ORIGINAL TO QSE

"THE HOUR OF YOUTH HAS STRUCK": THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR A MASS BASE, 1943-1952

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAC - All-African Convention
ADP - African Democratic Party
AMWU - African Mine Workers' Union
ANC - African National Congress
APO - African People's Organisation
CNETU- Council for Non-European Trade Unions
CPSA - Communist Party of South Africa
CYL - Congress Youth League
FRAC - Franchise Action Committee
ICU - Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
NEUM - Non-European Unity Movement
NIC - Natal Indian Congress
NRC - Native Representative Council
NUAY - National Union of African Youth
PAC - Pan-Africanist Congress
SAIC - South African Indian Congress
SOYA - Society of Young Africa
TIC - Transvaal Indian Congress

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Introduction

The reason for choosing an examination of the Youth League of the African National Congress as a dissertation topic is twofold. Firstly, the alliances, struggles and political events of the 1950s are often analysed and are, in some senses, useful for political practice today. However, it was necessary that the ANC undergo a change in the late 1940s and early 1950s to enable it to participate in campaigns of the nature of those organised by the Congress Alliance. A more thorough examination of this process of change would thus be helpful. It was largely the Youth League that played the critical role in this process, and it is in the Youth League that it is possible to see the beginnings of change.

Secondly, the grassroots organisation of youth into Youth Congresses (such as the Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO), the Soweto Youth Congress (SOYCO) and the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO))has been a particular feature of South African politics for the last few years. Conditions and organisations obviously differ from those in the 1940s. Nevertheless, a study of the organisation of youth in the latter period could still benefit an understanding of youth organisation today.

The aim of the dissertation has changed somewhat since the research was begun. Originally it was intended to examine the forms of organisation of the ANC Youth League from 1943-1960. However, various factors made this impossible.

Firstly, it was discovered that the CYL did not, until the early 1950s, attempt to organise African youth on a large scale. Secondly, there is very little information available about the individual branches and how they operated. Thirdly, information about the Youth League in the 1950s is also very limited. It was necessary, therefore, to alter the emphasis of the dissertation and to restrict the period covered.

The aim as it now stands is to provide a context for the development of the ANC Youth League and to periodise its growth. The context is provided in the first two chapters. Firstly, the paper looks at

the constitutional and organisational problems in the ANC which were challenged by a young group of militants who, in response, formed the Youth League. Secondly, there is an attempt to provide a broader context in terms of the increased influx into the urban areas during World War II, and struggles waged by oppressed communities in these areas.

The paper then looks towards an explanation of various features of the growth of the Youth League. It attempts to explain why the League remained such a small grouping of people for the greater part of the 1940s. It examines the process through which the Youth League was successful in effecting change within the ANC, and imparting to it a dynamic character. It also attempts to identify the influences on the Youth League which resulted in their move to the left. Finally, a postscript looks very briefly at the League from 1953 to 1960.

A few comments on sources might be useful, as it was the nature of the available sources that directed, and restricted, my aims and thus my conclusions. Secondary material proved more valuable than was originally thought possible. I have thus been able to rely fairly heavily on these sources as far as the framework of the dissertation is concerned. However, most of the works deal only scantily with the Youth League, and thus could not be relied on for any detail.

Primary sources are fairly extensive. The Karis and Carter microfilm collection and a private collection of documents I had access to were particularly useful. But once again, detail was available only in exceptional cases. Most of the material concerned the League on a national level and thus, to a large extent, determined the final direction of the dissertation.

In this situation, the personal interview is the obvious solution. However, being based in Cape Town, where the Youth League did not operate, this has certain problems. A limited number of those involved are available for interviews for various reasons (being in prison or in exile, etc.), and because of the distance and the limited time available, follow-up interviews proved impossible. This was certainly an obstacle, as needs and questions became clearer closer to the end.

Chapter One

ORGANISATION AND DIRECTION IN THE ANC, 1912-1939

The African National Congress Youth League (CYL) was formed only in 1944, almost thirty years after the inauguration of the African National Congress (ANC). The object of this chapter is to identify the organisational context in which the formation of a league to organise youth was seen to be necessary. It is not, however, an attempt to document the turbulent history of the ANC between 1912 and 1939. Rather, it isolates the problems faced by the ANC during this period, and in particular, tries to show the dominance of petty bourgeois interests and the results of this: a leadership favouring elitist forms of struggle (such as deputations) and attempting to gain limited concessions for themselves as a group, rather than popular forms, and thus failing to develop mass support which could be mobilised in support of progressive demands. The struggle over differing political lines occurred in Congress from its early days, with the moderates invariably coming out on top.

Formation of the ANC

The formation of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC)[1] in 1912 was the first attempt by Africans in South Africa to form a national political organisation, overriding all tribal barriers.[2] Based on already-existing provincial Native Congresses, its aims were to foster and direct the growth of a nascent national movement around national political issues. At the time of its inception it was faced with the details of the South Africa Act[3], and subsequent legislation by the Union Parliament.

In 1911, soon before the formation of the ANC, Pixley ka Izaka Seme, one of the organisation's founders, wrote to Imvo:

> "The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa-Fingo feud, the animosity that exists between the Zulus and the Tongas, between Basuto and every other Native must be buried and forgotten ... we are one people. These divisions, these jealousies, are the cause of all our woes and of all our backwardness and ignorance today."[4]

The inaugural conference of the ANC on 8 January 1912 was attended by nine influential chiefs as well as by members of the emerging African petty bourgeoisie in the towns. Most had attended mission schools, and some were university graduates - lawyers, ministers, teachers, interpreters, clerks, small traders, builders, compound managers, estate and labour agents and a few successful farmers. The executive that was elected included the Rev. John L. Dube as President, Sol Plaatje as Secretary and Seme as Treasurer. The latter two were lawyers, reflecting quite clearly the class membership of the Congress leadership. Walshe writes:

> "This executive represented well the ideals of the new African elite or 'middle class', striving for personal as well as national advancement in a situation where a customary economic colour bar and restricted opportunities for higher education limited the scope for their abilities."[5]

The Executive - the 'Cabinet' - was structured along the lines of a conventional Cabinet, with duties of members being similar to those of Government Ministers. Departmental Committees, such as those on labour and education, were formed. Some 'cabinet' members, such as the President and Treasurer, were subject to income and property qualifications, similar to those required for the Cape African franchise[6], thus ensuring the petty bourgeois basis of Congress leadership.

The ANC constitution, rejected in 1915 and finally accepted only in 1919, afforded to chiefs a special place within Congress and in the conferences in particular. Chiefs from both the Union and the territories (Basutoland, Bechuanaland, British Bechuanaland and Swaziland) were ex officio members and honorary vice-presidents. At conferences they sat separately from the other delegates in an 'Upper House' or 'Council of Chiefs', effectively empowered to veto any resolution passed by the 'Lower House'. This veto power was apparently never used, and Simons and Simons suggest that "the deference shown to traditional rulers and the provision made in the constitution for an upper house of chiefs have led some writers to overestimate the influence of tribal leaders on Congress."[7]

This constitutional location of chiefs within Congress, although also entrenching the political power of particular interests, was

important for two reasons: firstly, the representative function of chiefs brought an increasing number of rural Africans into indirect contact with Congress. Secondly, the chiefs were a major source of financial support, providing, for the first ten years at least, the greater part of Congress funds.

Besides the chiefs, there were three different types of individual membership. Anyone "belonging to the aboriginal races of Africa"[8] was eligible. Firstly, there was 'ordinary membership' for all men over 18 years of age; secondly, there was 'honorary membership' for those who had provided a service to the African people; and thirdly there was 'auxiliary membership' for those in auxiliary organisations such as the Bantu Women's National League. The latter had no right to vote and were responsible for the provision of shelter and entertainment for the conferences.

The ANC was structured along provincial lines, incorporating the old Provincial Native Congresses, with the Transkei being regarded as a separate province. However, the Congress was initially a co-ordinating body of various African organisations rather than a tightly-structured organisation itself. Some organisations were affiliated nationally and others provincially. The annual conferences were therefore attended by three major groups: the hereditary chiefs who had an automatic right to attend any Congress meeting, 'ordinary' delegates, and delegates appointed by affiliated organisations.

Early ANC Activity

Throughout the early years, the activity of Congress was restricted to discussions and resolutions at conferences and meetings, and to sending delegations to the Union government and to Britain. Although according to the constitution these activities were to supplemented by protests, 'passive action', education and the encouragement of economic combination', 'Native Colleges' and Church unity, none of the latter was taken up in any significant way.

The ANC's first political act was to send a deputation to Cape Town to protest against the impending land legislation - the Land Bill of 1912. This bill proposed to create African reserves, outside of which no African could own land. The Reserves consisted of scattered fragments of 7,3% of the total land area of South Africa.[9] Needless

to say, the deputation was a failure. As Walshe puts it, "organisational response to (the) legislation was swift, persistent and ineffective."[10]

At the first annual conference in March 1913, another deputation was sent to see Sauer, the Minister of Native Affairs, while a letter was written to the Governor-General. When these initiatives proved unsuccessful, a deputation was sent to appeal to "His Majesty and to the British public", only to fail once again. To show its determination to obtain political rights through constitutional channels, Congress dissociated itself from the industrial struggles, such as strikes, that were taking place on the Rand.[11]

Differences within the ANC itself emerged over the issue of segregation. While some Congress members opposed segregation completely, others accepted segregation in principle, provided it was carried our out on 'just lines'. This meant drawing a line from the northern boundary to the sea, with blacks on one side and whites on the other. However, after the Beaumont Commission report, which investigated the extension of the Reserves, Congress decided almost unanimously to oppose segregation completely.

Walshe writes that Congress leaders realised that the Reserves

> "could never be more than a limited local protection of tribal areas, those economic backwaters removed from the mainstream of South African development and only able to support a constantly diminishing proportion of the African population. Its reaction to the report was therefore to move back to old ideals, to reject segregation, prompted in the case of some individuals by judgements of principle but also by a now proven fact that segregation was to be implemented on the basis of grossly inadequate land."[12]

In the face of the Congress failure to have any impact on government land policies, Dube was forced to resign the Presidency, and it was decided to send another delegation to the King during the peace negotiations after World War I. Another failure, the delegation marked a watershed in early Congress history. It was the last attempt to get Britain to intervene in local political affairs and, as the active and financial support of chiefs declined rapidly, membership stagnated.

There was certainly exceptions to the tactics used by Congress during this early period, as the more radical Transvaal Congress gained

the upper hand after the war. Partly as a result of the failures of Congress methods outlined above, the ANC began to participate more directly in struggles that were taking place in the urban areas. The war had brought with it industrialisation and rapid urbanisation on the Rand, thus creating increased possibilities of mass-based struggle. High levels of inflation made the economic position of the lower petty bourgeoisie increasingly tenuous. Bonner adds that sections of this polarised petty bourgeoisie on the Rand "took a ... radical turn under the pressure of African working class agitation and just possibly the influence of the International Socialist League".[13] It was this increasingly threatened lower petty bourgeoisie that became the radical wing of the ANC. They recognised that their political power lay in mobilising the working class, rather than separating themselves from it, as the moderates tended to do.

Roux suggests that those Africans returning from the war played a major role in this radicalisation process. After the war, some of the Labour Corps were forced to pay poll tax for the years during which they were in the army. Thus after the war, "there were thousands of black men in the country who were not willing any longer to endure the anti-Native laws, men who were prepared to stir up their fellow Africans to revolt against the system."[14]

Some Congress members played a critical role during various strikes during 1918 and when "state repression outraged the black community on the Rand"[15], they organised protest meetings and even supported the call for a general strike. In 1919, large-scale struggles against the pass laws, including mass demonstrations and pass-burning were actively assisted and led by these more radical Congress members.[16]

Hofmeyr points out that this involvement of the ANC in popular struggles for the first time highlighted the contradictions within the organisation. On the one hand, "those who stuck to the traditional role of the petty bourgeoisie" argued that the popular struggles should be 'extinguished' in order to safeguard the African people. On the other,

> "there emerged for the first time a political line, not yet clearly defined or articulated, which realised the importance of mass mobilisation for the national movement. An increasing

> number of the petty bourgeoisie became aware of the fact that the ANC had to take a direct part in mass struggles if it was to continue to represent the national movement."[17]

The moderates, however, reasserted their dominance within Congress. The state's provision of various concessions to the petty bourgeoisie, such as the provision of housing programmes, leasehold schemes, and first class rail accommodation for Africans[18] helped to detach the African urban petty bourgeoisie from the African working class. Added to this, as a result of harsh state repression and the participation of elements of the lumpen-proletariat, violence began to increase.[19] So the attempt by certain radicalised elements of Congress to move closer to the working class was unsuccessful, and no class alliance was achieved.

The 1920s began, then, with Congress losing both its source of money and a large part of its membership, and realising the futility of appeals to the 'innate sense of British justice'. Attempts in the late 1920s to draw the chiefs back into the Congress fold failed. Walshe reasons that the failures of the struggle over the land issue and the 1919 deputation as well as the increasing domination of the chiefs by the Department of Native Affairs were the major reasons for this and states that "while the movement was not shattered by their declining involvement, it is clear that their withdrawal contributed substantially to the continuing organisational malaise."[20]

The threat of other organisations

Throughout the period prior to World War II, the ANC struggled to assert its dominance as the primary national liberation organisation. The first organisation to pose a threat to the primacy of the ANC was the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU).

The ICU began on the Cape Town docks in 1919 and had a brief but spectacular career as it developed into a nation-wide general trade union. While its aim was to function as a trade union rather than a nationalist political party, the fiery rhetoric of its leadership and more practical activity made it a preferable option to the ANC for many, especially workers.

Thus, during the 1920s, much support and funding was drawn away from Congress, despite the support the ICU pledged for the ANC.

But, as Lodge points out, the ICU had some positive effects on Congress: "Its spokesmen infused into the courtly and often pompous discourse of African politicians a fierce anger and apocalyptic imagery."[21]

But the ICU, for all its radical rhetoric, was a spent force by 1928, unable to sustain its working class membership, and this threat to the ANC dissolved. Congress did not immediately benefit from this, however, and by the early 1930s was becoming more and more moribund. For a brief period, under the Presidency of the militant Gumede (1927-1930), the ANC looked towards tightening up its organisation, and becoming actively involved in popular struggles. But Gumede was too quick to work with the Communists for the liking of the more conservative established leadership, and was soon replaced by Seme[22], starting one of the most inactive periods of Congress history.

In the Western Cape in 1929-30, along with the leftward movement of Congress nationally (seen in Gumede's presidency), came a group of ANC militants operating in the rural areas, and attempting to organise farm workers on a mass scale.[23] Hofmeyr sees this upsurge in ANC activity in the Western Cape as the result of firstly, a combination of Garveyist nationalism and the influence of the CPSA, and secondly, a crisis in capitalist agriculture.

On the one hand, the Cape Town branch of the ANC urged the executive (unsuccessfully) "to explore every avenue towards the closest cooperation with the Communist Party"[24] as "the slogan (of a 'Native Republic'[25]) provided a coherent basis for a fruitful alliance between the CP and the ANC in the Western Cape."[26]

On the other hand, capitalist relations in Western Cape agriculture were far in advance of the rest of the country, producing a relatively 'free' rural proletariat and a powerful agricultural bourgeoisie. The world depression during the late 1920s created a crisis for this bourgeoisie, forcing it to attack the living standards of the rural proletariat:

> "Thus the crisis in agriculture produced a situation in which a militant mass movement could find a ready response, viz. mass dissatisfaction on the farms, large scale unemployment and overcrowding in the rural towns, and the farmers hamstrung to some extent by the labour shortage."[27]

Eventually the farmers and the state combined to end the organisation and mobilisation that was beginning to take root. Meetings were banned and leadership was removed. With the increasing level of violence, the alliance between moderates and militants began to dissolve, and the moderates began to gain the upper hand, especially after Seme's victory over Gumede in 1930.

