



Congress delegates toyi-toying against the backdrop of an MK banner.

Sayco is to start a process, together with the ANC Youth Section, to formally establish a massbased ANC Youth League.

The congress recommended that a joint committee made up of members from the Sayco National Executive Committee (NEC) and the ANC Youth Section is established to look into the matter.

The NEC has also been mandated to meet the ANC's Internal Leadership Core to discuss the matter.

Local youth congresses are to discuss further the question of Sayco becoming part of the ANC and to educate their members about the ANC.

By centralising and becoming a unitary organisation, Sayco will be in a better position to work to-

wards forming the Youth League.

#### Natal

The congress devoted a special session to the Natal violence where delegates from Natal were able to put forward their perspectives on the situation.

Many of these delegates had themselves been involved in pitched battles with Inkatha vigilantes backed by the state.

The congress noted that a number of people had tried to alleviate the situation by talking to Inkatha leader Gatsha Buthelezi, but that their efforts had brought no change.

"Buthelezi sees violence against our people as a weapon to enhance his status as a national leader who cannot be left out of negotiations.

"...[He] has realised that violence and violence alone can make Comrade Mandela hold a meeting with him and this meeting would keep Buthelezi in the limelight," said a congress resolution.

It was resolved to isolate Buthelezi, declare him an enemy of the people and urge Mandela not to meet with him.

The congress also resolved that effective defence units had to be established as a matter of urgency and called on MK to assist in the defence of Natal's people.

Noting that the state's security forces together with the KwaZulu police had recently intensified the offensive against the people of Natal, the congress also resolved to campaign for the removal of the security forces, and particularly the

KwaZulu police, from Natal.

#### Elections

By Sunday morning, the list of items to be discussed stretched into the distance. Major dicussions such as Sayco's constitution, policy and programme of action still had to be dealt with.

At midnight, the congress was still going full-steam.

As the last item – the election of a new NEC – was reached at 1am, people started to stir and get excit-

The new Sayco constitution stipulated a 20-person NEC, and regions were to nominate candi-

Former political prisoner and MK member Regan Shope had the unenviable task of trying to contain the excitement and conduct the elections.

The newly elected NEC is as follows:

Mokaba Peter President (unopposed); vice-president Nyamaseli Booi; general secretary Rapu Molekane (unopposed); administrative secretary Jerry Ndou; organising secretary Kgaogelo Lekgoro; treasurer Ignatius Jacobs (unopposed); assistant treasurer Fawcett Mathebe; education officer Ephraim Nkoe (unopposed); assistant education officer Febe Potgieter; publicity secretary Kenneth Mphakwana (unopposed); women's organiser Dipuo Peters; assistant women's organiser Nxumisa Kondlo; religious officer Joe Nkuna (unopposed); cultural officer Andy Sefohlela; sports officer Lulamile Georgias; student liaison officer Christopher Mbekele; Pioneers co-ordinator Sharon Davids; labour co-ordinator Norman Mashebane and Vuyo Bodiya as the additional member.

Finally, at 3am, delegates were free to attend the braai prepared for them some hours earlier.

The following day, the delegates joined hundreds of others dancing in the hot sun to the likes of Bayete, Stimela and Sankomoto at the Youth Festival at Lekazi's stadium.

Then it was time to return home to start implementing the programme of action.

# Young lions plan action to destroy apartheid

AYCO'S young lions have drawn up a formidable programme of action to destroy apartheid colonial-

The congress – which is Sayco's highest decision-making body – committed its membership and resources to the intensification of the struggle at all levels.

It emphasised that mass mobilisation and organisation had to be increased and that the best way to ensure this was to promote mass action around concrete issues and problems facing people.

Strong sectoral organisations had to be built as a matter of priority to cater for the different needs of various groups of people, such as the youth, women, trade unions and civics.

The ANC's moral and political influence had to be extended at all levels of society, resolved the congress, and Sayco would help in this process.

The preconditions for negotiations as laid out in the Harare Declaration still have to be met. Sayco committed itself to popularising the declaration and fighting for the preconditions to be met, such as:

• the lifting of the state of emer-

e the lifting of the state of emer gency;

• the ending of political trials and the release of political prisoners;

• the withdrawal of the security forces from the townships and the stopping of security police action against progressive organisations.

Delegates also committed themselves to winning support for the unifying principles of the Conference for a Democratic Future (CDF), specifically emphasising the establishment of a unitary, non-racial and democratic South Africa based on one person, one vote.

Discussing the ANC's constitutional guidelines were also identified as essential. The youth is to conduct door-to-door campaigns to involve people in drawing up a new constitution.

This process would go hand in hand with the non-racial vote campaign to establish a Constituent Assembly to draw up a new constitution for the country.

Non-racialism in action should be built, declared the congress.

At an organisational level, Sayco resolved to restructure itself into a unitary organisation and work to overcome regionalism.

It also resolved to consolidate its various departments and develop programmes of action for each department.

Sayco is to extensively discuss the process of becoming part of the ANC Youth League, and has resolved to set up a joint committee with the ANC Youth Section to discuss the issue.

While consolidating the ANC Youth League as the core of youth structures in the country, Sayco will also help to build a youth from involving ANC youth, students, religious, cultural and sports youth organisations.

#### Union of Young Communists of Cuba:

"It is an honour for the UYCC to participate in this congress. We are bound to the South African youth not only through our Latin-African identity but also through our common struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism and racism in all its manifestations.

"The imperialists are wrong if they believe it is possible to reverse the process of socialist construction in Cuba... The Cuban youth, as part of a people who have willingly chosen the building of socialism, are ready to defend loyally both the principles of Marxism-Leninism and our revolution to the ultimate consequences.

"For Cubans, socialism means everything: independence, liberty, dignity. What we are and have to-day we owe entirely to socialism and believe in its unlimited possibilities.

"Today, more than ever, our youth supports our Revolution,

our Party and Fidel [Castro]. The feelings of the Cuban youth, reflected in recent demonstrations in support of our revolutionary process, are clearly expressed in the current slogan: Socialism or Death.

