

Chapter Nine

YOUTH AND STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

LAST YEAR'S REVIEW dealt mainly with the historical backgrounds of Youth Organisations operating in all three regions. The intention this year is to outline the various projects they have implemented in accordance with their aims and objectives.

South African Students' Movement (Junior SASM)

SASM's vigour, enthusiasm and determination was felt in 'Thrust', the first edition of a newsletter they have produced this year. It abundantly reflected the great potential present among young Black high school students in tackling frustrations and problems that beset them in their roles as students and as members of the Black community.

SASM's newly printed skipper which bore a very powerful and militant emblem depicting Black unity arbitrarily suffered the blow of the censorship board under the hand of Mr Jannie Kruger, the chairman of the board.

SASM also succeeded in conducting a matric summer school at Orlando West High School for external matriculants preparing for March supplementary examinations. This project was envisaged by SASM to be, in the near future, a National project embracing the other provinces and not merely confined to the Transvaal.

Several project proposals were drawn up by SASM, viz. Winter and Summer project for Secondary and High School students. This project was geared at helping students in:

- (a) choosing of right career or profession;

- (b) personal improvement of the student in the study of subjects;
- (c) bridging of J.C.-matric gap;
- (d) bridging of matric-university gap.

This was to be an annual project conducted at major centres throughout the country during school vacations for a period of two weeks.

Another project proposal was intended for vocational training pupils in all trade centres in the country and was primarily aimed at helping pupils in developing some degree of competence and skill in the general use of official languages which play a vital role in the acquisition and maintenance of jobs.

SASM's attempts at organising an annual Students' General Council conference sometime in July were thwarted by 'militant' forces.

The tremendous strides taken by SASM this year, were savagely curtailed by the banning order imposed on its Secretary-General, Mathe Diseko (21 years old), believed to be the youngest black to be banned under the Suppression of Communism Act.

WCYO (Western Cape Youth Organisation)

WCYO was officially established early this year and is a properly constituted youth organisation. Its aims and objects are laid down in their constitution as follows:

1. To promote contact, practical co-operation, mutual understanding and unity among all Black youth organisations in the Western Cape.
2. To represent the interests of youth organisations on all issues that affect them in their community situations.
3. To heighten the sense of awareness and encourage them to become involved in the political, economic and social development of the Black people.
4. To project at all times the Black consciousness image, culturally, socially, educationally and religiously.
5. To become a platform for expression of Black youth opinion and represent these nationally.

WCYO immediately embarked on meaningful projects aimed at bringing about positive re-awakening in the Black community. Projects can be broadly tabulated as Drama Workshops, Leadership Seminars, and Literacy Projects.

In June, WCYO held a 3 day leadership training conference for Black high school students at the Christian Leadership Centre in Kensington. Their conference theme was: Black Consciousness and the High School Student.

WCYO also conducts a language Xhosa clinic whereby Xhosa tuitions are rendered to pupils by a qualified Xhosa teacher. These tuitions are held thrice a week at night at the Care Centre. The Secretary-General was responsible for the establishment of a Drama Society (Hanover Park Drama Society) which produced its first play called 'What hurts me'.

In the suburbs of Landsdowne, Wynberg, Hanover Park and Claremont, WCYO noticed the great dispersion of various youth clubs operating within their various sections due to different denominations. WCYO thus initiated a project which would lead to the unification of all these groups. A seminar for this purpose was organised where 10 different denominations were represented. This seminar resulted in the formation of the Ecumenical Youth Front.

The National Youth Organisation (NAYO)

Black Youth Movements in the provinces of Natal, Transvaal, Western Cape and Border, experienced a desire to come together at a Seminar where youth activity in the entire country could be thoroughly analysed and decisions to solidify efforts arrived upon. The movements hoped too that such a seminar would culminate in the formation of a National movement representing the Black youth in this country.

To them the necessity and value of such a body, lay not only in the implementation of the aims and aspirations of the youth as such, but also in the articulation of the needs of the entire Black Community towards emancipation from psychological and physical oppression.