Seme's attempts at the organisational reform of Congress, the formation of more provincial Congresses, the increasing centralisation of financial power in the hands of a revamped 'Upper House', and the power of the President to appoint the 'Cabinet' was rejected by Congress. The ANC was becoming increasing isolated from the struggles that were happening around it. Plaatje wrote that since 1912 he had "never witnessed such inactivity and apathy on the part of our leaders as now."[28]

In July 1931, the Central Committee of the CPSA passed the following resolution:

> "The African National Congress is now openly a servant of the imperialist bourgeoisie and uses its endeavours to damp down the revolutionary activity of the masses. This role during the recent pass-burning campaign was a role of complete betrayal, openly appealing to the masses not to break the law. The influence of the ANC increasing ly declines, it functions only as a committee of Native petty bourgeoisie. Organisationally it has no existence, but it is still able to wield considerable influence by its decision."[29]

The next threat to the primacy of Congress came in the form of the All-African Convention (AAC) in 1936. The AAC was set up to discuss and formulate protest against the Hertzog Bills which proposed to discuss discontinue registration of Africans as voters, and provided for four white senators in parliament chosen through electoral colleges, as well as a purely advisory Native Representative Council (NRC).

On 16 December 1935 the AAC (convened by Jabavu and Seme) held its first conference in Bloemfontein, which was attended by 500 delegates, including 'coloureds' and Indians.[30] The general theme of the conference was 'unity', and delegates called for a qualified franchise for all South African, albeit a 'civilised franchise'. But the more radical voices calling for militant action, such as demonstrations and strikes, were once again a minority. Again it was decided to send a deputation to the Prime Minister. "An Afrikaans newspaper summarized the result

on placards: NATURELLE BLY STIL (Natives Stay Quiet)"[31]. The mild outcome was calculate to be acceptable to varying viewpoints.

A 'compromise' suggested by some Eastern Cape United Party MPs involving a separate voters' roll and three white parliamentary representatives was accepted by the deputation, though not the rest of the AAC. At the 1936 AAC Conference, however, it was decided to test the new legislation and participate in elections for both the NRC and the white parliamentary representatives.

At this stage, the threat to the role of Congress became critical. A debate ensued as to whether the AAC should continue as a permanent organisation - as the national liberatory organisation. There was much opposition from ANC leaders who saw the AAC as a temporary 'front', but a majority at the conference voted for permanent organisational status. The CPSA threw its weight behind the AAC. One of its prominent African members, Edwin Mofutsanyana, argued that support for the Convention was imperative "in this country where we have no national liberation movement",[32] demonstrating the way many saw the ANC.

It was during this crisis that the ANC started to reassert its hegemony. As Benson puts it, "the emergence of this rival organisation, coming on top of the ANC's failure to lead the opposition to the Hertzog Bills, shocked some its members into a decision: Seme must go".[33] In 1937 the Rev. Mahabane took over the presidency from Seme, and with the Rev. James Calata, began to regain the legitimacy of the ANC. Financial problems and divisions within the provinces remained major problems, but the ANC again began to tackle popular political issues, and to attempt to gain popular support. At the same time, the AAC, dominated until the war by conservatives, fell into ineffectual disarray.

Members of the CPSA began moving into more influential positions within the ANC, and the party swung its support back towards the ANC. "It (the CPSA) noted that the Convention remained dominant, doing nothing to implement the fine-sounding resolutions passed at its conferences, while the ANC involved itself more and more in the day-to-day struggles of the African people."[34]

Conclusion

We can see then, that for the period of ANC history up until World War II in 1939, its activity (with exceptions) was restricted to

constitutional methods decided on at conferences. Although the aims of Congress during this period were limited, and were geared mainly to the removal of barriers to the growth of an African petty bourgeoisie, these activities proved unsuccessful. Congress remained dominated by a small group of petty bourgeois intellectuals with a moderate political line and, as a result, membership was generally small.

A boost in the mid-1930s injected a new life into the ANC with the replacedment of Seme by Mahabane. When Xuma was elected in 1940,[35] he accelerated this process, by revitalising the provincial congresses and tightening up financial structures. Struggles continued within Congress itself as Communists and other militants began to hold leadership positions in the organisation. But the moderates, with their traditional support in the ANC, kept a tight rein, and the overall direction of Congress remained unchanged. But as Benson points out, "Congress was the oldest and most consistent of African organisations, (and) while others had sprung up with a flourish, these had faded out; the Congress survived."[36] The ANC was once again recognised as the primary African nationalist organisation.

Thus, by the early 1940s, the ANC had established itself as a credible vehicle with which to mobilise the African people. But the interests of an African petty bourgeoisie, trying to maintain and improve its position, were dominant, and this favoured moderate and elite forms of struggle. In order for Congress to become an effective national organisation, it had yet to become more dynamic and militant. It also had to recognise the importance of incorporating the energy of the popular classes and channelling it into supporting popular demands. But for this to happen, a strong militant group would have to challenge the direction of the Congress. This was to be the task of the Congress Youth League.

Notes to Chapter One

1. The South African Native National Congress changed its name to the African National Congress (ANC) in 1925. To avoid confusion, I have referred to the organisation as the ANC, or Congress, even before the change.

2. A group of Africans (mostly lawyers), before Union, in 1909, set up an ad hoc South African Native Convention. This body was "never intended as a permanent structure but rather as a co-ordinating body to give unity and weight to African opinion on the draft South Africa Act." (Walshe, 1970; p. 33).

3. The South Africa Act was the legislation that united the provinces creating the Union of South Africa.

4. Pixley ka Izaka Seme in Imvo; quoted in Walshe, 1970: p. 33.

5. Ibid., p. 36.

6. Ibid., p. 207.

7. Simons and Simons, 1964: p. 134.

8. In practice, this meant that a prospective member had to have at least one parent who was 'African'.

9. In 1936, this land area was extended to 12,7%.

10. Walshe, 1970; p. 48.

11. Ibid, p. 49.

12. Ibid, p. 56.

13. Bonner, 1979, p. 282.

14. Roux, 1978, p. 114.

15. Hofmeyr, 1983, p. 4.

16. Ibid, p. 4.

17. Ibid.

18. Much was made by elements of the emerging petty bourgeoisie of the difference between themselves ('civilised African') and the working class or rural Africans. In 1920, D.D.T. Jabavu, one of the more conservative leaders from the Cape, said: "(Railway) waiting rooms are made to accommodate the rawest blanketed heathen; and the more decent native has either to use them and annex vermin or to do without shelter in biting wintry weather." (Quoted in Lodge, 1983, pp. 2-3.)

19. Hofmeyr, 1983, p. 5.

20. Walshe, 1970, p. 213.

21. Lodge, 1983, p. 6.

22. Gumede, after his return from a trip to Moscow, said in Europe in 1927: "I am happy to say that there are Communists also in South Africa. I myself am not one, but it is my experience that the Communist Party is the only party that stands behind us and from which we can expect something." (Quoted in Simons and Simons, 1969, p. 353).

23. A major strength was that the ANC (Western Cape) organised both Africans and 'coloureds' who resisted attempts by capital and the state to divide them along racial lines. See Hofmeyr, 1983, p. 4.

24. Simons and Simons, quoted in Hofmeyr, 1983, p. 6.

25. The "Native Republic" slogan was adopted by the CPSA in 1929, after a great deal of debate, and resolutions by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. See Bunting, 1975, Chapter 2.

26. Hofmeyr, 1983, p. 6.

27. Ibid, p. 8.

28. Quoted in Simons and Simons, 1969, p. 452.

29. Quoted in Bunting, 1975, p. 56.

30. Benson, 1966, p. 66.

31. Ibid, p. 66.

32. Quoted in Bunting, 1975, p. 78.

33. Benson, 1966, p. 70.

34. Bunting, 1975, p. 83.

35. Mahabane was defeated by Xuma at the ANC Annual Conference of Devember 1940 by 21 votes to 20 (ANC Annual Conference Minutes, 15-17 December, 1940).

36. Benson, 1966, p. 74.

Chapter Two

INDUSTRIALISATION, PROLETARIANISATION AND URBAN STRUGGLES DURING WORLD WAR II

This chapter attempts to show how political conditions in the urban areas altered substantially during World War II, and provided a potential militant base for the national movement. Secondary industrialisation expanded during this period and thus increased the rate of proletarianisation. The number of African people in the urban areas grew dramatically. Finally, the chapter looks at the militant urban struggles undertaken by the people, and at the response of the ANC to these struggles.

War-time industrialisation and proletarianisation

The war era was one of rapid expansion of the manufacturing industry in South Africa. As Bloch puts it, it was a period of growth and profits for the manufacturing industry that consolidated on the boom of the 1930s. However, during this period, the industry developed its own internal dynamic, rather than growing "on the back" of the mining industry as it did in the previous decade.[1]

The war created particular conditions in South Africa, which aided this expansion of the manufacturing industry. Firstly, the international capitalist economy was disrupted because of the inability to transport manufactured goods, raw materials and capital goods. Thus, the economy was forced to alter its dependent structures somewhat. Locally-produced raw materials were used. The absence of imported manufactured goods stimulated the limited import substitution sector. And, because of the lack of new imported capital goods, and the establishment of ISCOR in 1940, there was both the need and the potential to enter this field. Kaplan writes that

> "the engineering and machine tool industries were called upon to supply machinery and equipment to other sectors of the economy which found their usual overseas sources of supply disrupted - particularly the gold mining industry."[2]

But besides the weakening of direct economic links with the advanced capitalist countries, there were other features of the wartime economy. South Africa was called on to supply arms to the Allied armies. And relatively free access to the surrounding territories provided the manufacturing industry with an enlarged market.[3]

So it was, to a large extent, the economic necessities during the war period that stimulated the economy and allowed it, 'unnaturally', a faster rate of growth. Kaplan refers to the industries that developed so fast during this period as "precocious" industries. They would not have grown as rapidly given 'normal' conditions. He suggests that most of them owed their origin to

> "particular war time conditions which 'allowed' South African industry to develop the manufacture of sophisticated products which given 'normal times' would not have occurred until a much later date."[4]

As a result, the economy as a whole boomed, as the gross national income increased by 68,4% between 1939 and 1946.[5] Manufacturing itself also grew substantially relative to other sectors of the economy. The net output of the industry grew from £87m in 1939/40 to £158m in 1944/5 - an increase of 81,6%.[6]

Clearly then, during the period of World War II, industrialisation occurred in South Africa at a rapidly increasing rate. As a result, labour needs increased substantially, especially in the manufacturing sector. Bloch writes that the

> "growing relative importance of manufacturing industry's employment of African labour is given by the change in the ratio of employment between industry and mining from 187:348 in 1939 to 321:328 in 1948."7

An added reason for this increased employment of Africans in the manufacturing industry was the fact that a significant proportion of skilled white labour had joined the army. As a result of this and the growth of the industry, the ratio of blacks to whites in the manufacturing industry grew from 2,5:1 to 3,2:1.[8] In addition, African women began to be employed in manufacturing for the first time.

This need for an increased supply of African labour and in particular, unskilled and skilled African labour, resulted in a large-scale influx of Africans into the urban areas, and particularly Johannesburg. According to Stadler, the population of Johannesburg increased from 229 122 to 384 628 between the years 1936 and 1946.[9] It is suggested that the greatest increase occurred soon after the outbreak of war.

At the same time, conditions in the rural areas - both on the farms and in the Reserves - played a part in forcing people towards the urban areas in search of employment. On the farms, squatters and labour tenants were either transformed into a rural proletariat or evicted. Lodge writes:

> "On the farms the general trend towards proletarianisation of labour tenants and squatters continued, forcing large numbers off the land. High wartime food prices not only hastened the process of transition to a fully-blown rural capitalism but also led to a deterioration in the diet of farm labourers."[10]

From the Reserves there was also a move towards the urban areas as survival became untenable as a result of overpopulation and increased landlessness. This deterioration of the Reserves had been a long process, but state schemes to 'remedy' the situation had effectively made matters worse. By the 1930s, the Reserves were no longer capable of reproducing themselves. Added to this (but, as Stadler points out, a problem not confined to the rural areas), was the drastic increase in the prices of basic necessities. As compared to prices before the war (presumably in 1938) by 1940 the cost of mealie meal had risen by 20%, rice by 50%, candles by 45%, wood by 50%, boermeal by 25%, paraffin by 25% and coal by 50%.[11] A serious shortage of maize caused by increased export undertakings and a drought persisted throughout the war.

So, on the one hand, an increased demand for African labour, and on the other, the move away from the rural areas resulted in a rapid influx into the towns. Added to this, large numbers of prospective workers began to bring their families with them into the urban areas Lodge writes that

> "between 1939 and 1952 the African urban population nearly doubled, the major proportion of this increase being the result of the movement of whole families from the countryside into the towns."[12]

The proportion of African women in relation to men increased, thus laying the basis for a large permanent African population in the urban areas. Here was the potential mass base for the ANC. However, as we shall see below, the ANC, to a large extent, chose to ignore it.

Urban struggles and the ANC

One out of every four urban African workers lived in Johannesburg in the late 1930s.[13] Many of these were unemployed, and thus, although wages rose in some sectors during the war, and were in any case higher than those obtained in the rural areas, conditions in the towns were poor. The increase in food prices added to this. Even unskilled workers were unable to earn enough to feed their families.

In Orlando, Johannesburg's 'model township', many tenants took in sub-tenants in an attempt to keep their costs down. It was these sub-tenants who made up the first squatter group, argues Stadler, as Orlando became overcrowded.[14] Further, squatter movements also originated in areas further away from the centre of the city. Firstly, there was less chance of the municipality acting against the squatter community. Secondly, transport costs were higher here, and Stadler suggests that total costs of a family could thus be readjusted by having to pay less or no rent.

It was economic survival factors primarily which provoked the urban struggles of the war years. In the African communities, these struggles took the form of bus boycotts and squatter movements - both attempts to keep down a rising cost of living. But there was no attempt by the ANC leadership to involve themselves in such bread-and-butter struggles. As Harris suggested of Xuma:

> "To have joined the walk to town, or to have addressed the people from Number 2 Square during the (bus) boycott, was unthinkable..."[15]

This is not the place to analyse these urban struggles in detail. The point that is being made is that despite the increased proletarianisation during the war years, and the consequent swelling in size of the urban African population, the ANC was unwilling and unable to gear itself to the changing situation. While individual ANC members were involved in various struggles, the Congress as an organisation was not.

During the bus boycotts in Alexandra between 1939 and 1944, the community was relatively strongly organised.[16] However, a number of prominent Transvaal ANC leaders who lived in Alexandra failed to push the ANC into a leadership role. In fact, one of them, Ramohanoe, was employed by the bus company. Baloyi, another ANC member, had previously run a bus service himself, but had been forced out by the bigger company. He was intent on continuing his service, and thus opposed the general call for a public bus company. Added to this, Xuma and Baloyi were considering refloating the latter's company.

So the ANC, possibly due partly to economic interests, and partly because of the gap between itself and the people, refused to involve itself in the boycotts as an organisation. In the case mentioned above, the ADP took its chance and moved into the opening. Basner, one of its founders, organised an Emergency Transport Committee to give lifts to the boycotters.

The other upheavals on the Rand during this period were the squatter movements. Once again, the ANC failed to involve itself. Harris writes:

> "What might have become part of a wider political movement was restricted to the immediate needs of those who had joined the squat, and during the first phase of action, the political movements (with one exception) stayed clear of the camp sites and of those who had moved onto the veld in an effort to secure better housing."[17]

Harris is correct in that, organisationally, it was only the ADP that co-operated with Mpanza (the Orlando squatter leader). ANC and CP activists did provide support and worked with Mpanza and the squatters. But this did not affect the political direction of the ANC. The individuals remained individual activists and the ANC continued in its general direction.