"We are extremely proud to have offered our modest contribution to the present reality through the participation and sacrifice of our young people in Cuito Cuanavale and elsewhere.

"Long live the Freedom between Cuban and South African Youth!"

All youth to battle! All youth to the frontline!

The ANC Youth League's 17th National Congress, which begins in KwaNdebele on 9 December 1991, bears particular historical significance because it is the first national congress of the Youth League since the unbanning of the ANC.

After 30 years of inactivity, the ANC Youth League re-emerges as a force unifying all democratic youth organisations and individuals which held aloft the banner of the ANC during the years of illegality. That delegates to the congress will be coming from different parts of the world – Africa, Europe, America and Asia and, of course, from our 14 regions – is an illustration of the wealth of youthful experience that the congress is bringing together.

The congress comes at a time when the ANC is confronted with the task of the transferral of power into the hands of the majority of our people. The immense nature of the responsibility is reflected by the pressure placed on the national liberation forces by leaders of big business and apologists of white domination to renege on basic tenets of fundamental political and socio-economic transformation.

Countless efforts are being made by forces of reaction to manufacture a "troika" whose primary objective is to defeat our revolutionary objectives. Equally significant and irresistible is the expectation of the oppressed majority that

## Challenges facing the youth

the ANC should, in unambiguous terms, detail how it is going to redress the legacy of devastated communities and peoples.

In pursuit of their nefarious goals, the regime and its allies have unleashed an unprecedented campaign of violence to weaken the ANC and to defeat the effort for the establishment of a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

The ANCYL National Congress has the challenge of not only participating in the further elaboration of ANC policy, strategy and tactics, but must also work out ways of how the above objectives can be realised within the shortest possible time.

The intentions of reaction have been eloquently echoed by the National Party's constitutional proposals, which seek, at whatever

cost, to preserve white domination and privilege. The proposals are a manifestation of the racist stupor in which the National Party still wallows. The ANCYL should therefore formulate its perspectives and programmes well aware of the extent to which the adversary is still committed to the white racist

ideology.

As we go to Congress, the patriotic forces, at the head of which stands the ANC, have agreed with the regime and its allies on the date, agenda and venue of the All-Party Congress (Codesa). This will begin to outline the route we should follow into a democratic South Africa.

While things seem to be going according to our intentions, we must always be vigilant of the manoeuvres of the regime. The need to escalate struggle for our demands – a sovereign interim government and a constituent assembly elected on a one-person-one-vote basis – cannot be overemphasised.

The added challenge is to build the ANC into a formidable vehicle of liberation. These are tasks on which we cannot fail our people, our freedom and our country.

Forward to Congress! •

## At the cutting edge

was characterised by militant struggles by black youth and students throughout the country. June 16 1976 stands out as a watershed in popular resistance by the oppressed and exploited people of our country. On that day, thousands of high school students took to the streets of Soweto to protest against the forced imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. This was to become a rallying point in South Africa and abroad in the struggle against apartheid colonialism.

The white minority Pretoria regime was shaken to its roots. The political scenario in South Africa would never be the same.

In the 1960s and early 1970's, the Pretoria racists scored some successes in suppressing the liberation forces, particularly following the banning of the ANC. However, by the mid-seventies, the tide was turning.

The apartheid government responded to the peaceful protests with brute force, killing and maiming thousands of unarmed students and youth.

Following the demonstrations, thousands of youth left the country for military training rather than to continue offering themselves as cannon fodder for Pretoria's security forces.

They swelled the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the glorious fighting arm

### Youth organisation since the seventies has been built in the midst of the anti-apartheid struggle

of the ANC, ready to occupy the forwardmost trenches of battle.

The events of 1976 and 1977 revitalised the ANC politically and militarily. The old stream of ANC activists fused with the militant young generation thrown up by the popular uprisings.

In the 70's, several youth and student organisations were formed as an organisational expression of the determination of young people to continue the struggle against white minority domination. These included the South African Students Organisation (Saso), the South African Student Movement (Sasm) and the National Youth Organisation (Nayo). The political orientation of these organisations was Black Consciousness.

Saso rose to prominence in 1975 when it pioneered "Viva Frelimo" rallies to celebrate Mozambique's independence from colonial rule.

While thousands of young people

were mobilised into action, the organisations at the time were unable to develop a solid and coherent mass base. In addition, there was a lack of national political and organisational youth leadership to guide, instill political cohesion and organise thousands of disorganised youth.

In October 1977, Saso, Sasm and a number of other organisations were banned.

However, the flames of resistance could not be extinguished.

The post 76–77 period was qualitatively different from the previous period. The ANC and MK were reasserting themselves. The Freedom Charter, non-racialism and democracy, and the centrality of mass mobilisation and organisation were gaining prominence. Black Consciousness as a philosophy was increasingly seen as having serious limitations as an effective instrument to marshall the democratic

forces.

The perspectives of the Congress movement were on the ascendancy. By the late seventies, more and more young people were beginning to embrace the Freedom Charter and non-racialism as guiding perspectives of the liberation movement as led by the ANC.

The formation of the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) in 1979 stands out as an important achievement. A tight and coherent layer of activists schooled in the policies and perspectives of the ANC-led liberation alliance emerged. Cosas, which developed into a strong national movement of high-school students, laid the foundation stone for significant political developments.

Whereas in the 1976 period students erroneously believed that they could lead the national democratic struggle, Cosas deepened the appreciation of the central leadership role of the working class.

Cosas also formulated a programme which linked students' immediate grievances with national political and community-based struggles. This approach was to inform the method of mass organisation in the 80's.

In exile, youth in the ANC and MK were making a powerful political impact. Many of the 1976 generation rose in the structures of MK and the ANC, including its international missions. The ANC Youth

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Youth predominate at a mass funeral in GaRankuwa at the height of Sayco's popularity in the late eighties.

organisation of the ANC which has about 500 000 members throughout its 14 regions: Pretoria-Witwaters-Vaal triangle, Northern Transvaal, Western Transvaal, Eastern Transvaal, Northern Orange Free State, Southern Orange Free State, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Border, Transkei, Northern Cape, Northern Natal, Natal Midlands and Southern Natal.

