

Winnie Mandela defeated in Women's League elections

After strong speculation that Winnie Mandela was going to be elected president of the ANC Women's League at its April national launch, delegates confounded pundits by voting in Gertrude Shope. Press reports reveal that Mandela received less than 20% of the votes cast.

The conference was to have taken place last October but was postponed because of the slow process of establishing structures in the country. Although it was intended to focus mainly on the rebuilding of the organisation, its structure, its relation to other organisations, and raising the profile of gender issues, it seems that the conference was dominated by the leadership tussle between Winnie Mandela and Shope.

Press reports before the election said there were basically two positions: the first wanted the League to be a 'mothers' body which would basically offer support to the (male-dominated) ANC - these were said to be mainly older women who did not feel that Winnie Mandela's militant image was suitable. The second position was said to be a more assertive 'feminist' position, coming mainly from younger women (especially those from exile) who saw in Winnie a potential champion of gender rights on the ANC executive.

But this portrayal was simplistic and misleading. Many feminists in the ANC have been appalled by the controversy surrounding Winnie, while on the other hand some of her staunchest supporters during her trial have been precisely those 'mothers' - correctly said not



• **Mandela: Lost**

to be 'independent thinkers' - who are supposed to be alienated from Winnie.

The election result seems to affirm the view that Winnie's star is beginning to wane - in any case, since her denouncement by the MDM in 1989 the extent of her popularity was always in doubt (she after all only just managed to get onto the executive of the ANC PWV region - with the help of Nelson Mandela - and won the PWV Women's League presidency earlier this year by only 3 votes). — *Special Correspondent*

Sactwu criticises ANC's lack of consultation

Last month the South African Clothing and Textile Worker's Union (Sactwu) - a Cosatu affiliate - publicly criticised the ANC for its lack of consultation.

This occurred after ANC PWV regional executive member, Abie Nkomo, speaking at a Sharpeville Day rally in Mamelodi, announced a consumer boycott which was to run from April 8 to April 13. The boycott was to be part of the campaign for a constituent assembly, according to reports.

Sactwu placed advertisements in the media countrywide, objecting to the an-

nouncement on the grounds that community organisations and unions like Sactwu, which has about 200 000 members, were not consulted on such a major aspect of the campaign.

The union's Natal regional media officer, Paul Hartley, told *WIP* that the decision to publish the advertisements was taken by the Sactwu National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC). When asked if the move was supported by the full Sactwu membership, he said it was 'based on the principles derived from the constitution' and would not have been done if the NCC thought that it would not receive support.

He said the advertisements were placed nationally because the announcement of a national consumer boycott necessitated a national response.

Hartley dismissed claims that Sactwu had problems with the Cosatu/ANC alliance, saying that by virtue of their affiliation to Cosatu they are also aligned to the ANC in some way. But he stressed that 'we (Sactwu) do not wish workers' support to be taken for granted by anyone.'

Sactwu subsequently received clarification from the ANC that the boycott would not occur if community organisations and unions were not consulted.

Premature

Abie Nkomo said he thought that the Sactwu response was premature. He explained that the statement should have been seen in the context of the campaign around the issues of indemnity, release of all political prisoners, aids and the constituent assembly.

'It was done in the process of announcing a package of campaigns and should not have been seen in isolation.' It was a recom-

mendation only, he said, which was in the process of being discussed by ANC regional committees, the unions and the SACP.

He said that the campaign had been discussed at the consultative conference in November by the Campaigns Committee and was part of a suggested programme of action which was unfolding, and which still had to be taken back to the regional committees and other fraternal organisations like the unions and the SACP.

Nkomo said he would like to believe he spoke on behalf of the ANC's PWV region at the Sharpeville rally. He found it 'strange' that Sactwu, and not Cosatu, placed the advertisements, but felt that, instead of looking back, he would like to see the progressive movement organise, build and prepare for the following campaigns.

This is not the first instance of a lack of consultation between the ANC and its alliance partners. This year the ANC failed to properly consult either Cosatu or the SACP on two major tactical shifts - the January 8 call for an all-party conference and the recent ultimatum to the government.

Towards the end of January the alliance met and the problem was 'resolved', only to emerge again in April. This time Cosatu and the SACP agreed with the shift, but nevertheless felt that they were not properly consulted.

The public chastising of the ANC by Sactwu has revealed that unions are no longer willing to kow-tow to any political organisation or party. Within Cosatu there are certain unions, or significant sections of unions, which have voiced their reservations about political alliances in the past. — *Charmeela Bhagowat*