.30. They were punctual; they kept to their word, and the only time when the organisation began to break down was when the arrests took away more and more of their leadership. But in the peak period of our co-operation, from about the 25th March to the 2nd and 3rd April, there was a very easy alliance between us; and in fact, a great deal of mutual respect built up over that period.

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I would like to add one more thing. I think a great deal of the success of this was (1) that the Liberal Party was a reasonably efficient organisation at that stage. We were able to raise money if we decided to raise it; we were able to keep the promises we had made to the PAC. They did not have to wait three or four days or two weeks. If they needed £25 in a hurry, they could get £25, and they got it. That made a good impression straight away.

The second thing was the personalities of two of our leading Liberals, Randolph Vigne and Patrick Duncan. Vigne had built up this very easy happy friendship with PAC leaders such as Nana Mahoso, and Philip Kgosana. The result was that when Kgosana needed something, he didn't hesitate; he came straight to the Contact office and contacted Duncan, and in turn the link with the Liberal Party started.

That is a very significant part of it. The personalities, ~~xxxx~~ of the leading Liberals at that time, was one of strength and quite a bit of ability. And this drew the support and friendship of the PAC. I think it was just a fortunate combination of all those factors at that particular time, but whether it will ever happen again, I don't know.

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- **Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand**

Location:- **Johannesburg**

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DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- **A2618-Ch6**

Document Title:- **P Hjul: Co-operation between the Liberal Party and the PAC, Strike in Nyanga, police action**

Author:- **P Hjul**

Document Date:- **undated**