A small portion of our membership is still outside the country in the different parts of the world where ANC communities are found. Years of exile forced our compatriots to settle in foreign lands. A number of them have returned in the course of repatriation. However, some of them are still outside the country due to several commitments and problems. While a number are pursuing their studies in Europe, America, Africa, Asia; some cannot return due to complications that have arisen as a result of the continued threat to their lives that is posed by agencies of the S.A government. It is indeed true to say that many of our returned compatriots have lost their lives in the hands of the South African Police in the main and that others continue to endure severe harassment and intimidation by the same force.

The smallest component part of the ANC Youth League is its branches. There are about 700 branches of the Youth League all over the country. The Youth League exists in the urban townships, rural villages, and a number of white, Indian and coloured communities. A few branches have been established in the mines. Recruiting committees have also been constituted in some factories and other workplaces. Discussions are still raging on how the Youth League should exist at universities and colleges. The Youth

## Facts and figures

#### The structures of the Youth League

League has, however, not gone beyond establishing recruiting committees due to the discussions that are still taking place between us and SASCO on the matter.

#### BRANCHES

 The Youth League only formally constitutes a branch once 100 youth have been recruited in a particular locality. The branch membership is subdivided into several sub-committees which deal with various aspects of the organisation like campaigns, recruitment, fund-raising, media, political education, culture, sport, pioneer organisation and liaison with student and other organisations. This sub-division is intended to achieve maximum participation by the entire membership in the activities of the organisation. The membership of the branch meets once a year in an annual general meeting to elect a branch leadership, the Branch Executive Committee.

To facilitate co-ordination between branches and the regions and eventually the national headquarters, the regions are divided into numerous zones. For instance, seven zones make up the PWV region, namely Pretoria, Johannesburg, Vaal, East Rand, West Rand, Soweto and far East Rand.

The size of and number of branches in each zone is determined by the proximity of branches to one another and the extent to which co-ordination between such branches can be easily

sustained.

Zonal and Regional Congresses should, according to the draft constitution which is to be adopted at the coming national congress, be held once a year.

The different regions will come together once every two years to elect the National Executive Committee and to determine the policy and programme for the following two years.

At the National Congress representation is proportional to the size of each branch. Each branch is entitled to two delegates for the first 100 members and one more for each additional 200. Unlaunched branches have observer status at the congress and can only send one such observer.

The National Executive Committee shall consist of seventeen (17) or twenty (20) members (a number still to be determined by the National Congress) and the 14 regional chairpersons and secretaries. This means the Youth League should eventually end up with an NEC of 42 members or so.

operational work is carried out by its various departments: organising, women, students, information and publicity, political education, pioneers, labour, finance and projects, religion and international.

The organising department is responsible for setting up Youth League structures throughout the country, plus the recruitment of membership. It also oversees the implementation of the organisation's programme of action.

The women's department looks after interests of women within and outside the organisation. It also has a responsibility of ensuring that more and more women are joining the organisation. The student department looks after the interests of student members of the organisation. It is also charged with maintaining liaison with student organisations.

#### DEPARTMENTS

Like student affairs the religious and labour departments are charged with looking after the interests of the respective constituencies within and outside the organisation, namely, the religious and working youth and liaising with these sectors of youth.

International affairs is responsible for maintaining relations with other youth organisations all over the world. The ANC Youth League is at the moment the incumbent president of the World Federation of Democratic Youth.Our term of office ends in 1994.

The Department of Political Education deals with the political training of Youth League members. The Department of Information and Publicity is responsible for all media and publicity of the organisation.

Below left: Toyi-toying on the stage – tens of thousands commemorate the anniversary of the June 16 uprisings at a rally hosted by Sayco last year. Below right: ANC and ANCYL banners at the launch of the League's Eastern Transvaal region earlier this year.



#### Youth at the cutting edge

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Section was established to cater for the interests of youth in exile and to become involved in building the national youth movement inside South Africa.

The Youth Section cultivated bilateral relations with international youth movements. This helped foster a spirit of international solidarity and complemented the ANC's work for the international isolation of the apartheid regime.

By the early 80's, Cosas had already begun to build a firm base in the schools. On the education front, it formed a strong alliance and took up joint campaigns with democratic student organisations at tertiary educational institutions, Azaso and Nusas.

The 1982 Cosas national congress resolved to build and strengthen youth organisations. Many Cosas activists across the country had been expelled from school or had finished their high school studies and were now young workers or unemployed. They played a central part in the formation of local youth congresses.

The formation of youth congresses took place at a time when community-based mass struggles and civic organisations were gaining momentum. Youth activists played a central role in organising residents around their immediate demands. These included demands for affordable rents and bus fares, upgrading of services and facilities, the resignation of councillors and so on.

#### FREEDOM CHARTER

Youth congresses were vociferous in projecting the Freedom Charter as a programme for the democratic transformation of apartheid South Africa. They fearlessly chanted slogans and sang songs of the ANC and MK at a time when these organisations were still illegal.

The youth congresses brought together the young militants of the 76/77 period with the emerging Young Lions of the 80's. In the midst of battles against police and soldiers occupying the townships, the youth were forging political and organisational resilience.

They used sticks and stones and defence units to protect their communities.

The organised youth also played a key role in the

UDF, which was formed in August 1983 and united hundreds of organisations nationally.

As local youth organisations mushroomed, the need for national co-ordination was becoming evident. An interim national youth structure was formed for this purpose.

After the UN General Assembly declared 1985 the International Year of the Youth, a national coordinating structure was set up and campaigns, cultural festivals, workshops and seminars were organised to mark the event.

With youth organisations often playing a key role in anti-apartheid opposition, youth and student activists became the main target for detentions and assassinations. Like with the 1976 generation, another wave of young people left the country for military training.

Repression aimed at crushing countrywide resistance was reaching unprecendented levels. Mass funerals became regular events. By 1985/86 the country had become ungovernable, true to the ANC's call at the time to "render the country ungovernable and make apartheid unworkable". Apartheid structures in many townships collapsed and community councillors

#### UNITY **FOR** STRENGTH

This week marks the tenth anniversary of the independence of Zimbabwe and, numerous African heads of state where in Harare to pay their respects to all the people of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has achieved some noteworthy successes in the fields of education, agriculture and, to some extent, land reform.

