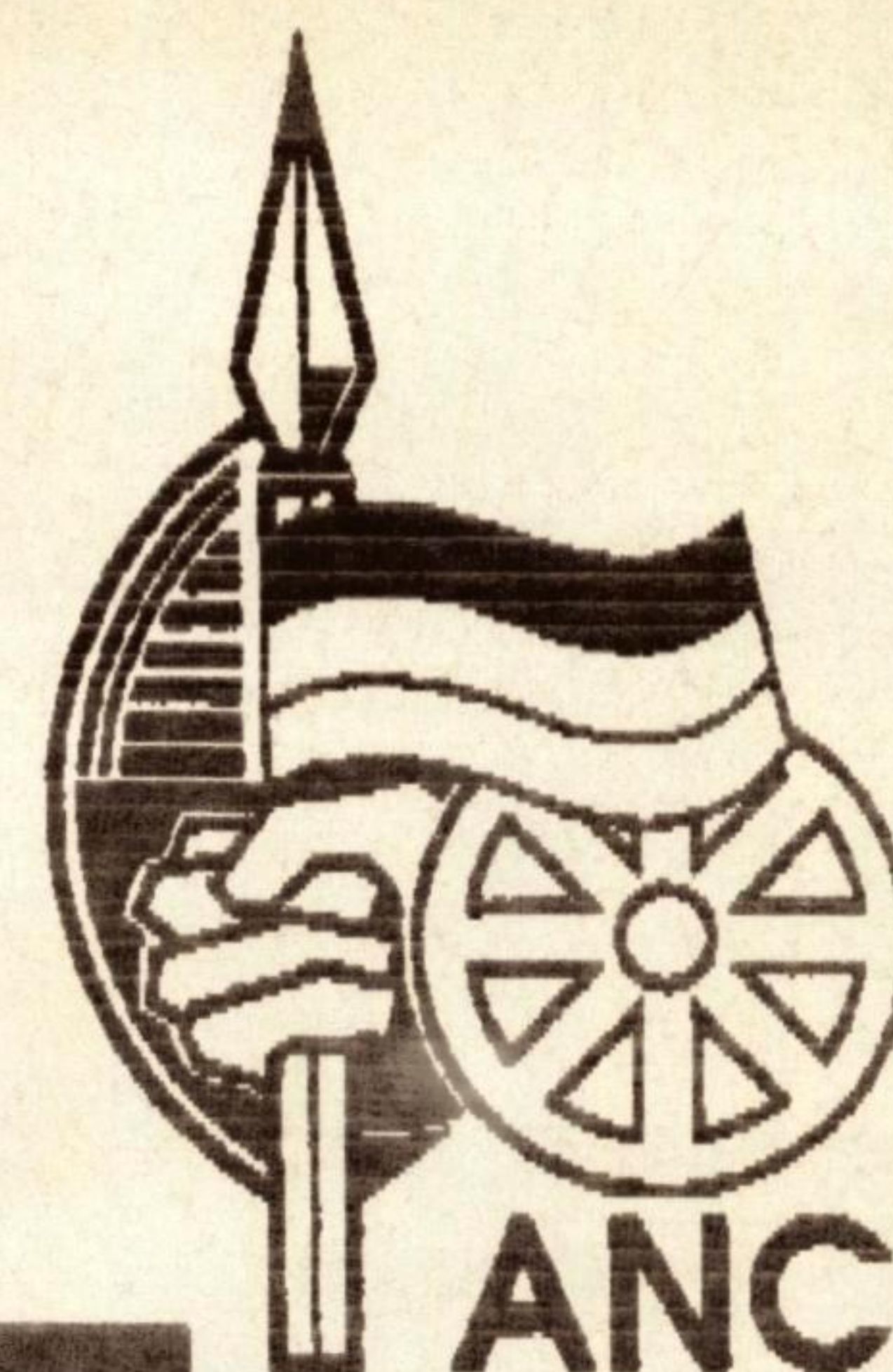


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Department of Arts & Culture

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The Cultural Front

▼ Advances

Although much ground has been covered over the last two years in forging a front for the democratisation of South African culture, the achievement of this goal is rendered inaccessible because of the intransigence of pro-establishment cultural institutions and formations.

In April 1991, the DAC initiated a consultative meeting with various organisations, including the cultural wings of the PAC and Azapo, to forge a common front over the anti-apartheid cultural boycott issue as well as the democratisation of South African cultural structures.

Thereafter the DAC held discussions, which developed into negotiations for their transformation, with a range of establishment cultural institutions. This resulted in the formation of Joint Working Committees to ensure that the institutions' decision-making, administrative and creative structures reflected a future democratic constitution of our society and worked towards redressing apartheid imbalances.

On the 3rd - 5th April 1992, a DAC Negotiation Commission, headed by DAC head Wally Serote, was launched at a workshop attended by most regional ANC DAC co-ordinators and non-aligned cultural organisations at the Alpha Centre.

The commission consists of 14 DAC regional co-ordinators of the Language, Funding and the Museum, Monument and Heraldry Commissions plus a NWC member, Cheryl Carolus. It reports to the ANC National Negotiations Commission and is advised by a Brainstorm Committee resource group.

In accordance with guidelines based on the ideal non-sectarian nature of culture, formulated at the launch, the DAC Negotiations Commission serves only as a facilitator for the empowerment of cultural organisations

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DAC

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Following the guidelines, in consultation with COSAW, PAWO, FAWO, and the Association of Community Art Centres, the DAC has facilitated Joint Working Committees composed of non-sectarian cultural structures and apartheid or parastatal structures. To date, JWCs have been formed or agreed to in principle with most of the major South African cultural organisations, institutions or structures. Statements of intent have been drawn or adopted in principle to form trusts to redress apartheid imbalances, train underprivileged cultural workers and generally improve their lot through affirmative action.

▼ Setbacks

However, all this progress has been hampered by the intransigence of government-aligned performing arts councils consisting of Napac, Pact, Pacofs and Capab. While continuing to enjoy apartheid sponsorship, the councils have been delaying negotiations by making progress contingent upon the outcome of national political negotiations and consulting with apartheid ministers for their representation at Codesa.

It is therefore apparent that the DAC, as facilitator, is compelled to find alternatives to resolve the stalemate. For this reason, it demands a moratorium on the government funding of the arts councils through the National Negotiations Commission and calls upon democratic cultural structures to define their role within the mass action principle formulated by the Tripartite Alliance as well to increase pressure for the transformation of specific apartheid cultural structures.

The Brainstorm Committees consisting of the DAC regional co-ordinators, Women and Youth League representatives and DAC Language, Funding Negotiations and Museum, Monument and Heraldry Commission facilitators, which were approved at the DAC Policy Conference in December 1991, must be set into motion to organise cultural structures for mass action to demand:

- A moratorium on the use of taxpayers' money to fund apartheid cultural structures;
- The restructuring of all apartheid cultural structures and parastatals;
- Commitment to the binding decisions and time-frames set by Joint Working Committees; and
- The creation and emergence of non-racial, non-sexist and non-sectarian democratic cultural structures. •

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