Although the ANC Youth League too, remained, for the most part, aloof from the squatter movements, it seems that they remained critical of the lack of response on the part of the Senior Congress. There is an account of a Transvaal Congress meeting in 1945 at which Mpanza arrived and, supported by Lembede, the Youth League President, launched a scathing attack on the ANC.[18] And 'Kanyisa' (Jordan Ngubane) wrote in Inkundla ya Bantu:

> "Congress has shilly-shallied and missed a golden opportunity to crystallise the shanty town movement into the spearhead of the Africans' fight against oppression and the discriminatory land policy."[19]

In the arena of labour organisation, too, militancy grew during this period. While on the one hand, the cost of living was rising rapidly, on the other, African workers were moving increasingly into semi-skilled and skilled occupations, thus enhancing their bargaining power. This increased power was somewhat muffled by the proclamation of strikes as illegal in 1942, justified by the assertion of the need to support the war effort.

Nevertheless, strikes continued despite their illegal nature, and between 1943 and 1944 sixty strikes took place.[20] At the same time, African trade unions developed rapidly. The Council for Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU), formed in 1941, was to become the most powerful African trade union federation ever to have existed in South Africa. By 1945, it consisted of 119 unions with a total membership of 158 000 workers - 40% of African employees in commerce and manufacture.[21]

Once again, individual ANC members were active in the formation and the running of some of these unions. In 1941, the Transvaal Congress, prodded ahead by its communist members, contributed to the establishment of the African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU).[22] This was an exception, however, and besides the fact that a portion of the AMWU's leadership came from Congress, the latter played no significant role in the future. It was only because of a significant push on the part of the Congress left wing that it involved itself at all.

Conclusion

The war and a massive expansion of the manufacturing industry resulted in an increased need for permanently proletarianised labour. At the same time, deteriorating conditions in the rural areas forced an increasing number of families into the urban areas - a process facilitated by a temporary suspension of influx control.

The resulting urban struggles, such as bus boycotts and squatter movements, were being waged by communities quite separated from the national organisation. For reasons mentioned in Chapter One, and sometimes, it is suggested, because of the direct economic interests of the Congress leadership, the ANC did not attempt to provide leadership to these struggles. Individual Congress members did involve themselves at certain times, but these were exceptions and the direction of the ANC, as an organisation, remained unchanged.

The CYL after its formation also did not involve itself to any significant degree. It would seem that the Youth Leaguers saw their task as forcing Congress to a position where they would be willing to take up these struggles.

Lodge writes:

> "In contrast to the political lethargy of the previous decade the 1940s was a period of ferment as political movements adjusted to the new pressures and opportunities created by the popular upheavals accompanying the massive wartime expansion of the African working class."[23]

It is clear, however, from the arguments above, that the ANC by the end of the war had not adjusted itself to the changing conditions in the urban areas, and particularly in Johannesburg. It was necessary that the ANC was pressurised in order to provide leadership to the communities in the towns. But to do this, the aims and direction of Congress had to be changed. This is the subject of the bulk of the remaining chapters.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Bloch, 1980, pp. 91-2.
2. Kaplan, 1977, p. 288.
3. Bloch, 1980, p. 98.
4. Kaplan, 1977, p. 289.
5. Bloch, 1980, p. 92.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid, p. 93.
8. Ibid.
9. Stadler, 1979, p. 20.
10. Lodge, 1983, p. 12.
11. Stadler, 1979, p. 21.
12. Lodge, 1983, p. 11.
13. Harris, 1981, p. 7.
14. Stadler, 1979, p. 29.
15. Harris, 1981, p. 16.
16. The detail below is based on Harris, 1981.
17. Harris, 1981, p. 34.
18. Ibid, p. 41.
19. Quoted in ibid.
20. Lodge, 1983, p. 18.
21. Ibid.
22. The development of the AMWU and the mineworkers' strike of 1946 is dealt with in more detail in Chapter Three.
23. Lodge, 1983, p. 11.

Chapter Three

THE CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE IN THE TRANSVAAL, 1943-1947

From 1940 onwards, the rejuvenation of the African National Congress began. Xuma set about reorganising a much more centralised strucutre, and stressed the importance of paid-up members, functioning branches, increased communication and an executive that could operate more effectively. The long and clumsy 1919 constitution, which had been effective up to this time, made it difficult to streamline this restructuring.

At the 1940 Conference, at which Xuma was first elected, he spoke of the urgent need for organisation, and was given a mandate to revise the constitution.[1] The new constitution, adopted at the 1943 Conference, was more simple and practical. It was non-racial, allowing anyone "willing to subscribe to the aims of Congress" to become a member. The 'Upper House' of chiefs was dispensed with, and the Presidential nomination of Secretary and Treasurer (on the ratification of the Conference) was replaced by their direct election by the Conference.[2]

The most important change, though, was the centralisation of the executive functions. A 'working committee', with members living within fifty miles of ANC headquarters, was set up, and was able to meet almost weekly. This enabled Congress to cease being an 'annual parliament', and to start organising on an almost day-to-day basis.

But, as mentioned in Chapter One, this tightening up of the organisation of Congress did not fundamentally change its aims and methods. As Walshe points out, the activity of Congress "had not been an attempt to wrest power from white South Africans, but rather to qualify that power by the gradual participation of Africans in the machinery of government and the developing exchange economy."[3] The methods used to work towards this goal had been shown to be ineffectual for three decades.

A new generation of young Africans were emerging in the national movement. They originated mainly from the Transvaal, where they had had no experience of even the qualified Cape African franchise. Any

hope to re-attain and extend these limited rights were, therefore, not considered. This young group consisted mainly of intellectuals. They were students, teachers and lawyers who saw the annual ANC activity of passing resolutions at Conferences without carrying them out as futile. "Congress" Mbata, a leading member of the CYL, later said:

> "People were beginning to say we had long been appeasers, and almost every resolution of the ANC had started like this: We pray the Minister, We request the government, We humbly request ... and so on. It was that sort of thing that made the younger people feel that we would always be treated as immature persons and that something more dynamic and much more direct was needed."[4]

Like the NEUM, they were strongly in favour of a pro-boycott position.[5] Similarities ended here, as the young militants were determined to remain within the ANC and exert their influence as Congress members. They began to stress resistance to government policies, rather than passive requests, as a means to force the government to recognise Africans as full citizens.

In addition, war-time urbanisation brought with it increased possibilities of mass-based resistance (see Chapter Two). There was a recognition on the part of the younger ANC militants that this mass base would have to be aroused in order to build Congress into an effective political force. "Here, for the Youth Leaguers," writes Lodge, "was the potential source of mass support which the Congress movement had to shamefully neglected to exploit."[6]

So, a revamped, more militant Congress, moving away from 'elite-style' politics to "mass-based political struggle" was seen to be essential. "Slowly, but with increasing clarity", the young ANC militants began to argue "that African progress would have to involve the disciplined organisation of extra-constitutional power."[7] It was the ANC Youth League which was to finally effect this change within Congress. The necessity of a class alliance to effect this "organisation of extra-constitutional power" was recognised by the young militants and "it was CYL members who first articulated the need for a class alliance (though in very different terms from that which actually emerged)."[8] As we shall see below, these activists underplayed class divisions, and argued that the 'African monolith' should be mobilised and united under the ideology of 'African Nationalism'.

The formation of the CYL

Many of the founders of the CYL were members of students' or teachers' organisations before 1943. The Transvaal African Students Association was one which had political discussions during the school holidays, and also had a branch at Fort Hare. Also at Fort Hare was the Social Studies Society which held discussions of this nature during the mid-1930s.

Jordan Ngubane, a CYL founder, helped to organise the National Union of African Youth in Natal along with Manesseh Moerane in 1937. This had a core group of about twelve people, and sometimes drew up to sixty people to larger meetings. Moerane was elected President and Ngubane Secretary. However, Moerane, a teacher, was forced to resign by the Natal Education Department who informed him that "he was employed to teach children and no to participate in political activity."[9] Ngubane, a journalist, moved to Johannesburg to work on Bantu World and the NUAY collapsed.

For most of the CYL founders however, this kind of group was not sufficient. The African National Congress was the national organisation, and it was this body which should be involved in militant activity. They were dedicated to working within Congress and effecting change in that way, as separate opposition groups were seen to be divisive. Further, Congress provided the youth with a necessary legitimacy. Oliver Tambo, a leading Youth Leaguer, later wrote:

> "The present relationship between the League and the ANC automatically places us in touch with the people. It gives us a means of access to them; it places us at their immediate disposal, enabling us to work with and as part of the National movement; it collects and places the African intellectuals and African masses into the same fold, making it possible for black Africa to move to freedom under the guidance of her own educated sons, instead of the latter being a separate clique from whose existence the nation derives no benefit."[10]

The idea of a Youth League within the ANC originated from an attempt to elect Mr Self Mampuru ("young, not physically, but in ideas") to the Presidency of the Transvaal Congress. Mampuru met Tambo and "Congress" Mbata at the Bantu Men's Social Club in Johannesburg and, indicating that he wished to stand for the Presidency, asked them if they would

mobilise the support of the youth behind him. According to Mbata, Mampuru had said: "Look, I want to fight for youth in the ANC. I want the youth to have a voice."[11] So a group of about eight to ten people met with him a few times, going over his draft manifesto and rewriting it.

Mampuru, however, lost interest in the campaign by August 1943, and started working with Paul Mosaka and N.M. Basner on what was later to emerge as the African Democratic Party (ADP).[12] Slowly, informally, the young militants involved in the meetings with Mampuru discussed their future position, and it was decided to call a meeting of people who might be interested in forming a youth section of the ANC.

In October 1943, a meeting was held, chaired by Peter Raboroko, a member of the Transvaal African Students' Association. There was unanimity amongst those present on the need for a youth section of Congress - even at that stage it was said that the Youth League would be "the leaven within the ANC".[13] The militants involved in these meetings were largely intellectuals. With a majority of teachers, it also consisted of students, a social worker and a trade unionist. The ad hoc committee that was set up was chaired by William Nkomo, a medical student at Wits University, who had close contact with Communist Party members. It immediately began to draw up the CYL constitution.

A major problem remained. That was how to gain the support of Congress leadership in their new venture. The youth section would have to be a constitutional part of the Congress and, as such, the Old Guard[14] would have to agree to its formation:

> "(I)t was decided at the time that we must have a properly consituted body which would be called the Congress Youth League and it should have its own constitution, but we were to work it out in such a way that there would be liaison with the mother body ... it would be possible for it to function within the framework of the ANC constitution and that's why it became so important during the final stages to get Dr Xuma on our side."[15]

Karis and Carter suggest that these meetings with Xuma prior to the December 1943 Conference of the ANC were critically important as they "sought to forestall his opposition by embracing him as one of the initiators of a youth league."[16]

Dr Xuma was at this stage quite supportive of the initiative of the youth. He realised that a youth league would be a pressure group within Congress, but saw it as a group that would uphold Congress policy, rather than oppose it. It was possible that in these meetings before the annual conference, the youth were particularly cautious, and played down the differences between themselves and the Old Guard, emphasising rather the role of youth in Congress, and how a youth section could work to increase this.

At the ANC Annual Conference of 1943 the resolution was passed to form the African National Congress Youth League.[17] Because of Xuma's support, there was very little opposition from the more established older members of Congress. However, A.W.G. Champion from Natal warned Xuma in a public speech that the Youth League would cause his own downfall.[18] But Xuma's speech included a call to youth, and an interim committee of the Congress Youth League was formed.

At the conference, the first clash between Xuma and the Old Guard on the one hand, and the aspirant Youth Leaguers on the other, occurred, laying the basis for conflict over the next six years. The disagreement was over the new constitution, drawn up mainly by Xuma. Sisulu argued that the constitution was a 'collaborationist' one, as it was open to anyone supporting the aims of Congress rather than only Africans. This opposition was unsuccessful and the constitution was passed.

The CYL had already started working on its own constitution before the December 1943 conference, and also began drafting a manifesto. The latter was written by Lembede, A.P. Mda and Ngubane. A deputation consisting of these three as well as Nkomo, Mbata, Sisulu and Mandela then visited Dr Xuma in February 1944 to review these drafts.

Although Dr Xuma maintained his support for the CYL at this and at later meetings, he was nevertheless concerned about the goals and methods proposed by the deputation. The CYL had decided that it was important that the deputation was straight with Xuma - that they should tell him the lines along which the League should operate, and that they would be critical of the present leadership of the ANC: "We realized it was delicate ground but we felt it was necessary at the time."[19] Xuma, obviously threatened by these suggestions, argued that Congress was not well enough organised to participate in militant activity and non-collaboration which the Youth Leaguers were promoting. He also suggested

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that the youth were immature, and that the older members had had a lot more experience.

Notes taken by a member of the deputation record parts of the meeting:

> "The reply was that the weakness of the ANC lay in its organisation and in its constitution. Dr Xuma countered that this approach was destructive (and) that the CYL must be constructive. The deputation went on to say that the erratic policy of the ANC was shown by the fact that there was no programme of action - no passive resistance or some such action. Dr Xuma replied that the Africans as a group were unorganised and undisciplined, and that a programme of action such as envisaged by the CYL would be rash at that stage. The ANC lacked people who were convinced about the movement and who knew what they wanted. Action would merely lead to exposure. The masses of the people were unorganised and only committees existed in the ANC ... He felt that what was really wrong with the manifesto was the tone of criticism and the expressions used ... He said that he was at one with the committee about the aim; the trouble was whether the approach would help build or would arouse fighting."[20]

Lodge argues that the main difference between Xuma and the Youth League was over the question of organisation: "The Africanists (Youth Leaguers) were uninterested in organisational problems, and the League itself remained small and loosely structured; for them the key question rather was that of ideology."[21]

Lodge is correct here on two counts: firstly, that the CYL remained small and loosely structured, and secondly, that the disagreements between Xuma and the CYL was over the issue of organisation. But the fact that Xuma stressed organisation does not mean that the Youth League was "uninterested in organisational problems". As we shall see below, Xuma and the CYL thought of 'organisation' and its ultimate aims on completely different levels. While the CYL (consciously) did not develop itself as a mass organisation, they saw their task as bolstering the organisation of Congress itself. They argued that militant action and passive resistance on a large scale could contribute to this organisation and support. As the notes of the Xuma-CYL meeting point out, they argued that "the weakness of the ANC lay in its organisation and in its constitution". As Walshe points out,

> "the League's peculiar contribution lay not only in the vision of Pan-Africanism, in a search for African self-confidence and in a vigorous insistence on the implication of African power, but in the belief that attempts at mass protest, boycotts and passive resistance would in fact create the basis of mass support."[22] (author's emphasis)

In March 1944, the Provisional Committee of the CYL issued the "Congress Youth League Manifesto", an expansion of the preamble to the CYL Constitution, which was the first published Youth League document.[23] The manifesto emphasised the promotion of Africanism[24] and the necessity for African youth to be united. It goes on to stress the differences between the philosophy of whites and that of Africans:

> "The White man regards the Universe as a gigantic machine hurtling through time and space to its final destruction: individuals in it are but tiny organisms with private lives that lead to private deaths: personal power, success and fame are the absolute measures of values; the things to live fore."

While this 'White' philosophy of life inevitably steers one towards conflict, 'the African', on the other hand,

> "regards the Universe as one composite whole; an organic entity, progressively driving towards greater harmony and unity whose individual parts exist merely as interdependent aspects of one whole realising their fullest life in the corporate life where communal contentment is the absolute measure of values. His philosophy of life strives towards unity and aggregation; towards greater social responsibility."

While the white philosophy explained the theory of white superiority and 'trusteeship', Africans have now decided to make demands for control of their own destiny.

