



ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION



**CDE DUMA
NOKWE**

ANC SECRETARY-GENERAL

— 1958 - 1969 —



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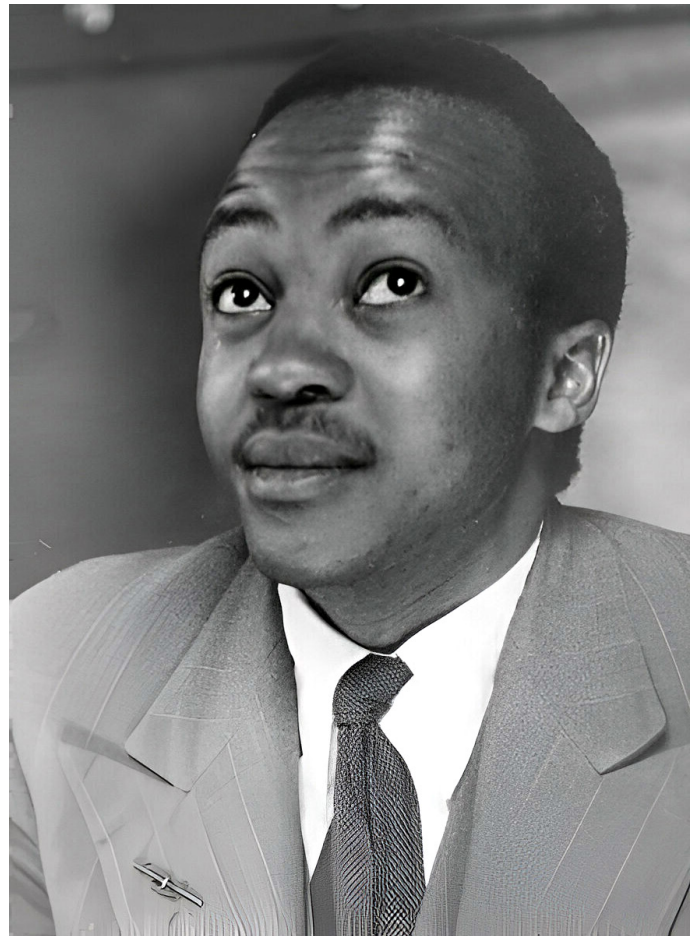
HONOURING THE THUNDER THAT ECHOED ACROSS GENERATIONS

It is with a deep sense of pride and solemn responsibility that the African National Congress (ANC), through this special commemorative edition, pays tribute to one of our most distinguished revolutionaries, Comrade Philemon Pearce Dumasile Nokwe.

Known to many as Duma Nokwe, his name meaning “thunder on a cloudless day” — was more than poetic coincidence. It symbolised the moral clarity, revolutionary intelligence, and ideological decisiveness with which he lived and led. He was, without question, a force of conscience during one of the most perilous chapters in our country’s history.

This publication marks an important moment in the life of our movement and our nation. As the ANC continues the work of renewal and unity as mandated by our 55th National Conference. It is vital that we look back with honesty and admiration at those who paved the way, those whose lives were devoted to justice, and whose sacrifices were made in exile, under persecution, or in silence.

Comrade Nokwe’s political grounding was forged in the revolutionary traditions of African nationalism, international solidarity, and principled youth activism. As a student at Fort Hare, he helped establish one of the first ANC Youth League branches beyond the Transvaal. He rose to become National Secretary of the ANC Youth League in 1954, marking him as a generational leader who bridged the idealism of youth with the responsibilities of national leadership. Four years



later, in 1958, he was elected Secretary General of the ANC at the age of just 30— becoming the youngest to hold that high office in our movement’s storied history.

His journey from student activist and the first African advocate of the Supreme Court of the Transvaal, to banned liberation intellectual and later the ANC’s chief diplomat in exile mirrors the resilience, brilliance, and hardship of our broader struggle.



This edition is not only a memorial, it is a reassertion of the ANC's ideological identity, rooted in revolutionary discipline, anti-imperialist internationalism, and a vision of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. In revisiting Nokwe's writings and ideas, many of which remain remarkably prescient, we offer our younger generations a living archive of revolutionary thought and strategic clarity.

Importantly, this edition forms part of a broader project of memory, legacy and political education. As we return

Comrade Nokwe to the soil of his birth, we affirm that the ANC does not forget its sons and daughters, and that our martyrs and intellectuals do not fade with time. Their lessons must be revived and reintroduced into the bloodstream of the movement.

As Head of the Department of Information and Publicity and National Spokesperson of the ANC, it is my honour to introduce this edition. This is one that carries not only historical significance but deep emotional and political relevance. We invite our readers, young and old, cadres

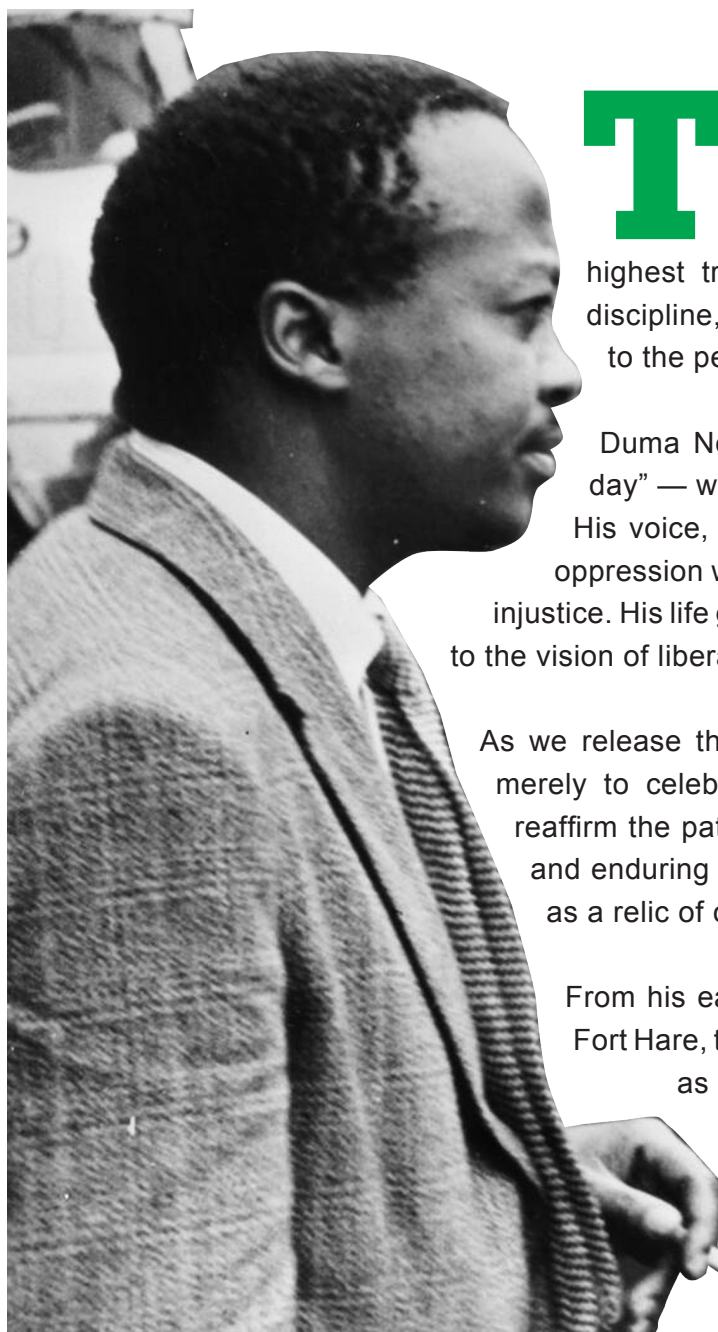
and comrades, to engage this material not simply as history, but as a call to action.

Let the thunder of Nokwe's name remind us that our mission is not yet complete, and that through the revival of memory, the strengthening of organisation, and the renewal of our values, the ANC shall continue to lead.

Aluta continua. The thunder has returned home.

Cde Mahlengi Bhengu-Motsiri
Editor-in-Chief and
ANC National Spokesperson

IN HONOUR OF ADVOCATE DUMA NOKWE: A VANGUARD OF PRINCIPLE, DISCIPLINE, AND RENEWAL



The African National Congress (ANC) today bows its head in honour and raises its fist in pride as we pay tribute to Advocate Philemon Pearce Dumasile Nokwe, a revolutionary whose life embodied the highest traditions of the liberation struggle — unwavering discipline, clarity of purpose, and a profound sense of service to the people.

Duma Nokwe's name — meaning “thunder on a cloudless day” — was not metaphorical flourish. It was prophetic. His voice, intellect, and actions struck through the silence of oppression with forceful resonance. His very presence unsettled injustice. His life gave rhythm to the song of resistance and substance to the vision of liberation.

As we release this Special Commemorative Edition, we do so not merely to celebrate the memory of a comrade departed, but to reaffirm the path he walked — a path of principle, defiance, unity, and enduring loyalty to the oppressed. We remember Nokwe not as a relic of our past, but as a compass for our future.

From his early formation in the crucible of student activism at Fort Hare, to his pioneering leadership in the ANC Youth League as National Secretary, and later as Secretary General of the ANC, Duma Nokwe always demonstrated the calibre of leadership that rises to the moment with vision, courage, and humility. He was the first African admitted as an advocate to the Supreme Court of the Transvaal — a brilliant legal mind

weaponised in defence of the voiceless, even as apartheid sought to marginalise him from the very justice system he mastered.

Comrade Nokwe was not confined by titles or offices — he was a revolutionary in all terrains. He served in the courtroom, at the frontline of the Defiance Campaign, behind the wire of banning orders, in the corridors of international diplomacy, and at the heart of ANC organising structures, whether in Orlando or in Lusaka. His leadership in exile, as Director of International Affairs, was pivotal in mobilising the global anti-apartheid movement, gaining recognition for the ANC as the authentic voice of the oppressed South African majority.

In every stage of his life, Duma Nokwe embodied the kind of cadre we seek to cultivate through our current organisational renewal programme. His life teaches us that revolutionary discipline, political education, humility, and service are the bedrock of enduring leadership. These are not outdated values — they are the very tools we must now use to rebuild the ANC into a modern, ethical, people-centred liberation movement.

We are currently in the midst of a profound transformation of our internal systems, including the rollout of the new membership card system, the implementation of the Foundation Political

Education Course, and the revitalisation of branches as engines of activism, not just electioneering. These are not bureaucratic exercises.

They are political instruments designed to deepen commitment, foster consciousness, and reconnect the ANC with the masses of our people.

Renewal, as we have declared, is not a slogan — it is an ideological and organisational project. It requires a return to the moral and political standards set by leaders like Nokwe. It demands that we root out factionalism, entitlement, and ethical drift. It compels us to build a generation of cadres who lead in communities, mobilise on issues, and live the values we proclaim.

In this regard, the Alliance remains a strategic pillar of our liberation movement. Duma Nokwe understood the power of unity among the progressive forces of our country. His generation forged our revolutionary Alliance not as a marriage of convenience, but as a principled response to the national question and the shared interests of the working class and oppressed majority. Today, as we confront inequality, unemployment, and the unfinished business of the National Democratic Revolution, we must draw on Nokwe's clarity of purpose to reinvigorate the Alliance as a force for

transformative governance, grassroots organising, and policy coherence.

When the remains of Comrade Nokwe were repatriated from Lusaka, more than four decades after his passing, he was still wrapped in an unblemished ANC scarf. That image — of a scarf that survived exile, time, and the earth — is a poetic affirmation of his undying loyalty. It challenges all of us in leadership today to ask: Do we honour that scarf in action, in humility, and in service? Do we wear it in memory — or do we wear it with responsibility? To our branches, our youth, and every ANC member across the country: this foreword is not only an introduction to a publication — it is a call to consciousness. We must now emulate Duma Nokwe's example with urgency and resolve. Read his writings. Study his politics. Understand the times he lived in — and act decisively in the times we now face. From local ward struggles to continental diplomacy, we need revolutionaries who combine clarity with compassion, and militancy with morality. Let this edition be more than a tribute. Let it be an awakening. Let Duma Nokwe's thunder roll again — not from the pages of history, but from the actions of a renewed cadre, a restored movement, and a reconfigured Alliance.

Cde Fikile Mbalula
ANC Secretary General

INTERVIEW WITH DUMA NOKWE

October 29, 1970

Interviewed by **Gail Gerhart**

[Duma Nokwe (1927-1978) was Secretary-General of the ANC from 1958 to 1969. Born to working class parents in Evaton, he studied at St. Peter's School in Johannesburg, Fort Hare, and the University of the Witwatersrand, where he pursued law. In 1956 he qualified as the first African advocate in the Transvaal. He also belonged to the underground Communist Party. From 1956 to 1961 he was a defendant in the Treason Trial. Banned, detained and in 1962 house-arrested, he fled South Africa in early 1963. He occupied leadership positions in the exiled ANC until his early death in 1978. Gerhart interviewed him while researching her doctoral dissertation.]



Gail Gerhart: *The whole issue of Nationalist philosophy and its appeal, and the range of attitudes that Africans held towards extreme nationalism is something that is very crucial to my investigation. I'd be curious to go back with you to the time when you were at high school, I believe you must have been at St. Peter's in the late 1940s?*

Duma Nokwe: Early forties, it should be 1942-46.

Can you remember when you were there hearing Anton Lembede come to the school and speak?

Yes, I do. In fact I was at the conference at which he addressed the ANC Youth League. I think it

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was its second birthday in 1945. I think it was 1944. Then he put forward his philosophy of taking both the good from the West and the East, putting it together, Africa being the center and that type of thing.

And do you remember what your reaction was to him at the time?

Well, I thought he was an extremely brilliant and eloquent speaker; I thought he was a profound thinker, and I thought he was in search of some solution to the problems which faced the people of South Africa – particularly the problems which faced the people of Africa. I think Anton Lembede did evoke admiration from all young men because of the very vigour with which he applied himself to the cause of national freedom. He was the embodiment of the rise of philosophic nationalism, I think, in South Africa. And for this reason he became the hero and star of most young people including myself.

Did you ever wonder about whether some of his ideas were feasible or practical or realistic?

Well, at that stage, at the age of something like seventeen, one admired the ingenuity of thinking and collecting all that's good from the East and West and putting them together, and Africa becoming the synthetic point of the totality of what is good. And also something particularly African about it. Nothing Western, nothing Eastern but the synthetic product being a purely African thing. At that stage one did not really worry much about whether this was practical.

It looked practical; I mean if there was something good in the East and something good in the West, and there is so much bad in the West anyway. It looked as if it was the right way out. And so I think he inspired a lot of confidence and he was a rallying point in the Youth League. And the Youth League, anyway, became a very practical organization, and existed very concretely.

How did it operate at St. Peter's? Was it a secret organization?

No! No! It was not a secret organization, it could not have been, because Oliver Tambo was then our teacher there. He was the Secretary of the Youth League in the Transvaal. At least at this conference in 1944 he was there as its secretary. So it was not an illegal body. It did not operate, if one may use the word, on a unit level. After all, these fellows at St. Peter's were something between eleven, seventeen, eighteen and perhaps a few above twenty; but then they were little boys, and it did not have an organized form.

