EVOLUTION OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
YOUTH LEAGUE:

FROM “FREEDOM IN OUR LIFETIME” TO “ECONOMIC
FREEDOM IN OUR LIFETIME”

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EVOLUTION OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE:

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By

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DECLARATION

I, Msingathi Sipuka (student number 202328864), hereby declare that the *treatise* for MPhil South African Politics and Political Economy is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

Msingathi Sipuka
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my family, in particular my mother, my father and my sister. I would also like to thank those friends who have been next to me, encouraging me to complete this work even when it seemed that finishing was a distant dream.

Lastly, to my supervisor Dr J Steyn-Kotze. I would like to extend my greatest gratitude for the patience you have shown during this period and without your guidance this work would never have reached completion.
SUMMARY

The 1994 democratic elections heralded a significant change in South Africa's political and social landscapes. This historic moment, and the subsequent democratic developmental processes that unfolded aimed at laying the foundations for a democratic state, were the culmination of a long history of struggle by the Black majority, in alliance with other social forces, against colonialism and apartheid. One of the significant social forces that emerged as part of this struggle against racial oppression was the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). It is argued that the two most important developments in South African politics during the 1940's were the emergence of the African National Congress Youth League and the consolidation of its influence on the ANC leadership.

The African National Congress Youth League was formed against the background of very distinct circumstances, the first being the worsening economic conditions for the growing African working class and the declining African peasantry. The second was the inability of the African National Congress to respond to the material challenges confronted by the African majority, because of its leadership and organisational weaknesses. The political programme of the ANCYL was rallied under the ideological auspices of African Nationalism, and its organisational programme under the articulated need to build a mass based and campaigning organisation. With a very strong leadership, the ANCYL was able to, within five years, assert its leadership and authority in the ANC with key elements of its manifesto forming significant parts of the ANC Programme.

This culminated into the rise of the generational theme of the ANC Youth League of “Freedom in our Lifetime”. Essentially freedom was conceived as the abolishment of formal apartheid, and the delivery of a democratic South Africa. Formal democracy became a reality in South Africa in 1994 and at the helm of the ANC and the new government was the ANC Youth League generation of the 1940’s. This generation had over fifty years struggled for freedom and 1994
represented the formal victory over apartheid and the attainment of a generational mission.

The ushering in of formal democracy in 1994 heightened the expectations of the black majority in terms of its elevation from a point of view of its existing socio-economic realities. Close to twenty years after the end of formal apartheid the reality has been less than satisfactory in terms of addressing these socio-economic realities. What has been observed on the contrary is an increase in key measures such inequality and unemployment. Subsequent to that has been a less than satisfactory performance in the area of economic transformation which has been seen as a critical limiting factor in addressing the legacies of apartheid, particularly among the black majority.

These limits to transformation have resulted in discontentment among the majority, claiming that democracy has not yielded to any significant changes in their material lives. The discontentment has been particularly proliferated among the youth, who bear the brunt of social challenges such as unemployment.

The ANC Youth League, has had to confront the reality of being of a youth league of a governing party and balancing that with the social discontentment that has developed among South African, particularly the youth, as a result of perceived lack of social transformation. In balancing these two realities, the ANC Youth League has found itself at the centre of South African politics similarly to the 1940s generation of ANC Youth League leaders of the Youth League who had been mobilised under the theme of “Freedom in our Lifetime”. The contradictions within the ANC, of which the ANC Youth League has found itself at the centre of, and the need to become a socially relevant political force have culminated into the birth of a generational theme led by the ANC Youth League of “Economic Freedom in our Lifetime”.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The 1994 democratic elections heralded a significant change in South Africa's political and social landscapes. This historic moment, and the subsequent democratic developmental processes that unfolded aimed at laying the foundations for a democratic state, were the culmination of a long history of struggle by the Black majority, in alliance with other social forces, against colonialism and apartheid. One of the significant social forces that emerged as part of this struggle against racial oppression was the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). According to Lodge (1983:20), the two most important developments in South African politics during the 1940’s were the emergence of the Congress Youth League and the consolidation of its influence on the ANC leadership.