The Manifesto went on to criticize aspects of Congress policy, going further than just the weakness of organisation and the constitution. It spoke of the body of gentlemen, the "privileged few" who, scared of a further curtailment of their rights, were prepared to dampen the assertion of popular will. Although they were "compelled" to criticise harsh legislation very loudly, they were not well organised and had no marked following.

The manifesto stressed that the role of youth was not just to condemn leadership, but to work actively from within to build Congress. To do this, the CYL would sponsor a Congress Progressive Group, a political group within Congress that "will stand for certain clear-cut national ideals within Congress; it will stand for specialisation (of ideology) within the national movement, to reinforce the latter's representative character and to consolidate the national unity front ..." The creed emphasises the leadership of Africans in their own struggle, establishes Africanism as "the goal of all our struggles" and believes that "Africans (from the whole continent) must speak with one voice."[25]

On Easter Sunday, April 1944, the CYL held its inaugural meeting in the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg. It was only in September of that year that the Youth League held its first conference. A pamphlet headed "Trumpet Call to Youth" announced the conference:

> "The hour of youth has struck! As the forces of National Liberation gather momentum, the call to youth to close ranks in order to consolidate the National Unity Front, becomes more urgent and imperative."[26]

About 200 youth attended the conference, and speakers included Xuma, Selope Thema, Vivienne Ncakeni[27], Dan Tloome and Tambo.

According to the constitution adopted at this conference, membership was open to Africans between the ages of 12 and 40, and "young members of the other sections of the community who live like and with Africans and whose general outlook on life is similar to that of Africans..." Members above the age of 17 years would automatically become members of the ANC. The stated aim of the CYL included encouraging "national consciousness and unity among African youth" and working for their educational, moral and cultural advancement, supporting and reinforcing the ANC and studying the political, economic and social problems of Africa.[28]

Anton Lembede was elected President, taking over the leadership from William Nkomo, the Provisional Chairman. Similarly, "Congress" Mbata became Secretary in the place of Lionel Majombozi. The two who were displaced were both sympathetic to the Communist Party. Walshe, amongst others[29], has suggested that Nkomo "was replaced at the conference on account of his leftist leanings..."[30] Nkomo himself dismissed

this account and said that "we (Nkomo and Majobozi) had, because of our work as medical students, decided that we needed to work harder, and it was not possible for us to carry on this work ... so we excused ourselves from the elections."[31] However, it would seem that, with the ideological inclinations of the CYL (as seen in the Manifesto and later documents), Lembede would have been elected President, even if Nkomo had been available.

Lembede and Africanism

Anton Muziwakhe Lembede, the first President of the CYL, was an intellectual of a different sort when compared to the other Youth Leaguers. He was a law clerk with Seme's law firm, and later became a full partner. But he was also a philosopher, and in 1945 wrote an MA thesis called "The conception of God as expounded by, and as it emerges from the writings of philosophers from Descartes to the present day". It was Lembede who provided the philosophical basis for the political operations of the CYL.

In a short article, "Some basic principles of African Nationalism", published in early 1945, Lembede laid down the basis for Africanism.[32] The philosophical basis, Lembede argued, was that man is neither an "economic animal" nor a "beast of prey" (as seen by communism and Nazism respectively) but is "body, mind and spirit", and that "(h)istory is a record of humanity's strivings for complete self-realisation". On the scientific level, no two people, or two nations, are the same, Thus, each nation, with its own contribution to the progress of mankind, has "its own divine mission".

As far as an economic basis is concerned, socialism (based on traditional African social structures) is inherited from the ancestors:

> "The fundamental structure of Bantu society is socialistic. There was for instance no individual ownership of land in ancient Bantu society. Land belonged virtually to the whole tribe and nominally to the king or chief... Our task is to develop this socialism by the infusion of new and modern socialistic ideas."

Similarly, the traditional concept of democracy should be preserved and developed. Finally, the ancestor worship, the belief in the immortality

of the Africans' ancestors should be retained, "but our ethical system today has to be based on Christian morals since there is nothing better anywhere in the world."

The "Policy of the Congress Youth League", published the following year, was more explicit about issues of socialism.[33] "Nationalism" and "socialism" are completely separated. While the "Divine destiny" of the African people and the solution to their problems is "National Freedom", any thought of socialism comes only after this "National Freedom":

> "Africans are naturally socialistic as illustrated in their social practices and customs. The achievement of national liberation will therefore herald or usher in a new era, the era of African socialism. Our immediate task, however, is not socialism, but national liberation."

An important issue for Lembede was that Africans develop in themselves a self-confidence. If they were ashamed of being Africans, militant action was out of the question. It was necessary that Africans were proud of themselves as a "race". It was emphasised that the struggle was between races and not between classes. Communists were criticised bitterly for confusing the struggle to overthrow white domination by talking about class struggle. In much the same way, the Transvaal Youth League later said:

> "The wave of this maniacal oppression of the man of colour in South Africa emanates fundamentally and finally from the peculiarly narrow and suicidal emotional unbalance of white South Africa as whole (sic). The colour problem is essentially a psychological problem and not so stupid as in fact biologically intelligible."[34]

Purity was crucial - purity of philosophy or outlook and thus, purity of race. Mbata said later:

> "His main point was self-confidence, but he said that if it became necessary to exclude others, then we must be prepared to do so."[35]

To "water down" the Africanist attitude to race would lose the ideology some of its dynamism, and it would therefore become too weak to

galvanize African opinion.

Africanism was meant to have a strong appeal to the African masses. The oppression of white by black is the most immediate aspect of life that the newly-urbanised African communities could identify with. Ngubane later wrote that

> "Lembede attached the greatest importance to the magnetic pull of a powerful ideal. Nationalism, he often told me, had a dynamism which we should not be afraid to develop; we should give it the momentum which would enable it to crush opposition and syphon in all our people. Africanism had its roots in the African evaluation of the person and defined the Black man's destiny in his own terms. This would give it the momentum which would unify the Black people and in the end bring White domination crashing to the ground."[37]

This emphasis on self-assertion was certainly necessary at the time. The Africanists saw the necessity to demand rights, not ask for them. Further, their ideas of a new society were changing. While the Old Guard saw change as meaning an insertion of Africans into white political structures, the Africanists went further. For them, the future was based on an African past, an African heritage that would remain and would be dominant in a new South Africa. It was this aspect of Africanism which guided the League to an argument for more militant tactics. The 'African monolith' had to be mobilised on the basis of Africanism, and had to act in unison in order to overthrow white domination.

But the Africanist position clearly contained reactionary elements. One of the more conservative aspects was the resultant underplaying of class differences among the oppressed. Lembede wrote: "Africans are one. Out of the heterogeneous tribes, there must emerge a homogenous nation."[38] Although he does not deny the existence of classes, this is only a side-issue. The struggle was defined as one between black and white, while issues of class serve only to obscure this.[39] Class differences within the "African Nation" must be de-emphasised in order to strengthen the unity of the "nation". This would have obvious implications for political practice, as working class issues would not be stressed, and only national issues would be taken up. Working class issues would be made into national issues, as seen in the 1946

strike (see below). Working class leadership, too, would not be seen as a pertinent issue to guide the movement. A petty bourgeois 'bias' would therefore exist within the national movement.

Another aspect of the Africanist policy which was politically destructive was its exclusivism. This can be seen clearly in the early CYL policy documents discussed above. This exclusivism attempted to separate the oppressed people clearly into racial groups, and denied the importance of any real unity amongst the national organisations. At a stage when the ANC was moving steadily towards joint campaigns, especially with the Indian Congress, the Africanists were pressurising Congress not to "dilute" the African struggle.

Of course the CYL was not, during this early period, an homogenous Africanist bloc. On the one hand, there were conflicts between individuals, some of them personal, but also, certainly, political in character. Benson writes:

> "There were conflicts: Nkomo disagreeing with Lembede for his emphasis on Africanism, Mda and Sisulu, both uncompromising men, clashing - with Mda openly contemptuous of Sisulu's lack of education, and the journalist Ngubane, who had an almost pathological feeling about royalty, virtually repudiating Mandela because of his birth."[40]

On the other hand, not all of the Youth League members agreed completely with Lembede's Africanism. Firstly, there was the left wing, sympathetic to the communists, a small group consisting of Nkomo, Majombozi, Bopape and perhaps a few more. They tried to change the emphasis of the CYL Manifesto in the early days.

Walshe makes a further division into two groups, which he calls ("tentatively") the "Nationalists" and the "Africanists". The "Nationalist" grouping (Ngubane, Mda, Mbobo, Tambo, Yengwa and Ncakeni) saw the need for Africans to assert themselves politically, but were aware of the "dangers of extremism". Mbata (another "Nationalist") later said:

> "We didn't see that extreme African nationalism would help our position at all ... and we didn't see that it would evoke a hearty response at all from the people."[41]

The "Africanists" (Lembede, Sisulu, Mandela and Ramoroka)

> "were less inclined to worry about the dangers of engendering anti-white (or anti-Indian) attitudes, as long as an ideology could be developed that was dynamic enough to rouse the African masses to political awareness and action."[42]

Whether Walshe's placing of individuals in these two groups is correct is difficult to say. But these two positions certainly existed. When the Africanist group tried to define whites as "foreigners" in the first draft of Basic Policy (1948), the less extremist Youth Leaguers challenged them. The revised edition excluded this term.[43]

While Walshe places Sisulu in the category of the Africanists, Matthews has stated:

> "Sisulu wasn't, of course, a chap who would be interested in this sort of philosophical approach. He was more practical... I think to him the Youth League was an instrument for getting into power in the ANC."[44]

And Mandela, Matthews claims, rejected the idea that the ANC or the CYL had adopted Africanism as "special philosophy". They were rather just Lembede's ideas.

The view has been expressed that Lembede was "a man with a vision", trying hard to get his position accepted with varying degrees of success. Mbata, for example, says that Lembede

> "was almost alone and he fought a very brave battle; I must say we respected him for his stand ... if he was convinced about a thing (he) would go to any length to make his viewpoint (sic)".[45]

Whatever differences existed, however, there was certainly unanimity about the necessity for the development of a strong African leadership and the use of more militant tactics. But there were arguments about whether exclusivism was necessary, or to what degree it should be practised.

Bopape (a CP member) suggests that the left-wing members of the CYL were relatively effective in countering the "naked African nationalism" of Lembede: "we pulled the youth ... from their game of

extreme African Nationalism".[46] And the more moderate line prevalent within Congress itself also had its effects, especially during the early period. The CYL, until 1948 operating only in the Transvaal, was not in a very strong position vis-á-vis the Old Guard. It was necessary to moderate Lembede's extreme position.

Most members of the CYL were unanimous in their rejection of communist influence within Congress. In some respects, the goals of the communists and those of the CYL were similar. They both had an interest in the adoption of militant tactics. But the frameworks from which they were working were fundamentally different. While some Party members, such as Kotane, Marks and Mofutsanyana were dedicated African Nationalists as well as communists, many others had never really come to terms with the national aspect of the struggle.[47] Suspicions of communists in the ANC ran rife amongst the Youth League members, as they feared that "the Africans would be exploited by them in order to build up the African to carry out their Moscow-oriented programme."[48]

The CP, however, did not reciprocate this antagonism, except when exclusivist Africanism was attacked in the Party's organs. As Joe Matthews later put it, the CP supported the formation of the Youth League, and "the communists didn't oppose the Youth League. The Youth League opposed the communists."[49]

At the 1945 Conference of the ANC (Transvaal) Lembede, Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo put forward a motion to exclude from Congress all those who were members of other organisations. Aimed essentially at communists, it meant that these ANC members would have to choose between Congress and the Party. Although it was passed at this conference, the National Conference rejected it at the end of 1945. In 1947 a motion was proposed at the Transvaal Conference "that no member of any political party shall hold office in the ANC either in the Provincial body or in its Branches", in another attempt to limit communist influence.[50] This time the Transvaal Congress threw it out.

Despite these attacks, however, communists continued to work both in the CYL and with it, when possible. In some cases they exerted a considerable influence on political practice. (This is dealt with in more detail in Chapter Five.) For instance, at the ANC crisis conference in early October 1946 (after the Mineworkers' Strike),

Lembede's attempts to urge a total boycott of the NRC were unsuccessful. After working with Moses Kotane, a slightly modified version of his resolution was accepted.[51]

The 1946 mineworkers' strike

In 1941, the Transvaal Congress, spurred on by two members of its executive, who were also CP members, resolved to initiate the organisation of African mineworkers. The African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU) was formed with J.B. Marks (also a CP member) as President. Although mineworkers were notoriously difficult to organise[52] the AMWU grew steadily to a membership of 25 000 in 1944.[53]

Throughout the war years, relations between the Chamber of Mines and the AMWU were bad to say the least. Wages were extremely low; in fact, mineworkers were paid lower money wages (let alone real wages) in 1942 than they were in 1890.[54] Food cuts in the compounds as a result of the wartime food shortages made matters worse. The April 1946 AMWU Conference drew up a statement demanding, inter alia, higher wages, while the June 1946 CNETU (Transvaal) Conference resolved to support the AMWU in the event of a strike.[55] The situation simmered until early August when 1 000 delegates at a special conference unanimously agreed to strike.

On 12 August the strike began. By the 17th August, five days later, the last of the strikers had returned to work: it was a short strike, but with devastating effects, the largest strike in South African labour history. Over 70 000 of the industry's 300 000 workers joined the strike. At least nine mines ceased production completely, while a further twelve were partially affected.[56] The state used the full might at its disposal to protect the interests of the mining industry. AMWU officials were promptly arrested, and at least twelve Africans were killed and over 1 200 injured.[57]

A CYL pamphlet issued at the time of the strike tried to link the struggles of the African workers and the African petty bourgeoisie but, in doing so, attempted to play down the class differences. The pamphlet, entitled "The African Mine Workers' Strike - A National Struggle", stated that the mineworkers' struggle challenged the "whole economic and political structure of South Africa". It called on all Africans to

support the mineworkers' struggle: "They are fighting political colour bar (sic) and economic discrimination against Africans."[58] (my emphasis) Effectively, this was a call for a class alliance, but a class alliance in which the importance of class struggles were denied. It attempted to simply transform the class struggle of the working class into a struggle against white domination.

The NRC, which was in session at the time, promptly adjourned. As Z.K. Matthews (an NRC member) put it: "They could not go on calmly discussing the estimates of the South African Native Trust and other such matters while their countrymen, less than 50 miles away, were exposed to danger."[59] The moderate councillor, Selope Thema, stated during the last session that the cause of the mineworkers was the cause of the African people as a whole.[60]

Dr Xuma called an emergency conference of the ANC in October to discuss the strike and the adjournment of the NRC. A resolution prepared by Kotane and Lembede calling for a boycott of future NRC elections, but urging the councillors to await the reply of the government to the demands they had made, was passed with an overwhelming majority. The second section of the resolution was a compromise on Lembede's part.[61] Bunting writes:

> "The co-operation between Lembede, the leading figure among young African nationalists, and Kotane at this conference was symptomatic of the greatly improved relations between individual ANC Youth League members and the Communist Party members of the ANC brought about by their common association in political action."[62]

But, as he admits, the CYL continued to oppose the communists who brought "foreign ideas" into the national struggle.

The South African Indian Congress

O'Meara suggests that "in the period immediately after the strike, foundations were laid for co-operation between the political organisations of the various oppressed groups",[63] such as the Indian Congress. While this is true, the ANC had been looking towards co-operation for some time. Congress had been working with the CP since 1944. The campaigns against the pass laws were the common issue, and the committees that were

set up, consisting of both CP and ANC members, had considerable influence on the direction of Congress.

From 1946 onwards, the ANC's relations with the Indian nationalists began to improve. While the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) was previously dominated by merchants and businessmen who "believed in conciliation with the white authorities"[64] leaders with leftist leanings such as Dadoo and Naicker now began to emerge.