The first organized form at a college which I remember was one organized by Joe Matthews, myself and one [Godfrey] Pitje at Fort Hare; that is when we constituted a branch of the Youth League. That was in 1948. But at St. Peter's it did not exist as a branch. Its ideas found way among the students through the debating society. We had a very vigorous and active debating society. But some of us absorbed them through going to the meetings in town. Or whatever ideas were absorbed by visits from people

like the late Lembede and A. P. Mda, who was also a theoretician, found their way to the students through the debating society and the ideas were introduced in such occasions.

Can you tell me about the starting up of the Youth League at Fort Hare? Was Sobukwe involved in that or who were the moving figures?

Well, the people who established the Youth League at Fort Hare included G. M. Pitje, who is now a lawyer in Johannesburg. Joe Matthews and myself, I think we were the sort of foundation members of the Youth League. We were at Fort Hare in 1947 when there was very little political activity. In Johannesburg of course we had the opportunity whilst being at St. Peter's to go to public meetings in town, Sundays or Saturdays, and we found Alice a little town in the Cape, rather quiet politically. And it was important for students to start getting organized, and we then started a branch. In 1948, January or February, I think.

What was your connection at that stage with Mda?

Oh, very close, very close. He sent us all the material which he wrote, and we in turn kept very close contact with him, indeed very, very close. And again I must say that Mda was admired by the intellectual youth and after the death of the late Lembede he became a sort of theoretical nationalist, that is a nationalist theoretician.

How would you distinguish, or did you distinguish at that time, between the philosophies of Lembede and Mda? Did you see there being any main distinction between them?

Not much. At that stage we thought that, or the impression that he really wanted to give, was that he was the true successor and true continuer of the Lembede philosophies. Because Lembede was widely read, and I think he was almost, you know – by religion he was a Catholic, but I think he had read a bit or some amount of Marxism or Leninism. But he was busy battling with this idea of producing something African in the political and economic philosophies. It seems Mda also had that same burning desire, his desire was to become the African Nationalist theoretician.

You think he was personally ambitious to be a leader himself or simply a theoretician?

I think he had some ambitions, drive for leadership; I think he did have that, I think he wanted to produce something which will be some.... Yes, I think that was –

At the time you were involved in the Youth League organization at Fort Hare, would you have described it philosophically as more or less straight Lembedist, or did you already at that point feel that modifications had to be made in this kind of extreme search for something so purely

African?

Yes, yes, well I mean it became clear when we were at Fort Hare that there was a lot of groping being done in what is called “African nationalism”. It was impossible to pin down what actually was African, you see. The world was sort of cordoned out in a small way, in a confined way in Fort Hare. We delved into studying and reading a lot of philosophic works; certain newspapers like the *Guardian* as it was called then, and others, also had great effect in moulding one’s thinking and mind, bringing one back from the, you know, the heights of very fine, and thin philosophical talk, to brass tacks.

What was, of course, even more, I think, important in one’s political development was that the year 1948 not only saw the beginning of active political work at Fort Hare, but it also brought in the Nationalists [National Party] who were down-to-earth, totally down-to-earth as such. And were not delving, I mean, in such high philosophical formulae. But they made their point simple and very, very clear. And we became preoccupied during that year, too, with something which was simple but effective. The reaction of the people –

---Interruption---

You were saying that 1948 was when the Nationalists came into power.

Ah! Yes, yes, it was then that even the ANC Youth League at Fort Hare realised that instead of working out or thinking of nationalism in its philosophical aspects and so on, it had better

work out some programme against a very forthright and clear attitude of the Nationalist government of Dr. Malan, who were very simple, and very forthright and very clear. And so there was a general tendency of concentrating on a program of action, action based on the masses more.

I think the years 1948-49 show an important historical change in the development of the Youth League from 1944 to 1949, a sort of a philosophical groping, a sort of highly intellectual and abstract sort of a thing. A concentration more on ideas and on action somewhat divorced from the people, the masses of the people; a sort of elite organization. And maybe it was a good thing, or I suppose at some stage in any struggle one has to clear up questions of ideas.

But it did not complete that task at all, because of the advent of the Nationalists who quickly changed it, and got it to change from this philosophical sort of body, intellectual sort of body, to a body of action rather than ideas. And a sudden and close link with the masses of the people and particularly the masses of the youth. And I think this was a very healthy turn. The coming into power of the nationalists stimulated this strongly enough, and injected this attitude more sharply into the Youth League, which in turn became a catalyst within the African National Congress, for a clear program of action.

When you say that this early period of the Youth League was mostly a philosophical one, I wonder whether you remember when you were a student at St. Peter's whether students in those days spent much time discussing practical problems, as opposed to philosophical ones? Did you as a high school student discuss, say how a revolution might be brought about in South Africa or what the constraints were to mass action? Or was this something that was so far from anyone's knowledge or conception at that point that no one discussed it?

I do not think really – Well I should not perhaps – Sometimes it is the question of emphasis that was more predominant over the other, whether the sort of philosophical aspect or the action, the program of action, or the revolutionary aspect. I think that one can say that despite the fact that we were then living in an atmosphere of general youth revolt, that was the general attitude. It was sharp reaction, an angry reaction, mixed with an attempt to find some theoretical and philosophical justification.

---Interruption---

You said the Youth League in the forties, you thought was representative of a broader revolt of the youth against –

Against the whole system of white oppression. And I think it is probably fair to say that the beginning of politics, by and large, amongst the African youth, beginning with the deep sense of

grievance and even anger at the conditions under which they live. And the first expression is one of wrath and anger.

What was it about the 1940's that created this atmosphere, before the Nats had even come into power?

Well, I do not know what it was specifically, but I think that the 1940s were very special. In the first place, there was the whole World War going on; there were very sharp expressions of nationalism, and I think the world atmosphere was charged with an atmosphere of nationalism – defence of one's country, defence of one's rights, and so on. And in an atmosphere like that, it sort of illuminated and might have acted to illuminate the conditions under which the people were living in South Africa.

And the wrath and anger and the general military atmosphere of the 1940s I think was not confined to those who were the parties only, but it spread. And struggle and fight became the – was the order of the day. And it could be interpreted – it was an atmosphere in which – It was capable of, if one may use the electrical word, charging even feelings which were rather, or appeared to be, dormant, I think. The Second World War and the slogans which were bandied around – Freedom, justice and democracy – the newspapers we very opposed to fascism and that type of thing. And the experience of our people in finding for once that we wore the same khaki [uniforms]. After a long time anyway, since the first World War, wore that

same uniforms as the whites in defence of South Africa, probably had a lot to do with creating the atmosphere of an examination and a searching examination of what was happening then.

When you, as a student in the 40s, thought about action, did you ever for example imagine that you might, thirty years hence be sitting in Dar-es-Salaam – as an exile in a long frustrated revolution? What sort of a concept of action did you have in those days? How did you think of the future as unfolding?

No, I certainly must confess, I certainly never thought of myself as sitting here as an exile! Like all youth, with the optimism of youth, one thought that some vague forms of action which were not defined, some militant form of action could change the situation fairly rapidly and quickly. I certainly did not have the ideas which I now have that the South African struggle is necessarily a prolonged one. And I must confess there was no clear revolutionary strategy which one had in mind.

As I say, I think that it is important to realise that the youth, I think then and even now, joined politics and political activity first out of angry reaction to the conditions under which they were living, and then only subsequently is that anger spelled out into some ideas. And this, of course, develops with the development of the political consciousness – for this is an emotional reaction. And then when there is a clear political consciousness – I think when

the Youth League and the ANC together formulated the Program of Action of 1949 – there was hope that the Program of Action would bring sufficient pressure to bear on the government to change its ways or to change the political and economic conditions under which the people lived. For that reason it looked a complete program of action for the achievement of the aims and objects of the ANC. Well, as you know, subsequently that Program has had to be amended and added to, so drastically, that today with the armed struggle as a program, it looks like a sort of a junior stage.

Yes, well, it was twenty years ago. Were you at the Bloemfontein Conference in 1949 where it was enacted?
Yes.

Within the ANC, what did you sense as the nature of the opposition to the Program of Action, if there was any? I have the impression that the members of the older generation were a little sceptical about this—
Yes.

What were the grounds of their objection to it?

I think people like Dr. Xuma – the late Dr. Xuma, who was then President of the ANC and had to relinquish the presidency because of his opposition to this Program of Action – felt it was too radical. It was too radical. They could not quite feel the transition of a complete break and the beginnings of a confrontation

between the government – almost direct confrontation between the government and the African National Congress.

And also the great stress on the mass activity, the force and influence of the masses. I mean, the Program of Action was the one that could not be carried out by an executive body deciding and drawing up a petition. It was a program of mass action, and it meant organizational forms and activities of the masses and the drawing in of more active role among the masses of the people. It was really getting down to a sort of making the African National Congress a far more popular organization than it had been perhaps in the past.

Do you think the fears of the older generation about mass action were primarily fears that they might lose their position of influence and leadership, or that they might – that somehow it was more a class conflict, that these were people who were in a privileged position within African society and they feared an overturning of the whole social order which might displace them as a more privileged group. I am just speculating.

Yes, it very difficult in retrospect to say what the real problem was, except that, I think, there are some leaders in an organization that just can't change when the vital political changes are necessary. They are conservative by nature, sometimes without having anything at stake. I mean for instance you were asking if

they feared whether they would lose their positions – Dr. Xuma was prepared to lose his position, quite prepared, rather than accept the Program. And never, of course, he never became disloyal to, even hostile to the African National Congress, an organization to which he contributed so much since the '30s, to remoulding it and to organizing it. The ANC we found in 1949 was by and large – praise should be due to Xuma's efforts. But he just could not change.

It is so in different forms when the organization assumes different forms of struggle. Of course, these should be, there must be some basic reason why people don't change. It is not that conservatism is some quality that cannot be related to anything concrete. But I think by and large with people like Xuma – The next person who took the position, frankly, was even less revolutionary, less dynamic, than Xuma. And he had even a more bigger stake in wealth, his practice was fabulous, he was so rich. So you see it's very difficult in a situation like that to draw a firm and hard rule. To say that those who did not accept the Program of Action did it for this reason or that reason. It is very difficult. It was a political movement in evolution in which so many – Sometimes the factors are so varied that that it is impossible to hammer out a formula in which everybody would fit.

I have found that to be true, and that is why I am groping around with these theoretical questions because I have not so far seen any evidence that there is any broad pattern. You must have been involved or continued to be involved in the Youth League after 1949. How would you characterise the evolution of the Youth League after the adoption of the Program of Action? Their whole perspective was then altered. What happened to the Youth League internally as a sub-organization after 1949?

Yes, I think after that the Youth League had developed itself. After the ANC had accepted the mass Program of Action, it had to develop itself into an entirely different type of Youth League. And this what it was grappling and battling with. In the first place, it must be confessed that in the early 40s it was a sort of pressure group organization, not really paying complete and full allegiance to the ANC. That is frank and fair I think. Well, with the adoption of the Program of Action, two things arose, and then this in turn resulted in a very sharp internal struggle within the Youth League.

The first was the importance to the Youth League of paying complete and full allegiance to the ANC and becoming a real junior body of the African National Congress. And it adopted fully its policies, now that the ANC had adopted this Program of Action, yes. And becoming less of a pressure group within. That fundamental fact in

itself was important in the face of mass action. The Youth League had to change its character from being a sort of a club or group organization, to mobilising the youth, in support of the ANC, to carry out its mass actions.

This continued to be a problem in my own mind, in the Youth League. Many people still wanted to keep it as a sort of exclusive club for purposes of pressurizing the ANC and others felt that, Look, we to have done that enough! The ANC was now going ahead, full-steam ahead, and now we owe it all our allegiance. And now our job was to turn the masses of the youth and to rally them to the ANC.

Now by and large it appeared that some people were adhering to this view, keeping the Youth League as a unit, an organ, small and compact, powerful organ with African nationalism as its fundamental philosophy. All fervent adherents to African nationalism. Bear in mind, their views were shaped by what they considered to be a threat from another body and another group with a philosophical point of view and which was a small and well knit, and that was what they regarded as the communists. And people like A.P. Mda really and truthfully thought that the Youth League must keep itself intact as a custodian of African nationalism in order to be a counter weight to the Bolsheviks and the Marxists within the African National Congress. So it was more or less keeping the Youth League as an ideological weapon against communism – what they regarded as the communists. And this struggle, I think it becomes clear

over the history of the African National Congress Youth League, over the next perhaps decade, up to the formation of the PAC.

How did you account for the fact that there always seemed to be a certain number of people who kept on adhering to that point of view, even after – You said that there was one view that the Youth Leaguers should maintain this exclusive philosophy, whereas other people thought that it was time to broaden out. How do you account for the fact that there always were people who clung to that older nationalistic view? Did you have any view of why there were always people like that, or was it simply Mda and those that he managed to influence?

Well!

That's a vague question.

Yes, it is rather difficult, I don't know why this continued. I suppose it (laughter) in its very essence, in its very development, the Youth League had this very potentiality as an organization of both being a sort of ideological forum for action – I do think that when once one had drawn in a considerable number of intellectuals, always the primary task or duty or primary preoccupation is thought and ideas and ideology, and so on. One must expect in an organization of that type the survival all the time of people who would place the emphasis more on ideological conflict rather than popular mass action. And I think its very history, the fact that it was

originally a sort of intellectual body, a philosophical body, hammering out and trying to search for pure forms of African Nationalism, laid the very foundations for the remaining – a group or a division within the organization, those who believed in the pursuit of philosophy and an emphasis – Who believed that once you are clear – this was in fact the proposition – that once you are clear, that once you have a clear grasp of African Nationalism, once it is hammered into your head, you are already three-quarters of the way to emancipation. So I think this was so.

Who fell on the one side and (laughter), who fell on the other, I suppose a close analysis of the social and historical background would probably give the answer, which I am afraid we do not have the time to do (laughter). So I do not think that the elements of so-called “pure” nationalism which subsequently were being claimed by the PAC, with its consequence of a bit of anti- everybody who was not African, which was the original stand of the PAC, their so-called adherence to the 1949 Program of Action and also their strong initial anti-communism, I think finds its answer in this development of an ideological struggle and a search for what they call “pure African Nationalism”. Which really in the end became just extreme nationalism, and “anti” so many things, but very little pro-something.

Speaking of this split and these people who you call more intellectual elements, a lot of the ANC literature referred to these people as “immature”, and referred to the Lembedist philosophy as “immature” philosophy, or a philosophy that appealed to immature people. Do you think that was an apt word, or what did the ANC mean when it said “immature”?

Well, I would not stick to the word immature myself, but if it meant that it was an approach that really had very little to do with the realities of the South African life, I would rather call it unreal, very unreal, than even immature. Perhaps immature people do unreal things or do things...? I would believe that this is so. You see, the primary and basic problems which elements of the PAC posed, or the adherents to what was called “pure” African Nationalism, which expanded itself to Pan-African nationalism, were an unrealistic assessment of the situation in South Africa, completely unrealistic.

In the first place, take their opposition to the co-operation with other racial groups, Indians, Coloureds. They claimed that we were weakening and diluting the force of African Nationalism by drawing in other groups. In order to inspire the Africans, you must have them as Africans themselves, and to make them feel that they are the dynamic force of liberation without drawing in assistance from other groups. Because they say that by drawing in the co-operation of other groups you were proclaiming that the Africans were incapable of doing this. Well,

you see, their whole reaction there was of African assertion, Africans feeling liberated and capable of freeing themselves.