This tenth year of independence also means the withering away of the Lancaster House constitution, a development which should hopefully see a much more rigorous approach to the opening up of the land to those who work it.

For us in SA, however, the greatest feature of the Zimbabwean experience has been the unity of Zanu and Zapu.

The unity of the two organisations represents a remarkable achievement in our region and continent.

The disunity of our people has, in times of bondage, delayed the day of liberation. On independence, such disunity has resulted in the retardation of the development of the country and people as a whole.

Many African countries have been truly devastated by this type of disunity. That a number of countries in the region are beginning to opt for the path of negotiations is most encouraging.

Within our country, talks between the ANC and the government are about to take place - yet there is not yet a coherent basis of unity that holds all our organisations and people together.

It is imperative that once genuine negotiations starts, there should be two positions on the table – that of the people and the regime.

In this respect the maximum unity of all those opposed to apartheid is central.

The recent calling off of talks between the government and several homeland leaders gives us great encouragement because these leaders, are now beginning to identify with the people. If they do so, they should not be rejected.

The democratic movement needs to speed up the process of intraorganisational consultation. This process will ultimately build towards a common position of all the people of South Africa.

Those who want to be part of this process should not be shunned. Those who stand outside this process will inevitably gravitate towards the government and all it represents.

In our struggle, we can no longer afford to have grey, undefined areas. Now, more than ever before, it is the people or the regime.

#### UPDATE

- More than 214 people are in detention under emergency regulations in South Africa, according to the Human Rights Commission (HRC).
- Fourteen detainees held in Krugersdorp prison embarked on a hunger strike 10 days ago, and were moved to Grootvlei prison in Bloemfontein. They are demanding that they either be charged or released, the HRC reported.
- Michael Mekgwe, who was detained on April 10 and is being held in Potchefstroom prison, embarked on a hunger strike on April 5 and is demanding that he either be charged or released, according to the HRC.

#### Saveo concress

#### WHAT THE YOUTH WANT

Resolutions passed at the congress:

#### THE ANC AND THE YOUTH LEAGUE

All youth in Sayco will be encouraged to join the ANC, rebuild it and popularise its perspectives, aims and objectives.

Sayco will begin a process, together with the ANC Youth Section, of formally establishing a mass-based ANC Youth League in the country.

#### THE UDF

The UDF must be phased out and its political role must shift to the ANC. The united antiapartheid front approach is still important and must continue. The ANC must play a central role in building a united front against apartheid.

#### VIOLENCE IN NATAL

Defence units to defend people against Inkatha are to be formed and MK is called on to help in this defence. Sayco will campaign for the removal of security forces, especially bantustan police, and national mass protest action to highlight the Natal situation will be embarked on. Inkatha leader Gatsha Buthelezi has been declared an enemy of the people. The youth have called for his isolation, and that Nelson Mandela should not meet

#### STATE VIOLENCE

Law and order minister Adriaan Vlok must resign and the security forces must withdraw from the townships. Should police brutality continue, Sayco will call for talks between the ANC and the government to be suspended. The people, under MK's command, will not hesitate to take up arms against the brutality.

#### THE BANTUSTANS

Organisation must be built in the bantustans and referenda held to test the popularity of bantustan leaders.

#### DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN

Defiance of apartheid laws must continue in all. parts of the country under the banner "All Power to the People". People must occupy empty houses in white suburbs. Empty land will also be occupied and houses, creches, schools and recreational facilities built. Mass marches and demonstrations will continue.

#### THE EDUCATION CRISIS AND THE NECC

between the liance NECC, Cosas and parents. The NECC should a mass-based assume



character should become central to shaping educational decisions.

#### WOMEN

Sayco will work to eradicate all sexism, and ensure women are represented at all decisionmaking bodies. Affirmative action to develop the potential of women will also be embarked on.

#### NEGOTIATIONS

There must be maximum mobilisation and organisation of people and the ANC's non-racial vote campaign must be supported. The government must commit itself to immediately establishing an interim government of which the ANC will be part to faciliate a negotiated settlement.

#### THE HARARE DECLARATION

The Harare Declaration must be popularised. It must be translated into other languages, taken to rural communities and discussed through workshops and seminars.

#### INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The international isolation of the apartheid regime must continue and be intensified.

#### SANCTIONS

Sanctions must continue, and Sayco will help popularise the call for sanctions.

#### FOREIGN FUNDING

No funds with strings attached can be accepted. However, funds can be accepted from countries that are not supporting the regime. Sayco's NEC must be in charge of controlling and distributing funds.