In 1946 the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill, known as the 'Ghetto Bill' came before Parliament. This was a state initiative to prohibit land transfers between Indians and non-Indians in the Transvaal and Natal, and to provide token Indian representation in Parliament. The deal was rejected by the SAIC, and Passive Resistance Councils were set up in the Transvaal, Natal and in Cape Town.[65] By March 1947, more than 1 600 resisters were in jail, and this number rose to 2 300 by 1948.[66]

In Johannesburg, support for the Indians' struggle was expressed by a "conference of Africans" chaired by Xuma. The Germiston branch of the ANC joined the resistance in solidarity,[67] while the Cape ANC, at its annual conference in Langa, decided to raise funds to assist the campaign.[68]

In mid-September, the Joint Passive Resistance Council took the first steps towards urging a united political programme for all the oppressed people of South Africa:

> "The struggle of the African, Indian and Coloured people was a common struggle, said the Council, calling on them to strengthen their respective national organisations in order to rally their entire communities behind the struggle for national liberation and for full democratic rights for all. The Council proposed the launching of simultaneous campaigns against oppression, 'thereby uniting all sections of the Non-European people in action.'"[69]

On their side, the ANC, at the 1946 Annual Conference, instructed the newly-elected National Executive to "consider the possibilities of closer co-operation with the national organisation of other non-Europeans in the common struggle."[70] These initiatives laid the basis for common political programmes for the ANC and the SAIC, culminating in the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and the Congress Alliance.

Although elements of Congress tried to obstruct this move towards working with the SAIC, the co-operation between the two Congresses continued. On 9 March 1947, Dr Xuma from the ANC, Dr Dadoo from the TIC and Dr Naicker from the NIC met to form the so-called 'Doctors' Pact'. Their joint statement declared that

> "full franchise rights must be extended to all sections of the South African people, and to this end the Joint Meeting pledges the fullest co-operation between the African and Indian peoples and appeals to all democratic and freedom loving citizens of South Africa to support fully and co-operate in this struggle."[71]

Conclusion

The CYL was formed in 1944 as a response to firstly, the ineffective tactical methods of the ANC leadership and secondly, changing conditions in the towns. An unstable permanent urban proletariat began to develop as a potential support base for militant tactics. The Youth League's aims during the 1940s were not to develop a strong organisation of youth separate from Congress. Rather, they aimed to urge the more militant youth to participate in general ANC activity, in an attempt to press for militant tactics, such as strikes, demonstrations, and passive resistance.

The CYL leadership saw themselves as, quite literally, a 'Broederbond' within Congress. The idea was that the CYL "should do for the ANC what the Broederbond had done for the (Afrikaner) Nationalists."[72] In doing so, they were exclusivist, and often alienated potential recruits, as Pitje has pointed out.[73] While the Old Guard did not stand in the way of the League's formation, viewing the organisation of youth as desirable, there was certainly intense conflicts between the two groups.[74]

This conflict can be seen at the level of political ideologies, where the moderate leadership clashed with Lembede's Africanism. His racially exclusive position formed a basis for the CYL's early documents. On the one hand it plays down class antagonisms and stresses those of race. On the other, the importance it placed on African self-confidence and the need to act assertively were critical at this stage of Congress history.

It seems, however, that this extreme Africanism was not completely accepted by the majority of CYL members. But while there were disagreements amongst membership, the majority retained some fundamental points in common: that African self-assertion was necessary, that Congress should become more militant, that discriminatory government institutions should be boycotted, and that communist influence was a danger to the cause of African liberation.

The ANC itself, during the 1940s, began to extend itself and work with both the CP and the Indian Congress. This dynamic, as well as the effects of the 1946 mineworkers' strike, began to exert an influence on both the ANC and the CYL. The Youth League was certainly gaining momentum within Congress, but was as yet not in a position to make any decisive moves.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Minutes of the Annual National Conference of the ANC, Bloemfontein, 15-17/12/1940.
2. Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 85.
3. Walshe, 1982, p. 349.
4. Interview with Mbata (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Johannesburg, 19/2/1964.
5. In fact, Karis and Carter argue that the young ANC militants were in fact influenced by the NEUM: "Its strong boycott position served to increase the dissatisfaction felt by young articulate Africans with the ANC's leadership." (Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 99). However, the ANC members were committed to the building up of Congress and were also influenced by a "strand of exclusivism in African thought". The paths of the two groups diverged here.
6. Lodge, 1983, p. 21.
7. Walshe, 1982, p. 350.
8. O'Meara, 1975, p. 168.
9. Ngubane, n.d. (b).
10. O. Tambo (National Secretary and Acting National President of the CYL) - "Message to African Youth", n.d. (Private collection).
11. Mbata interview, op. cit.
12. The ADP was formed in 1943 by a few whites and ANC members who were also feeling the need for Congress to exert more popular influence. While having the same goals as the ANC, it was committed to "more determined organisation of mass support". (Walshe, 1982, p. 280) Although fairly popular during the wave of militancy of at the end of the war, the ADP soon lost influence and was a spent force by 1948. The youth's opposition to the ADP at the time of its formation put them on a much stronger footing in their dealings with the Old Guard.
13. Mbata interview, op. cit.
14. The "Old Guard" was the term used by the CYL to refer to the older generation of ANC members. It did not necessarily refer to age, but rather to the political methods used by this hegemonic group within Congress.
15. Mbata interview, op. cit.
16. Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 100.
17. At the same conference, women were accepted into Congress as full members (rather than auxiliary members), and an ANC Women's League was set up. Although the Women's League, for the most part, continued throughout the 1940s to provide 'services' as in the past, it played a major role in the political campaigns of the 1950s.
18. Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 100.

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19. Mbata interview, op. cit.

20. CYL interview with the President-General, Dr. A.B. Xuma, 21/2/1944 (Private collection).

21. Lodge, 1983, p. 25.

22. Walshe, 1982, p. 351.

23. "Congress Youth League Manifesto" - Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 300.

24. The Manifesto reads: "WHEREAS Africanism must be promoted, i.e. Africans must struggle for development, progress and national liberation so as to occupy their rightful and honourable place among nations of the world;..."

25. The Africanist perspective put forward in this document will be explained more fully below.

26. "Trumpet Call to Youth" - Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 308.

27. Although it is difficult to determine the role of women in the CYL, whose leadership consisted wholly of men, it is evident that at least four women were involved in preliminary meetings. They were: Vivienne Ncakeni, Albertina Sisulu, Emma Maki and Rahab Petje (List of members at CYL meetings, February-March 1944 - Karis and Carter microfilm).

28. "Constitution of the Congress Youth League" - Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 309.

29. See also Ngubane, n.d. (b)

30. Walshe, 1982, p. 352.

31. Interview with William Nkomo (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Pretoria, April, 1964.

32. Lembede, 1945.

33. Lembede, 1946.

34. CYL pamphlet: "Apartheid: An old machine subtly employed", n.d. (Private collection).

35. Mbata interview, op. cit.

36. Ngubane, n.d. (b).

37. Ngubane, n.d. (a).

38. Lembede, 1946.

39. Interestingly, some Marxists have an inverted version of this, and argue that the struggle in South Africa is between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and that the racial dimension serves only to obscure this basis antagonism.

40. Benson, 1963, p. 111. Mandela was the son of a Tembu chief in the Transkei.

41. This position "was simply that rather than concentrate on an ideology that seeks to exclude, we must work towards the improvement of the African people without necessarily being exclusive, and without necessarily going out of our way to accomodate anyone else. But

our main concern was to arouse the African to a consciousness of his own power and ability." (Mbata interview, op. cit).

42. Walshe, 1982, p. 356.

43. Ibid.

44. Interview with Joe Matthews (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Maseru, March 1964.

45. Mbata interview, op. cit.

46. Interview with David Bopape (SAIRR Oral History Archive) - Johannesburg, 31/5/1982.

47. Kotane said in 1939: "I am first a Native and then a Communist", and later: "I am a black man who became a communist" (Bunting, 1975, p. 89). Kotane, Marks and Mofusanyana, amongst others, were both ANC and SACP members and had been involved in fierce debates about the 'Native Republic' thesis and the national question since the early 1930s. However, many other Party members had not yet come to terms with the national question, and saw the national struggle purely as a force that could be harnessed to the class struggle.

48. Mbata interview, op. cit.

49. Joe Matthews interview, 1964, op. cit.

50. Walshe, 1982, p. 358.

51. This is explained more fully below.

52. The tightly-controlled compounds and the migrant nature of the mineworkers were major obstacles, as well as War Measure 1425 of 1944, which prohibited meetings of more than 20 people on proclaimed mining ground.

53. O'Meara, 1975, p. 155.

54. Ibid, p. 156.

55. Anton Lembede sent "fraternal greetings" to this conference on behalf of the CYL.

56. For details of the strike, see O'Meara, 1975, pp. 160-3.

57. O'Meara, 1975, p. 161.

58. "The African Mine Workers' Strike - A National Struggle" - CYL pamphlet - Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 318.

59. Z.K. Matthews, 1983, p. 146.

60. Bunting, 1975, p. 136.

61. Ibid, p. 138.

62. Ibid.

63. O'Meara, 1975, p. 168.

64. Benson, 1963, p. 120.

65. Bunting, 1975, p. 129.

66. Benson, 1963, p. 150.

67. Ibid, p. 122

68. Bunting, 1975, p. 131.

69. Ibid, p. 141.

70. Quoted in Bunting, 1975, p. 142.

71. Quoted in Bunting, 1975, p. 144.

72. Mbata interview, op. cit.

73. G.M. Pitje later said that the founders of the CYL "were an elite group that kept to itself, and to a certain degree didn't really welcome intrusion". He went on to explain how, when he was teaching at Orlando High, the CYL leadership was "not very communicative" (Interview with G.M. Pitje - SAIRR Oral History Archive - Johannesburg, 28/1/1982).

74. The two groups were fairly clearly defined within the ANC, as both put their views across strongly. The Youth Leaguers often used Mandela as their spokesman: "If we wanted anything unpleasant put across in a way that would not ruffle the feathers of the Old Guard ... we asked Nelson to speak for us" (Ngubane, n.d. (a)).

Chapter Four

EXPANSION OF THE CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE AND THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION, 1948-1949

By 1948, A.P. Mda had assumed the Presidency from Lembede who had died the previous year, and the CYL started to emphasise 'African Nationalism' as a driving force, rather than 'Africanism'. There was, however, no dramatic change in CYL policy, as the 'Basic Policy of Congress Youth League' confirms.

The 'Basic Policy' was issued by the CYL in 1948.[1] While echoing some of the sentiments of Lembede's work, it for the first time laid down goals for a future South Africa: a "true democracy" in which "all the nationalities and minorities would have their fundamental human rights guaranteed in a democratic Constitution." For instance, far-reaching agrarian reforms were envisaged, as well as 100% literacy, full industrialisation and the end to "domination and exploitation of one group by another."

While it recognised the attempts to correct some of the mistakes of the earlier Congress period, it also saw room for "drastic and revolutionary changes in the organisational form of Congress". African Nationalism was identified as "the militant outlook of an oppressed people seeking a solid basis for waging a long, bitter and unrelenting struggle for its national freedom."

The 'Basic Policy' noted two separate kinds of African Nationalism. The first, 'Garveyism', which advocated "throwing the Whites into the sea" was dismissed as being "extreme and ultra-revolutionary". It was the moderate type ('Africanism') that the CYL professed. Realising that the Indians and 'Coloureds' were permanent inhabitants of South Africa, the CYL would not regard them as enemies "as long as they do not undermine or impede our liberation struggle". The oppressed groups "may co-operate on common issues".

Thus, besides the emphasis on 'African Nationalism' as opposed to 'Africanism', the 'Basic Policy' deviates very little from the previous path of the CYL. Even the differences between 'African Nationalism' and 'Africanism' are unclear. Ngubene suggests that the difference was one of extremity. Mda, he states, stood between himself and Lembede, and it was Mda who now held the dominant position in the

CYL. 'Africanism', as opposed to 'African Nationalism', was too exclusive.[2]

In some areas, however, the CYL branches set out to implement this programme of exclusive Nationalism in a somewhat over-zealous fashion. In July 1948 the Guardian reported:

> "According to reports appearing in the local press, the Newclare branch of the African National Congress Youth League has passed a resolution calling on the Minister of the Interior to 'use drastic action' to segregate Indians from Africans. The resolution is reported to have said that 'there could never be mutual understanding between the two races', and that crime among Africans would not stop until they were segregated from Indians."[3]

Xuma, in response, reaffirmed the ANC's decision to co-operate with the national executives of the other national organisations. Tambo, vice-president of the CYL, also repudiated the resolution in a letter to the Bantu World.

> "He states that the meeting concerned was held without the knowledge of the Executive, and that the Youth League 'rejects all forms of discrimination.'"[4]

Tambo continued to say that African-Indian relations in Newclare 'appear to verge on the critical', and that the close attention of African and Indian leaders was needed to solve the problem.[5]

Although this public racism was rare on the part of the CYL, it does point to a deep contradiction within this extremist framework. While on the one hand, the philosophy of African Nationalism (as put forward by the CYL) could easily lead to extreme exclusivism, on the other it was not possible to maintain this in the ranks of Congress. The co-operation of Congress with the other national organisations was already established to a significant extent, and (as we shall see in Chapter 5) it was an issue on which the CYL would be forced to compromise.[6]

The immediate task facing the CYL, however, was to inject some dynamism into Congress. Although its militancy had, up to now, had some influence, Xuma and the Old Guard were still firmly in control. The CYL remained a tight but small group, and until 1948 was in existence only in the Transvaal. While the Youth Leaguers operating in that province were united around their demands for a militant Congress, they

lacked the numbers to have any decisive effect on the ANC nationally. To gain numerical support as 'voting power' at the annual national conference (and the different provincial conferences) it was imperative to organise additional branches in the other provinces. A tighter programme to guide the youth was also necessary.

Mda wrote:

> "Forces are working within the breast of Congress whose progressive expansion must result in the smashing of the old Congress, devoted to the true interests of the people, and rejecting compromises and appeasement in whatever form they are presented. That is the historic task of the Youth, and the best answer we can give to Congress recalcitrance, is the strengthening of our organisation and numerical strength and our putting forward a clear-cut programme. With the formation of a Youth League in Natal, our forces moving (sic) to a position where we shall defeat reaction and unleash the forces of African Nationalism."[7]

New Branches

It was in 1948 that the CYL began to develop into an effective national bloc within the ANC. The first province in which a new branch was formed was Natal. Firstly, Natal was closer to the CYL centre in Johannesburg and thus contact was easier than for other places. Secondly, Jordon Ngubane, a Youth League founder, had moved back to Natal and was editing Inkundla ya Bantu, the only African-owned news. newspaper. Inkundla was very sympathetic to the CYL and its objectives within Congress.[8]

The formation of the CYL branches in Natal was not as generously supported as it was in the Transvaal. Champion, the President of the Natal ANC, saw the Youth as 'upstarts' and was threatened by their organisation and goals. But his support was not essential for the formation of the League, as it was sanctioned by a national conference resolution, and the Natal branch developed rapidly. By the end of October, Mda could report in a letter to Pitje that the Natal Youth League was "strong".[9]

Until 1948, students at Fort Hare, too, had been cut off from the CYL. G.M. Pitje, who had come into contact with the Youth League leadership in the early 1940s, set to work organising a Fort Hare branch of the CYL.[10] Pitje was in the "curious" position of not being even an ANC

member, but, assisted by Professor Z.K. Matthews, the Treasurer of the Cape Congress, the branch was set up in just a few weeks.[11] Pitje remained in close contact with the CYL National President, Mda, who issued instructions on how to set up the branch, and also provided a 'crash course' in the political philosophy of African Nationalism.[12]

The CYL members at Fort Hare were encouraged to subscribe to Inkundla ya Bantu which, although not a Youth League paper, gave publicity to the League and "a platform to the forces of African Nationalism".[13] Many members also wrote articles for the Inkundla, especially Joe Matthews and Robert Sobukwe. Within a relatively short period, the Fort Hare Youth League was making a significant contribution to the Cape Congress.