As suggested by Lodge the emergence of the ANCYL and its consolidation in the ANC represented a significant development, in particular, in the ANC, its politics and the role the ANC was to play in the South African struggle against colonialism and apartheid. This study will investigate the circumstances and processes that led to the formation of the ANCYL under the generational theme of “Freedom in our Lifetime” in the 1940’s, to how the current generation of the ANCYL has come to define its own generational theme of “Economic Freedom in our Lifetime”. This chapter will outline the context of this research, the objectives of the study, the background to the study, the research design and methods, and the data analysis strategies. The chapter will conclude by outlining the chapters of the study.
1.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

In outlining the processes and the politics that resulted in the formation of the Youth League, Meli (1988:108) states that in the mid 1940's, young men and women in their mid-twenties or early thirties, mainly teachers or students of medicine or law, became disillusioned with the manner in and the pace at which things were done by the ANC. Meli (1988:108) proceeds to argue that these young Africans were concerned about the deteriorating conditions of their people. In response to this upsurge of militant youth, the Annual Conference of the ANC on 21 December 1942 authorised the Executive to institute a Youth League of the African National Congress, to include students at the Fort Hare University. The Youth League was formally established at an inaugural meeting held at the Bantu Men’s Social Centre in Johannesburg in April 1944.

Meli (1988:119) concludes by arguing that the radicalisation of the ANC cannot correctly be attributed to a specific event or incident. Overall, it was a process that developed over a period of time in which significant landmarks, such as the organisational interaction of the ANC with the Communist Party of South Africa are readily recognisable; the formation of the Youth League represents one of these landmarks.

During the period of the banning of the ANC from the early 1960’s, to its unbanning in 1990, the ANCYL took a less prolific role as an organisation within the broad liberation movement, both inside and outside the country. Political and organisational activity was centred on the ANC, and the majority of the leaders of the ANCYL were also prominent leaders of the ANC. This void within the youth movement as a result of the minimal presence of the ANCYL was to be filled by successive youth organisations during the period of banning, particularly during the 1970’s and 1980’s. With the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations in 1990, the ANCYL re-emerged in the political landscape of the country as the primary youth organisation. The ANCYL had to respond to a new set of conditions as a result of the advent of democracy, giving birth to a new
generation of youth leaguers rallying their constituency and society at large under the new generational theme of “Economic Freedom in our Lifetime”. Key to the politics of this new generational theme was the need to respond to the commonly observed character of South African democracy, which is said to have delivered political freedom for the Black majority, which political freedom has not translated into meaningful economic gains, or as the ANCYL argues, it has not translated into economic freedom.

Therefore, the focus of this study was to investigate the evolution of the ANCYL and how it located itself and its politics within the ANC and society at large in order to respond to its generational theme of “Freedom in our Lifetime”. This study also investigated the ANCYL in a democratic South Africa and how it has positioned itself and its politics so that it can respond to its own generational theme of “Economic Freedom in our Lifetime”.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The African National Congress Youth League was formed against the background of very distinct circumstances, the first being the worsening economic conditions for the growing African working class and the declining African peasantry. The second was the inability of the African National Congress to respond to the material challenges confronted by the African majority, because of its leadership and organisational weaknesses. The political programme of the ANCYL was rallied under the ideological auspices of African Nationalism, and its organisational programme under the articulated need to build a mass based and campaigning organisation. With a very strong leadership, the ANCYL was able to, within five years, assert its leadership and authority in the ANC with key elements of its manifesto forming significant parts of the ANC Programme.

Post 1994, the ANC ascended to power and was tasked with the enormous task of leading the transformation of South African society. As the governing party, it
was confronted with the peculiar challenges of governance. Key challenges lay in the areas of poverty alleviation, eradicating the challenge of high unemployment, and the provision of basic services and housing. This required the ANC to move from an organisation operating as a liberation movement outside the corridors of power, primarily concerned with the political mobilisation of national and international social forces against the apartheid state, to a ruling political party in a multi-party democracy responsible for the formulation and implementation of policy. Given the challenges that prevailed, such as the high rate of unemployment confronting the youth of South Africa, the question was whether the ANCYL has been able to transform itself in line with the dictates of democratic South Africa and its challenges. The study investigated the evolution of the ANCYL and its politics, which enabled it to play a meaningful role in confronting the challenges of a post-democratic South Africa.

1.4. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study was to understand the history of the formation of the ANCYL and the development of its specific brand of politics under the generational theme of “Freedom in our Lifetime” in the 1940’s and the evolution of the ANCYL and its politics since its re-establishment in 1991, which has resulted in the specific brand of politics experienced in 2012 under the generational theme of “Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime”.

The secondary objectives of the study include the following:

1. An investigation into whether or not the ANC Youth League has been able to adapt to the new conditions brought by the democratic dispensation;
2. An investigation into whether or not the ANC Youth League has been able to politically and organisationally position itself within the political landscape of a democratic South Africa in pursuit of the ANC’s programme of creating a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society;
3. An investigation into whether or not the ANC Youth League has been able to craft a new vision and supplement that vision with a new set of policies that are able to mobilise the young people of the country behind its banner and that of the ANC and its programmes.