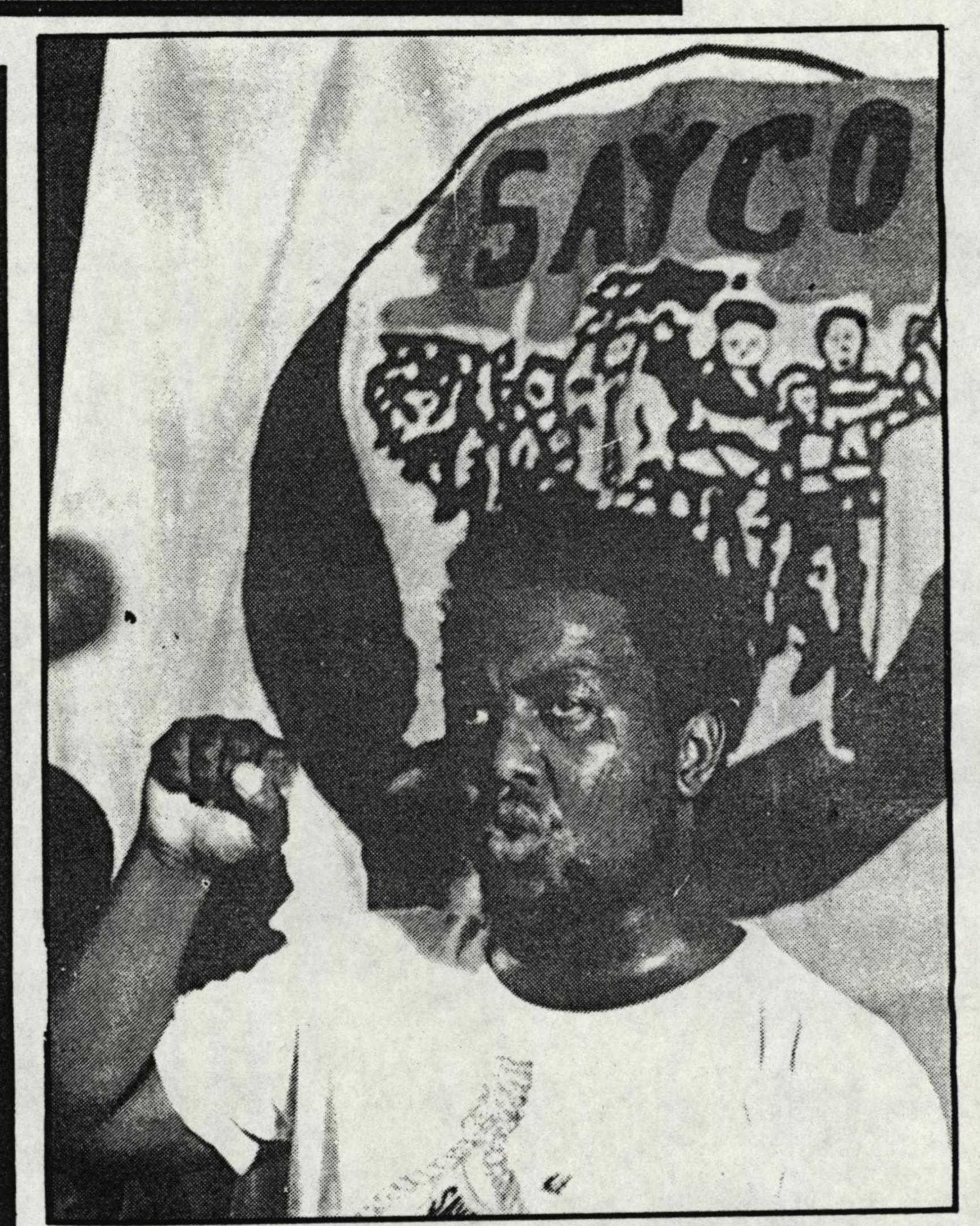
#### THE ENVIRONMENT

Awareness of the state's abuse of the environment must be built. Youth must be educated about conservation and the development of our natural resources. Sayco should work with existing environmental groups to determine how to manage the environment in the future.

#### PIONEERS

Young children or pioneers need to be cared for and educated. Sayco

There should be an al- needs to devise ways of organising children and must establish Pioneers' sections in all its struc-



Sayco's Peter Mokaba after his re-election as president at the congress.

HE hills surrounding KaNyamazane in Kangwane rang with freedom songs and slogans last weekend as youth from all over the country gathered for the first national congress of the South African Youth Congress (Sayco).

Some travelled for 24 hours on buses to get to the Eastern Transvaal venue, while others caught taxis, came by car or hitch-hiked.

And the biggest hall in the bantustan could only just accommodate all 1 500 delegates; guests from as far afield as Cuba, the United States and Sweden, and observers from the Congress of South African Students, Young Christian Students, the SA National Students' Congress and the National Union of SA Students.

The 10 official Sayco regions -Northern Transvaal, Eastern Transvaal, Southern Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal, Border, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Western Cape and Southern Cape - were joined for the first time by the Transkei region.

#### Highlights

Highlights of the congress were the opening addresses by ANC deputy president Nelson Mandela and Sayco president Peter Mokaba, a paper on negotiations by ANC leader Andrew Mlangeni and discussions on the ANC-SACP alliance and the anti-apartheid coalition led by ANC, SACP and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) veteran Lawrence Phokanoka.

The major areas of debate cen-

tred around the restructuring of Sayco, its relationship with the ANC Youth and the situation in

After much discussion, the congress resolved to transform Sayco from a federal to a unitary structure. The exact process of transformation still has to be worked out, but local youth congresses will all now be guided by the same constitution and will follow a national programme of action.

However, local youth congresses - which will now become Sayco branches - will still be guided by local conditions which will determine how they take up this programme.

#### ANC youth

There was much discussion on Sayco's relationship with the ANC Youth Section.

The dominant position put forward at the congress was that most Sayco members would become ANC members. For this reason, it would make no sense for Sayco to exist alongside the ANC Youth League and that Sayco should become part of the Youth League when it is formed.

The view that Sayco should exist alongside the Youth League, but that it should be broadened out and depoliticised to attract the maximum number of youth, won little support at the congress.

It was eventually resolved that as most, if not all, Sayco members were ANC supporters, Sayco members should find their home in the ANC Youth League.

#### **EXTRACTS FROM** MESSAGES OF SUPPORT

#### **ANC Youth Secretariat:**

"The convening of your first congress since the launching of Sayco under difficult conditions three years ago is a befitting tribute to the resilience and determination of the young lions.

"The current phase of our struggle demands political discipline and maximum vigilance. It is a time for intensified mass action

in demand for the creation of a climate conducive for a political settlement. Central to this will be the convening of a constituent assembly to draft a democratic constitution for a unitary, non-racial South Africa.

"We are about to begin a process to launch the ANC Youth League which will maintain overwhelmingly the socio-economic and political interests of the youth. We are confident that Sayco will play a key role in this regard."

#### Mobilise, organise for the final offensive!

establishing the ANCYL, a draft constitution was drawn up and distributed to all Youth League structures for discussion. This constitution shall be perfected and adopted as an ANCYL constitution in the forthcoming congress.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ANC

On the question of the ANCYL relationship with the ANC, the ANCYL draft constitution states the following: "The ANCYL shall be organisationally autonomous. Based on the broad political perspective of the ANC. The policies and programmes of the Youth League shall, however, be determined by its membership in accordance with this constitution. The ANCYL shall closely liaise with the ANC at all levels."