It was not without its problems, however. A nurses' strike at Lovedale, the training hospital for African nurses adjoining Fort Hare, brought the League out in full support. This, and subsequent clashes with the authorities at Fort Hare, resulted in the banning of the CYL by the Fort Hare Senate in October 1949. It was thus forced to "go underground, and to disseminate the ideas of African Nationalism and organise much more carefully".[14] Mda suggested that the contribution made by Fort Hare up to that stage had been significant: "Fort Hare has played its part in the historical development of the Liberatory Movements - and that will go down in history!"[15]

Branches were soon organised in other centres and country areas of the Eastern Cape, such as East London, Queenstown and Herschel (in the Transkei). But problems in the Eastern Cape, and particularly at Fort Hare, came in the form of the Society of Young Africa (SOYA). SOYA, the 'child of NEUM', was set up as an opposition group to the CYL. At Fort Hare, SOYA and the CYL vied for membership. But fortunately, the SOYA appeal was not as strong in this area as it was in the Western Cape. In Cape Town, SOYA worked in close conjunction with the AAC (Western Cape). This factor prevented the CYL from gaining a strong foothold in Cape Town.

Bloemfontein, the normal centre for Congress activity, on the other hand, met with more success. By October 1948, the CYL in Bloemfontein was described as a "league in embryo",[16] and was able to send seven delegates to the national conference of 1948, just two months later.[17]

There were other obstacles to the CYL's efforts to expand. For instance, the youth of Lady Selbourne in Pretoria chose the more radical alternative, the Communist Party. Tambo, the CYL National Secretary, wrote that:

> "the youth of Pretoria, or at any rate Lady Selbourne, consider that the continued association of the Youth League with confused and helpless Congress destroys the attraction which the League otherwise has, and in this circumstance the Communist Party, which is a strong body in Pretoria, becomes preferable to them,"[18]

While Tambo argues that it was the CYL's links with the 'hamstrung' ANC which turned the youth away, there may have been other reasons. It is just possible, considering that it was the Communist Party which the youth joined, that they were not completely drawn to the exclusivism of the CYL. This possibility cannot be substantiated, however, as no more detail is available about the issue, except that a permanent organiser was sent to Pretoria by the CYL barely a month later.

The CYL asserts itself

The victory of the Nationalist Party in the 1948 general election was significant in a number of ways. On the one hand, it ushered in the period of apartheid and tightened repressive laws. On the other, the extreme character of the Afrikaner Nationalists, and, in particular, their attitude to and plans for Africans, provoked a more widespread acceptance of militant African Nationalism. Added to this, as Walshe points out, "opposition to apartheid brought the Congress Youth League and Communist Party into a common radicalism of method, that is, a willingness to co-operate in the development of mass action."[19] This encouraged increased personal contact between CP and CYL members, and a degree of moderation of the anti-communist line.

By now the CYL was in a much stronger position vis-ã-vis Congress, and its criticism of the Old Guard came increasingly to the fore. Xuma's sponsorship of the People's Assembly for Votes for All, which was held in Johannesburg in May 1948, came under heavy fire from the Youth League. The People's Assembly , confined to the Transvaal and Orange Free State for organisational reasons, was an attempt to organise broad-based opposition on the eve of the white elections. Xuma's aim was to rally more people from these two provinces than the total number of people that were about to take part in the election.[20] The Assembly had 322

delegates representing 706 990 people, from residents' associations, ANC branches, Advisory Boards, trade unions and peasants' organisations. Four African chiefs also attended.[21]

The Assembly adopted a manifesto which demanded for "all adult men and women of all races in South Africa ... the right to stand for, vote for and be elected to all the representative bodies which rule over the people."[22] Significantly, it was the first time the ANC had (although as part of an Assembly) effectively demanded 'universal franchise'. The Assembly also resolved to call a "national assembly of the South African peoples" to discuss the People's Charter for Votes for All, and to convene a joint meeting of the ANC, the SAIC and the APO to ask them to sponsor the National Assembly.

It was not only the CYL that was critical of the Assembly. In fact, the CYL as an organisation did not publicly oppose it. But the Transvaal Congress refused to take part, and it was the Youth Leaguers on the Transvaal Executive who pushed this most strongly. Mandela stated that while the Transvaal Executive was not opposed to the aims of the Assembly, it had been summoned in the wrong way and the national organisations had been bypassed. It was argued that the Assembly had the appearance of a permanent 'unity movement', such as the AAC. But once again beneath this argument about 'constitutional method', there lay the antagonisms with the communists. For it was Dadoo who had originally, in January 1948, called for a national convention to campaign for "democracy for all". The 'exclusivists' were wary of the communists' United Fronts, and argued that the ANC should involve itself in co-operation, not unity. Tambo later suggested that although the Youth League as such did not oppose the Assembly, "it can be assumed that the Youth League as a whole would have opposed it."[23]

Another issue on which the CYL was critical of the senior Congress was that of the Durban riots in January 1949. The riots began when an Indian shopkeeper allegedly cuffed an African boy, and conflict between Africans and Indians escalated. One hundred and forty-two people (Africans and Indians) were killed and over one thousand injured.[24] But what started off as inter-racial conflict, fostered and aided by the police, also brought the ANC and SAIC closer together. The Executives of the two Congresses met immediately in Durban in early February and decided to work closely together to resolve the tensions. The meeting

also instructed the ANC (Natal) and the NIC to set up a 'joint council' and to establish local committees to "advance and promote mutual understanding and goodwill amongst our respective peoples."[25]

The CYL National Working Committee urged the formation of a joint commission of enquiry, while the Natal Youth League played a major role in the attempts to resolve the conflict. But at the same time, they remained critical of the Natal Congress's inability to work properly amongst the people, and argued that this was a contributing cause of the riots.[26] Mr. T. Gwala, a trade unionist and ANC member, expanded on this in an interview with the Guardian:

> "Nothing like the recent riots could have developed if the African National Congress had gone to the people and explained the implications of the unity declaration issued last year by the national presidents of the African and Indian Congresses. Not a single meeting was called by the Durban branch of Congress to explain to the people the necessity of unity in the (struggle)..."[27]

From 1948 the CYL, as a national organisation, began to develop tighter programmes for its branches to adhere to. Although the programmes were meant to be carried our by the Youth Leagues, they were not directed at youth as such. Rather, they fitted into the most immediate aim of the CYL - the transformation of the ANC. At the National Conference of the CYL in 1948, an extensive programme for the following year was decided on.[28] A National Working Committee was set up in order to ensure its implementation. Much emphasis was placed on education. On the one hand, branches were instructed to concentrate on the education of members - African Nationalism, political economy and history were the main issues to be dealt with. On the other, mass education was also considered. The establishment of adult classes and night schools was urged in order to teach people literacy and increase their participation in political struggle.

The programme included the launching of a "Fighting Fund" to finance campaigns, an issue which the senior Congress had continually neglected. The drive to purchase a newspaper for the national movement was given similar emphasis. (At this stage, negotiations had begun for Congress members to buy shares in Inkundla ya Bantu.) The economic programme suggested the setting up of economic savings co-operatives, but stressed that economic power was not an end in itself, but a means to an end.

The cultural programme recommended a National Association of African Authors and Artists. Finally, under the heading "The Boycott Issue", the programme instructed branches to boycott "political instruments of segregation", such as the NRC and Bungas, to expose their "uselessness" and to "make Congress boycott-minded".

It is difficult to estimate the extent to which this programme was implemented. The Authors' and Artists' Association did not get off the ground. Congress became "boycott-minded" only in the early 1950s, although this campaign had an impact on Congress policy in the late 1940s. The national movement never got to actually purchase a newspaper. Some progress was made in the economic programme. In Herschel a CYL Co-operative Savings Society was set up, and in July 1949 had a balance of £150.[29]

However, although the details of this programme were not carried out to any significant extent, the most important programme was yet to come - the Programme of Action. It was on the basis of the Programme of Action that the CYL was to transform the ANC into a militant, dynamic mass organisation.

The 1949 Programme of Action

There is much dissension as to who it was that initiated the Programme of Action. On the one hand, some Africanists have argued that Sobukwe was involved and others that the document had been circulating since before 1947, and that Lembede initiated it. Other sources have disputed this and argued that Tambo, Sisulu and Kotane prepared it.[30]

The Programme, however, seems to originate from the ANC National Conference of December 1948. At this conference, delegates resolved "that a committee of five or six delegates be elected to go and draw up a programme of action and to report to the Conference in an hour's time."[31] A committee of Selby Msimang, Ntlabati, Z.K. Matthews, A.P. Mda and Mzamane was elected. The next day, during discussions of the programme, it was moved that the programme be circulated to all branches for their consideration, as Kadalie, Champion and Xuma "did not think that it was wise for a depleted House to decide on so broad and important an issue ."[32] The CYL felt that the 'Old Guard' were trying to block their moves to militancy again. Bopape reacted strongly, deploring the "dilatory tactics" of the officials and arguing that "the people want

a lead from us. We must decide now whether or not we shall give that lead. This programme is that lead."[33] But once again the consitutional blocks used by the Old Guard succeeded, and the issue was dropped until the following conference.[34]

The CYL, however, did not drop the issue. The attacks on the Old Guard, if anything, were stepped up. The Natal Youth League fought a running battle with Champion. While the CYL members tried to unseat him, he remained in control. In April 1949, the Durban branch of the ANC, not having had an AGM for two years, once again postponed it as "a number of those present at the meeting did not have membership cards". At the same time, the officials refused to issue cards to those who were already members.[35]

Mda made bitter public attacks on the Congress leadership, while Ngubane relentlessly took them to task in the columns of Inkundla. At the same time, the CYL leaders began to realise that they would soon be in a strong enough position to defeat the Old Guard. In July, Mda wrote: "This year gives us a chance to choose new leaders. It is our chance to place the acceptance of our Basic Policy and Programme as a condition for election to the presidency."[36] In October Ngubane wrote in a letter to Pitje: "It has taken us nearly five years to get them where they have no other way of escape. Their encirclement is now complete and ... we are now free to finish them off where and when we choose."[37]

At the Provincial Conference of the Cape Congress in July, the Programme of Action was adopted. It was supported by Xuma who declared that the time had come to formulate a plan for action, rather than just pass resolutions.[38] The CYL lauded this decision in a "Message to the African Youth": "Along the new path which the Cape Congress had decided to tread, the whole Congress should now move." The message continued:

> "I may as well tell the country in advance here that the CYL will simplify the presidential elections at the end of the year by putting forward a concrete, sold, political and Nation-building programme, on the basis of which African Nationalists throughout South Africa will accept or reject the prospective candidate for the Presidency".[39]

The Programme of Action was in some senses a shortened but more dynamic version of the League's Programme for 1949. For instance, the creation of a national "(fighting) fund"and the establishment of a national press reappeared here. The most important aspects of the Programme were firstly, the decision to "work for the abolition of all differential institutions" and secondly, that this should be done by using, inter alia, "immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-cooperation", as well as a one day national work stoppage.[40]

The CYL leaders, realising that they could effectively 'choose' the new ANC President, decided that they wanted someone who would not refuse to implement the programme at times of crisis. In early December, Sisulu, Mandela and Tambo visited Xuma and offered him their support for re-election provided he accepted the Programme of Action, and the boycott of all 'mock' forms of representation. Xuma was not prepared to accept the boycott, as it would "open the way for weaker aspirants" to positions on the NRC. He then said: "I don't want your vote, I don't want to be dictated to by any clique."[41] Z.K. Matthews, the next option, was unavailable, while J.B. Marks was a communist. Thus, to the Youth Leaguers, just before the conference, Xuma was still the best choice - there was no option.

The conference unanimously adopted the Programme of Action after a few minor amendments.[42] But, during discussion, Dr. J.S. Moroka, a member of the AAC Executive, "warmly supported the advocacy of the boycott of the NRC"[43] and strongly approved the Programme of Action. After hurried CYL leadership discussions outside the hall, it was decided to adopt him as their candidate.[44] While Moroka replaced Xuma, Calata the Secretary-General stood down, believing that the Programme of Action was too drastic and that Congress "needed younger men". The CYL suggested Sisulu to replace him, while the left-wing put forward Dan Tloome. Sisulu won by one vote. An elderly Congress member was heard to remark: "Very clever young boys!"[45]

The Executive that was elected contained three more CYL members - Mda, Tambo, and Pitje, while Mandela was later co-opted in early 1950.[46] Also, three CP members - Tloome, Marks and Kotane - were elected, thus paving the way for a militant beginning to the new decade.

At the Annual Conference of the CYL, held at the same time as the ANC Conference, G.M. Pitje replaced an ailing Mda as National President. The other possibilities were Tambo and Mandela, who were too busy because of their studies, and Walter Sisulu, who had just been elected Secretary-General of the ANC. The inexperienced Pitje was President for only a year, and Mandela took over from him at the end of 1950.[46]

Conclusion

It was in this period, then, that the CYL began to expand, in order to increase its influence within the senior Congress. New branches were set up in Natal, the Eastern Cape and Bloemfontein. At the same time, the Youth League began to develop militant programmes for its own activity, as well as that of the ANC.

The attacks on the 'Old Guard' of Congress did not relent, however, and in fact increased in bitterness and intensity. At last, at the national conference of 1949, the CYL was able to exert enough pressure on Congress to get it to adopt the militant Programme of Action. They were able to replace Xuma with Moroka, with the help of the left-wing, and consolidate many of their own leaders on the National Executive.

The process by which Congress became militant, though, was a slow one, and necessitated a long, hard struggle on the part of the CYL. It did not happen in December 1949, although that is certainly when the militants' power was consolidated. The fact that Congress unanimously adopted the Programme of Action testifies to at least some change of opinion over a period of time.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. "Basic Policy of Congress Youth League" - Manifesto issued by the National Executive Committee of the ANC Youth League, 1948 (Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 323).

2. Ngubane, n.d. (a).

3. The Guardian, 29/7/1948.

4. Ibid.

5. It is interesting to note that this was the first article on the CYL that ever appeared in the Guardian, and the issue was probably picked up because of its controversial nature. The CYL was again mentioned by the Guardian only after the Annual ANC Conference of December 1949, when the League took effective control of Congress (The Guardian, 22/12/1949).

6. It is perhaps also significant that it was Tambo (CYL National Secretary) rather than Mda (CYL President) who dealt with the situation. In later years it was Tambo who accepted the necessity of non-racial struggle while Mda, although remaining within Congress, supported the ideas of those who broke away to form the PAC. A possible simple explanation for this, however, is that Mda was in Herschel in the Transkei during this period, and that Tambo was deputising.

7. A.P. Mda to G.M. Pitje (incomplete letter, c. 1948 - Private collection).

8. Ngubane later wrote: "I was determined to use Inkundla as the communications medium which would help place the League on the political map and I did use it as such. I did this with a free conscience." (Ngubane, n.d. (a)).

9. A.P. Mda to G.M. Pitje (letter, 27/10/1948 - Private collection).

10. See all Mda's letters to Pitje, 1948-1949 (Karis and Carter microfilm).

11. Interview with G.M. Pitje - Johannesburg, 30/11/1983.

12. Pitje later said that the CYL at Fort Hare had followed Mda unquestioningly. He was not sure about the rest of the League's branches (Interview with G.M. Pitje - Johannesburg, 30/11/1983). It is unlikely, though, that the Transvaal branches, with their own strong political leadership would have followed suit. The Fort Hare branch had just begun, and the leadership, or Pitje at any rate, was politically inexperienced.

