

CONTACT - 1/11/58

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**NEW BID TO REACH UNITY BY TVL ANC.
DIFFERENCES LIKELY TO BE RESOLVED by UMHLADENI.**

The long-awaited special conference of the Tvl ANC, delayed for six months because of the ban on meetings of ten or more Africans in urban areas, is at last to take place. It is to be held in Orlando, Jbg, on November 1 and 2, and will coincide with the normal annual congress.

The chief importance of the conference is that delegates will once again have to face up to issues which have caused strife and disunity within the ANC during the past year.

It is likely that these issues will be resolved at the conference and that the Tvl ANC will adopt a pattern of outlook which will last for some time to come. As other ANC regions are experiencing similar problems to those of the Tvl, whatever the Orlando delegates decide will probably go a long way towards influencing the African National Congress as a whole.

While the ban was in operation the problems in the Tvl were there, but they were under the surface. The opposing groups were at loggerheads, but their conflict was more in the nature of hidden, sniping warfare. In recent weeks however, the struggles have again emerged into the open, and all sides are now engaged in last-minute preparations for the conference.

The ANC members who attend the conference will have in their minds the succession of events in the past year. These events were:

In mid-1957, a number of Tvl ANC branches began to campaign for changes in the provincial executive. They felt that the large proportion of the Tvl leaders, who were standing trial for high treason, had been unable to devote their full attention to the ANC and that organisational affairs had deteriorated as a result. They therefore pressed for a new, working executive.

The situation was discussed at the annual conference held in Pta in October 57. The branches put forward their views about the leadership, and also complained that the financial affairs of the province were not in order, as several items of expenditure had not been properly explained. The leadership's supporters replied with the slogan: "We stand by our leaders". They claimed that because of the Government's attacks on the ANC, the leadership, whatever its faults, which in any event they denied, should be given full confidence. When executive elections arose, no opportunity was allowed for individual nominations, and the old executive was left in office en bloc.

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As a result, the petitioners - as the campaigning branches had become known - increased greatly in strength and in fact, became a semi-organised group within the ANC. Their complaints were voiced at the ANC's national conference held in Orlando in December, 1957. After discussion, Mr. D. Nyembe, the deputy national president, undertook to assist in the calling of a special Tvl conference.

The weeks passed, however, and no conference was held. Growing impatient the petitioners proceeded with plans to convene their own meeting. It was at this stage that an official special conference was announced for February.

The meeting began inauspiciously. Even though Nyembe was in the chair, he was unable to prevent the physical assaults which occurred. A group of "strong arm" men - whose presence has never been satisfactorily explained, although the most credible account seems to be that they were there at the behest of the Tvl leadership - proceeded to bloody the heads of a number of persons who were attempting to enter the hall. For a time, complete disorder reigned, and when the conference did finally get under way, there were constant delays because of arguments over procedure. At 8 p.m. permission for the use of the hall expired. Nothing constructive had been achieved.

It would, however, appear that the very great majority of delegates was opposed to the then existing leadership on the grounds of their maladministration, and that this would have been made evident if a vote had been taken.

The petitioners were now in full cry, but a series of events and circumstances served to check their momentum. Firstly, the national executive moved in, suspended the Tvl executive, and appointed an "administrative committee". Immediate elections were promised. Secondly, the general election of April 16 was not far off, and energies were turned towards the organisation of the "stay-at-home" protest. This demonstration was a failure, and it would inevitably have rebounded against the provincial leadership had a conference been held at that time.

Because of the ban imposed by the Govt shortly before the General Election, no meeting could, however be held.

In May of this year, two prominent Africans, Madzunya and Lebailo, were expelled from the ANC because of their alleged anti-congress activities. The ban was recently lifted, and arrangements for the forthcoming special and annual conference were proceeded with immediately.

This is the background of events to the conference. The issues now are not however, the same as six months ago. In the intervening period, the anti-leadership feelings which were so strong and widespread at the time of the stay-at-home, have greatly abated. During this period, too, the affairs of the Tvl have been in the hands of the National executive's appointed committee, which has done its best to re-establish the prestige of the ANC amongst the mass of members.