You felt that that was unrealistic?

I thought it was. I mean, the situation under which we live would be very fine if we were living somewhere else, but if you take the realistic situation in South Africa, you have not only Africans oppressed, exploited. We have a whole number of other groups – Indians, Coloureds and so on. And then you have got whites who are driven by perhaps ideological, rather social and material, concrete position to support the struggle. Now what do you do with them? Do you say “wait!” let the Africans first free themselves, then we will consider what to do with you and all your goodwill and your support. Let the African first demonstrate to himself that he is capable of this? I mean this is not the type of way things work in the real world.

You can’t tell everybody else “Please wait, we will fight it out”. I suppose this happens in a boxing match, where one chap takes up the challenge and everyone else sits outside; but not in the context of real life. It’s absurd. And once other people are struggling you must adopt an attitude towards it. I mean, Gandhi was there, and you can’t wipe out that history of 1906. He conducted a whole struggle, he himself led the Indian people. And there might have been some Chinese in this, who might have been born who would lead the Chinese people. A realistic leader of South Africa would have to

pause and say to himself what do I do about all these forces around me? And you will have to solve it. And unless you say, oh well, let them go on in their own way – And I think that is completely unrealistic and undoubtedly, would call it immature.

---Interruption---

Wasn't the PAC making that point that if you had multiracial cooperation, you were requiring the average African in the street to somehow distinguish in his mind between good whites and bad whites, good Indians and bad Indians, and somehow this was too much for the man in the street. It was too much to ask him that he should make exceptions for whites who were sympathetic. Did you think that that was simply a mistaken interpretation of the popular mentality?

I thought so, really. I thought it was a gross underestimation of both the political consciousness and the understanding of the masses. And frankly, I don't accept arguments of that type. I think they do a gross injustice to the political understanding of our people, and I don't believe in any idea where the leaders are superior and the masses are inferior. I think if a situation like that obtains, it is a sorry day. I think that a leadership firstly grows out of the masses, out of the complete conditions under which the masses live. And I found in my own experience in politics, that one— Sometimes the leaders have far more to learn from the masses than they think

they can teach the masses. This idea of claiming the imagination of the masses on any issue, I mean those are the people who ultimately believe and ultimately understand even the necessity of laying down their lives, not blindly, for causes and for issues which they believe in.

And I must say I constantly can't understand this idea of the masses wanting, understanding, and the leadership understanding. I can't. I take it from myself. I mean, I don't think that a few degrees at a university make a qualitative change in the ideas and beliefs of people. I come from a very ordinary family. My mother used to work in hotels, making up beds, and my father was a cobbler. A shoe-maker. But I found they understood the importance of giving me the education which I have, under very grave difficulties; education which they never enjoyed. And they were more fervent in doing so than even I have [been]. In growing up, I think people who make these fine or sharp distinctions between what the masses understand, and what the leaders understand, they are doing an injustice to the masses. I can't see on that basis how even a democracy can start working. I mean, after all, a democracy is supposed to be the government of the people, by the people, for the people. And if people are so dense and can't understand certain things at certain times, and only leaders can, and arrogate themselves this thing, it's something quite a little like a trend towards unhealthy ideas.

I wonder though if that doesn't overlook the fact that the experiences of people like yourself, or Africans who took a leadership role in the ANC, were quite different from the experiences of other Africans, working men, or labourers, in respect to race relations. Certainly your experiences must have shaped your views about race relations. I haven't reached any conclusions, but it just seems logical—

May I ask a special question?

It just seems logical that some one who had been to a university which was predominantly white would have much more rapport, say with whites than an African who had never experienced contact with the whites except as a slave to a master. Surely you might find it easy to co-operate with whites because that was part of your experience.

I would be most surprised, I think if you take the proportion of our total leadership of the African National Congress, and in so far as university training is concerned, a study of that would reveal a very startling fact, that by far the majority, by far the majority of the leaders, over a number of years have hardly been to a university. Up to date! Up to date! Even up to date, I think an analysis of the composition of both the membership and the leadership of the ANC will perhaps show quite a different tendency.

One would have expected, of course, that if the ratio of political consciousness to education was having a relationship as was stated here, an influx, a heavy influx of university trained people— because students who are educated have political enlightenment and so forth. But the tendency is the other way round. It is not that at all. And it is not that for various reasons, I think primarily because I would expect far more bitterness and far more frustration in the intellectual group, which has gone through university training, and finds that having done so it comes back to exactly the same miserable conditions, the same shackles which shackled him.

You know the hopes of parents, I was about to say, for their children, even those who are uneducated, is to hope that they would after education, they would at least lead a better life, and that the qualities and the talents of the African people would be recognised, and there would be a loosening of these chains and shackles around. This is not so. And the African intellectual, university trained, apart from the frustrations of not being able to do precisely what they want to do, having to be forced into particular channels, and that having a full acceptance even at these – There are no longer any white universities, but at that time, not even a full acceptance, I think they go through even sharper snubs and even close contact with what they regard as sometimes not even their equals, in fact, even their intellectual juniors. This should make them a little more bitter when coming back having to do the same job for a much less – Let me give you an extreme

example, and this is not trying to be in any way racialistic on my part, to have a dense fellow or a colleague, in the same class in medical faculty, going to exactly the same hospital as yourself, and you're having to earn two-fifths of his salary. This should make greater frustration, more bitterness and less acceptance of this. So I was saying that I don't think that this relationship of training and so on is so—

On the other hand if one examines the campaigns and the struggles of the Africans, one would find that it was the masses of the African people who were more ready, even to listen to great revolutionaries and strugglers of all colors. During the Sophiatown removal, I think, any African who said that he could challenge Father [Trevor] Huddleston on, say, a voting contest in Sophiatown, was taking a very serious risk. From the African masses. And throughout they were prepared and more sensitive. The fact that they are suffering more, makes them more receptive of forms of solution and clearer judges also of people who are leading them.

After all, the African National Congress, its leadership has always been elected not by an intellectual group, but by the ordinary branch members from all over the country. They have steered the policies, they have discussed the resolutions, they have known what is realistic and practical in the cause. And they have participated and joined in mass struggles out of the belief that they were, rather than being driven or being pulled by the so-called intellectual class, I have a very

firm belief, a very honest belief, firmly I believe in the vast wisdom of the people, the masses of the people, not taken individually, but if you work [with] them, I think they have been able to survive, even in South Africa, survive this terrorism out of a tremendous amount of wisdom. And an organization like the African National Congress which wants to continue fighting and surviving will have to once more resort to the firm loyalty and very clear understanding of the ordinary popular masses of South Africa.

Let me go back to some more specific factual questions, which are important to the history but are less theoretical than what we have been discussing. I think in 1953 or '54 the Africanist movement began to take shape – this little circle in the Youth League that you referred to – and to form itself up in Orlando. Can you remember for me, if you can, the sequence of how that came about? Apparently at some stage, Leballo got himself elected to office, somehow in the Youth League in Orlando. Can you recall your impressions of that coup on his part in Orlando?

Well, very strange enough Leballo was both in my branch as a member, and also his branch was under us. I was then Secretary of the Transvaal Youth League, apart from being Secretary of the Orlando branch. There were various little movements. Of course, one must say to start off with, the whole development of

an extreme form of nationalism in the African National Congress was not a new phenomenon. You will recall the National-Minded-Bloc, which was previous. And this had nothing to do with the historical development of the Youth League. And A. P. Mda had a tremendous amount of doubts about the Defiance Campaign in 1952, which he expressed.

Based on the participation of Indians and left-wing people?

Yes; not so. He tried, to put it in a high philosophy, but this was one of his objections. I also think it was based on his constant fear of communism. He had some phobia about this. And he always thought that they were plotting, organizing in some dark corners. And then he came out with some pamphlet during the Defiance Campaign, almost criticising the Defiance Campaign. Not almost – criticising it very sharply. It was an underground pamphlet, but it was obvious he was editing it. It had no name attached; I think it was called the “Africanist” or something like that.

What was the gist of this?

The gist of it was that you can’t face fascists with this passive resistance business. It is useless. You are just exposing the people to the fascists. You can’t change their minds; that was the theme of his criticism of the Defiance Campaign. He thought it was a method of struggle which was wrong, against the type of enemy that we face. Then subsequently— And this fervour did develop. And I think also the aspect I have

already mentioned, this of anti-communism phobia, did grip some people. There was some term, even at that stage, even apart from the PAC. Some group called the “Bafabegiya”, which in a way was an extreme left-wing group, which was very critical of certain people in the leadership – Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and myself, and so on. And they thought we were of the extreme right-wing group. But peculiar things do happen in politics.

My understanding of that was that it was a disgruntled group of followers of one man who thought he was entitled to higher office?

Well, yes, it was. They were staging, preparing a sort of a coup. And there were some extreme left-wing element – MacDonald Maseko, who is now in Swaziland, he also thought he should be something, you see.

What was his actual relationship to the communists?

He was in the past. He was a communist before the banning of the Communist Party. But – I don’t know, they were spreading all manner of rumours, like people who want to stage a coup always do, but they were exposed and denounced. So during that too, there was – This was an extreme left-wing group. At that stage there was an extreme right-wing group in my view, which was also operating under Mda, what was later to be the PAC, the Pan Africanist Congress. So there was a sort of turmoil. And this was after,

you see, after a very powerful, a very powerful and very pressing action, which naturally called for certain organizational changes and assessment. The Defiance Campaign, yes. All this turmoil went on at about that time. And these groups on both sides were actively trying to rock the ANC as such, and pull it one way or the other. It was a time for a reshaping.

Can you remember what your feeling was about the Defiance Campaign around that time it came to an end? Did you feel fairly satisfied with what it had achieved, or were you disappointed, or how did you feel, how did you evaluate its success? How did you at that stage evaluate it?

Well, I was in the last group which went to defy. It was by then clear that the enemy was going to strike very heavily. At the time I had naturally hoped that we would have been given much more time to rally more than the 9,000 people who had rallied into prison. I did feel that to some extent the enemy had out-foxed us, by bringing in this anti-Defiance law. But I was highly inspired then. It was, I mean, one of the first big mass actions I had participated in. I was doing law at the Wits [University of the Witwatersrand] and virtually these three, four, five months of my last term, I did not go to school at all. I was busy in the office. And ultimately I went and defied and got myself nicely kicked out of the teaching I was doing, I lost that job without any regret at all.

So I could say— I don't think anybody who is honest could say that they feel completely satisfied with the results of the Defiance Campaign. It was the campaign which was snapped, perhaps after it had done some considerable to bring the situation in South Africa on the international map. But we thought we had not exhausted all the potential that we could. But certain things resulted from it which were very important. These were the organizational formations, even within the African community, and also within the White Community: the formation of the COD, and the Liberal party, and so on.

And inside the ANC too, there were these forces. Yes, as I say, it is natural after such a mighty move, and when people were now beginning to flex their muscles and feel that they are capable of something. So they had extreme right and extreme left tendencies, and I think the PAC, by and large was that. But I must say, starting from that, they were honest people, believing in these extreme forms, particularly within the PAC, who believed in it sincerely, believed in these ideas of "pure" nationalism. There are others, who up to this day, I am satisfied that they are absolute rogues in it, merely used it because it was popular. It was easier to defend wild "pure" African nationalism than the more complicated and intricate forms of tactics and rallying of different groups. That's more difficult, it is a more difficult task. It requires what-you-call; I mean anybody can run out into the streets in Orlando and shout "I'm absolutely pure—" (laughter) This is a tape! I nearly said "to

the moon with whites"! That is very easy; that's very easy. I think they were running away from any productive....

In which of those two camps would you have put Leballo at the time? The rogues, or the dedicated – the believers?

Sub judice, isn't it? (laughter) I say this is locally *sub judice*! [P. K. Leballo at this time was a state witness in a case against alleged coup plotters in Tanzania.] And this character in question! (laughter).

What did you make of him at the time, trying to forget?

I thought he was an absolute fraud! I could only say this only after this [Tanzanian] trial is over. I still think he is a rogue. But as I say, this matter, this one is *sub judice* here. You know there is a trial on in which his character is being... and I wouldn't like to...

Yes, you know this was not covered in the Kenyan press. This is a digression, about this evidence of his arrests and convictions in South Africa. What was the case that they were bringing up? I never heard what it was.

I don't know, but I suppose it is because in any court of law you can attack the character of a witness.

You don't remember what specific past arrest or whatever it was they were citing?

I know, but I fear to speak here, this case is a very delicate one.

Do you want me to turn it off?

---Interruption---

[There was evidence brought by the defence to impugn Leballo's character as a witness; it had to do with a mutiny of troops during World War II, where evidently some of those involved were executed. Leballo managed to get off and not serve any sentence as a result of the mutiny. And he said that the gist of the evidence was to show that time and again, a group of people had gotten into trouble because of Leballo and had all taken the rap and Leballo had escaped unscathed.]

How did he manage to gather this following in Orlando, and why was it in Orlando and not somewhere else that this group formed up?

Particularly! Perhaps it was only in Orlando, because he was staying in Orlando, and this following was not a mass following, it was just a group of young students. I think our Youth League there did not have more than 30 members. And of those he probably got ten. As I said, this extreme nationalism attracted young people very much, and [if] you yelled a few slogans against the Whites and a few against Moscow you looked a very big hero. If you could shout at the whole powerful White

establishment, and the Whites as such, use a few swear words—

The press then proceeded to describe him as of 1954 or so as the Youth League Chairman of Orlando. What was the story?

No, that was not correct. The truth about it is that he established his group. I should indicate that in our absence he managed to collect a few of his supporters, and he even expelled us from the branch, the Youth League branch, whilst we were secretaries to the province. And that was it; but it did not last for long. Because there was a national conference forthcoming, and in the national conference the whole matter of the Orlando branch was put forward and in turn they got themselves kicked out. The adherents of Leballo mainly operated a sort of dissident little group of his in Orlando. But I think Orlando (laugh). The use of the word Orlando is rather unfortunate— within the complex of Soweto— South of the whole complex around Orlando there, you know there is some 28 ANC branches.

Within only the part known as Orlando, or within Soweto?

Within Orlando there are four. The whole Soweto, altogether there were 28.

Skipping to something else, one of the contentious things that was often raised in a very propagandistic tone in the PAC literature, or at that stage Africanist literature, was the mechanism of the Consultative Committee within the Congress Alliance. And it is almost impossible to get an accurate picture of the true functioning of that body. Can you explain to me what the Consultative Committee was, and what its functions were? And what its position was in the total scheme?

Well, it was, as its name says, a national consultative committee. Its origins really, not its origins, but it took various different forms and different shapes during the different campaigns. During the Defiance Campaign, which was a campaign jointly run by the ANC and the Indian Congress, we had a national Action Council which was necessary to coordinate the work of the two organizations, to have exchanges of views and so on. And this was done by the National Action Council. A body co-ordinating two independent organizations, you know. And working out plans in a common struggle. Well, the National Action Council subsequently, you know, had the preparations for the Freedom Charter and so on.

This was the same body that was carried over from the Defiance Campaign?

