

St. Thomas Secondary School,
P.O. St. Thomas,
Parish of St. George,
Trinidad, West Indies.

24th September, 1944.

Mr. John, Esq.,
St. Thomas,
St. George Province.

Dear Sir,

You will find enclosed a badly printed copy of our 1944 Manifesto, in which we set out the immediate and long-range objectives of the Congress Youth League.

You will easily notice from it that our organization is based on the belief in the first instance that the African National Congress provides a good basis for the building of a militant and powerful National Front. Therefore the immediate task of the Congress Youth League is to overhaul the machinery of the A.N.C. from within by mobilising Youth throughout South Africa, and building a powerful core of militant African Nationalism in order to rouse the masses and win our National freedom.

You will notice also that the Congress Youth League is only now beginning to unfurl its sails and to sweep out into open organisation by establishing Branches in Natal and the Cape. This will lead inevitably to the formation of an all-South Africa Youth League, which will be the rallying point of all nationally-minded Youth in the developing struggle for the overthrow of white domination!

Of course, our Manifesto was issued at a time (1944) when the National Movement was threatened by the splinter organisation, the African Democratic Party. Some parts of it, at least are out of date if not too unwisely. It will be necessary in the near future to re-word our Manifesto, so that it becomes a clarion call to all Africa to rise and smash the shackles of foreign domination.

So as regards your questions I shall answer them one by one.

"Are members of other political groups allowed to join the Youth League?"

Here is the answer:- "The Youth League professes African Nationalism, an outlook which must ultimately embrace every African. Our goal is the creation of a single powerful African National Front which will include Africans from all ranks and all walks of life. From that point of view therefore every African is eligible. But here is the rub. No serious-minded person joins a political organisation unless he believes in the validity and genuineness of its methods, principles and programme. If he believes in these he devotes almost all his energies to the furtherance of the interests of his political party and for the achievement of its ideals. It is therefore inconceivable that any serious-minded person would belong to two parties at the same time, unless he believes that they were interchangeable, which is nonsense. Therefore we of the Youth League encourage a singleness of purpose in our members, in the sense, of course, of undivided devotion to the cause of African Nationalism and National freedom. That is particularly so at this time when we are laying a solid foundation for creating a revolutionary national front upon the proper basis. If we allowed members of all political parties to join the Youth League we would soon have an amorphous body with no clear-cut political orientation and with no proper direction, because it would endeavour to accommodate all

conflicting groups. That is short is our attitude. But this attitude is further qualified in two ways. The Communist Party, the Unity Movement, the Trotskyist Group, the A.S.P. etc., are all bent on fighting oppression. We are therefore not hostile to any of them as long

These are the cardinal features in the broadest outline of our Nationalism - such as we profess it in the Congress Youth League.

However, we shall in the very near future, supply you with copies of our Constitution and our Youth League Manifesto. Meanwhile you could do the following:-

1. Get together a small nucleus and work them in our Nationalistic outlook and indicate to them the need for Youth to train for a greater leadership. These will form the core of the Movement at Port Hare. Once there is such a core of convinced and faithful Youth Leaguers there will be no chance of the Youth League at Port Hare dying out.
2. Then call or let some body call a meeting of those interested and launch a Youth League Branch at Port Hare. But such a Branch should work hand in hand with the National Executive stationed in Johannesburg, and of which the General Secretary is H.A.D. Masekela, Esq., B.A., a law student. At that meeting an Executive should be formed. Subscription Fees for students amount to only 6d. and 2/6 per annum for adults and those above the age of 21 and not at school. Our membership cards for adults not attending school are the same as those of the National Congress. However, that will be clarified in the Constitution. Meanwhile, whilst waiting for the Constitution and other details, get your nucleus or "core" in readiness. You might, if you think it necessary, also contact Mr. Masane who is Secretary of the A.N.C. (Cape). Also contact these students Tsapo Letlaka (D.A.P.) who knows me, and Roseate Esiba (S.A.I.) who also knows me. Let me know as soon as possible what you think of my suggestions. In any case, please do not follow my example of a long and protracted delay in answering.

Kind regards to all!

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) A.S.P. MDA

Pres. Congr. Youth League.

P.S. Expect Constitution late next week. Hope to hear from you soon.

A.S.P. MDA

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