The petitioners movement as such has disappeared, and the struggle now is between differing ideologies. The former Tvl leadership is no longer the primary target of criticism. Instead, it is the policies and outlook of the national leadership and the ANC as it is at the moment which is under fire.

The opposing groups and the views they represent can be summarised in this way:

(1) The official ANC leadership. Their policy has been described by Duma Nokwe assistant national secretary-general of the ANC, as being "embodied in the Freedom Charter". Mr. Nokwe says: "It is a policy of universal suffrage for all, and the equitable distribution of the wealth of the country amongst all persons irrespective of their colour or race. In fact, the ANC accepts unreservedly that South Africa belongs to all who are within it."

Continuing, Mr. Nokwe says: "The ANC has always accepted that it must co-operate with other racial groups. At no stage has it been the policy of the ANC to confine the struggle to those of African origin. In co-operating with other organisations, as it has done with the SA IC, and more lately with the SACPO and the COB, the ANC operates on an equal basis. The question of one group dominating the other has never been experienced, and those who may fear that that is the position, are suffering from an inferiority complex."

"The ANC believes there are sincere and democratic persons among all the other racial groups. This view has been confirmed again and again in the national conferences of the ANC".

Speaking on international policy, Mr. Nokwe says: "The ANC supports all struggles for independence, also peace in the world."

(2) The Anti-Charterist Council. This is an organisational committee which was formed only a few weeks ago. Its aim is to remove the existing leadership and at the same time to delete the Freedom Charter as a fundamental aspect of Congress policy. The Council represents the union of two opposition groups: the Africanists and the African Nationalists.

The Africanist leaders are men such as Potlako Leballo and Josias M. Madzunya.

Mr. Leballo states Africanist policy in this way: "In the present phase of the struggle, the Africanists believe that it is essential for the African people to be forged into a united group. We believe that the force that can do this is nationalism, because it provides a superior loyalty to the tribal loyalty. And we believe the African people are oppressed as a nation, not as a class, and must therefore struggle as a nation to overthrow white domination."

"The Africanists would prefer to see a peaceful ~~mutin~~ solution of the country's problems, but have reached the conclusion that unless there is a drastic change in the attitudes of the whites, such a peaceful solution will be impossible.."

On the question of multi-racialism, Mr. Leballo says: "We feel that even to admit the existence of different races is a ~~mut~~ sign of racialism, because we all belong to the one human race. Because of geographical and historical factors, different members of the human race have evolved their own cultures. Hence we speak of 'national groups' of which we recognise three in South Africa, namely Africans (including Coloureds), Europeans and Indians.

"We accept democracy as the rule of the majority and we believe that only universal suffrage can correctly interpret the will of the majority.

"The society we will have will be non-racial. Initially, it might even be necessary to make a crime of racialism. Men will be judged on their individual merits. Since there will be no groups, but individuals, it will be impossible to have domination of one group by another.

"The ANC has stated that it welcomes cooperation with other national groups on specific issues. And the Africanists support that stand. But we regard it as untenable, if not insolent, for any one of the other national groups to determine the method of struggle and the goals of the African people".

(3) The African Nationalists claim their leadership from trade union leaders, businessmen, teachers and journalists. In outlook they are essentially the same as the Africanists, except that they dislike the use of the word "Africanist" because they feel it has acquired undesirable connotations and they also state that the Africanists are inclined to be too extreme in statements on multi-racialism.

A prominent African Nationalist has expressed his group's viewpoint in these words: "The whole feeling of the African people is to fight their battle alone. If the Indians, for example, are also an oppressed group, they should unite and fight as an Indian group. At the same time, our standpoint is not exclusive. We believe in a common society where there will be no racial discrimination and where everybody will identify themselves with the interests of South Africa as a whole."

"But to attain that goal, we feel that African ~~mut~~ must be united on the basis of nationalism.

"We do not exclude cooperation with other racial groups, but because of our past experience, we are very wary of possible domination and control. For example, the 'stay-at-home' protest did not come from the people and they did not want it. And who were the sufferers?"

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What are the criticisms which the conflicting sides level at each other?

(4) Mr. Nkwe has this to say about the Africanists: They are a very small group. Occasionally they take advantage of conditions of dissatisfaction within the ANC and by allying themselves in this manner, they give the impression of having a following. But they do not have a mass following. They do not have a single branch supporting them.