Almost; in form, but not quite, but the concept of coordination. Now it had been joined by the COD, and so on. And the concept of

coordination found— yes, I think it was still called the National Action Council for the coordination of the Congress of the People. That also worked out coordinating action and action programs and plans. But each of the organizations was always entitled to discuss. Usually the plans originated from the organizations, either the ANC, COD, or SAIC. Subsequently it was SACTU also, and the Women's Federation. Now most of the time, at any rate, it was the ANC which piloted the proposals. And the very fact that it was the ANC that had the large mass membership, and mass action, it proposed things and put suggestions as to how the others can fit in.

When you say that the decisions came or the proposals came mostly from the ANC and were presented to the other groups, was it the National Executive of the ANC that was formulating these proposals?

Yes, yes, it was the National Executive but more the Working Committee. The National Executive Committee, you know, met, but the body of action was the Working Committee.

How often did the working committee meet?

Well, what would I say now? Heavens; it met very often, but it was always in Johannesburg. Sometimes, as the situation calls upon, sometimes very frequently – tense situations – very, very frequently.

And how often did the Consultative committee meet?

Whenever there was an issue to discuss.

Just on an ad hoc basis?

Yes, yes. Once for instance there was a campaign on, it met more often; and if there was no campaign on, it hardly met. It didn't need to meet. Sometimes the proposals even came from SACTU itself, the pound-a-day campaign, and so on. And how to coordinate. But naturally one would say that the other bodies didn't have much to propose. The forms of action which the SAIC could take – were limited. If they were thinking of a national strike, and called upon us to join them by having a hartal, that type of thing.

And the COD then would either come out or it was just natural. It is surprising that people get the Impression that— Sometimes I think this is a distortion which is being put that the ANC was being led by other bodies. I mean, the poor COD representative could hardly come and say, you know comrades, I think that today there should be a huge nationalist— (laughter). Not even from their experience or their assessment of the political situation. They were incapable of assessing the situation. It was the ANC which had these numerous branches all over the world— all over the country, which got reports on its branches which suggested one thing or the other.

Was there much informal contact between the people who were representatives on this body? Or did they only see each other at the meetings?

No, there was a constant informal contact all the time. Not only representatives, but I mean, I could just stroll into the COD offices, or the officials of the COD stroll into my office, and similarly all of them. Informal contact was there. It was an alliance, an ANC Congress alliance in the fullest sense.

What constraints were there on the people who were banned? How limited were their activities actually, once they were banned? Or did they continue to participate, say in the formulation of the proposals that were coming from the ANC? Or were there people who were banned who were more or less carrying on as ever?

Naturally we could hardly ever accept the restrictions imposed on us by the fascists, and we found such ways and means of participating as fully as we can. We constantly adopted that attitude of never accepting it. And of course you find means of neutralizing that, I mean, you can't agree to sentence our people to perpetual silence, particularly the cream of the leadership. We just could not accept the position.

It seems to me that there is some evidence that in the 50s, I do not know how accurate that is, that's why I am asking you, but that there was a certain rigidity in the ANC because of the fact that so many men were banned and yet continued to be acknowledged as the leaders of the organization. Given the situation where no one wanted to appear disloyal to these original real leaders you have a situation develop where it was impossible to get real new blood in the leadership. And that perhaps this is one reason why the Africanists or the people who were opposed to the policies of the ANC felt frustrated in trying to put their line across. Do you think there is any truth in saying that a sort of ossification had set in?

No, I think to be honest, let's be honest about this. The first people to be banned and struck-off the African National Congress were the communists. The members of the Communist Party were the first people to be struck. And if anybody felt any frustration, it was not so much the fact that there's new blood. Why should we wait for the fascists to remove our people? There were normal channels of removing a leader in our organization, conferences, and so on. We didn't have to wait for bans from the enemy to say – as if one was glorifying, happy that the enemy had found a new method of removing certain people. If any people were happy or unhappy about the participation of certain people, then they were happy

for entirely different reasons than new blood, into the organization, through normal conferences. The organization was not banned, and we did not have to wait for the enemy to remove and silence our people. In fact at that stage we were... But if one had some anti-communist feelings he would probably find a little clarification or justification, happiness in the removal of a communist. But I think it was only extremely anti-communist elements at that stage. No, I don't think that any frustration was justified.

*Do you think that this anti-communist phobia was the main thrust behind the Africanists? **At least so they said themselves, so they said. That was what they attacked the Alliance for.***

You don't think that was just a front for something else that they believed?

Well, I don't know. They counter-posed "pure" African Nationalism on communism. They said communism watered it down. And that the class struggle wasn't there or anything; and that we should not import foreign ideas. Because again this idea of having something which was specifically African, and communism was a "foreign" idea which we were importing, and we had allied ourselves with "foreign" elements, which weakened the force and dynamism of this. I think there was something behind this and perhaps one still has to find the reasons for this trend, as I say. But on the face of it, this is what the position was.

Earlier you said you thought Mda had some kind of phobia about communism. Did you have any clue what the origins of that phobia were, in his personality or his background or anything?

I don't know, unless his religion perhaps had something to do with it, I really don't know.

One can speculate but no one really knows.

Yes, but sometimes it has.

Were you at the Transvaal Conference of November 1st and 2nd 1958, where the Africanists staged their walk-out?

No, I wasn't, I was then banned. But I was watching the conference, Mr. Tambo was there.

Even though you weren't there, obviously you were interested in what was happening. How did you evaluate their strength at that stage, when they broke away?

Weak. And I thought the fact that they broke away was a clear demonstration of their complete frustration within the ANC. They had been a great nuisance and instrumental for a long time in trying to disrupt and upset. They attacked the Freedom Charter which was the foundation document of the ANC with a view of getting it retracted, they failed. And in utter desperation, there were about ninety, nineteen of them in a huge conference... And they walked off, to strike it out alone and I thought this was the very act of moving out of the ANC [that] demonstrated a complete failure over many years in the

ANC to get it to adopt this puerile and infantile policy.

You say they had been a nuisance over several years; what was the general strategy of the leadership for dealing with this nuisance?

To let the masses, just give the masses the rein of dealing with them, that's all. Giving the masses the rein of dealing with them in conferences, and debating and defeating them. And making sure that the masses choose for themselves their own leaders. And incidentally, not even one got on the provincial leadership of the ANC; not even Leballo. Up to the time that he broke away he remained a branch – (self-appointed?) something.

Did he ever stand for election to the provincial—?

Of course, yes; I mean this was a whole bid for leadership. Not even stand, because nomination. It was his greatest desire! There can be no doubt; to arrest the leadership from the so-called misled "Charterists". I think he must have aspired in his deep heart for the presidency. And as I have already said it, it is always awkward to be talking about Leballo, in this atmosphere. I find it rather inhibits me!

*To try to remember ten years ago—*Yes, yes, and what else to remember today too!

The efforts of the Africanists to get themselves legally elected to office in the ANC. I know the ANC always accused them of being position-seekers, and so forth, and I am sure there must be a kernel of truth in that. But do you recall any specific instances of conferences where the Africanists tried to get themselves legally elected to things and what ensued?

No, they tried more than getting themselves elected, there is much more than that. Their vicious attacks on the leadership, unwarranted criticism of it, tends to show that in many instances—take the Transvaal conference of 1954 – that the leadership was merely the instruments of Moscow, that type of thing. It goes even far more than constitutionally – It is... for a complete change of the leadership; they'd impose themselves then at those conferences, through this agitation, through this organization. As the alternate leadership.

When you start challenging the whole policy of an organization from its very roots, you don't have to be saying "elect me" thereafter. And to be unfair to those leaders is to be unworthy completely of leadership, completely unworthy. And the final act of having failed to get the policies changed, having failed to completely discredit those leaders and to occupy the positions, of walking out and forming a new organization, surely! It's the most, clearest demonstration. Not only were they now seeking for the leadership of an organization, but were also now seeking for leadership of the struggle. I don't think one needs

proof of their canvassing which would be difficult in a conference, which is a free conference, of saying they canvassed so many people. They were looking for more than just positions in leadership, but a complete take-over.

Did you think they had much strength outside the Transvaal? How would you assess their strength as of the end of 1958 or so, outside the Transvaal?

I think that they had some, to be objective, they had some sympathizers and strong, fairly – fair group in the universities; perhaps in Fort Hare they had some sympathizers among the young men; perhaps in the Eastern Cape they had some. In the Western Cape more...

What was your assessment of Sobukwe's strength or weaknesses as a leader? Did you take him seriously? Or what was your view of him?

Well, I mean, Sobukwe was a very eloquent leader. He joined, incidentally, we recruited him into the ANC at Fort Hare. After forming this branch, we made him the spokesman of the branch, and he was a very eloquent man, very impressive, and subsequently, during the Defiance Campaign. and shortly thereafter, his active political work sort of went down to an ebb. He came back after a lot of persuasion, and became a branch chairman. I don't know if this also affected his ideas; one of the branches of the 28. He never rose to any other position. I think from that—

Had he not been a national official of the Youth League at an earlier point?

Earlier, yes. But when he returned to politics he—

How active was he when he was Secretary? I think he was Secretary of the Youth League. Was he active?

No, no, not secretary. I can't remember when he was national secretary.

Under Pitje I think.

At that stage there was a bit of—

About 1950 or so, after he finished Fort Hare. I think he was. Perhaps yes, but Pitje was a bit of a dim era in the Youth league.

A bit of a what?

Dim era.

Not so much of an activist.

Yes. The ANC after this – I think it is because of the activity which the ANC engaged in after the 1949 era. So I am not so – I can't really remember Sobukwe's activities; I don't. Perhaps Gwendolen [Carter] has got material on it.

You said he was eloquent as a public speaker—

Yes, but I didn't think him very profound. I didn't think, frankly, very profound.

What weaknesses did you think he had?

(Laughter) Well, I couldn't say now; I think it is hardly fair for a man who has gone through so much suffering.

Fairness aside—

Yes, I know; the political historian!

Remembering in 1959, let's say, what assessment you made of this rival is rather historically important. And in fairness I wonder what the ANC—

Yes, but it is politically—

Untactful.

Politically tactful, yes. Historians it is true are chasing after the truth; I must mix the truth with such forms of conduct on my part which might not jeopardise the achievement of an objective (Laughter)—Yes I appreciate your question.

I appreciate your answer. Were you at any point after the break-away of the Africanists, or the starting up of the PAC, did you or Tambo or any of the other leaders of the ANC. Did you consider making any efforts to bring about a reunion or reconciliation with the Africanists?

Well, our external mission, I think it's now well known.

I don't mean after Sharpeville, I mean between their breakaway and—

It was hardly — It was only nine months, nine months; just about a year. No, there were no — after all, they walked out of conference,

saying that they were going to — And in April they founded themselves. In December they walked out, and started on their own; I mean, they did precisely what we anticipated, which was to concentrate more on attacking the African National Congress. And this is what we said in our statement then, that we are going to be used to try to increase the attacks on the ANC. So they did that, and did not participate. We carried on with our programme, the boycotts and so on, which they criticised. We were then in the thick of the anti-pass campaign, which they also criticised, saying that they wouldn't tackle individual laws; they would rather have a complete and total revolution. And we thought they were just one of those group which developed over the period of the history of the African National Congress, and we should just go on.

However, after the [1960] detentions and during the detentions, efforts — Although they were a very small minority, efforts were made on the initiative of the ANC to call the African leaders of all groups to close ranks. This is how.... Many conferences which you know. More so the formation of the external United Front. They are all there. And it is now pretty well known. They never adhered to any agreements. They broke off, and continued their attacks.

This is a very vague question but it is a rather central one. You say that in the period just before Sharpeville there was no particular effort to bring the two organizations together again, because you say they were proceeding with

their own effort to create revolution.

No, no, not to create revolution; they were proceeding with their own efforts of finding their feet, defining what an African was; they were preoccupied with who is an African and who is not an African; and also attacking the campaigns which the ANC was then busily engaged in—the anti-pass campaign. There was really no need; the situation did not call for—

Was there any sense that the PAC was more militant than the ANC?

I don't know where that comes from honestly, frankly, I just don't understand; it is a sort of a historical blow which occurs over things, development of organizations, either deliberately by design and distortion, or I don't understand; people call them militant; what does militant mean? They had hardly embarked on any action. You know what action they embarked upon during 1959? It was the status campaign. A campaign to have Africans addressed as Sir or Mrs. in the shops and having those shops listed in a directory, I didn't think that was more militant than the potato-boycott, or even more militant than the anti-pass struggle. The word militant loses its meaning if you examine what precisely the PAC was doing during that time. What was it doing?

It seems the so-called Sharpeville business too, was called more militant and even violent, I don't know. That does not show that. Sobukwe wrote and distinctly made it clear that his campaign was going to be nonviolent. Now

history suddenly has it, and we are constantly confronted with this, and I don't understand. I think if people will say they were more militant, they had better say, well, we have looked through the history and they did this and this, which we consider was more militant than what the ANC ever did. Then one could interpret it. Otherwise it is difficult, I don't know what people mean by militant.

I think what most people mean, although I acknowledge that they don't bring it out, is that their ideology is aimed at a total overthrow of White government. And a replacement of it by a totally black government. Whereas the ANC had, in this respect, a more moderate policy of replacing white government perhaps with some kin, of a multi-racial scheme. I think that is what the phrase militant comes from. But I agree with you that in the actions they took they never achieved—

I mean, I wouldn't ever be able to find a more militant program than the Freedom Charter. Perhaps this was one reason why the South African government decided to charge us with treason and keep us in the treason trial for five years. I wouldn't find—I doubt if there is any political organization anywhere, even the then unliberated states, which had a more militant program than the—I mean more militant outlook than the Freedom Charter. Politically, economically and otherwise, I didn't know even up to this day, what the PAC's political program is, and if this idea of militancy holds, complete black government.

Well, they must have changed their ideas a million times since then, because I notice they have done what not even the ANC has done. To have had Patrick Duncan as their spokesman in the what-you-call; no, not the OAU, that is the same time when he appeared in 1963. A black government of pure nationalism; I would question that.

I think that after 1960 that they were in a confused state, to say the least.

I wonder how confused they were even to begin with.

I don't want to seem to be looking for things that aren't there, but I'd be very interested in your assessment of the whole general condition of the ANC in the late 1950's. Were you, as a leader – I know you were banned and so forth – but still you were in a position to influence the organization. How satisfied were you with the internal strength of the ANC, say in 1958 or 59? What did you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the ANC then? I'm trying to get a picture of the state of things at about that stage of the political development. Can you remember? That was the end of the first phase of the Treason Trial, but not yet the end of the trial.

I thought that at that stage the ANC was preparing itself again, having readjusted itself to the new situation which had virtually made it semi-illegal, with gathering again strength and momentum once more for another confrontation with the government. I think one will

remember that that was the period of the anti-pass campaign of 1959. In '58, in May? We had a mammoth conference in Johannesburg on the pass issue. Chief Luthuli was banned when he was coming to that conference. I recall the 26th June that year too, I was on the way to address a meeting which subsequently turned out to be 75,000 strong in Durban. And I was banned on the way. There was mass agitation against the pass laws and that was the year when we called for a potato-boycott, as one step towards a sharp conflict which we were preparing for 1960; I thought the ANC was rather...

Do you think that without police intimidation the 1958 Stay-At-Home would have been more successful?