13. A.P. Mda to G.M. Pitje (letter, 27/5/1949 - Private collection).

14. The Fort Hare CYL branch was not the only 'underground' branch. A 'secret' branch was also in existence at St Peter's School in Rosettenville, Johannesburg.

15. A.P. Mda to G.M. Pitje (letter, 10/11/1949 - Private collection).

16. A.P. Mda to G.M. Pitje (letter, 27/10/1948 - Private collection).

17. Unfortunately, very little information is available on the individual CYL branches themselves and their activities.

18. O. Tambo (CYL National Secretary) - letter to branches, 9/9/1949.
19. Walshe, 1982, p. 358.
20. The Guardian, 8/4/1948.
21. Bunting, 1975, p. 152.
22. Quoted in ibid, p. 152.
23. Interview with O. Tambo (Karis and Carter microfilm, n.d.).
24. Benson, 1963, p. 154.
25. Quoted in Bunting, 1975, p. 163.
26. Ngubane, n.d. (a).
27. The Guardian, 14/4/1949.
28. 1949 Programme of the Congress Youth League adopted at the Annual Conference of the ANCYL, Bloemfontein, December 1948 (Private collection).
29. A.P. Mda to G.M. Pitje (letter, 27/5/1949 - Private collection).
30. Interview with Duma Nokwe (Karis and Carter microfilm) - April 1964; interview with G.M. Pitje - Johannesburg, 30/11/1983.
31. Minutes of the National Conference of the ANC, December 1948.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. It is not clear whether this is the same programme as the one that was to be adopted in 1949. It does seem probable that it is. After the Conference adjourned, the Programme began circulating and was adopted at the Cape Conference in July 1949 (see below).
35. The Guardian, 14/4/1949.
36. A.P. Mda to Sifora (CYL Transvaal Secretary) (Letter, 20/7/1949 - Private collection).
37. Ngubane to G.M. Pitje (letter, 26/10/1949 - Private collection).
38. At the same conference, the Fort Hare Youth Leaguers for the first time raised their fists, with protruding thumb pointing to the shoulder, while singing the National Anthem. This was later adopted by Congress as its official salute: "The first four fingers symbolised Unity, Determination, Solidarity and Militancy, while the thumb was raised as a supplication for Africa to come back to us" (Rev. J.A. Calata at the ANC National Conference, 16/12/1949).
39. O. Tambo (National Secretary and Acting National President of the CYL) - "Message to African Youth", n.d. (Private collection).
40. "Programme of Action". Statement of Policy adopted at the ANC Annual Conference, December 17, 1949 (Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 337).
41. Xuma quoted in Benson, 1963, p. 157.
42. Minutes of the National Conference of the ANC, Bloemfontein, 15-17 December, 1949.

43. Benson, 1963, p. 158.

44. It is interesting to note that Moroka, in his speech ending the conference, announced his intention to increase and develop contacts with other national organisations.

45. Benson, 1963, p. 161.

46. Interview with G.M. Pitje, Johannesburg, 30/11/1983.

ORIGINAL TO QBE

Chapter Five

THE CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE MOVES LEFT, 1950-1952

The few years immediately following the capture of power in the ANC by the militant CYL were critical ones for Congress. It was then that the leadership of the ANC, and also the direction of its concrete action, changed. Congress began to initiate popular struggles, such as the May Day Stayaways and the protests of June 26, 1950, as well as, more importantly, the Defiance Campaign of 1952.

On the other hand, the newly-elected Nationalist government, determined immediately to implement its policy of apartheid, began systematically to attack any remaining rights of all sections of the oppressed people. The Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and the Separate Representation of Voters Act all emerged from this period.

But one of the most important aspects of these years was the consolidation of political co-operation between the various national organisations, in particular the African and Indian Congresses. The purpose of this chapter is to attempt to trace the development of a multi-racial front during these years. Considering the exclusivism of the CYL in the late 1940s, however, it will also be necessary to focus attention on the changes occurring in the political outlook of prominent Youth League members, and to provide some explanation for these changes.

May Day 1950

The 1949 Programme of Action included a section resolving to appoint a Council of Action to implement the programme. The latter included the "preparations and making of plans for a national stoppage of work for one day as a mark of protest against the reactionary policy of the Government." The Council decided to organise this for 26 June 1950. But events overtook this careful planning and resulted in a joint committee to organise the "National Day of Protest and Mourning".

A "Defend Free Speech Convention" was held in the Transvaal on 26th March under the auspices of the ANC (Transvaal), the TIC, the APO (Transvaal) and the Johannesburg section of the CP. This convention, called in response to state harrassment of leaders and in support of workers'

demands, such as higher wages, announced the organisation of a stay-away on 1 May. The strike was organised by J.B. Marks, working in a Joint Action Committee, within a matter of weeks.

However, there was certainly not unanimity within the ANC about the protest. CYL members, especially, actively opposed the stay-away. The idea was challenged at the March 26 Convention on the grounds that "such a hodge-podge meeting could not take such a decision", and that a properly-constituted ANC meeting was required.[1] But Joe Matthews suggests that the real reason behind these attempted constitutional blocks was that "Africans who would have to suffer in the end were having decisions taken for them by a mixed group. It was also felt that Communists had 'taken over' the Programme of Action.[2]

Having been thwarted at the Convention, the 'exclusivists' turned to disrupting the meetings that were being held to publicise the stay-away. At one meeting Mandela and Tambo defeated an attempt by Marks to keep them away and "forcibly took over the platform to tell people to disregard the May Day call."[3] The CYL continued to dig at the left, and in the May edition of African Lodestar, compared communism to "an exotic plant" which would die in African soil.[4]

The results of the strike demonstrate the failure of the CYL appeal to have any effect. In the Johannesburg area it was a resounding success, with more than half the African work force not going to work But police action in the evening struck a heavy blow - nineteen Africans were killed and thirty injured in the Rand townships. In Cape Town and Durban, large demonstrations, with crowds of 6 000 and 10 000 respectively, were held in the streets.[5]

Joe Matthews suggests that the May Day strike was a turning point for the CYL : "That strike delivered a heavy blow".[6] In the Transvaal, the exclusivist approach was rejected by 'the people' - they supported the strike. Matthews also points to the fact that it was the first time the exclusivists lost - before that, every time, they had won. Sisulu, for example, as Secretary-General of the ANC, and playing a key role as Moroka lived so far away (in Thaba 'Nchu in the OFS), began to realise the need for alliances, arguing that the exclusivist approach was impractical.

Benson, too, sees the strike as critical. She suggests that "common sorrow and rage" moved the CYL during this period.[7] But the radicalisation

process, although fast during this period, was not quite so sudden. Benson writes:

> "(Sisulu) and Mandela had some way to go to overcome their exclusive nationalism, before they found it easy to co-operate with Indians and Whites. They had grudgingly to admit that the May Day campaign had awakened them to the need for the intellectually-inclined Youth League to attain closer contact with the workers who, though inarticulate, were reliably militant and stubborn."[8]

Tensions still existed over the May Day issue, both amongst the exclusivist ANC members, and the CP members. Party members were angry at the attempted sabotage of the campaign by the CYL. Moses Kotane, CP Secretary-General and ANC National Executive members, played a critical role in drawing the groups together. On the one hand, he spoke at CP branches, with varying success, trying to abate some of the anger. On the other, he set up meetings with the CYL, "to discuss their difficulties". This seems to have had some positive effects:

> "Mandela, getting to know him better, felt that he was 'really a nationalist', and began 'reluctantly' to feel that he had not been justified in believing that communists worked to subvert policies."[9]

A few days later, another stimilus to unity appeared in the form of the Unlawful Organisations Bill (later the Suppression of Communism Act). On 14 May, an emergency conference was convened by the ANC. The SAIC, the CP, the APO, CNETU and the CYL were also represented. It was clear that the bill, although ostensibly aimed at the CP, was broad enough to be used against any opposition to apartheid, and thus it was a broad group of organisations which agreed to "mobilise the people to offer 'concrete mass opposition' to the Bill".[10] A co-ordinating committee was immediately set up, with Sisulu and Yusuf Cachalia as joint secretaries. Even at this meeting, suspicion still existed, and Sisulu had to be restrained from harsh reproaches.[11]

A week later, the ANC executive met in Thaba 'Nchu and announced the decision to launch a national day of protest. It was later made known that the date would be June 26.[12] The campaign was immediately supported by the CP, the SAIC, the APO and the CYL, and meetings to

mobilise support were held throughout the country.

In the meantime, however, the Unlawful Organisations Bill posed a more direct threat to the CP, as it was likely to be passed within a few weeks. On 20 June, after a CP Central Committee meeting, it was announced in Parliament by Sam Kahn, a Communist MP, that the CPSA had dissolved itself.[13] The African communists, most of them ANC members, and some Executive members, threw themselves fully into Congress activity.

The 26 June national day of protest was an enormous success. In Johannesburg almost 75% of the African workers stayed away, Indian shopkeepers closed their shops and township schools were almost empty. In Durban, Indian workers stayed away, and many were fired and replaced by Africans. Pretoria, Bloemfontein and Cape Town had limited success, with a 50% absentee rate for African workers in the latter.

Port Elizabeth, reflecting its militancy in Congress campaigns of the rest of the 1950s, was "spectacular": "All cargo work was halted, businesses closed, shops, restaurants, hotels, garages and hospitals were short-staffed. Three-quarters of the railway staff stayed away. As one African housewife said, "You could only see a donkey in the streets."[14]

Considering the time in hand to organise the stay-away, the results were certainly astounding. It was the first attempt to organise a political strike on a national level. Further, the non-racial character of the stay-away contributed largely to the move to non-racialism by ANC membership. The Indian success in Durban, especially, but also the closing of shops in Johannesburg and Cape Town, were critical issues to support an argument for the inclusion of other national organisations in common struggles. So the period of May-June 1950 was certainly a catalyst in this movement.

Influences on the CYL

In the early 1950s, then, there was almost a barrage of influences that pushed the CYL to the left. First, the CYL's miscalculations of the workers' mood at May Day and the harsh state repression, led on to a series of joint meetings with prominent communists and Indian Congress members. Second, the resounding success of the national day of mourning on 26 June 1950 persuaded the CYL leaders that non-racial mass action

was effective. Third, the fact that many of the CYL leaders served also on the National Executive of the ANC, meant that they came into increased contact with, on the one hand, communist members of the ANC, and on the other, Indian leaders, some of whom were also communists.

Nkomo, referring to Mandela's move to the left suggests "that working with a number of people in the Indian Congress - most of the officers of the Indian Congress were communists - must have influenced him."[15]

Joe Matthews adds a further dimension to this. He argues that the CYL leaders, because of their leadership positions in Congress itself, were forced by popular feeling to a left-wing perspective: an example of 'pressure from below'. Those who became 'anti-exclusive' included Matthews himself, "Oliver Tambo, Sisulu and Mandela, because they saw that they could not get into power on an exclusive platform".[16]

But the influences do not appear only in the early 1950s. Clearly, the change, as can be seen, occurred rapidly, spanning the period of only a few months, after years of dogmatic exclusivism. For, as G.M. Pitje pointed out, Mandela was opposed to non-racial co-operation in 1950, but "had moved to the left by 1951."[17] But the influences also date back to the mid-1940s, when the CYL first came into contact with other national organisations and communists.

The Indian Congress, embarking on its own passive resistance campaign as early as 1946, also left its mark. The Indian Congress leadership began to seek contact with the CYL as early as 1945 (according to Mbata) and did make some inroads. Mbata suggested that the TIC "recognised that they youth would after all lead the ANC ultimately and if they made plans with them at that stage there was a better chance of working together with them later."[18] While the CYL officially accepted these advances, there was considerable debate amongst the Youth Leaguers at the time. Mbata even suggests that because it was contrary to the exclusivists' ideals, it was then that the foundation was laid for the PAC breakaway in 1958.

The other critical influence exerted on the CYL leadership during the 1940s was that of Moses Kotane. Many people, including Mandela and Tambo themselves, have pointed to the important impact Kotane made. Although the CYL never accepted CP participation completely, even up

to the Party's dissolution, the influence on individuals was critical. Tambo, meeting Kotane in 1945 or 1946, and fearing a pro-CP versus anti-CP split within the ANC, was "very impressed with (Kotane's) contribution."[19] After judging Kotane to be a sincere African Nationalist as well as a communist, Tambo continues:

> "I felt that the attitudes which some of us had developed about the Party were completely unjustifiable. If it was possible for a leading member of the Party like Moses to speak as he did, on this kind of question (relationship between the ANC and the CP-CG), I failed to see any difference, and forever afterwards I felt, and I said, that if Moses represents the Party, I don't think I will quarrel with it."[20]

Even Lembede, a rabid anti-communist, had "grudgingly" admitted to Kotane that the Party members are "workers, not just talkers."[21]

The Defiance Campaign

Mandela took over the National Presidency of the CYL from Pitje at the end of 1950. Pitje, remaining loyal to Mda's exclusivism, effectively dropped out of politics at this stage, finding a teaching post away from the Rand.[22] But the nature of the CYL as a national organisation of African youth was changing. As a tight national grouping, which was one of its strengths during the 1940s, it did very little.

On the one hand, the aims laid down and adhered to by its founders had been fulfilled. It had succeeded in changing the leadership of the ANC, imparting a dynamic character to the organisation and getting it to adopt a militant programme of action. Nothing more could be done in this regard by the CYL.

On the other, the CYL leadership and the Congress leadership were overlapping to a large extent. Mandela, Joe Matthews, Sisulu and Tambo were all influential leaders within the ANC. The inconsistencies that did exist immediately after the 1949 conference, such as a clash between the exclusivism of the new leadership and the non-racial character of Congress, had begun to resolve themselves.

Certainly, in some areas, there were conflicts between Youth Leaguers on the one hand and the Old Guard leadership that had attempted to entrench itself on the other. One such area was Natal, where for long

a struggle had raged between Champion, the ANC (Natal) President and the Youth Leaguers. Champion had opposed the formation of the CYL and thereafter refused to work positively with it.[23] Added to this, Champion had refused to resign from the NRC, even though this step had already been taken (although late) by both Dr Moroka and Z.K. Matthews.

At the Natal ANC conference in May 1951, the CYL, supported by Inkundla ya Bantu,[24] eventually displaced Champion, electing Chief Albert Luthuli in his place. The Guardian reported:

> "Behind the defeat of Mr Champion lies the struggle which has been waging within Congress (sic), with members of the African National Congress Youth League bringing pressure on the Natal Branch of the ANC to fall in line with the policy of non-collaboration advocated by the National Conference."[25]

While the framework of the CYL remained in operation, and young militants continued to join the CYL, they began to get more and more involved in the activities of Congress itself.[26] For instance in May 1951 the CYL organise a "week-long programme ... to rally the African people of (Durban) behind the national liberatory movement."[27] They CYL membership found itself at the forefront of Congress activity, and provided many of the front-line 'volunteers' to the Defiance Campaign that started in 1952.

The Defiance Campaign of 1952 extended the popularity of the ANC and laid the basis for the Congress Alliance campaigns of the rest of the 1950s. The Council of Action, set up by the Programme of Action, drafted a report which was discussed by the ANC National Executive on 17 June 1951. It was decided to call a joint meeting of the executives of the ANC, the SAIC and representatives of the FRAC.[28] A joint planning council was set up at this meeting, consisting of Moroka (in the chair), Marks, Sisulu, Dadoo and Yusuf Cachalia.

Their report, released in November 1951, suggested two tactics: defiance of unjust laws, and industrial action, to begin on either the 6 April[29] or 26 June. The campaign was structured into three phases: firstly, a small group of disciplined volunteers in the major centres would defy; second, the number of volunteers would increase, and third, the defiance would assume a "general mass character" and extend into the rural areas.

