

complicated maze of regulations, reservations and overlapping trusts that the state has imposed on black areas.

If these areas are simply opened up to the "free market", many people who have owned and occupied land for generations may find it sold from under them

THE Pan Africanist Congress is facing the most crucial period in its history as plans go forward for next month's congress — the first to be held inside the country since the organisation's banning more than 30 years ago.

Two pivotal issues, negotiations and the economy, have to be tackled. And it is these decisions that will decide the future of the PAC.

Congress delegates will have to state clearly whether the organisation will join the African National Congress and the government at the negotiation table. As yet the PAC has not responded to an invitation from State President FW de Klerk to join the talks.

The second major item on the agenda is the discussion over the PAC's economic blueprint. The document has still to be ratified by the organisation's grassroots support. So far the discussion/debate paper has sparked controversy in the media and among its youth:

Education, women and manpower development are other issues to be discussed at the congress to be held in Johannesburg from November 9 to 11 and attended by 1 000 delegates.

PAC general secretary Benny Alexander says a response to De Klerk's invitation will be made "not later than the congress". At the moment the organisation is testing grassroots response to the invitation "via our various structures".

South African Institute of International Affairs political researcher Gary van Staden says the PAC faces a particularly challenging period where it needs to go beyond the rhetorical "no negotiations".

As talks between the government and the ANC become more frequent, it would not be surprising if other liberation organisations begin to fear marginalisation, he adds.

The political environment has forced the PAC to be more flexible on the negotiations question.

"A year ago there was a very firm line that talks were out of the question unless very specific issues were addressed.

"This is changing and it may imply that they are ready to join the process — but may need more encouragement from De

happens, there will be as much resistance as there was to the policies of "betterment", forced removal and incorporation into bantustans.

Rural people have suffered terrible and irretrievable losses through the implementation of such a betrayal".

If the PAC decides not to go to the negotiating table, can it prevent the process from continuing?

Although there is no empirical data on PAC support, there is the feeling that it is not strong enough to do this, says Van Staden.

An option is for the PAC and other organisations to push for a constituent assembly. Through such an assembly the PAC would be able to ascertain its real support, says Van Staden.

Because it is doubtful the ANC will win an outright majority at such a forum, the PAC can expect to influence the decision-making process.

If the government is serious about negotiations then the PAC will be marginalising itself by not joining the talks, Van Staden says. "They do not have the support base."

However, if the PAC remains out of the talks it needs to identify the main areas to apply pressure — the armed struggle and sanctions — if it is to have any impact on the political front. "No other organisation besides the ANC is going to convince the international community to maintain sanctions," he says, adding that the PAC's armed struggle has not been very intensive.

The ability of the PAC to influence the international sphere will also be determined by its decisions on the economy.

The long-term objectives of the PAC need to be spelt out more clearly in the economic document, says Alexander, and additions are to be made to the paper.

Alexander says the PAC sees a socialist solution for Africa. "The PAC believes that African states taking on the imperialists single-handedly cannot succeed. The idea is to link up economies, and form a political union, with the ultimate objective of forming a monolithic giant state — the objective being the development and liberation of Africa."

The organisation is to reveal its programme of action piecemeal after the national congress. Says Alexander: "It is an unfolding programme for liberation."

centuries ago in wars of conquest with that of the victims of forced removals in our country. Here we are talking of communities like the Monnagotlas, the Mfengu, and the Bakwena baMogopa, whose land was expropriated in the last few decades, sometimes less than five years ago. They live in impoverished resettlement camps, and in many cases their land lies fallow, still registered in the name of the government.

If the present government does not have the grace to return such land to its rightful owners, it will find itself faced with innumerable court cases challenging the legality of its expropriations, with land re-occupations and with disillusionment and bitterness. When it tries to sell this land it will completely discredit its new non-racial land market — and rightly so.

Care and consultation are necessary to minimise the possible damage should the Land Acts be repealed in a vacuum and to undo positively the damage caused by this terrible piece of legislation.

Aninka Claassens is a senior research officer at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies

# PAC approaches the turning point

*The spectre of marginalisation hangs heavily over the Pan Africanist Congress. It must decide now whether it will enter into talks with the government.*

By CASSANDRA MOODLEY

Klerk," says Van Staden.

Van Staden believes it is in the government's long-term interests to get other credible black organisations to the negotiating table so as not to face the ANC alone. "We have seen tactics employed by the government to split the ANC to make them a less imposing force at the negotiating table."

The response to De Klerk's invitation, says Alexander, "is a tactical matter which the PAC leaders and member are currently considering".

However, any decision the PAC may take on negotiations is fraught with difficulties: does the PAC have the power to prevent an implementation of a settlement if it refuses to participate in negotiations; will its more radical structures support a decision to join the talks?

Says Van Staden: "The PAC is dealing with an even more militant youth wing than the ANC. There are cracks in the ANC over the question of negotiations — not all structures support it."

At a conference two weeks ago the Pan Africanist Students' Organisation decided to reject the government's invitation. This weekend Azanian National Youth Unity is to hold a national workshop to determine its position on the invitation.

Whatever decision is taken, says Alexander, "there will be no problems from the members because it (the decision) will come from them".

He adds that if the PAC rejects the talks the organisation — which is recognised by, among others, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth — "has the power to prevent negotiations from betraying the genuine aspirations of the masses". If the PAC joins the talks "we will also pre-

vent such a betrayal".

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**Abe Berry**

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