A good example of this is that from national to branch level the Youth League sits in the executive meetings of the ANC. The national chairperson and secretary general of the ANC Youth League are ex-officio members of the **ANC National Executive Committee. The** same applies to regional and branch executives. The ANC Youth League also sits in almost all the special and departmental committees of the ANC. These provisions are not only intended to facilitate communication between the Youth League and the ANC, but to also ensure that the Youth League plays a dynamic and effective role in the formulation of policy of the ANC and the determination of the general direction the organisation is taking. These constitutional provisions are complimented by regular meetings that take place between the leadership structures of the two organisations whenever the need arises. A specified number of Youth League members are

## Youth autonomy

## A discussion paper on the relationship between the ANC and the ANC Youth League

granted delegate status with voting rights at all ANC national conferences. This practice may have to be extended to regional level.

On the same relationship the ANC Constitution states the following: "The ANC Youth League will function as an autonomous body within the overall structure of the ANC, of which it shall be an integral part, with its own constitution, rules and regulations, provided that these shall not conflict with the constitution and policies of the ANC. Members of the ANCYL over the age of 18 shall be expected to play a full part in the general political life of the ANC. A memember of the ANCYL shall not be eligible for any position as an office bearer of the ANC or to attend ANC conferences, members or executive meetings of the ANC(unless specially invited) unless he/she is a full member of the ANC."

#### THE MEANING

In broad political and legal terms the term autonomy as used in the two documents quoted above means 'independence'. This independence is however not absolute nor is it complete. It is qualified. In order to explain our understanding of the exact meaning of this autonomy or independence let us confine ourselves to the ANCYL draft constitution.

The ANCYL draft constitution refers to organisational autonomy of the

ANCYL from the ANC. Organisational autonomy in this particular case also implies administrative autonomy. It means independence in structure and activity. It is not merely an auxiliary or appendage of the ANC but should have organisational and administrative life of its own.

This form of autonomy means the right of the Youth League to convene and hold its own conferences, to take resolutions which affect it and its programmes and to elect its own leadership. It has the right to establish its own infrastructure, its own bank accounts and to set up and run its own projects.

Political allegiance of the ANCYL to policies and programmes of the ANC is founded on the common objective of liberating our country from Apartheid colonialism and establishing a nonracial, non-sexist, unitary and democratic South Africa. This allegiance means adherence to the policy, political programme, strategy and tactics plus the ideological view of the ANC. On the other hand, the ANC always welcomes those ANCYL political positions which help to enrich its own policies. In cases where the conference and other leading structures of the ANCYL take decisions which affect these policy positions, those decisions are subject to approval, modification or rejection by the ANC.

#### CORRECTNESS OF AUTONOMY

The ANCYL draft constitution states that membership of the Youth League is open to all South Africans between the ages of 14 and 35 who support the policy and guidelines, aims and objectives of the ANC Youth League. Young people under the age of 18, whilst they can become members of the Youth League, cannot join the ANC. On the other hand, even if a young person is a member of the ANCYL, membership of the ANC is not automatic on reaching the age of 18. Such a young person must make her/his own individual voluntary application for membership to the ANC.

This means that there is a significant section of the membership of the ANCYL over which the ANC cannot lay any constitutional claim.

On the other hand there is a sizeable membership of the ANC between the ages of 18 and 35 which is not part of the membership of the ANCYL. For them to become members they have to make

a deliberate and conscious decision to join the Youth League. Membership of the ANCYL cannot be assumed.

We acknowledge the fact that the youth can only effectively participate in the liberation of our country and get involved in the building of a democratic South Africa on the basis of the totality of knowledge and experience handed over to it by the older generations. At the same time young people should not be encouraged merely to copy or assimilate what is handed over to them. They should do that through an investigative and critical approach. Through many bitter struggles our youth have shown that they are worthy successors of those who struggled before them.

The real education in struggle and development of the youth cannot be separated from their independent involvement in political struggle. A profound appreciation by the youth of the democratic ideals we are fighting for is better consolidated if verified by their independent experience in struggle.

The autonomy of the Youth League will offer the opportunity for the realisation of the boundless resources of energy, enterprise, initiative and free application of the creative potential of our youth.

It would be a big mistake to confuse the Youth League's desire for organisational independence with insolence, dissension or lack of confidence in the ANC.

Stifling the development of the youth militates against the very belief that our youth is the reserve force for our future struggles. It is only a nation that does not deserve its future which can stifle the development of its youth.

What is stated above does not mean that the older generations should abandon its responsibility of guiding the youth. Its guidance and criticism of the youth should appreciate the social character of the youth and the nature of the Youth League. It should strive to avoid stereotypes and uniformity rigidly imposed from above. It should be conducted patiently, persuasively and politically.

We should strive to combine mutual trust and respect between the young and the old. In the event of persistent differences of opinion the supreme judge should be what objectively unites them; the liberation of our country and the construction of a democratic society.

The autonomy of the Youth League shall make it easier for it to involve the youth independently in struggle, to organise, educate and unite them. In the process of doing that it shall train both itself and those who look up to it for leadership. It shall also inspire respect from the older generation and contribute towards the enrichment of the ANC policy, activity and tradition of struggle.



resigned. In June 1985, a state of emergency was declared and a few months later, Cosas was banned.

Thousands were detained as the security forces intensified their occupation of the townships, leaving a trail of death and destruction in their wake. Schools came to a standstill.

Youth formations were forced to operate in semiclandestine conditions.

By this time, moves to form youth structures at regional and national level were already afoot.

The first national gathering of youth congresses took place in 1984. There was general appreciation of the need to work for the establishment of a national youth organisation.

In 1985 youth congresses came together again in Natal to reassess their progress. A few interim regional structures had been formed. However, these structures were still working to forge the formations in their regions into a cohesive structure. There was disagreement on whether the proposed national youth organisation should have a federal or unitary structure. It was finally agreed that it should take the form of a federal organisation.

Clandestine consultations with the ANC Youth

Section were also taking place.