"There is a regrettable tendency in certain quarters, and even in certain newspapers, to build up the Africanists, and to make them appear much bigger than they are," says Mr. Nkwe.

"But the fact the Africanists have no mass following is clearly illustrated in the present Tvl situation. As soon as the national executive took over the administration of the Tvl, all the loyal branches which previously had appeared to be with the Africanists, turned against them. This was because as far as the loyal branches were concerned, the problem of the provincial executive had disappeared, and they therefore saw no cause for continuing a campaign against the policy of the ANC.

"And of course, it was possible to expel Madzunya and Leballo without any reaction other than acclamation from branches.

"One of the chief arguments of the Africanists is that the ABC has not adhered to its 1949 programme of Action. But this programme is merely a set of activities. It lays down no policy whatsoever. It simply enumerates means of achieving freedom - for example, the boycott of advisory boards.

"The programme does not define the content of African nationalism. It does not say that the brand of African nationalism to be followed is narrow, racialistic and chauvinistic.

"And the content which has been developed through the years is the progressive African nationalism which is in fact the policy of the ANC today.

Despite what the Africanists say, there has been no departure from anything at all."

(5) Africanist criticism of the ANC leadership as expressed by Mr. Leballo is as follows:

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"The leaders have never tried sincerely to implement the 1949 programme of action, for the simple reason that they do not want to see the emergence of an African nationalism.

"Subscribing as they do to the myth that this is a class struggle, they see an obstacle in nationalism. This attitude is chiefly due to the banning of the Communist Party in 1950 and the subsequent concentration of activities on the ANC.

"The present ANC leadership both national and Tvl, is dominated by the COD and others of its type of mind. That is, people of leftist inclinations.

"Since the advent of the present ANC leadership, a fetish has been made of loyalty to leadership as such. The impression is deliberately created that criticism of the leadership is tantamount to disloyalty to the movement.

"During the past few years, the ANC has made little or no progress. In fact, its campaigns have been a series of dismal failures. We believe that this has been due to the fact that the leadership has not been primarily interested in the cause of the African people as such, but rather in furthering ideals to which they as individuals subscribe."

(6) The African Nationalist spokesman also levelled criticism at the leadership. On the question of the Congress alliance, he has this to say: "The alliance has divided the African people. A large set of people in the country areas are all for African nationalism and are against the alliance. Thus people in the country have been divided from those in the towns. That is why the present ABC has been unable to obtain their support.

"The African people in general do not want to be allied with the COD. They know them to be leftists, and when we want to fight for our rights, these people weaken us.

"This is so both because they use campaigns for their own ends, and also because the Govt will not listen to our requests and demands because of their outlook.

We also oppose the ANC's adherence to the Freedom Charter. The Charter is a foreign ideology not based on African nationalism. It presupposes a state of freedom already obtained. It is not a programme of action for a struggle."

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This is the picture of the Tvl ANC as it goes forward to the special conference.

On Nov 1, the administrative committee will report on kks its period of stewardship, and this will be followed by a full discussion and elections for a new executive. The administrative committee has stated that it is simply attending to the organisation of the conference and will leave it to the Tvl delegates to choose their own executige.

The national working committee o f the ANC, in a statement sent to all branches early in October, has made the following appealin connection with the conference:

"Every member of Congress in the Tvl should realise that the unity of the people is paramount, and that the enemies who predict a failure shall be exposed and disappointed.

"Nothing that is unpolitifal should be tolerated. We wish to advise members against all tendencies which are uncongressite, cliques and factions.

"The main purpose of the conference is not so much who will be elected as the achievement of unity among all congress members.

"In the elections, the principle which must guide members is the election of a man or woman because of his or her ability and loyalty to the organisation, and the election of an executive committee which is kkkkk broad and representative.

"This means that members should not come from one area or should only be town people and ignore the countryside, which has proved so much ability in carrying the work of the organisation in the country.

"It is not a question of which side you were in the Tvl dispute. All except a few self-professed mischief-makers are members of one family whose main object is to defeat the tyrann of Verwoerdism."

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