Yes, I think so – I also think that some tactical mistakes were made there, which were admitted. Instead of calling out boldly, calling upon the people to strike and calling them in the name of the ANC, we had formed some ad-hoc body under whose name the strike was called, which confused the people. I think we realised that mistake afterwards and said that in the future we must not under any circumstances whatsoever, even if it meant possibly exposing the leadership to arrest, call these strikes under the name which the people know.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

■ By **Duma Nokwe**

One of the criticisms frequently levelled against the Youth Movements of Congresses is that they have failed to make any impact upon, and to organise the masses of working, peasant and intellectual youth. In fact, the very existence of these youth movements, the A.N.C.Y.L. [African National Congress Youth League], S.A.I.Y.C. [South African Indian Youth Congress], is known only to a small percentage of youth. In the case of the A.N.C.Y.L. its failure to win the confidence of the masses of African youth can only be clearly understood, against the background of its historical development, its tasks and functions as determined by its foundation members and its relationship with the A.N.C. [African National Congress].

As a result of the growing militancy of the students which was demonstrated by student strikes at Fort Hare and Lovedale, the A.N.C. resolved at its Annual Conference in 1943 to establish a Congress Youth League, whose tasks would be to organise the youth and prepare them for Congress membership. Thus in 1944 the A.N.C.Y.L. was formed.

From its inception, however, the



members of the Youth League focussed their attention on the weaknesses of the A.N.C., particularly its lack of a militant political theory and programme of action based on action by the people. Thus "From the outset the A.N.C.Y.L. set itself the task amongst others of imparting a dynamic substance and matter to the organisational form of the A.N.C. This took the form of a forthright exposition of the National Liberatory outlook—African Nationalism which the A.N.C.Y.L. seeks to

impose on the mother body." ("Basic Policy of A.N.C.Y.L.")

From 1944 to 1949, the Youth League concentrated on working out African Nationalism, criticising the old methods of struggle of deputations and resolutions to the Government, and tried to impose a militant outlook. This culminated in the adoption of the "Programme of Action" at the Annual Conference of the A.N.C. in 1949. For the first time in the history of the A.N.C. the National Executive was

elected which pledged itself to implement a specific programme of action. The A.N.C.Y.L. played an important part in the adoption of that programme of action. The salient features of the programme were mass political actions, in the form of boycott, national days of protest, and civil disobedience.

During this period (1944 to 1949) the A.N.C.Y.L. had the following features:

It was a small organisation, with very few organised branches, whose members were predominantly intellectual youth, almost all of who were above 25 years of age.

Its main activities were small meeting in which discussion centred around the Philosophy of African Nationalism and the defects in A.N.C. policy.

Its National Conferences or other caucuses were invariably held at the same as, and between sessions of the A.N.C. Annual Conferences and the main item which was discussed was the 'line' to be adopted by the Youth League delegates in A.N.C. Conferences.

It can thus be seen that during this period the Youth League was really of a 'party' within the A.N.C. whose members were adherents of African Nationalism. This preoccupation with the Philosophy of African Nationalism and the reform of A.N.C. policy, naturally attracted only intellectual youth. To the Youth Leaguers then, the mobilisation of the vast masses of youth was of secondary importance. There was quite a strong feeling that the League

should maintain its purity by not becoming a mass movement.

The sharp criticisms of A.N.C. policies from Youth Leaguers resulted in a lack of harmony, suspicion and sometimes open hostility between Congress leaders and Youth Leaguers. A.N.C. leaders like Champion regarded the Youth Leaguers as 'upstarts' who wanted to usurp their positions. On the other hand, Youth Leaguers in many cases despised the old established leadership of the A.N.C. Because of these attitudes, not a single A.N.C.Y.L. branch was established at the instance of the A.N.C.

It is important to realise that the keen interest shown by member of the Youth League at its inception, in matters of political theory and questions of policy is not a peculiar feature of the development of the A.N.C.Y.L. It would be an error to contend that the A.N.C.Y.L. should from its inception have confined itself to youth problems. Such a view ignores the concrete conditions which existed, the serious defects within the A.N.C. in the form of the lack of some form of militant programme of action, and the characteristics of intellectual youth, who invariably have a keen desire for political theory.

The contribution of the A.N.C.Y.L. towards introducing reforms within the A.N.C. to establish it as a mass organisation should not be underestimated. It is, however, unfortunate, that whilst the Youth Leaguers were keen to see organisational changes

in the A.N.C. they paid little attention to the Youth League as an organisation; whilst they wanted the A.N.C. to become a mass organisation which would unite the people and rely on the strength and confidence of the masses of the people, nothing was done by the Youth Leaguers to make the A.N.C.Y.L. a mass Youth movement, which would unite the masses of youth and rely on their strength and confidence.

From 1949 to 1952 the A.N.C.Y.L. devoted its energies to supervising the implementation of the 'Programme of Action', the boycott of the N.R.C. [National Representative Council], the National Day of Protest, and the Civil Disobedience aspects of the programme. There was during this period an appreciable increase in members from the working youth. But there were still no fundamental changes in the organisational methods and activities of the Youth League.

During the Defiance Campaign, although hundreds of youth volunteered and defied, the Youth League was disorganised at all levels. There were various reasons for the disorganisation of the Youth League, namely: Many Youth Leaguers became leading members of the A.N.C. and were actively engaged in Congress work, with little to no time for Youth League work. Those Leaguers who were not engaged in Congress work at the time just disappeared.

The A.N.C. had embarked on a bold and militant Campaign, and the primary function of the

A.N.C.Y.L. had disappeared. A small clandestine group, however, under the name of "Bureau of African Nationalism" issued a newsletter criticising the Defiance Campaign; and New conditions had occurred and there was no definition of the tasks of the Youth League in the new conditions.

The National Conference of the Youth League which was held in the Transvaal in April, 1953 attempted to define the tasks of the Youth League by resolving to form a mass Youth movement.

Although the weakness of the Youth League could be attributed to its exclusive political activities, this is not the sole cause. After the A.N.C. resolved that a Youth League should be formed it took absolutely no interest in the formation and development of the movement. Instead, when the leadership was faced with the criticism of their 'baby' some condemned and denounced it, others wanted it controlled and disciplined, but they did nothing positive either way. These prejudices and indifferences towards the Youth League still manifest themselves today.

Another source of prejudice against the Youth League arises from the fact that some people believe that it is a reactionary organisation. This charge arises from ignorance of the official policy of the A.N.C.Y.L. The basic policy of the A.N.C.Y.L. clearly rejects chauvinistic Nationalism, and warns against fascist Nationalism and advocates a progressive Nationalism which will take into

full consideration the inalienable rights of all minority groups. It is true that the full implications of such a progressive Nationalism have not yet been worked out, but concrete activities clearly indicate the trend of development of the policy of the Youth League. In 1947 the Youth League sent a delegate to the 2nd World Festival at Prague.

In 1950 the Youth League unequivocally condemned the reactionary National-minded bloc who were opposed to a progressive alliance. An article entitled the "Nationalist Bloc" in the September 1951 issue of the 'Lodestar' states:

"The A.N.C.Y.L. writes to expose to its members in particular and the African people in general, the character of these (National-minded bloc) backward looking and reactionary elements that hide the real nature of their activities by voicing Nationalistic fulminations and slogans...

"The Congress is a National Liberatory Movement, within whose fold will be found many shares of political opinion ranging from extreme right to extreme left, which reflect the development of the African people as an entity striving to overthrow foreign domination. At the present historical stage this organisational form of Congress is politically correct."

The policy of the Youth League is further clearly expressed in the Editorial of the same issue, in which the decision of the Joint Executives of the A.N.C., S.A.I.C. and Franchise Action Council to establish a Planning

Council for the purpose of co-ordinating activities is welcomed and further states that:

"We do not advocate the doing of anything which may place at a disadvantage the nation and international position of our struggle. Consequently we also welcome the decision of the National Executive to co-operate with the other National Organisation in the country as long as they support our struggle for independence. On this basis we should also welcome alliances with those world power which are in full accord with our aspirations."

It is on the basis of this policy that the Youth League has jointly with the T.I.Y.C. and Students' Liberal Association, annually organised the Colonial Youth Day Celebrations since 1950.

It is also on the basis of this policy that the A.N.C.Y.L. at its annual conference in 1953, resolved that it supported world peace and was opposed to war against the Soviet Union and also resolved to affiliate to the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

It is unfortunate that these developments within the Youth League which are an expression of its policy have not been carefully observed and given their true significance, and some people have dogmatically adhered to their own prejudices. They refuse to accept, appreciate and encourage the development of the Youth League.

Since 1952 when the old "Party" Youth League was disorganised, the Youth League attempted

to redefine its tasks in the light of the new conditions. A small dissident group which regarded itself as the repository of African Nationalism continued to attack the policy of the A.N.C.; the disruptive saboteurs now call themselves the Africanists. Their activity represents a dying feature of the old A.N.C.Y.L. The growing feature is one where Youth Leaguers unequivocally accept the leadership of the A.N.C. and they are attempting to use the new methods of organisation in order to build a mass Youth Movement.

At the present stage of the development of the youth movement, it is of fundamental importance that people in the liberatory movement and Youth Leaguers themselves should eradicate incorrect traditional suspicions, prejudices and beliefs. It is only when we have got rid of these attitudes that we can really get down to the historic task of building a mass youth movement.

The importance of mobilising the Youth for the liberatory movement, cannot be disputed. To neglect the Youth would be to neglect a vital and virile force of the liberatory movement. The Congresses must therefore adopt a more positive interest in the development of the Youth Movements.

The fundamental objects of the Youth movements must necessarily be the same as the fundamental purpose of the Congresses. This cannot be otherwise since the Youth suffer the same oppression as the

people of South Africa.

However, because of the peculiar characteristics, needs and interests of the Youth, Youth movements cannot merely be Junior Congresses. The keen interests of Youth in sporting and cultural activities, require that the methods of organisation of a Youth movement should conform to these interests, and the activities of the movement should not merely be confined to political agitation but should extend to cultural and sporting activities.

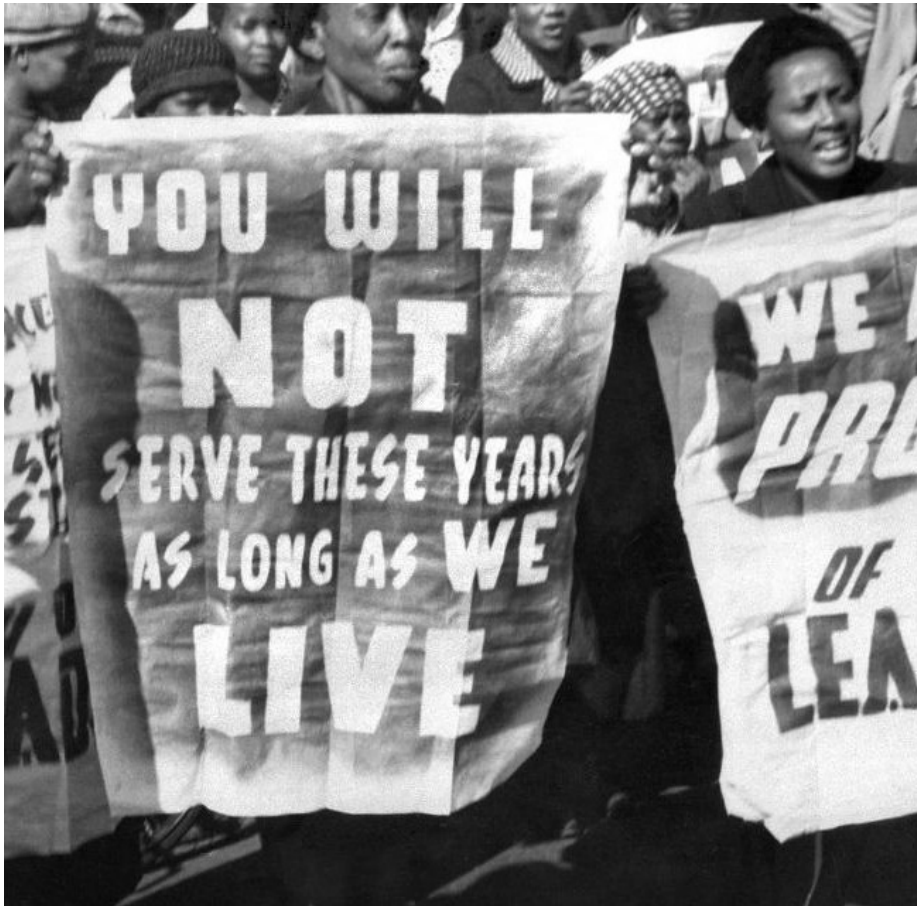
Culture and politics are inextricably bound together and cultural activities properly organised can serve not merely as recreation but can also raise the political understanding of the Youth. The expansion of the activities of the Youth movements will naturally attract younger Youth, and will also unite the peasants, working and student Youth. Youth leaders should study the problems, needs and interests of the various sections of the Youth, in order to unite them. The programme which was adopted as the annual conference of the Youth held on the 30th March 1956, is an important step in this direction.

Whilst in the past, the growth of the Youth League was partly due to preoccupation with political theory and activities, it would be incorrect to contend that a Youth movement should not concern itself with political theory at all. Political education and activities are essential to raise the political understanding of the Youth. The political education must be

provided by the African National Congress. Political education will give life and purpose to the cultural and sporting activities.

The inclusion of the African National Congress Youth League in the African Congress draft constitution, as an auxiliary body is correct. In the past, leading members of the African National Congress were free to disown the Youth League when it was convenient, and mischievous Youth Leaguers have claimed authority and even the right to flout African National Congress decisions.

Although the Youth League was the African National Congress Youth League there was no clarity as regards the exact relationship between the African National Congress and the Youth League. It was this very situation which stimulated the 'party' activities of the Youth League in the past. One cannot agree with Alan Doyle in his article in the February issue of 'Liberation' when he says that the proposal to include the Youth League (ANC) in the constitution would 'perpetuate the unhealthy position of the African National Congress Youth League as a separate political grouping with a platform of its own.' This is exactly what the draft was to avoid. The old constitution did not include the Youth League and it is difficult to understand Alan Doyle's reasoning. It would restrict the activities of the Youth League if they were included as "integral parts" of the African National Congress, it would deprive it of an opportunity of broadening its



activities. However, to exclude it altogether and to ask the Congress to rely for the exercise of its leadership merely on its political correctness, would be to ask for the liquidation of the African National Congress Youth League and in fact all the other Congress Youth Movements.

What excuse could there be for establishing Congress Youth movements when there already exist hundreds of Youth Movements, if the Congresses have to rely on their political correctness only?

The solution seems to be that the Youth movements should accept as a minimum the aims and objects of the African National Congress, and that they should be independent in regard to their activities, in order

to be broad and to organise the masses of the Youth. The Youth movements should report their activities to the African National Congress and the A.N.C. should take an active part in establishing Youth League branches.

There is the other problem of the age limit within the Youth Movement. In determining this limit I suggest we should look for guidance in Youth movements in other countries and also the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

The organisation of the Youth movements on the pattern of the Congress is correct. The unity of the three sections is growing step by step on the basis of concrete joint activities. It is, however, unfortunate, that there are not sufficient cultural and

social joint activities on regional, Provincial and National level, on the lines of the Youth Festival. Such activities would serve to remove the artificial barriers imposed to separate the Youth. The Youth Action Council which was established to co-ordinate Youth activities it is hoped, will consider increasing such joint intercourse and social activities.

