

WITH the ANC's first full-scale congress since its unbanning just over three months away, internal struggles for control of the organisation and leading positions in it are manifesting themselves in many ways.

But analysts will look in vain for division based on obvious political differences: "moderates vs radicals" or "communists vs nationalists". Rather, the tensions which have arisen are based on more mundane, essentially non-political, issues. And this has given rise to a variety of strange, interchanging alliances.

One of the sharpest divisions is between the old exiled ANC leaders and their younger, internal counterparts. In this struggle the internal leadership has not fared well so far.

The internal leaders — mainly former UDF activists — spent their formative years in the '80s learning about grassroots political and labour organisation, in which answerability and accountability to the constituency are an important part.

It must be said that, other than in the trade unions, these ideals were hardly implemented. The UDF in its mid-'80s heyday was never a particularly democratic institution. Nevertheless, most of that generation of leadership learned from its mistakes. That generation has also benefited from modern tertiary education which was far less available to black political activists 35 years ago.

In contrast, many members of the ANC national executive — particularly the '50s generation like Alfred Nzo, Thomas Nkobi and Joe Modise — are accustomed to leadership by decree.

They are not well equipped for the task of open, conventional political work which is now the ANC's priority. ANC sources say this has given rise to a situation where members of the old guard, seeking to protect their positions, have struggled to exclude their younger, better-skilled counterparts from positions of power. With notable exceptions such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada, the ex-politi-

Mandela factor is crucial in ANC scramble for posts

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cal prisoners convicted in the '60s suffer similar disadvantages.

The majority of full-time posts in the ANC have been filled by former exiles or prisoners, or local activists uncritical of the old guard's political style. Even Thabo Mbeki, one of the ANC's most competent officials and by no means a member of the old guard, is accused of staffing his international affairs department with "sycophants". (Mbeki also has a job security problem, but this stems from his devoting his time to cultivating foreign contacts and developing relationships with the business community, to the exclusion of building a substantial ANC support base.)

In general, the talents of the internal political leadership of the '80s have hardly been tapped. Only one top UDF person, Mahommed Valli Moosa, has acquired a senior position at the ANC's Sauer Street headquarters, and he is reliably understood to be in the midst of a struggle for his political survival.

These imperatives have given rise to some strange alliances of convenience. And one of the most potent ingredients in this brew is Winnie Mandela.

Alfred Nzo was the person who proposed the controversial appointment of Winnie Mandela to the post of head of the ANC's social welfare department. Nzo is also said to have issued the extraordinary ANC state-

ment, just before the start of Winnie Mandela's trial a few weeks ago, offering support to her as the victim of political harassment.

Why is Nzo (and others like him) so concerned with Winnie Mandela's welfare? It is unclear whether Nzo acted on his own initiative or whether it was at the urging of deputy president Nelson Mandela. Either way, it represents a double opportunity for this strata of ANC leadership to revive its flagging fortunes.

Firstly, Winnie Mandela enjoys widespread support from the militant young lions — the younger, "lost" generation clearly distinguishable from the UDF leadership. She has won this support by developing, as one observer puts it, a "political style attractive to basest instincts". The old guard political style bears little resemblance to Winnie Mandela's. However, by allying themselves with her, members of the ANC old guard can hope that, at NEC election time, they will cash in on the support she enjoys from an important section of the congress electorate.

Secondly, the old guard, because of the stance Nelson Mandela has taken recently, is in the fortuitous position that it can cash in on the "Mandela magic" in its entirety.

When Mandela was released from

prison, it was unclear how he would deal with the "Winnie problem". While still in prison he implicitly showed his disapproval by attempting to force her to disband her football club. He has always been perceived to be a man wedded to "decent" forms of political struggle.

More recently, a combination of personal and political factors — which are extremely difficult to define clearly — has led him actively to defend her honour and to orchestrate demonstrations of support for her during her trying times. Anyone lending his support to this cause is likely to benefit politically from the still extremely potent Mandela aura.