Under the co-sponsorship of Black Community Programmes and SASO, such a National Youth Seminar was held at Mount Coke Hotel near King Williams Town from 1-3 June, 1973. This seminar marked the birth of the National Youth organisation. Voting delegates came from the following youth organisations:

- (a) The Natal Youth Organisation.
- (b) The Transvaal Youth Organisation.
- (c) The Western Cape Youth Organisation.
- (d) The Border Youth Union.

The constitution with the following aims and objects was drafted and adopted by all youth groups:

1. To promote solidarity among all youth in the Black community.
2. To project the Black consciousness image culturally, socially, religiously, educationally, politically and otherwise.
3. To commit itself to the elimination of psychological and physical oppression of Black people.
4. To draw a common programme of action for all youth in the

Black community.

5. To serve as a platform of expression for the youth nationally and the Black world in general.

The Action Programme outlining projects to be embarked upon by NAYO affiliates was drawn as follows:

Projects

- (a) *Educational*: This project embraces activities such as:

- (i) conducting literacy campaigns;
- (ii) home education schemes;
- (iii) bursary fund;
- (iv) establishment of creches.

- (b) *Cultural*

- (i) drama, theatre, music and art workshops;
- (ii) sports (redirection)—soccer especially;
- (iii) black theology.

- (c) *Survey*: Survey of all Black experiences and living conditions as a counter propaganda machine, e.g. labour.

- (d) *Fund-Raising*: This project includes:

- (i) direct sponsorship from overseas;
- (ii) co-operation and centralisation of distribution;
- (iii) staging shows, showing films—cultural lights;
- (iv) publication sales;
- (v) cake sales, jumble sales and door to door collection.

NAYO's active president, Mathe Diseko (21), was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, restraining him from attending social and political gatherings and also from addressing pupils or students for the next 5 years.

Another member of the Transvaal branch of NAYO, the Transvaal Youth Organisation (TRAYO) Mr Nkutsoeu Matsau is presently being charged under the Terrorism Act.

Four other members from the same area, Sharpeville, who were arrested with him were released after one month in detention. No charges were laid against them.

Transvaal Youth Organisation (TRAYO)

TRAYO is affiliated to the National Youth Organisation (NAYO). This branch has been active in fund-raising projects and cultural activities on the

Reef, especially in Soweto. Carletonville Commemoration was held on 14 October 1973, in a pledge of solidarity with the families of those miners shot by the police at Western Deep Levels.

There were reports of intimidation against members of the Sharpeville Youth Club and the Sharpeville Students Association, both firmly attached to TRAYO. A press release on TRAYO members detained by the police appeared in the *Rand Daily Mail* of 26 October, after which TRAYO launched a Defend Fund which was seen as a permanent project.

Attempts were made to assimilate the Transvaal Labour Youth Organisation into TRAYO, after Labour Youth's militant stance at the Labour Party Congress and its advocating Black Consciousness amongst the coloured people. However, because of Labour Youth's operation within the CRC, through the Coloured Labour Party, there were still differences to be ironed out.

TRAYO's constitution declares 'non-allegiance and lack of loyalty to white structures, value systems, organisations and patronage'. TRAYO saw the means of solidifying and uniting the Black Youth to be lying in the realisation by the Black Youth that:

- (i) he has similar goals and aspirations as his country, and therefore has;
- (ii) to work relentlessly for the liberation of the Black community from psychological and physical oppression by;
- (iii) rejecting unconditionally all obstacles and defaulters that bar him from realising his aspirations.

TRAYO's influence stretches as far north as Sibasa. It has been remarked upon by TRAYO's cadres that the constant removal of rural blacks in areas such as Mabopane poses a difficulty for youth activity.

Outstanding about today's youth organisations is the fast-developing urge to spread the message of Black Consciousness. And to make increased contact between the various youth organisations in the country.