The co-ordination of the activities of the Youth movements through the Youth Action Council is no longer sufficient. If the Youth movements have to keep the close contact with the masses of Youth, it is essential that they should keep in close contact with organisations of Youth.

From the organisational point of view the following are the tasks of the Youth movement, if it wants to become a mass Youth movement:

The immediate establishment of a students' organisation which will organise the secondary and university students.

The establishment of cultural, social and sporting clubs for the Youth.

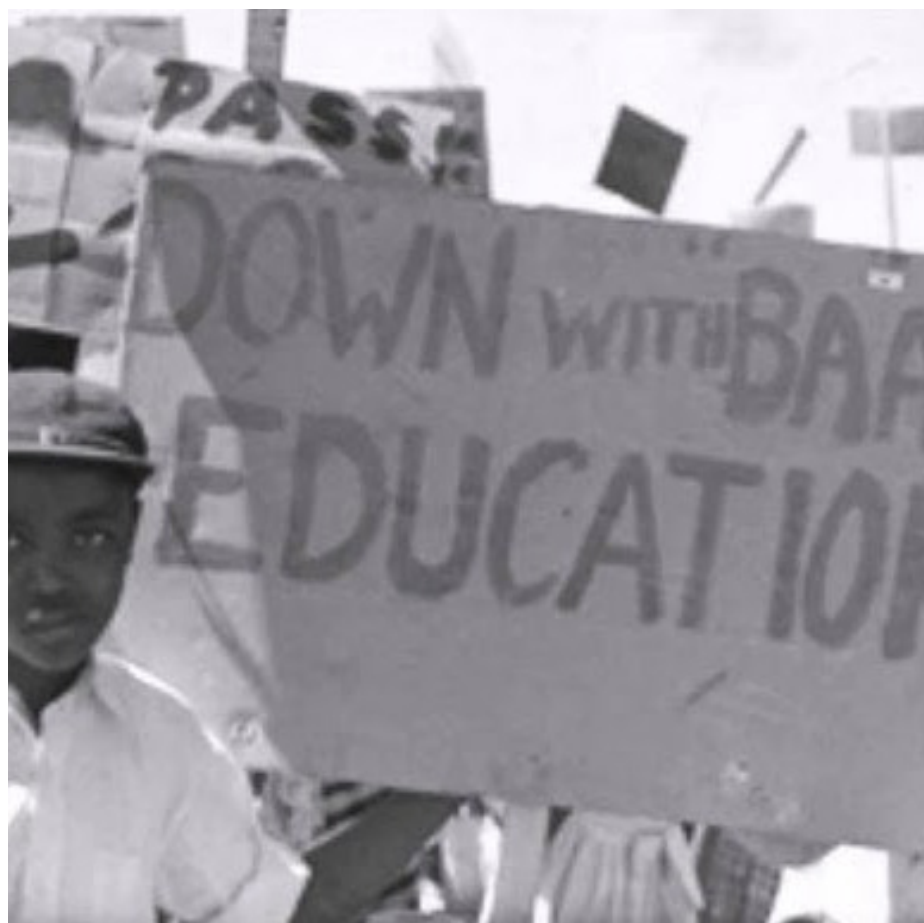
The formation of a Federal Youth Movement, to co-ordinate the activities of all the Youth organisations in the country. Such a Federation would enable the Congress Youth Organisations to keep in contact with the Youth and it would enrich the experience of our Youth movements in regard to the problems, needs and interests of the Youth.

From: Liberation, no. 19, June 1956.

BANTU EDUCATION IN ACTION

■ By **Duma Nokwe**

WHEN Bantu Education was introduced, Dr. Verwoerd wrapped it up in apparently 'progressive principles.' These were, firstly the separation of educational and religious institutions, and the transfer of the control of education to the state. Secondly, there was the much boosted extension of the control of education directly to the African people through School Committees. Thirdly, the introduction of mother-tongue instruction. It was not difficult to strip Dr. Verwoerd's schemes of the appearance of progressiveness and to expose Bantu education for what it is – a treacherous attempt to destroy the critical and creative abilities of the African people, and to restrict their ambitions within the narrow confines which the Nationalists design and desire should be the functions of the members of 'Bantu Society.' The publication of syllabuses for the Lower Primary Course and the Higher Primary Course, have confirmed the predictions of the people as to the



true purpose of Bantu education.

THE NEW SYLLABUS

In both cases Dr. H. F. Verwoerd has invited criticism of the syllabuses, and he contends that they are unassailable from the point of view of modern progressive educational principles. But Dr. Verwoerd has no regard for criticism; if he had, he would long have abandoned his post

and his Party. These invitations for criticism are intended to shield the ruthless autocracy with which the Nationalists implement their schemes. The Nationalists hate criticism and are determined to punish it severely. The volume of protest and criticism against the very introduction of Bantu Education met with the most scathing retorts and contemptuous dismissal in

government circles. Teachers who will in the main be responsible for the implementation of Bantu education have been forbidden from criticising the policy of the Native Affairs Department, and whoever criticises the syllabus adversely will be a marked man. No amount of criticism, therefore, will persuade the Nationalists to modify or abandon their plans.

There was a mixed reaction to the Syllabuses, as there was to the introduction of Bantu Education. Some people (fortunately only a small, and relatively uninfluential section of the people) adopted the attitude that there was no fundamental change which had been introduced by Bantu Education. Native education, they argued, was as much an education created by the ruling class for the oppressed people as Bantu Education was. It was further argued that whatever dangerous innovations there might be in Bantu Education these could be remedied by raising the political consciousness of the teachers so that they teach that which would liberate the children rather than what would enslave them mentally. Another group (consisting mainly of teachers) which whilst admitting the destructive nature of Bantu Education regarded it as an insult to suggest that teachers could willingly "inject poison" into their own children.

Before assessing the role of the African teacher in Bantu

Education, it is necessary to examine some aspects of the syllabus for the Higher Primary Course (Std. III to Std. VI).

The medium of instruction throughout the whole course is vernacular, except in the case of English and Afrikaans. The following are the subjects and the time allocated to each is indicated in brackets in minutes per week: Religious instruction (100), Afrikaans (205), English (205), Arithmetic (180), Social Studies (180), Health Education (150), Nature Study (60), Singing and games (60), Needlework (for girls), Tree planting and soil conservation, Handwork and Homecraft, and Gardening for Boys and Girls (each 120). It should be noted that out of a total of 1,650 minutes per week, 360 minutes or nearly a quarter of the time is spent in handwork, gardening or tree-planting and soil conservation. In addition, the Nature Study course provides for practical work for all classes which includes the 'collection of weeds' and this resembles Dickens' "Do-the-Boys School." In the words of the syllabus the primary aim is to inculcate the attitude that "work ennobles."

The moral and mental training of the child is provided by a subject – called Social Studies. This is really a training in Nationalist policy under the guise of Geography, History, Citizenship and Good Conduct. There is no

clearer statement of the purpose of this course than that contained in the syllabus itself. These subjects have been "orientated economically and socially with an aim to develop in the Bantu child Social consciousness and responsibility." The course is intended to make the child realize that he is bound by various ties to particular groups of people as they are represented in his home and in his tribe. Groups of people beyond his tribe are omitted, apparently it is undesirable that he should realize the bonds with people beyond his tribe. A further aim is:

"The acceptance by the Bantu child in an intelligent manner of the fact that the welfare of his community depends on the contribution made towards it by each of its members. He should therefore know how his own people work and others earn a living; ... and he should be convinced that he must work if he wishes to lead a useful and contented life ... He must realize that by his behaviour other people will determine whether society will accept him as a dependable and useful person . . . He should be convinced that he cannot live and act as a detached individual in society . . . Furthermore, he must realize that the laws are necessary for the people of any community for harmonious living together. Consequently, teaching should lead the child to do naturally, and therefore willingly, what society has prescribed as correct, good

and commendable.”

It would be difficult to find a clearer exposition of fascist principles of education. The passage from which these extracts have been taken represents the process of education as a task in which every effort should be made to twist and hammer an otherwise rebellious child into accepting and submitting to conditions which have been created for him. That is, of course, the basic aim of Bantu Education.

The Social Studies course is the therefore designed to inculcate a strong tribal consciousness, acknowledgement and acceptance of what has been prescribed for his tribe, obedience to the laws; and the function of education is to make him accept all these naturally and willingly. The orientation has been achieved by ruthlessly omitting everything which is inconsistent with the above purpose and including everything fashioned in Nationalist style.

In the section dealing with History to indicate what a fortunate heritage awaits him, the child is taught in detail all the ‘benevolent contributions’ which the State and Church have made towards the development of the ‘Bantu.’ Not a word is mentioned of the contribution made by the Africans towards these institutions and towards the development of the country generally. Under Mining, Commerce and Industry, the History course includes “the

effects of Mining, Commerce and Industry on the life of the Bantu – the creation of opportunities for work; new professions and trades; movement of the people to cities; need for influx control.”

No mention is made of the fact that these industries really exist by exploiting African labour. Throughout the whole course the Africans are presented as lifeless clods of earth upon whom mysterious forces are acting to shape their destiny.

The section dealing with Citizenship and Good Conduct is an abomination. The whole course is designed to impress indelibly upon the child that he is a citizen not of South Africa but of the tribe and that he has “duties, privileges, and responsibilities in the village and the town” and not beyond. The word ‘privilege’ instead of ‘right,’ is insistent throughout the syllabus, and sandwiched between duties and responsibilities.

There is not a single occasion when the word ‘right’ is used. Quite clearly the African child will be taught that he has no rights. Apart from an intensive training in the mechanism and virtues of tribal organisation, supplemented by the modernized version provided for by Dr. Verwoerd’s Bantu Authorities Act, the precepts of “Good Conduct” include a knowledge of how to assist, amongst others, the CHIEF, the STOCK INSPECTOR, the

LOCATION SUPERINTENDENT and the POLICEMAN. Assistance to the latter will probably follow the Gestapo method of charging children with the task of spying on their parents, and reporting any anti-Nationalist activities. By the time the child is in Standard Five and on the verge of leaving school he is given final trimming in the form of “instruction and guidance in the Personal Reference Book – why and how used, the Labour Bureaux, control measures in Urban Areas, Curfew.”

These are the things which he must naturally and willingly do because the society of Dr. Verwoerd and Swart have prescribed them as ‘good, correct and commendable.’ It is only if and when the pupil gets to Std. VI that he is given a glimpse of the sanctuary which is above the Chief and his tribe. Even here the emphasis is on ‘Bantu representation’ in Parliament and the ‘officers who deal with the Bantu people.’ After a constant grinding for thirty minutes each day, for eight years, the child will it is no doubt hoped, submit naturally and willingly to the dictates of the Paramount Chief Verwoerd and his clique and also regard it as his duty to persuade other Africans to do the same.

CULTURE AND POLITICS

It is only the most blind dogmatism which makes it possible for people not to realize that if there have been no fundamental changes brought by Bantu Education, at least the

changes are radical enough, and create conditions for new methods of struggle, and a new emphasis on the struggle in the cultural and educational spheres. Through Bantu Education the Nationalists have realized the inseparable unity between the cultural life of the people and their political aspirations, and they now hope to use the former to smother the latter. Surely it is the task of progressives to organise the cultural life of the people so that it serves the true interests and aspirations of the people.

THE KEY FIGURE

The hope that African teachers will be able to teach anything other than Bantu Education in Dr. Verwoerd's schools, is based on an unrealistic assessment of the situation. Dr. Verwoerd is clearly aware that the key figure in his schemes is the teacher. He said "So much depends upon the teacher carrying out his duties conscientiously... For the teacher who is not faithful in this regard there is no place in Bantu Education." The conditions of employment of teachers make it quite clear that Dr. Verwoerd will tolerate no unfaithfulness or even criticism. It is also clearly stated that any teacher who encourages disobedience or resistance to the laws of the country or participates in political activity would be instantly dismissed. Even if therefore it was possible to increase the number of militant



teachers who would be prepared to risk 'their bread' in order to serve the interests of the people, these conditions of employment combined with the spying activities of some Principals (which will no doubt be intensified because of the 'enhanced' prospects of becoming a sub-inspector) make it unlikely that such militant teachers would remain teachers for long. It should also be borne in mind that the prospects of raising the political consciousness of teachers are no better now than they were a year ago. In fact, because of their conditions of employment, and the distrust which is bound to grow amongst them, the teachers can be expected to be more reticent and less responsive to the voice of the people, and a little more 'bread conscious'.

The prospects of using teachers in schools is further diminished by the fact that Dr. Verwoerd is going to train his own Bantu Education

teachers. And he is going to train them not merely to be dumb tools for his policies and schemes but also to be active agents against the liberatory movement. Apart from the fact that it is a condition of a teacher's employment that his whole time should be at the disposal of the Native Affairs Department, Dr. Verwoerd has stated that he considers it the duty of teachers to agitate against the African National Congress and to discredit its campaigns. Recently, after he had dismissed 116 teachers on the Rand he said that he did not think that they had done sufficient work to sabotage the boycott of schools.

It is important to realize that Bantu Education is not merely designed to destroy the political consciousness and understanding of the African child, so that he may be a dumb and contented serf, but it is positively designed to produce Nationalist cadres, who will sow seeds of hostility against the Liberatory movements, sabotage its campaigns and attempt to terrorise and intimidate progressive people.

Bantu Education thus constitutes a positive political front against the movements. Since it is so fraught with danger for the liberatory movements which are the bulwark of the people's interests and aspirations, it deserves the utmost vigilance and most careful study and the most effective assault.

The Meaning of BANTU EDUCATION

■ By **Duma Nokwe**

Bantu education is the 'education' designed for the 'Bantu' by the Nationalist Government, it is a development of 'Native Education meaning the education which was designed for the 'Native' of South Africa.

Like 'Native Education, Bantu education' is a qualified education which is a product of the political and economic structure of the country. Like its predecessors too, 'Bantu education' was not introduced as a means of raising the cultural level of the Africans, nor of developing the abilities of the African child to the full, but as one of the devices which aim at solving the cheap labour problems of the country. The development of education amongst the Africans and the policy of Governments have been closely connected with the labour problems of the country.

Dr. Verwoerd's statement that "(Native) education in each of the four provinces, therefore, took into account neither the community interests of the Bantu, nor the general policy of the country," is incorrect in so far as it refers to the general policy of the country. It is, of course,



correct that 'Native Education did not take into account the interests of the Africans, it was never intended to fulfil that task. The Director of Education of the Transvaal made it very clear that "teach the Native to work" was the "true principle by which the education of the Native is to be regulated and controlled" and that a plan for "Native education" must "contemplate the ultimate

social place of the native as an efficient worker". The report continues to prescribe a scheme through which the aims of Native education could be realised and the scheme which had to be for the continuation of MANUAL TRAINING with ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION, and in the second place for the shaping of the elementary instruction to equip the Native for more

intelligent comprehension of any industrial work before him." The scheme was implemented; and it determined the salient features of Native education, which were:

1. The complete application of segregation in the purpose, administration and organisation of education.
2. The vesting of control of education of the Africans in hands which were not responsible to the Africans, despite the fact that Africans were made to pay for their education.
3. The careful regulation of the number of children who had access to education to keep it as low as possible, so as not to upset the reservoir of cheap, unskilled labour, among of the 'controls' used were the denial of free, compulsory education to Africans and the insistence that parents who wanted their children "educated" should pay for them, and the inadequate and poor schooling provided for Africans.
4. The careful regulation of the curriculum of African schools so that African education remained basically elementary with an emphasis on MANUAL labour. This is illustrated by the following extract from the report of the Native Education Commission, of 1930-1932 (P. 75) "The students were taught gardening and other manual work. Every student at Lovedale had to work two hours in the garden or on the road. This excellent practice continues to this day."
5. The denial of technical education to Africans, and the restriction of their training to teaching, nursing and interpreters and priests.