The logic of the old guard/Winnie Mandela alliance becomes even more apparent when it is recalled that the two also share the same enemy — the young upstarts who led the UDF in the '80s, who sent Winnie Mandela to Coventry in 1989 because of her football club's activities, and who might wish to seek senior positions in the ANC at the expense of the older generation.

This is not to say that the entire NEC sees the situation in the same light. The ANC's political committee, a subcommittee of the NEC, is said to have taken an unexpectedly firm stance recently on the Winnie issue by refusing to mandate the two Mandelas to attend the inaugural meeting of the Winnie Mandela Sup-

port Committee — a decision which infuriated her. Joe Slovo and Joe Nhlanhla are two senior leaders said to be risking the Mandelas' wrath.

It is also understood that Department of Information and Publicity head Pallo Jordan is in the dogbox as far as Winnie Mandela is concerned, for refusing to allow the support committee to hold its media activities under the department's auspices. But Jordan, an accomplished and popular intellectual and politician, appears to feel sufficiently secure to be able to ride out the storm.

By coincidence, perhaps, another one of the few internal activists to hold a senior position, Saki Macozoma, is number two to Jordan in the DIP. By further coincidence, Macozoma is formerly of the SACC. The churches are another of Winnie Mandela's pet hates — remember her attack on the Rev Paul Verryn in 1989.

The ANC PWV regional office took a similar stance when approached by the support committee — but only time will tell whether it has the same staying power as Jordan.

The old guard vs young turks battle has also introduced the uneasy scent of racial politics into some ANC structures. Many younger leaders are Indian or white intellectuals, and resentment towards them threatens to turn into a racial issue. Simultaneously, much of the vocal opposition to the ANC's handling of the Winnie Mandela affair has come from branches in white and Indian residential areas.

The Operation Vula affair — where "retired" NEC member Mac Maharaj and activists in the former Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses took a leading and, some say, elitist role in mass mobilisation and building ANC underground structures in the late '80s, has also taken on a racial tinge in certain ANC eyes.

Distasteful political tactics are probably unavoidable appendages to an underground struggle against repression. The ANC's June congress will begin to show whether the organisation has the ability to make the conversion to an open, democratic political style where Machiavellian politics is kept to a minimum.

Grilling for Winnie trial witness

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PATRICK LAURENCE STAR

KENNETH Kgase, aspirant writer and key witness in the trial of Winnie Mandela, insisted yesterday that he did not know the meaning of the word "comrade".

Mr Kgase, who is matriculated, chose to give his evidence in English rather than in his mother tongue, Tswana.

He had admitted earlier that he had written an article on Mrs Mandela's alleged role in the assault on him and his three companions for the British Sunday Telegraph.

Mrs Mandela and her three co-accused — John Morgan, Xolisa Falati and her daughter Nompumelelo — face four counts of kidnapping and assault.

Yesterday, under cross-examination by George Bizos, SC, for Mrs Mandela, Mr Kgase told the court he had heard that people staying in back rooms of Mrs Mandela's house in Diepkloof, Soweto, were "comrades".

But, in reply to a question from Mr Bizos, Mr Kgase — who described himself as non-political — insisted he did not know what the word meant.

After the resumption of the trial on March 8, Mr Kgase gave a graphic account of how Mrs Mandela had allegedly hummed a tune and danced in rhythm to it as she systematically laid into Mr Kgase and his three companions with her fists and a sjambok on the night of December 29 1988.

In his evidence-in-chief, Mr Kgase said of Mrs Mandela: "She kept on punching me. She

said she had heard I was an intellectual ignorant. My call to free Africa."

Under cross-examination yesterday, Mr Kgase admitted that he had not mentioned Mrs Mandela's humming and dancing during the alleged assault in his testimony in the trial of Jerry Richardson, coach of Mrs Mandela's Mandela United Football Club.

