

Erasing Sebe's footprints

The new Ciskei military ruler Brigadier Oupa Gqozo is discovering how difficult it is to dismantle the heritage of ousted president Lennox Sebe. When he took power in March, Gqozo was at pains to stress his openness to working with organisations of the mass democratic movement. So far, he has been largely as good as his word, and MDM sources indicate there has been continuing contact over a range of issues.

He moved swiftly to accommodate demands of rural communities, whose rebellion played a key role in sweeping him to power. A steady stream of delegations from rural communities has presented demands, asking what the new regime will mean for them.

In the case of Peelton, he proved amenable to requests for their land to be reincorporated into South Africa. South Africa was unwilling to meet the demand, probably for fear of creating a precedent. More significantly, Gqozo appears ready to hand over local administration to residents' associations, which are grouped in the UDF-linked Border Civics Congress (Bocco).

At a recent meeting with Bocco, he indicated a willingness to accept demands that tribal authorities be dropped, and local administration handed over to residents' associations. Tribal authorities were closely associated with the Sebe regime, and their maladministration and

corruption played a key role in sparking the rural rebellion.

Gqozo offered to pay residents' association officials instead, for the work they are beginning to do in administering their areas. Sources said it was unlikely that the associations would accept payment, although they increasingly exert *de facto* control.

The issue was crucial, but also relatively easy to deal with, as many headmen had already fled their communities and strong residents' organisations were in place in most areas. It remains to be seen whether the same principle will be applied to urban areas, where issues of administration are far more complex, and residents' organisations are not as strong.

The union issue has proved even more difficult. Immediately after the coup, unions began moving into Ciskei factories, sparking substantial nervousness among industrialists.

Gqozo initiated a series of discussions between Cosatu and local employers to determine the shape labour legislation should take in the bantustan. (See pages 36 and 37).

On the unionisation of public servants, however, Gqozo has proved less than tolerant. His own efforts to pre-empt unionisation by establishing public servants' associations fell short of effective, and when nurses at Mdantsane's Cecilia Makiwane Hospital went on strike, hundreds were arrested.

A government statement hit at the National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), making the unconvincing allegation that it was in league with Sebe's Ciskei National Independence Party and bent on overthrowing the new order.

When the teachers' body, Elptu, sought meetings with him, they received a very frosty response.

Meanwhile, Gqozo has moved steadily to consolidate his position with the Ciskei bureaucracy, whose loyalty was always doubtful. On the one hand, he has announced salary increases for a wide range of staff, particularly police, prisons and military personnel.

At the same time, he has acted against some senior officials. Among his first actions was a major shake-up in the upper echelons of the security forces. More

recently, two of the original members of the military council were dropped among mutters of a coup plot. One of them, Col OM Guzana, was detained. The most recent figures to be affected were key security spokespeople, Headman Somtunzi and the police's Avery Ngaki. Both were leftovers from the Sebe regime and had represented its most prominent public face. - Franz Kruger, ECNA

SAYCO

Now just a phone call away

Gone are the code-names, the cheap disguises and the secret meetings on city pavements. The South African Youth Congress (Sayco) is rapidly getting used to the idea of being legal.

It now operates from not one but two office suites, one in downtown Johannesburg and the other in the city's more upmarket Braamfontein area; and access to the organisation's leadership is often no more than a phone call away - a far cry from just 12 months ago, when Sayco was functioning virtually underground.

But growing up hasn't been easy, as the leadership found at Sayco's first-ever national congress, held in the KaNgwane bantustan over the Easter weekend. When toyi-toying young lions were urged to roar, they did just that - and that included roaring their disapproval of several of the methods and decisions of the early years.

Sayco's financial policy, and a lack of consultation on key issues such as the



Gqozo: friendly, but not with the unions

ANC Youth League, were the major areas of dispute, and ones which led to lengthy debate during the three-day congress.

'Congress came up with a number of lessons for us', admits newly-elected publicity officer Parks Mphakwana. 'The clandestine methods used by Sayco in the past did reduce the frequency of consultation. We did not use forums of discussion as often as we would have liked to.'

'But as a legal organisation, under the present conditions, we cannot operate clandestinely. The membership will not accept that we cannot consult'. Although the leadership sometimes seemed taken back at the ferocity of questioning at congress, Mphakwana says all agreed that the 'spirit of openness' was a healthy sign. 'Now is the correct moment to raise these issues', he told *WIP*.

'It can only strengthen our organisation, which in turn will strengthen the ANC'. The question of Sayco's relationship to the ANC is obviously a crucial one, yet it did not seem to be fully resolved at the Easter congress.

This was partly because of the absence of input from an ANC Youth Section delegation, who were unable to travel to South Africa because of government delays in granting indemnity to ANC cadres; but there also seemed to be genuine concern within individual youth congresses about the implications of Sayco and the ANC Youth Section 'merging' to form a revived ANC Youth League.

These concerns varied, from fears that those youths to the left of the ANC would be left without a political home, to those who felt the 'merger' was



Sayco: growing up hasn't been easy

being foisted on the ANC by an impatient Sayco leadership.

According to Mphakwana, the position now is that the organisation's next central executive committee (CEC) meeting - scheduled for the end of May - will draw up a programme of action to be presented to the ANC Youth Section.

'Congress gave the NEC a mandate to discuss the establishment of the Youth League with the Youth Section, and this is what we are doing now.'