This scheme of education was consistent with the general policy of governments attempt to check the flow to towns by imposing restrictions on the movements of Africans, in the form of permits under the Native Urban Areas Act of 1935. But as industry developed, the contradictions sharpened proportionately.

Successive governments of the country have tried various devices to resolve the contradiction between country and town. The amendment to the Urban Areas Act was calculated to tighten restrictions on the entry of Africans into towns; elaborate influx control departments were established, the

police force was increased, and pass raids were intensified; and arrested Africans found themselves working on the farms. Farmers were allowed to build farm goals and secure their cheap Labour behind bars. The Nationalist Government, which represents the interests of the capitalist farmers and the mine magnates, has intensified the efforts to drive Africans from the towns to the country in a more ruthless manner. 'BANTU EDUCATION' is one of these numerous efforts of the Nationalists, aimed at resolving, the conflict between the farms and mines on the one hand, and industry and commerce on the other, by compelling the African to accept the miserable oppressive conditions of work on the farms and mines.

Native education was the education imposed upon the African during the period of the development of capitalism in the towns; the period when there was a shortage of cheap labour in towns, and consequently a great demand for it. 'Bantu education' is imposed on the Africans in the period of the development of capitalism in the country, a period of intensified exploitation by farmers and the shortage of cheap labour on farms and mines. Through it, the Nationalists are attempting to harness the African to the most ruthless exploitation and oppression.

BENEFICIAL – TO WHOM?

Dr. Verwoerd's exposition of Bantu education contains the outworn fallacy that it is intended to benefit the African. In his pamphlet on Bantu Education, he says: "The Bantu pupil must obtain knowledge, skills and attitudes in the school which will be useful and advantageous to him, at the same time beneficial to his community. The subject matter must be presented to him in such a way that he can understand and master it, easily making it his own to the benefit and services of his community."

In the very next paragraph, however, Dr. Verwoerd proceeds to expose this fallacy by stating that: "A school must equip him to meet the demands which the economic life of South Africa impose upon him." He admits that the country maintained the difference in standards between European and African to perpetuate the illusion of white supremacy and

black inferiority, the fallacy upon which the exploiters rely to justify their ruthless exploitation of the people. Native education fulfilled the function of supplying the growing commercial enterprises and mines with 'efficient' workers without disturbing the cheap labour reservoir.

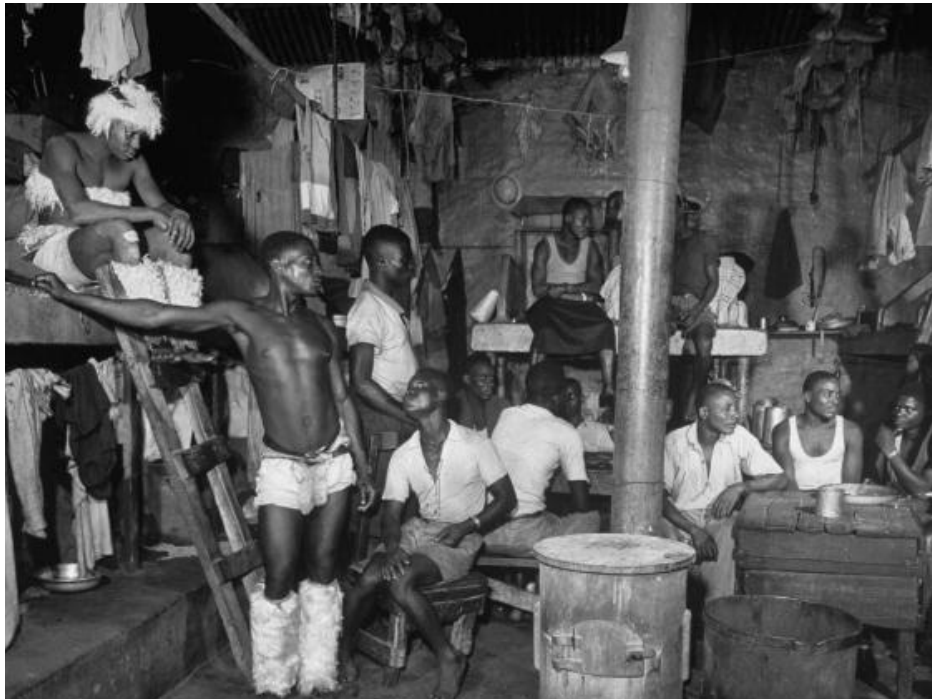
Native education was the educational scheme for Africans during the period of shortage of labour in the mines and the growing commercial enterprises of the country; together with other measures like the Land Act of 1913 and the Taxation laws, it maintained a steady flow of cheap labour from the country to the towns.

Before World War I, when South Africa had mainly an agricultural-mineral economy, most of the energies of the government were spent in squeezing Africans out of the Reserves and driving them in to the towns following the development of industry in the towns after the first World War, the process which the governments had begun assumed inconvenient proportions as the flow from country to town increased.

This created two 'problems' for the economy of the country:

a. The participation of the African in an industry after his low wage constituted a threat to the privileged position of the European worker, according to the report of the economic commission:

"Industry in the Union in areas where the Native predominates used to be based almost entirely on European supervision and skilled work, and Native manual labour. This was the natural division of labour in the earlier period of the contact between races ... when however, the land began to fill up and the struggle for a share in the material goods became keener, this division of labour began to change. On the one hand, there arose a small but increasing number of natives who aspired to the



more lucrative occupations of the Europeans."

To remedy this position, and to restore the 'natural division of labour which protected the European, colour Bar laws were passed which denied Africans access to skilled labour, the 'natural' preserve of the European.

b. Africans were naturally attracted by the more favourable conditions of work offered by the growing industries, as opposed to the feudal conditions on the farms and the exploitation of the mines. This created a condition of surplus cheap labour in the towns and a shortage of labour in the country and on the mines, thus sharpening the contradiction between the town and the country.

"The economic structure of our country of course results in large numbers of natives having to earn their living in the service of Europeans."

These last two quotations represent a more honest declaration of the purpose of Native education. Dr. Verwoerd exposition of 'Bantu Education' is full of glaring contradictions, but in characteristic Nationalist style he staggers blindly over the contradictions and imposes upon the majority of the people of South Africa a complete racist and fascist system of education. It is a negation of every single principle of education, which has been accepted by democratic people of the world.



The content of bantu education is a gross lowering of the already low education facilities of the African. Dr. Verwoerd shamelessly set Standard 2 as fundamental education, at which pupils will be carefully selected for what is called high primary education. Dr. Verwoerd keeps a judicious silence about the fate of those who are not selected for the higher primary course. The curriculum is distorted. Fundamental education consists reading, writing and arithmetic, Afrikaans and English. Religious education and singing, history and geography have been excluded. The intention is obvious, the African child who is being prepared as an instrument of cheap labour in a society which relies on fallacies must not know either the condition of his country nor the truth about the world which are apparent even in the distorted South African history books are likely to expose the fallacies.

Dr. Verwoerd blame the African child for the low percentage of African children who have access to education and not effectively inadequate schooling facilities to increase percentage, he proposes, first, to reduce school hours of the sub-standard to three a day... "It is wrong to utilise expensive teaching to supervise large classes of bored pupils while thousands of children who are entitled to the

same measure of primary education are kept out of school."

Secondly, to remove children who keep in sub-standard years, "keeping other children out of the available school accommodation and wasting public funds without themselves deriving benefit worth mentioning."

Thirdly, to dismiss children who fail-to attend school regularly'.

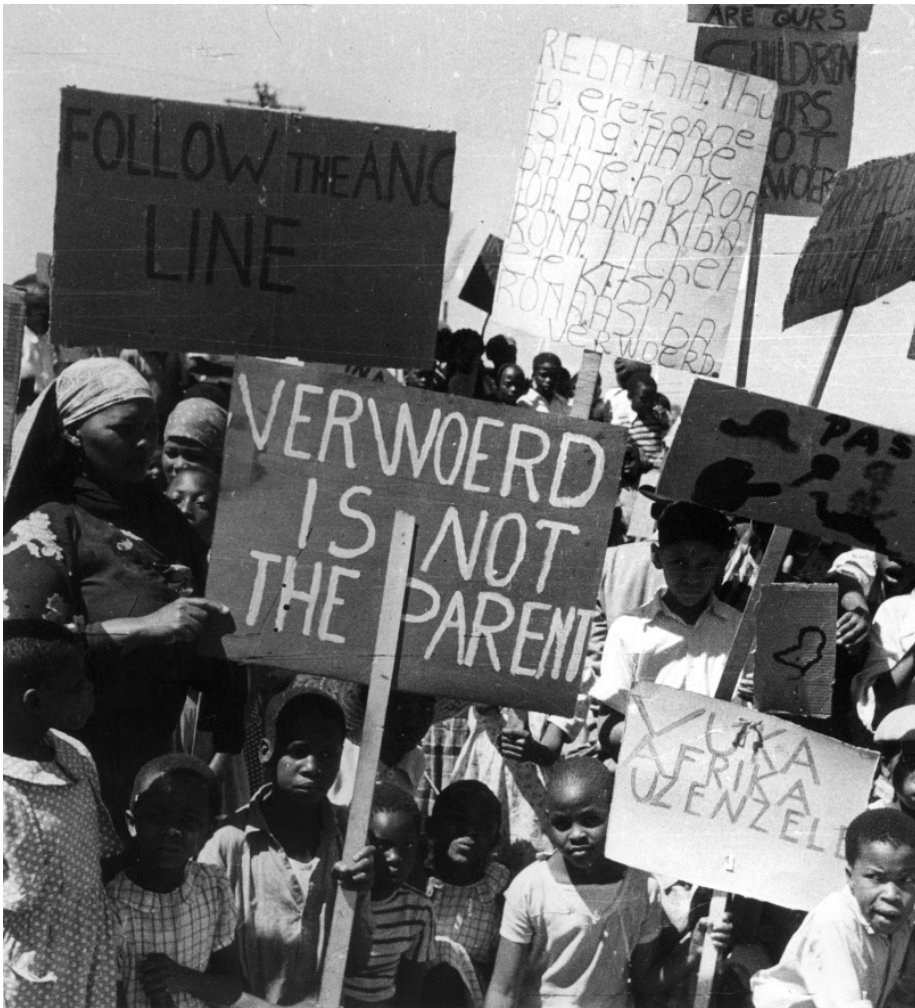
Fourthly, to refuse admission to children who cannot afford school requisites, such as pens and exercise books.

These proposals are made under the heading of "Extension of school facilities to bantu children." He does not mention a word about building new schools. On this point, however, he proposes later on:

- a. "Bantu mothers can, in accordance with local methods, erect walls where farmers allow it, and the Department will provide the windows, doors and roofs."
- b. "The present arrangement in Native Areas by which the Department provides the necessary labour is sound and can continue. The urban Bantu community will have to meet its obligations just as the rural community has to do."

The net result of these proposals is a reduction in the educational facilities for Africans.

The intensification of oppression and exploitation is extended to the teachers. Women teachers who are less expensive than men will be preferred. Instead of an increase in wages which teachers have been clamoring and hoping for, Dr. Verwoerd proposes a reduction in the present scales, despite the fact that European teachers have had increases and cost of living continues to rise. Dr. Verwoerd argues that the European teacher has a higher salary because "he is in the service of the European community and his salary must be fixed accordingly"



He ingeniously explains that the European teacher in the service of Africans gets European wage because he can be regarded as on loan to the African. Dr. Verwoerd does not explain why he does not apply his principles to the messengers and the large numbers of natives who earn their living in the service of the Europeans?

Dr. Verwoerd says of African teachers that they are entrusted with "a role in which they will be in the service of and responsible to the Bantu community". At the beginning of his pamphlet, however, he says "the control

of the educational system has been taken out of the hands of the provinces and placed in the hands, of the Department of Native Affairs," and later he says "no new school may, however, be established without the prior approval of the Department." The only responsibility the African community has in Bantu education is that of providing the children and the schools.

The introduction of mother-tongue education as a medium for teaching is justifiable on two grounds: first, as an expression of respect for a people and its national culture; secondly as, a step towards the democratisation

of education amongst a people.

The facts about Bantu education and numerous oppressive laws of the Nationalists indicate clearly that Dr. Verwoerd has no respect for the Africans and in fact despises them, nor has he any intention of democratising education so that it is available to all Africans to develop their abilities to the full, and so that they can contribute freely and fully to raising of the material and cultural standards of all people of this country. The reasons why Dr. Verwoerd introduces mother-tongue instruction is to enable the African child to master his distorted schemes easily and to fan the spirit of tribalism to divide the African people.

"Bantu education" is a reactionary scheme which very nearly destroys education for the African in South Africa. It is reactionary because it is designed to satisfy the needs of a reactionary and heartless class of exploiters. Whilst the Nationalists disregard the needs and interests of the masses of the people, and subject the people to a more ruthless oppression and exploitation in the interests of solving the contradictions of their society they do not take into account the sharpening conflict they are creating between themselves and the people, which will ultimately break their artificial political and economic structure.