Richardson was found guilty of murdering Stompie Sepele, the 14-year-old boy who was allegedly abducted from the Methodist Church manse in Soweto at Mrs Mandela's behest.

Abductors

Mr Bizos put it to Mr Kgase that his evidence about the humming and dancing was "another of those dramatic untruths" he had used to discredit Mrs Mandela. Mr Kgase denied that, saying he had no right.

Mr Bizos had already accused Mr Kgase of being a "publicity seeker", adding: "Your story would not have been worth much without implicating Mrs Mandela."

Under further cross-examination yesterday Mr Kgase denied that he had gone to Mrs Mandela's house voluntarily, insisting that he had been taken there against his will and that

he had escaped at the first real opportunity. He had been under surveillance by his alleged abductors and unable to escape until he was placed on guard duty, when he ran away, he said.

But, Mr Bizos pointed out, in the Richardson trial he was on record as saying he had not been guarded by his alleged abductors or their accomplices.

Pressed by Mr Bizos for an explanation for the contradiction, Mr Kgase dodged the question, then admitted he had no answer.

Cross examination of Mr Kgase focused attention on another aspect of the events immediately after the alleged kidnapping and assault: the failure of Mr Kgase to report the "kidnapping and assault" and the attempted murder of a former member of the Mandela United Football Club, Andrew Ikaneng, to the police immediately after his escape.

Mr Kgase, who held Mr Ikaneng down while Richardson stabbed him with garden shears, waited about five weeks before reporting to the police.

Mr Bizos put it to Mr Kgase that he had delayed going to the police because he feared that it would lead to the public exposure of the alleged homosexual activities that were taking place at the manse.

Mr Kgase denied that was the reason. He had waited because his charges were being investigated by the Crisis Committee, which had been established by Soweto leaders.

Saturday Star reporter subpoenaed

By Cathy Stagg

Lawyers acting for Winnie Mandela yesterday said they had subpoenaed Saturday Star reporter Pat Devereaux to testify about an interview she had last year with State witness Kenneth Kgase.

Mrs Mandela's counsel, George Bizos, SC, said he could not complete his cross-examination of Mr Kgase in the absence of Devereaux.

She had not returned the telephone calls of his instructing attorney, Ismail Ayob, and a subpoena for her had been issued.

Mr Kgase is testifying before Mr Justice M S Stegmann in the Rand Supreme Court in the trial of Mrs Mandela (56), her driver John Morgan (61), Nompumelela Falati (18) and her mother, Xoliswa Falati (36).

The four have pleaded not guilty to four counts of kidnapping and four of assault with in-

tent to do grievous bodily harm.

Yesterday, during exhaustive cross-examination, Mr Bizos referred to an article in the London Sunday Telegraph which Mr Kgase claimed was his own work.

Quoting from the article, Mr Bizos read words Mr Kgase attributed to Mrs Mandela: "For 26 years uMthetheli (the leader) has been inside for your benefit yet you are continuing your nonsense. You are not fit to be

to testify in Winnie trial

alive."

These remarks were allegedly made at her home moments before she allegedly assaulted Mr Kgase.

"Who thought up this drama?" Mr Bizos asked.

"I didn't make up that story," Mr Kgase said.

He admitted he had said in the article that he was hit on the right eye but in his testimony he had said the left eye.

Mr Bizos said Mr Kgase had deliberately brought celebrities into the story because it made "good copy".

Mr Bizos asked Mr Kgase what else Mrs Mandela had said on the night he alleged she had assaulted him.

Mr Kgase said Mrs Mandela had told him the white church went along with the principle of colonisation and that it was wrong to associate with the white church.

Mr Bizos said Mrs Mandela was a Methodist who received considerable assistance from the church when she was restricted to Brandfort in Free State.

"For her to make racist remarks like those you attributed to her would be a negation of her political life."

The Sunday Telegraph article was contrasted with one written by Devereaux.

The hearing continues.

LAW