Southern African Students Movement (SASM)

Background

This is a federation of National Organisations of Students from the countries of Southern Africa. Below is reproduced an extract from the SASM report on its formation inaugural conference:

On 24 June, 1973, students from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland came together at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, at Roma, Lesotho. They had come

together for the noble purpose of attempting to identify and define structures within which they could have a meaningful participation in the shaping of Southern Africa's destiny. The attempt was successful. The Southern African Students Movement (SASM) was born on 28 June, 1973.

The formation of SASM is first and foremost a response to the Kumasi Declaration of 1971 that as a contribution to the promoting of African Unity, student organisations in Africa had to be formed on a regional basis. The regions were Southern Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and North Africa. Southern Africa, according to this regionalisation, comprises South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Angola, Malagasy and Mozambique.

SASM comes as one of those organisations in Southern Africa, operating under the banner of the fast wide-spreading Black Consciousness attitude. It is therefore evident that they cannot let white student organisations like NUSAS and ASB affiliate to the movement. This was manifested by the unanimous conference decision to disallow NUSAS delegates from attending, even as observers, the SASM conference proceedings. Their policy statement clearly outlines that being a Black Movement, SASM is not, as a result, a racist organisation.

'A fact to be recognised is that coming together does not mean hating those who are excluded from our togetherness. It simply means that those excluded have no relevant place in our activities', remarks one of their executive members.

The following people were elected to serve on the first Executive Committee;

President	O.R. Tiro (South Africa)
Vice-President	R.T. Matete (Lesotho)
Secretary-General	S.T.M. Magagula (Swaziland)
Director of Projects	J.D. Baqwa (South Africa)
Director of Cultural Affairs	N.S. Ndebele (South Africa)

The movement is presently making arrangements for the establishment of its Secretariat buildings in Botswana.

Within four months of its formation in June, the Movement has already suffered a blow from the South African Government, in the October banning of SASM's Director of Projects, Dumo Baqwa, who is restricted to the magisterial area of Umzimkulu, C.P., for the next 5 years (see chapter on Bannings). This makes it impossible for him to continue with his duties, both in SASM and in SASO, where he was Literacy Director. At about the same time as Baqwa's banning, it was reported that Onkgopotse Tiro, then SASO Permanent Organiser and SASM's President, was being hunted by the South African Security Police, so that he could be served

with banning orders. It was later learnt that he could not be found because he had left the country for SASM work in Botswana (he still had a valid travelling document). At the time of printing he had not yet come back.

The formation of SASM has been a very remarkable stride in the Black Student affairs in Southern Africa. To many it comes as a fulfilment of a dream. A dream that one day the students of Southern Africa will stand united, and participate in the shaping of the Continent's future. One Africa, One Unity, One Destiny!

For the protagonists of Black Consciousness, this is seen by some observers as yet another milestone for the Gospel of Black Solidarity and the manifestation of self-pride through self-reliance; which is seen as a necessary ingredient even for the total liberation of the Continent from colonialism and neo-colonialism in which some parts of Africa are still gravely entangled.

'SASM sets out to prepare the people of Southern Africa spiritually and mentally for the better handling of the future', said one of its spokesmen. (*Information supplied by SASM*).

The South African Students Association (SASO)

SASO had a trying year when almost the whole of her leadership was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act by the Government. (See chapter on Bannings).

However, the Black students, undeterred by such suppressive measures that the Government had resorted to, continued to pursue the aims of the student organisation; and to register the aspirations of Black students in the country.

The annual SASO General Students Council was held in July. The theme of the conference was 'Black Power: its manifestations in the Black man's struggle'.

SASO engaged itself in projects and in other programmes according to her planning; though much planning was disturbed by the bannings. Students continued to fuse elements of self-reliance and self-appraisal in the Black community on matters of cultural, moral, ethical, economic and social values. (See chapter on Self-help).

The Free University Scheme piloted by SASO was making steady strides and gaining in progress. Many students have taken it up as a means of acquiring education outside of the tribal university system. (See chapter on Black Consciousness).

SASO continued to oppose Government-created platforms and openly stated its stand against Bantustans, the South African Indian Council, the CRC and other institutions working within the channels of separatism. (*Information supplied by SASO*).