By 1986, concrete arrangements were reaching their finality. A national workshop reached agreement on a draft constitution, emblem, motto and policy. A spirit of unity and enthusiasm prevailed.

Towards the end of 1986, a few regional youth congresses were established.

#### SAYCO LAUNCH

Finally, the South African Youth Congress was formed in Cape Town on March 28 1987. Taking place at the height of the state of emergency, the launch was a dramatic event. More than 200 delegates clandestinely came together for the gathering.

Deliberate disinformation was leaked to direct the security police to Durban while more than 200 delegates from youth congresses all over the country met secretly in Cape Town.

Sayco adopted a militant and far-reaching programme of action. It also adopted the Freedom Charter as a guiding document for the establishment of a non-racial, democratic and unitary South Africa.

The organisation came out unambiguosly in

acknowledging the centrality of the ANC in the resolution of political conflict in our country. It's slogan, "Freedom or Death, Victory is Certain", struck fear into the hearts of the regime.

Sayco was the UDF's biggest affiliate. Among the demands it vigorously put forward were:

- The unbanning of the ANC;
- The release of detainees and political prisoners;
- The lifting of the state of emergency;
- The freeing of prisoners on Death Row;
- The withdrawal of troops from the townships and villages.

Sayco structures played a vital role in mobilising the rural people. Together with other democratic organisations, they won over many traditional leaders to the side of the democratic movement.

The unbanning of the ANC raised the need to reestablish the ANC Youth League. The ANC Youth Section, Sayco, SA National Students Congress, Cosas, National Union of SA Students, the Young Christian Students and other democratic youth organisations came together in 1990 to launch a Provisional National Youth Committee at Orlando Stadium. This process saw the rebirth of the ANCYL in the country.

n the mid-1940's, young men and women in their mid-twenties or early thirties, mainly teachers and students, became dissatisfied with the manner in which things were done by the ANC and the pace at which they were done. They came from the Anglican (Episcopal) Secondary School of St Peters in Johannesburg, from Lovedale or Healdtown, Adam's College and Fort Hare. A few, notably Walter Sisulu, came from the ranks of the workers.

This new breed was impatient with the minority regime and called for more militant forms of struggle. In response to this upsurge of militant youth, the ANC annual conference on 21 December 1942 authorised the Executive Committee of the ANC to establish a Youth League "to include students at Fort Hare". This decision was implemented in April 1944 when the ANC Youth League was launched at the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg. Anton Muziwakhe Lembede became its first president and Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela its secretary.

In addition to Lembede and Mandela, the Youth League's first leaders included Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Dr James Njongwe, Dr William Nkomo, Jordan Ngubane, Robert Sobukwe, Ntsu Mokhehle and AP Mda.

The ANC Youth League, in the words of Anton Lembede, advocated a philosophy of Africanism. The Provincial Committee of 1944 adopted a manifesto which, in its preamble, stated that "Africanism must be promoted". This meant that Africans should struggle for development, progress and national liberation so as to occupy their rightful and honourable place among nations of the world.

#### FUTURE LEADERS

In addition, the African youth should be united, consolidated, trained and disciplined, because, from their ranks, future leaders would emerge.

The document went on to explain the policy of the ANCYL, which was based on the conviction that the contact of "the white race with the black has resulted in the emergence of a set of conflicting living conditions and outlooks on life which seriously hamper South Africa's progress to nationhood".

The whites, said the Leaguers of the time, possessed superior military strength and superior organising skills; and therefore had arrogated to themselves the ownership of the land and invested themselves with the authority and right to "regard South Africa as a white man's land."

The Youth League described the ANC as "the symbol and embodiment of the African's will to present a united national front against all forms of oppression".

## Early days

#### The roots of the Youth League

The central theme of the Youth League philosophy was the struggle for national self-determination, which would be brought about by "building a strong national unity". The organisation was also orientated towards mass action, a method of struggle new to the ANC and one which was bound to strengthen the ANC and hasten the march to freedom.

The document, "Our Creed", which became the guiding document of the ANCYL, marked a profound development in the policies of the ANC. The emphasis on Africanism "was a radical departure from the predominantly liberal and traditionalist thinking of the ANC" at that time.

The creed forecast the formation of the Organisation of African Unity twenty years prior to its birth. The emphasis on African unity and the subjection of ideology to popular demands and aspirations were significant mileposts in the development of progressive and revolutionary thought.

It is, however, important to note that the Africanism of the Youth League was devoid of racial prejudice. It sought to emphasize the unity of the African people and the need to fight for self-determination by the Africans themselves.

It never sought to exclude from struggle those non-African democrats who were prepared to fight side by side with Africans and accept the policies of the ANC and African leadership.

The ANC Youth League policy document went on to explain the aims of African nationalism as:

 the creation of a united nation out of the heterogeneous tribes;

 the freeing of Africans from foreign domination and foreign leadership;

 the creation of conditions which can enable Africa to make her own contribution to human progress and happiness.

About whites, the ANC Youth League talked of the "possibility of a compromise" if:

 The whites completely abandoned their domination of Africa;

 They agreed to an equitable and proportionate redivision of land;

• They assisted in establishing a free people's democracy

in South Africa and Africa in general.

The ANC Youth League documents distinguished between different types of African Nationalism:

"It must be noted that there are two streams of African Nationalism. One centres around Marcus Garvey's slogan – 'Africa for the Africans'. It is based on the 'Quit Africa' slogan and cry 'Hurl the white man into the sea'. This brand of African Nationalism is extreme and ultra-revolutionary.

"There is another stream of African Nationalism (Africanism) which is moderate, and which the congress Youth League professes. We of the Youth League take account of the current situation in South Africa, and realise that the different racial groups have come to stay.

"But we insist that a condition for inter-racial peace and progress is the abandonment of white domination, and such a change in the basic structure of South African society that those relations which breed exploitation and human misery will disappear.

"Therefore our goal is the winning of National Freedom for the African people and the inauguration of a people's free society where racial oppression and persecution will be outlawed."