Universities under fire

FOCUS ON THE SEPARATE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION BILL

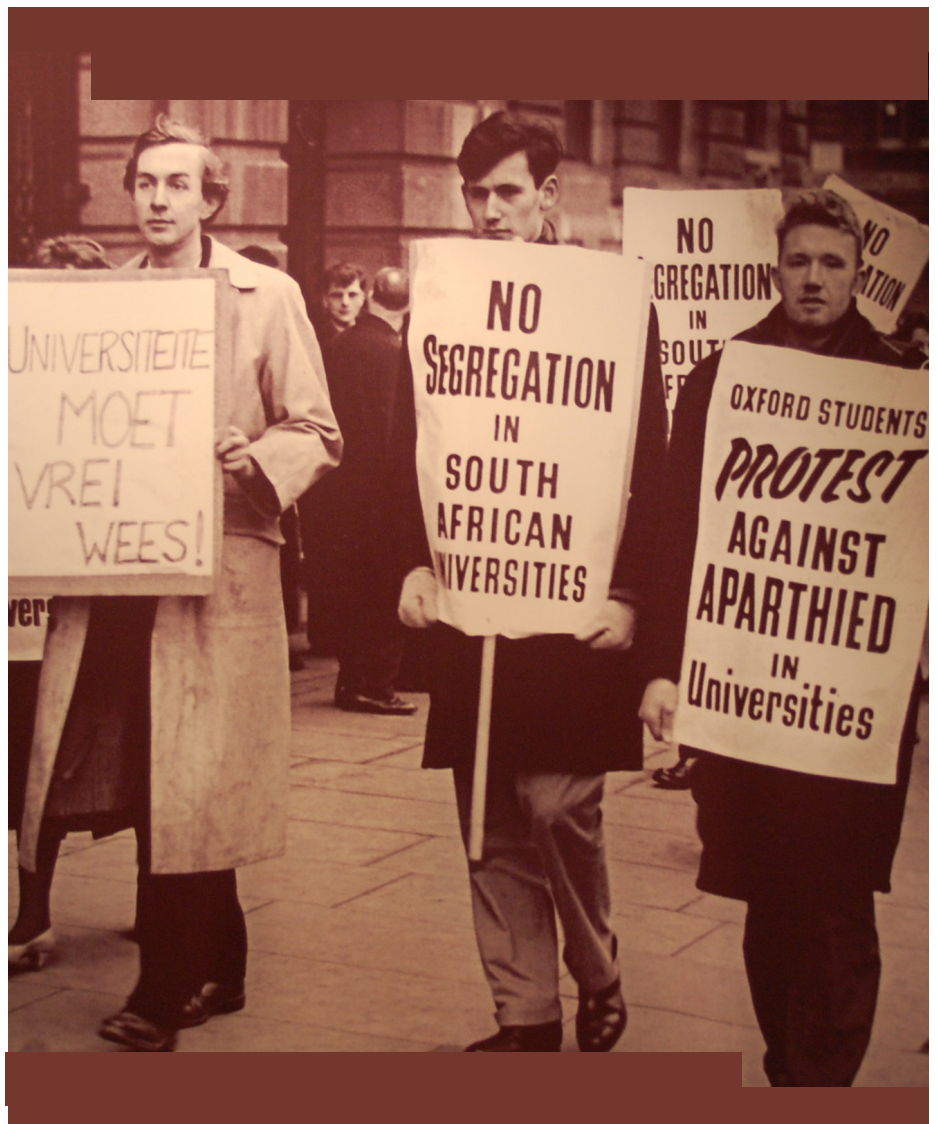
■ By **Duma Nokwe**

The purpose of the bill is to “provide for the establishment, maintenance, management and control of the university colleges for non-white persons; for the admission of students to and their instruction at the university colleges; for the limitation of admission of non-white students to certain institutions and other matters incidental hitherto”.

One of the most striking features of this bill is the absolute, unfettered powers conferred upon the minister, almost every section of the bill repeats with monotonous regularity the phrases “the minister may” ... “the minister shall” ... “as shall be prescribed”.

That minister

The bill empowers the minister to establish University Colleges for non-white persons and authorises him to disestablish such a University College merely by publishing a notice to that effect in the gazette. There is no lim-



itation upon the minister's power to disestablish a University College, no enquiry is necessary beforehand nor is it necessary for him to warn anybody that he is going to disestablish a College, the existence or non-existence of a college depends entirely on the desire of the minister.

The council of a college is appointed by the Governor-General which in effect means the Minister, the principal and members of the senate are appointed by the minister who is authorised to prescribe by regulation the powers, the duties, the functions and the allowances of members of the council and the senate.

The minister determines the faculties in a college, appoints the members of the faculties' board and prescribes their functions, not even the students escape the ubiquitous discretion of the minister. White students are prohibited from registering and attending non-white colleges, it is the minister who may refuse to any student admission to a college and who determines the number of students who can register for any course, the place where a student may reside or receive instruction and disciplinary conditions under which students enter these colleges.

Stranglehold

The ministerial stranglehold over the staff of a "university" is dealt within a special chapter of the bill, all posts in a college from the dean to the sweeper are determined by the minister and he or his secretary has "the power to appoint, promote, transfer or discharge" persons.

The bill provides the grounds on which a person who has been permanently appointed at a university college may be discharged by the minister and these include *inter alia*: "Reorganisation and readjustment of the staff..." IF "in the opinion of the minister his discharge will facilitate improvements in the university college at which he is employed by which greater economy or efficiency will be affected".

Again, no enquiry is necessary and the effect of these provisions is to make a member of the staff of a college hold his post through the grace of the minister, in view of these clauses the qualification "appointed permanently" is completely meaningless.

The bill deals at length with what is described as misconduct, there are 17 different forms of misconduct defined and the minister is authorised to make such additions as he deems fit. A member of the staff will be guilty of misconduct if he, *inter alia*:

- a) "Publicly comments adversely upon the administration of any department of the government or of any province or of the territory of South West Africa."
- b) "Propagates any idea or takes part in or identifies himself with any propaganda or activity".
- c) "Acts in a manner calculated to cause or promote antagonism amongst any section of population of the union, or to impede, obstruct or undermine the activities of any government department".

The forms of misconduct are incidentally almost identical with those prescribed for teachers in Dr Verwoerd's Bantu education schools.

The nationalists are so tired of criticism that they are not going to tolerate a professor who complains about the inefficiency of the train service, with these forms of misconduct we can say farewell to the ideas of those professors and lecturers who do not subscribe to Nationalist ideas.

Farewell to critical research which reveals facts not approved by the minister; farewell to free thought, expression and association by the intellectuals of our community. The penalty of those professors and lecturers who contravene the code of conduct is dismissal, demotion, reduction of salary or a fine of £ 100 for any professor of economics who dares criticise the budget.

Apartheid

Separation is effected in three clauses which are also the three criminal offences created by the bill, firstly no white student may register at or attend any of the minister's colleges, secondly, as from the 1st January 1956, no non-white student may register at a white university unless he was previously registered as a student at such a university or has obtained the written permission of the minister and finally, from a date to be published by the governor-general in the gazette, no non-white student shall register at any white university.



There is a benevolent provision that this would not affect those who had already commenced their courses at such a university, the maximum penalty for contravening any of the above is £ 100 with an alternative of six months imprisonment.

The minister who will wield the power of life and death over universities is not specified in the bill; the Governor-General is empowered to define "the minister" in respect of the different provisions of the act. There is however, no doubt that the bulk of these powers will be exercised by Dr. Verwoerd.

The original bill contained clauses transferring the control of Fort Hare University College and the Durban non-European Medical College to the Native Affairs Department, these provisions had to be withdrawn because certain formalities had not complied with. However, the separate universities amendment bill, 1958 will certainly contain them.

Scrub land

The bill has aroused widespread indignation and has been condemned by all people except the most fanatical nationalists. It is a sinister attempt to extend Dr Verwoerd's "principles of education" to university education, as these principles are already applied in primary schools...

"My department's policy is that education should stand with both feet in the reserves and have roots in the spirit and being of Bantu society. The school must equip him to meet the economic demands which the life of South Africa will impose on him. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour" – Dr Verwoerd in the senate, June, 1954.

The Nationalists have always been anxious to remove Africans and non-Europeans from universities because as Dr. Verwoerd says "it is of no avail for him (Bantu) to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community... until now

he has been to a school system which drew him away from his own community and *misled* him by showing him the green pastures of the European in which he was not allowed to graze.

The Nationalists are going to see to it that none of their "Bantu" long for green pastures of the European, they want to create "intellectuals" who are content with the scrub grazing land of the Bantu. This of course means in Bantu education the complete destruction of what the sane and civilised accepts as education. The Syllabus will be planned by the N.A.D to teach the students that "there is no place for the Bantu in the European above the level of certain forms of labour".

How the lecturer in Economics, Anthropology, history, sociology and other sciences will teach his subjects without running the risk of having a police file opened for him remains to be seen, it is surprising that the minister has not been specifically authorised to draw up lectures which must be endorsed and improved by the Nationalist Party congress or executive.

The destruction of academic standards in the tribal colleges is only the beginning of the assault by the nationalists on all universities of the country, it is the supreme ambition of the nationalists that they will so train the youth of South Africa that they will grow up in a world hedged by nationalist ideals, to serve the purposes of the broederbond and never question the direction charted by the nationalists for the future of our country.

EX UNITATE VIRES

Fifty years ago the founders of the Union adopted a great motto for our country: “*Out of unity grows strength.*” But they made a mockery of this motto. They divided the people instead of uniting them. Dr. Donges says to all South Africans that they must rally to commemorate the Golden Anniversary around the Festival slogan, yet the Nationalists are actually proposing to partition South Africa.

Before Union, South Africa was a land of strife; a land of hostile groups and of violence between English and Boer, between African and European. It was a land arbitrarily divided by the whites among themselves. On the one hand, there were the two Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and on the other hand Natal and the Cape Province. The divisions were more than physical. They represented a sharp division of policies with regard to the non-Europeans.

The Cape of Good Hope constitution of 1852 made provision for representative government for the Colony, and gave the franchise to all male persons, European or non-European who possessed the required qualifications. There were: the occupation of property valued at a minimum of £25 for twelve months, or an income derived from salary or wages of



ANC Secretary **Duma Nokwe analyses fifty years of the Union of South Africa.**



at least £50 a year, or £25 a year with food and lodging.

Subsequently various changes were made in the qualifications, but the “civilisation test” remain for all, irrespective of colour or creed on the basis of what the Secretary of State said in 1852: “All Her Majesty’s subjects without distinction of class or colour should be UNITED BY ONE LOYALTY AND A COMMON INTEREST.”

In Natal, in the terms of the Charter of Natal of the 15th July, 1856, the franchise was extended to all, irrespective of colour, qualified under a “civilisation test.” Unfortunately this principle was flouted in practice until by the year 1896 Africans were virtually excluded from the franchise.

In the O.F.S. and the Transvaal

Republics, the principles of no-equality and the limitation of the franchise to the Europeans were the basic principles from their inception.

There was, therefore, a conflict between the Republics and the Cape on the fundamental question of discrimination against the non-Europeans. The Convention which met in 1908 to unite the Republics, the Cape and Natal was faced with a choice between these systems. The one naturally meant progress, the other retrogression.

The so-called National Convention was a strange one. Although it called itself national, it represented at the most only 1,276,319 Europeans, or 21 % of the people, and it discussed the fate of the country as though the rest of the people, more than

78%, did not matter.

The very basis of the Convention was a negation of the motto ***Ex Unitate Vires***. The results of the Convention followed naturally from its constitution. The “civilisation test” for the franchise was rejected. The Cape “etained its franchise for the non-Europeans which was “entrenched” in the Constitution. Exactly how well entrenched it was became evident later. In the Cape and Natal non-Europeans were allowed to stand for elections in the provincial councils. In return for all these concessions, the Cape delegates accepted the colour bar by denying non-Europeans the right to sit in an exclusively white Union Parliament. The rot had set in.

John Xavier Merrimen smelt it, and would not hear of the inclusion of

a prayer to the Almighty God in a constitution that embodied the colour

bar. “*Ex Unitate Vires*” chanted the delegates of the Convention. It was the strength of the unity of the reaction. Many a more liberal delegate must have left the Convention with an uneasy feeling that the constitution should be given a chances, and “*alles sal regkom*,” salving their consciences for having betrayed the people of South Africa by being party to a constitution which denied four-fifths of the people a say in the government of the country.

When the draft Bill was going through the British Parliament, two delegations went to England with two conflicting purposes. One – led by De Villiers, went to see that the Convention’s

wishes were met. The other was a delegation of Schreiner, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, John Tengo Jabavu and Walter Rubasana. They were sent to try and convince the British Parliament and people that the colour bar in the draft South Africa Act was a “blot on the constitution”, that the so-called entrenchment of the vote for the non-European people in the Cape was a trap; and no safeguard at all.

Despite their warnings, the South Africa Act was passed.

In his *History of South Africa*, Eric Walker comments:

“Thus did the liberals in the United Kingdom, and like-minded men of all colours in South Africa, willy-nilly accept a statute which they *believed and prayed* would lead to the victory of the Cape’s well-tried *civilisation principles* throughout the Union. *It was a huge political gamble*, which took too little account of the strength of South African tradition in European policies...”

It was a tragic gamble; for the lives and destinies of millions of people were at stake. Walker continues:

“But it was a gamble that seemed justified. The gamblers are not to be blamed overmuch for plunging thus, even though the events were to prove them wrong and Schreiber right”.

Perhaps they are “not to be blamed overmuch!” But the history of the Union is a sound lesson that gambling in politics is a dangerous game; nothing can be left to chance; men must

stand firm for principles of human rights, take the bold, honourable and sure stand rather than hang the fate of millions of people on the capricious hope of a “change of heart,” or the illusion of “a slow but sure extension of rights!” It would be inexcusable and treacherous to repeat this gamble in the face of such a clear lesson from the tragic history of South Africa.

The blot of racial discrimination and all the oppression, exploitation and humiliation which accompanied it grew bigger and bigger until today it darkens every aspect of the lives of the people of South Africa. In 1913, under the pretext of enforcing segregation, the African people were denied the right to purchase and own land in 87% of the country. Colour bar was introduced in industry, employment and trade unions. Colour bar and racial discrimination grew and spread to the economic and cultural life of the people. For the race maniacs there is no common interest between the Europeans and non-Europeans of our country: “Ex unitate vires” has become the slogan of white domination. Yet more than a hundred years ago, in 1852, the Secretary for State said: “All Her Majesty’s subjects without distinction of class or colour should be UNITED by one loyalty and common interest.

Today we do not even stand where the Cape Colony stood 100 years ago. The entrenched clauses were indeed a trap. In 1936 the Africans in the Cape lost their franchise, and some communal representatives were allotted to them – 3 in the House

of Assembly with 153 members for 20% of the people. In 1952 the Coloureds lost the franchise. Today the State has abolished all representation for Africans in the government, and hope to push them back to tribalism through Bantustans.

How ironic that the Nationalists should light “the torch of civilisation” – they who have extinguished all the lights of liberty and civilisation in our country!


And how fitting that they should say they will stress the “cultural and sporting aspects” of the life of the non-European during the festival; there is nothing else to stress. Unless they wish to stress the people’s poverty? The restrictions on them in every walk of life?

There is nothing golden about the 50 years of Union, nothing of which we can be proud. The decision of Congress not to participate in the Festival, but to organise counter-demonstrations is unquestionably correct. This follows a fine tradition, established by the Inter-denominational Ministers Federation since 1946, of observing Union Day as a National Day of Prayer. We can take as our slogan “Ex Unitate Vires,” and draw strength for the liberation struggle. Only when we have wiped out the blot of the 1910 Constitution, shall we truly be able to build a Union of South Africa.



Duma Nokwe, ANC Secretary-General

Letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations



We notice from reports in the Press that the South African Government has refused a request by you to allow a group of United Nations experts to visit South Africa. We would like to place on record our indignation at the defiant and contemptuous manner in which the South African White Minority Government treats resolutions and Committees of the United Nations Organization. This conduct of the South African Government is consistent and is becoming more brazen.

So far, it appears that the South African Government has been able to flout resolutions and even humiliate committees appointed by the United Nations Organization with impunity. This attitude towards the United Nations Organization shows a disrespect for that Organization which is incompatible with South Africa's membership of that body.

We urge, Sir, as we have done before, that the time for punitive action against the delinquency of the South African Government is overdue. South Africa's continued membership of the United Nations Organization does little to enhance the reputation and purpose of that body. Her immediate expulsion would be in the interests of the struggle against apartheid and would pave the way for other forms of action.

In our view, any further delay and any other conciliatory gestures to the South African Government merely adds fuel to her defiant attitude.