'Obviously it will not be a trouble-free process', he says. 'The establishment of a mass-based organisation always has its problems. The ANC itself is having to adapt to being a legal organisation, and to the question of mandates and open discussion ... many people are still not used to open discussion and open

methods'.

Sayco officials are currently working out a timetable which will be implemented if the individual youth congresses agree to the transformation into the ANC Youth League.

The first stage of this programme has already started: the 'relaunching' of all Sayco structures, in line with the congress decision to adopt a unitary structure. This means, for example, that the Soweto Youth Congress (Soyco) will now relaunch as the Soweto branch of Sayco, and operate according to the Sayco constitution, with *one logo and one programme of action*.

June 16 has been set as a deadline for this, and 'we think the process will be a smooth one', says Mphakwana, smiling - and conceding there may be some youth congresses

which are 'sentimentally attached' to their names and emblems.

'But the benefits are obvious; a unitary structure facilitates communication, and shifts decision-making to a centralised structure rather than individual youth congresses scattered around the country'.

Also on the Sayco agenda is the transformation of the existing 'youth forum' - a loose grouping of Sayco, the SA National Student Congress (Sansco), the National Union of SA Students (Nusas) and the Congress of SA Students (Cosas) - into a fully-fledged Youth Front.

'At the moment this is more of a summit than a front. It must be transformed to marshal all forces of youth into struggle', says Mphakwana. 'It's minimum programme will be an opposition to apartheid, and

the unifying perspectives of the Conference for a Democratic Future'. Does this include the PAC and Azapo?

'If they agree to the minimum programme, they will be welcome', is the answer.

'We feel it is important for all youth sectors opposed to apartheid to participate. If we can come with one forum, the youth can learn to understand each other. We can lay the basis for a multi-party democracy ... we have to learn to co-exist'.

Talking about fronts, what about Sayco's relationship to the United Democratic Front - particularly the congress resolution calling for the UDF to disband?

'We feel the UDF, in its current form, should phase out', says Mphakwana. 'The UDF is no broader than the ANC. We see, rather, a patriotic front with the ANC and its allies at the core'.

To strengthen this front, Sayco says it is building closer links with the SACP and Cosatu, and now has a full-time official to co-ordinate its labour department.

'We want to encourage the youth to join trade unions, and teach them about unionism', says Mphakwana. 'We want the working youth to join our organisation, whether it be Sayco or the ANC Youth League, and to participate in community activities'. And what about those young lions to the left of the ANC?

'The ANC Youth League must be mass-based, but the Communist Party is different. It is not for everybody. Therefore, the Party youth has to be qualitatively different to the ANC Youth League.

'Within Sayco, there has been no real discussion around that ... perhaps the

Party will indicate the line of march'. - *WIP Correspondent*

NAMIBIA

Labour code on its way

Namibia is soon to unveil details of a new labour dispensation. Addressing a May Day rally at Windhoek's Independence Stadium, president Sam Nujoma announced that a labour code for the country was on the way.

The president told the 2 000 to 3 000-strong crowd that collective bargaining between employers and trade unions was essential for sound labour relations.

The government had already formulated the code, he said, and would soon be submitting it to the cabinet for approval.

In addition, a competent labour court would be established in the near future. Nujoma also gave an assurance that his government would not neglect its traditional role of protection for workers in the form of provisions like minimum hours and compensation for injuries sustained at work and for occupational diseases.

The code will be the first real indication of the new



Witbooi: labour administration will play developmental role

government's approach to labour. The Namibian constitution guarantees the right of freedom of association and upholds the right of workers to withdraw their labour. It also commits Namibia to joining the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and, where possible, to adhere to its conventions and recommendations. But few details of the nuts-and-bolts of labour policy have since emerged. The legislative legacy of the old South West African administration is a mixture of the antediluvian and some fairly sound law. The main statute governing relations between trade unions and employers is the Wage and Industrial Conciliation Ordinance of 1952 as amended.

The ordinance is in effect the equivalent of South Africa's Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937. It does confer the right for workers to take strike action provided certain procedures, including referral of the dispute to a conciliation board, are followed.

But SWA never had its equivalent of an industrial council system in terms of which agreements struck between unions and employers become binding as law, as applies in South Africa. It also never had a labour court or any equivalent, nor any provision for concepts like unfair labour practices. On the other hand, the existing provisions for basic protections for workers - the equivalent of South Africa's Basic Conditions of Employment Act - are deemed to be 'acceptable' by labour law experts.

In February this year Professor Nic Wichahn, architect of the labour reforms instituted in South Africa from 1979 onwards, handed to former SWA



Nujoma: announced new labour policy

administrator Louis Pienaar the second of two reports of a commission he headed into the territory's labour legislation. It has been left to the new government to respond to its recommendations and the extent to which they have influenced the code referred to by Nujoma is not clear. Labour and Manpower Development minister Hendrik Witbooi and John Shaetonhodi, president of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), also delivered speeches at the May Day rally. Witbooi declared current arrangements for labour administration 'grossly inadequate' and said serious measures would have to be taken immediately. He also said labour administration in the republic would not only perform the traditional role of protecting labour, but it would also play a developmental role. Shaetonhodi signalled that the unions intended to play a pivotal role in Namibia's political life and said workers had to forge their weapons of struggle so that they could also participate in the effective management of the country's industries. He also confirmed the unions would stay in Swapo. Some months ago, when the constitution was being finalised, there was speculation in the press about discontent in the labour movement following a leak of its