On 24 August 1948, AP Mda wrote to GM Pitje: "Please note that our Nationalism has nothing to do with Fascism and National Socialism (Hitleric version) nor with the imperialistic and neo-fascist Nationalism of the Afrikaaners (the Malanite type). Ours is the pure nationalism of an oppressed people, seeking freedom from foreign oppression".

#### PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The birth of the ANCYL largely influenced the ANC's 1949 Programme of Action, which emphasised:

• The principle of self-determination.

· Rejection of white domination.

 A vigorous pro-African policy under the banner of African Nationalism.

 Injection of the spirit of self-confidence in being African as opposed to racist theories and paternalistic attitudes of liberals who sought to instill a sense of self-pity, shame in and even "excuses" for being black.

Mass action: strikes, demonstration, protests and so on.
 They refuted accusations that African nationalism was

one-sided and racialistic and condemned "pseudonationalism", "people who pretend to be nationalists when in fact they are only imperialist or capitalist agents, using Nationalistic slogans in order to cloak their reactionary position", "fascist agents", "vendors of foreign method" and "tribalism".

Acknowledgement: "South Africa belongs to the us: A history of the ANC" by the late Francis Meli.

## an you briefly tell us about your involvement in the ANC Youth League?

My first contact with the Youth League was as a teacher at Orlando High in 1945. I was teaching children who were very politically aware. I considered it appropriate that I should join the ANC Youth League.

From 1946 onwards I was directly in touch with AP Mda. In 1948 I was appointed to the staff at Fort Hare. It was suggested that we form a Youth League branch at Fort Hare. I convened the first meeting, which formally resolved to start a branch of the Youth League. After forming the branch, we had a visit from Mda, who filled the gaps in our knowledge about the Youth League.

We then went to the Cape ANC conference in Port Elizabeth. Here we pushed forward the programme of action. We did not succeed in persuading the Cape Congress to adopt it. But we got encouragement to proceed in 1949 to Bloemfontein to present the programme.

We canvassed the views of the leading candidates for the presidency; Xuma, the incumbent; Cape leader Z.K Matthews and Dr Moroka from the Free State. Xuma and Matthews turned us down, but Moroka agreed to stand on the basis of the 1949 programme of action. He was eventually elected, thus unseating Xuma.

At the 1949 conference, Youth Leaguer Walter Sisulu was elected as Secretary General of the ANC. Youth League members AP Mda, Oliver Tambo, Jimmy Njongwe from Port Elizabeth and myself were also included on the executive.

From that conference onwards, the Youth League gradually rose through the hierarchy of the ANC and were largely responsible for the replacement of Dr Moroka with Chief Albert Luthuli.

Can you tell us something about the Youth League leaders at the time?
I remember Oliver Tambo. He remained, as far as we were concerned, an African Nationalist. Even at the firm of Nelson Mandela and Tambo, you had a Mandela

## One who was there

The ANCYL spoke to Godfrey Pitje (right), an active Youth Leaguer in the 1940's and 1950's

who was obviously left inclined and made no bones about it. We used to witness heated discussions between him and Mda in which he would say quite bluntly that we should move towards non-racialism. Mda would counter and say there was no reason for us to depart from the basic policy of pan-africanism.

I remember a meeting where we were attacked for being narrow-minded and bigotted. Oliver Tambo replied in defence of our view and said: "For a spear or an assegai to be effective it must be narrow and sharp pointed." That intervention was extremely persuasive.

Chaps like MB Yengwa in Durban were also amongst the Youth League leaders. J.K Ngubane was amongst the founders, even though he was more left and considered the rest to be right. He was the editor of Inkundla and used that forum to attack the Youth League leadership for being bigotted, and to a certain extent, even for being tribalist. He questioned the tenets of African Nationalism. He also criticised our statement: "Africa for the Africans", feeling that that creed was exclusive. There was a regular exchange between him and Mda.

As the Youth League chaps who were senior in the ANC grew in influence, we



"right wing" and a "left wing"
within the Youth League. The left wing was
led by people like Mandela, Joe Matthews
and, to a certain extent, Dr Mji. On the right
you had the Sobukwe's, the Peter Tsele's,
the Dr Motlana's and others.

The left tended to be more accomodative, to want to work with Indians, coloureds and even with the whites. Through that sort of approach, a body called the Congress of Democrats was formed which was co-operating with the ANC, the Indian Congresses and the Coloured People's Organisation.

## The 1949 ANC conference was perhaps one of the most important events in the history of the Youth League. Can you tell us about it?

There was uneasiness about the leadership of Xuma, based on the feeling that he was not championing the philosophy of African Nationalism and was coming under the influence of the white liberals. Because of his strength within the ANC he would not be persuaded to be re-elected on the basis of the programme of action. You also had the likes of AG Champion, who saw us as little boys and students. It was quite

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were speaking for him to say: "Hlala phantsi mfana" (keep quiet young man)
"you ought to be still at school". It revealed their attitude towards the youth.

It was finally Moroka who said he had no problems with our programme. He agreed to assume leadership on the basis of it.

Two names were proposed for the Secretary General's post: Mr Ntlabathi, a principal from Bethlehem, and Dan Tloome, who was a leading member of the Communist Party. Just before a vote was taken, a member of the Communist Party argued that it would be difficult for Mr Ntlabathi, given his position with the department of education, to carry out his duties. He motivated successfully and then put a motion that Dan Tloome be put in unopposed because there was no other candidate. I remember that Chief Luthuli was in the chair. We quickly put forward a motion that the other group be given an opportunity to renominate. Chief Luthuli ruled in our favour. We then put forward the name of Walter Sisulu. We won the

#### Did your opposition to Tloome reflect differences between the Youth League and the Communist Party?

The old guard in the ANC saw nothing wrong in having communists in the ANC. The Youth League had an attitude towards the Communist Party. There was a strong feeling that they could never be African Nationalists when their policy was what we understood it to be. This view was particularly upheld by the "right wing" of the Youth League.

### What would you say the role of the ANC Youth League should be in the

I see the Youth League as a watchdog. They must always make sure that the senior people do not deviate from whatever is the declared position of the movement. I also see them doing exactly what happened in the past by playing an active role in deciding the direction of the ANC.