The ANC Annual Conference of December 1951 adopted the report and resolved to launch the campaign unless certain unjust laws were repealed by the end of February. These laws included the pass laws and stock limitation regulations, the Separate Representation of Voters Act, the Group Areas Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the Bantu Authorities Act - a broad range of laws affecting the various oppressed groups.

Minor setbacks occurred for Natal, as Champion, although receiving the report of the Joint Planning Council, had not taken the trouble to distribute or discuss it. Natal therefore, with no prior plans, decided to join the campaign as soon as the province was ready.

What Luthuli called a "warm-up" was held on 6 April 1952.[30] It turned out to be a series of mass meetings held around the country, drawing a total attendance of 100 000 people.[31] At the end of April, the ANC National Executive called for 10 000 volunteers to be enrolled and set the date for the start of the campaign as 26 June, "Freedom Day". In reality the campaign started earlier than this. Many Congress leaders were banned under the Suppression of Communism Act and became the first volunteers at the beginning of June.

By the end of the campaign, more than 8 000 volunteers of all national groups had defied. In October 1952 alone, there was a total of 2 534 resisters.[32] But the following year, the campaign was brought to an end by state action. The Public Safety Act, providing for rule by proclamation in an emergency, and the Criminal Laws Amendment Act, which allowed for increased sentences for defiance, were promulgated in the first session of 1953.

But the campaign had an astounding effect on the ANC as a national organisation. By October, after only four months of defiance, the paid-up membership of Congress had swelled from 7 000 to 100 000.[33] At the 1952 Annual Conference of the ANC Chief Albert Luthuli was elected ANC President-General in the place of Moroka. Moroka had disgraced himself in the eyes of Congress. As a volunteer on trial, he had "separated himself from his fellow accused, hired his own lawyer, and (he) took the witness stand to declare his unalterable opposition to Communism in any shape or form."[34]

Although there had clearly been conflict between the CYL militants and Moroka during his term of office as a result of his continued membership of the NRC, it seems that his displacement was not an outcome

of a policy clash.[35] Moroka had proven himself incapable of leading th the Congress.

The CYL did not actually split during the Defiance Campaign but antagonism increased between the 'Africanist exclusivists' and those who were moving to the left. The Defiance Campaign confirmed for the latter the correctness of their shift, and was only the first of their moves in this direction. But the exclusivists had opposed the non-racial aspect of the Defiance Campaign from the start. They did not oppose the direction of the report at the 1951 Annual Conference because of their commitment to the Programme of Action: [36] "they supported plans for the Defiance Campaign while preparing to withstand any moves that, in their eyes, diluted the spirit of exclusive African Nationalism."[37] And, suggest Karis and Carter, they were concerned by the left-wing shift in the CYL and the Transvaal Youth League's journal, African Lodestar.

The exclusivists were critical of the Joint Planning Council because it contained both Indians and communists.[38] At this stage, still committed to Congress, if not to its policies, they grouped themselves tightly in specific areas of the Transvaal and Natal. Eventually, but only in 1958, they were the backbone of the 1950 breakaway that formed the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

Conclusion

The 1950s started with a general swing to the left in the ranks of Congress, and in particular the radicalisation of the younger leaders of the CYL and the ANC. J.B. Marks, an ex-CP member, was elected President of the ANC (Transvaal) as many communists moved into 'full-time' work for the ANC after the dissolution of the CP. As well as this, the more important leaders, such as Mandela, Tambo and Sisulu, moved to the left in response to various pressures.

While the effects of the May Day strike of 1950 and the stay-away of June 26 are obviously critical, other factors are also important. Finding themselves in leading positions within the ANC itself, the younger men came into increased contact with both Indian Congress and CP leaders. Added to this, the CP and the SAIC had sought contact with the CYL leadership since the mid-1940s as the future direction of the ANC became clear to them.

The more immediate outcome of the 1949 Programme of Action was the Defiance Campaign. This campaign was the first planned and structured campaign of a mass nature that was organised by an alliance of national organisations, and was the beginning of the future Congress Alliance. The membership of the ANC increased dramatically and the correctness of the policy of alliances was confirmed.

But the Defiance Campaign also confirmed divergences within the CYL. The exclusivist element, while supporting the idea of passive resistance, could not accept the policy of co-operating with other national organisations. But for the meanwhile, they remained within Congress and organised Africanist Youth League branches in order to influence Congress from within.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Interview with Joe Matthews (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Maseru, July 1963.
2. Ibid.
3. Benson, 1963, p. 28.
4. African Lodestar, Vol 1 no 1, May 1950.
5. The Guardian, 3/5/1950.
6. Interview with Joe Matthews (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Basutoland, Summer 1963.
7. Benson, 1963, p. 28.
8. Ibid, p. 164.
9. Ibid.
10. Bunting, 1975, p. 169.
11. Benson, 1963, p. 164.
12. June 26 has, since 1950, been celebrated in South Africa as "Freedom Day". It was also the day on which the Defiance Campaign was launched in 1952.
13. The CPSA had made no preparations for illegal activity and thus, at that stage, was forced to dissolve. It was later reconstituted (underground) as the South African Communist Party (SACP).
14. Benson, 1963, p. 165.
15. Interview with Willie Nkomo (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Pretoria, April 1964.
16. Interview with Joe Matthews (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Johannesburg, 28/2/1964.
17. Interview with G.M. Pitje (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Johannesburg, 28/2/1964.
18. Interview with 'Congress' Mbata (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Johannesburg, 19/2/1964.
19. Tambo quoted in Bunting, 1975, p. 138.
20. Tambo quoted in ibid, p. 139.
21. Lembede quoted in ibid, p. 138.
22. Interview with G.M. Pitje, Johannesburg, 30/11/1983.
23. At the Annual Conference of the ANC in 1949, Champion, in delivering Natal's Provincial Report, "said that they in Natal were not very well acquainted with the resolution of Congress creating Youth Leagues and from the little they knew and saw, they were inclined positively to discourage establishment of League (sic)" (ANC Annual Conference Minutes, Bloemfontein, 17/12/1949).
24. Jordan Ngubane, one of the CYL founders, was editor of Inkundla ya Bantu. One of his desires for years before this was to defeat

Champion. He was also an avid supporter of Luthuli, and created much tension between himself and Lembede when he supported Luthuli publicly in the NRC elections of 1946 (Pitje interview - Johannesburg, 30/11/1983 and Ngubane - unpublished manuscript, n.d.).

25. The Guardian, 17/5/1951.

26. In some areas, such as Fort Hare, where African youth were concentrated, the CYL organisation continued. Accordingly, the CYL nucleus shifted from the Transvaal to Fort Hare. In 1952, the Students' Representative Council at Fort Hare was composed entirely of Youth Leaguers, while 75% of the students were members of either the CYL or SOYA (Makiwane interview (Karis and Carter microfilm) - Dar es Salaam, n.d.). Yet this branch was effectively an ANC branch, and a strong one at that. Also tight organisation continued in areas where an 'exclusivist' approach predominated (see below).

27. The Guardian, 10/5/1951.

28. The APO was invited to this meeting, but declined to participate.

29. 6 April 1952 was also the 300th anniversary of van Riebeek's arrival at the Cape. Thus, while whites were celebrating this, blacks were holding protest meetings at 300 years of oppression.

30. Luthuli, 1982, p. 105.

31. Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 416 n.

32. Luthuli, 1982, p. 106.

33. Ibid, p. 113.

34. Bunting, 1975, p. 189.

35. This is confirmed by Luthuli's statement during the Treason Trial (private collection) and the interview with David Bopape - Johannesburg, 30/11/1983.

36. Interview with A.B. Ngcobo (Karis and Carter microfilm) - 9/4/1964.

37. Carter and Karis, 1973, p. 413.

38. Interview with A.B. Ngcobo (Karis and Carter microfilm) - 9/4/1964.

Conclusion

This dissertation is not an attempt to conclude one single argument or answer one question. Rather, it is an attempt at a contextualisation and periodisation of the Congress Youth League between 1943 and 1952. As such, the conclusions reached are various. The purpose of this conclusion is to draw out the arguments from the bulk of the paper and to point to some open areas, which could not be, or were not, undertaken.

Firstly, I have tried to show that the formation of the CYL was a response to the failure of the ANC to adjust itself to changing circumstances. The ANC, from 1912 to the war years, was dominated by an emerging small African petty bourgeoisie, attempting to defend and extend their rights as a class. Despite significant contradictions and counter-pressures within Congress itself, it could not respond to the changing political climate in the urban areas during World War II, when rapid secondary industrialisation stimulated the growth of the urban African proletariat, engaged in struggles for survival. Although, as some have pointed out, the CYL also failed to respond to these struggles, I would suggest that this was because they defined their role in a different way. Instead, they pressurised the ANC itself to involve itself in the urban struggles. For the Youth League of Congress to move into these areas and organise, while leaving Congress behind, would have had the effect of setting up a separate organisation in opposition to Congress.

From the start, the goal of the CYL was to work in a disciplined manner within the senior Congress, attempting to inject dynamism into it, and to effect a change in its general direction. Its defined role was not to move into areas neglected by the ANC, but, in effect, to force the ANC to take up popular issues. The CYL did not attempt to organise youth on any significant scale, but remained a small, compact group, and instead, expended almost all of its energy on strategising around its influence on Congress. A major reason for this was the way the CYL had defined its role. But its attempts to remain pure, in ideological terms, certainly also contributed.

In a sense, this method of operation was correct, in that it would

have been premature to organise a mass youth movement with a different political direction to that of Congress. The ANC was recognised as the national movement, and thus it was the ANC which had to be 'dynamised'. Yet this neglect of the organisation of youth had some negative effects. When the small group which controlled the CYL moved into the senior Congress in the early 1950s, there was no continuity in the CYL. Its new leadership was faced with the task of firstly, establishing itself, and secondly changing the direction of the CYL completely. The goal laid down by the early Youth Leaguers was fulfilled. Now, in the early 1950s, it was necessary to begin organising a "genuine mass youth movement", without much of a basis being laid in the earlier years. I shall comment further on this below.

I have also tried to show that while the public ideology of the CYL was Africanism, not all the Youth Leaguers were rabid Africanists. Rather, the common unifying factors were racial exclusivism, anti-communism, and a recognition of the necessity to use militant tactics under a strong African leadership. Even Mda, a strong 'exclusivist', tried to move the empahsis from Africanism to African Nationalism when he took over the Presidency after Lembede's death in 1947. Although the specifics of individuals' positions are unclear, there were certainly varying degrees of exclusivism.

It is possible to say with certainty that it was largely due to the efforts of the CYL that the ANC adopted a more dynamic programme after the 1949 Annual National Conference. But this is nothing new. Most writers have stressed the central role played by the CYL in this change. What is important, though, is that this change is not seen as such a sudden one, and that factors other than the influence of the CYL are identified. Both the CPSA and the SAIC were important influences on the ANC, especially in the second half of the 1940s. What is needed is a thorough assessment of this influence, and an examination of both the Communist Party and the Indian Congress would thus be necessary. Further, the presence of communists within the ANC itself was a critical influence on both the Congress and the CYL.

I have also examined the move of the CYL leadership to the left. Once again this should not be seen as stimulated only by events at the time of the evident move, such as the May Day stay-away and 26 June of 1950. I have argued that once again the Indian Congress and prominent

ANC communists had been influential in the CYL in the later part of the 1940s, despite the official CYL position on these groups.

Lastly, I have tried to show that the short-term results of the Defiance Campaign vindicated the CYL's arguments concerning militancy and organisation. The massive growth in membership in a relatively short period during the campaign showed that the questions of organisation and resistance are dialectical. While it is certainly necessary to organise a campaign of resistance and to have organisational backing, that resistance in itself can generate mobilisation, organisation and more resistance.

While focussing on more general issues concerning the CYL, many more remain. A brief mention of some of these areas would be useful.

Firstly, very little is known about the specifics of the CYL during the late 1940s when it began to expand. More detailed accounts of the branch structures and even provincial structures would help to inform us of the forms of organisation of the CYL during this period. Limited information was gained from interviews, as individuals were not clear on how other areas operated.

Secondly, the contradiction between "exclusivism" and "non-racialism" during the 1940s has not been drawn out sufficiently. Once again, through lack of information, it was not possible to be more precise about this conflict.

Thirdly, and related to the second point, there is the question of the specific relationship between the SAIC and the CYL. Although it has come up fairly often, the specifics remain unclear. Once again, it is possible that a study of the SAIC would be necessary to ascertain the extent and the influence of this relationship, and how the SAIC coped with the contradictory CYL position.

Finally, little is known about the attempts by the Youth Leaguers to effect the change in direction of their own organisation in the early 1950s. In 1950, J.B. Marks, in his Transvaal Presidential address, suggested to the CYL that its role in moving Congress had been fulfilled, and that it was time to adjust their forms of organisation to mobilise and politicise the youth themselves. Although details are not easily available, it would seem that the CYL, for all their attempts, were unsuccessful in this as they became increasingly absorbed into the senior Congress. (I have expanded on this briefly in the Postscript.)

The arguments put forward in this dissertation have been general ones, and do not succeed in breaking any new ground. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this work can at least provide a basis on which further reasearch can be carried out.

Postscript

THE CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE, 1953-1960

This short postscript is intended as a brief comment on the CYL from 1953 until the organisation was banned along with the ANC in 1960.

As seen in the conclusion, the CYL began to discuss the question of organising youth on a mass scale in the early 1950s. Although it is likely that these organisational attempts were largely unsuccessful, an analysis of these attempts would be most welcome. However, as the emphasis shifted back to the activities of the senior Congress and the Congress Alliance, little information is available.

Duma Nokwe, writing in June 1956, argued that the objects of Congress and the CYL should be the same, but that the sphere of the Youth League should extend to sporting and cultural activity. He suggested that the tasks facing the youth were, firstly, to establish a students' organisation for secondary school and university students, secondly to establish cultural, social and sporting clubs, and thirdly to form a Federal Youth Movement to co-ordinate the activities of the youth organisations.[1]

At the CYL National Conference in the same month, the Youth League showed clearly that while it was preparing to organise youth on a mass scale, it would continue to operate as an integral part of the national movement. While on the one hand, it "pledge(d) itself to work tirelessly to win thousands of Youth to the banner of the Freedom Charter", on the other it called for a nation-wide campaign to discuss "new methods of work in youth organisation". It also began to look towards organising at schools as a priority.[2]

In 1958, the CYL was formalised in the ANC Constitution. In this year they adopted a "Programme for the Building of a Mass Youth Movement". They also resolved to organise cultural and sporting clubs based on a federal structure, attempting to bring all youth organisations under a common umbrella.[3]

Notes to Postscript

1. Nokwe, 1956.
2. "Draft Resolutions presented to the Eastern Cap Regional Conference of the ANCYL" - 23/6/1956 (Karis and Carter microfilm).
3. "Resolutions presented to the 15th Annual Conference of the ANCYL (Transvaal)" - Benoni, 26/10/1958 (Karis and Carter microfilm).
4. See McIntosh, 1983.

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1. Karis and Carter Microfilm Collection

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2. Private Collection of ANC Papers

3. Newspapers

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4. Interviews

(a) Interviews from the Karis and Carter Microfilm Collection

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Ngcobo, A.B. - no place, 9/4/1964.*
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Tambo, O. - no place, no date

* - signifies 'notes'

(b) South African Institute of Race Relations Oral History Archive

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Pitje, G.M. - Johannesburg, 28/1/1982 (A. Manson).

(c) Own Interviews

David Bopape - Johannesburg 30/11/1983.
Henry M. Fazzie - Kwazakhele, 20/12/1983.
G.M. Pitje - Johannesburg 30/11/1983.