1.5. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence and rise of the African National Congress Youth League occurred in the context of the politics and the political environment of the late 1930’s and early 1940’s. Marais (2001:8) argues that the definitive origins of South Africa’s status as a “Two Nation” society lie in the late nineteenth century, when capitalism accelerated rapidly after the development of diamond and gold mining in 1867 and 1886. As part of these processes a huge influx of foreign, mainly British, capital placed the mining industry on the world map. There was a rush of European immigrant labour, which supplied the semi-skilled and skilled labour required by the industry and boosted the numbers of white settlers beyond the levels typical in other African colonies. Also generated was the need for a steady supply of cheap, unskilled labour of which the dismantled African peasantry would become the chief source. Marais (2001:9) further argues that the African peasantry dwindled from 2.5 million in 1936 to 832 000 in 1946 sighting a trio of factors that drove this process, mainly, the increased mechanisation of agriculture, the crushing effects of the Depression and centrally and the state expropriation of land.

According to Lodge (1983:12), poverty among the urban African population during the 1940’s was widespread. Although wages were higher than in rural employment and indeed rose in some sectors during the Second World War, this was offset by unemployment and increases in the cost of staple foods and fuel. Unskilled workers rarely earned enough to cover the cost of essential food stuffs, shelter, fuel and clothing. As a result, many who depended on such wages simply did not survive. Such conditions, Lodge proceeds to argue, were not
always accepted passively. Where there was scope for leverage, African communities were quick to attempt either to resist increased subsistence costs or to reduce the price of survival. Prominent among such struggles were the Alexandra bus boycotts of 1940 and 1945 and the Johannesburg Squatters’ Movement of 1944 to 1947.

Meli (1988:82) argues that increasing industrialisation and urbanisation led to a growing African working class, which resulted in the emergence of a new breed of African revolutionaries with a distinctively working class outlook and a new generation of intellectuals. He proceeds to argue that despite this, throughout the world revolutionary movements experienced serious problems in the period of the mid 1930’s to early 1940’s. The period saw the rise of fascism in Europe and militarism in Japan. Within South Africa, the more militant ANC leadership of Gumede and Khaile was ousted and replaced by the ageing Seme and the not-so-radical Rev. Mahabane – leaders who could not cope with the changes taking place in African society. Seme’s weak leadership as President-General caused the ANC to become ineffective.

Meli (1988:83) proceeds to argue that Dr Xuma became President-General of the ANC in 1940, considered to be a moderate reformer. According to Meli (1988:83), in 1932, Dr Xuma wrote the following about himself:

I am a medical practitioner by profession. I studied in the United States of America, in Austria-Hungary and at Edinburgh. I am neither a politician or agitator or racialist. I am merely an interested student of human relations.

According to Marais, (2001:14) Xuma’s talents did not extend to the popular touch; he was no orator and felt more at home in committee rooms than at mass meetings. Marais (2001:14) concludes by citing the Communist Party’s JB Marks, who pronounced the ANC literally dead in 1935. Its descent had been fuelled by its failure to register gains for its constituency and by the rapid erosion of its peasant social base, whose ranks had been seriously denuded during the Depression years. The ANC could not point to a single concession wrestled from
the state. Less than ten years later, the Communist Party of South Africa would lament the fact that the African people had been frustrated by a Congress leadership that did not organise mass support nor arranged mass action to improve the living standards of the Black majority.

From the above, it is evident that there were two distinct factors that created the conclusive conditions for the formation of the ANCYL. The first was the deteriorating economic situation of the African peasantry and the working class, which resulted in the deterioration of the quality of lives of Africans. The second was the weak state in which the organisation of the ANC found itself. The organisation could not adequately respond to the challenges facing it because of its leadership and organisational incapacities. It was into this vacuum that a new generation of more militant urban intellectuals stepped in the mid 1940’s, organised within the newly formed ANCYL.

According to Lodge (1983:21), the guiding personality behind the Youth League’s inception was a former school teacher and articled clerk, Anton Lembede. Lembede and his co-founders of the Youth League, according to Lodge, were inspired by the popular responses to material deprivation in wartime Johannesburg. Here, for the Youth Leaguers, was the potential source of mass support, which the Congress movement had so shamefully neglected to exploit. However to link this rapidly growing urban proletariat to the ANC, some crucial problems had to be overcome. What was required to channel the latent energy of working class Africans into Congress was an appeal that would overcome the psychological inhibitions produced by racial oppression.

Lodge proceeds to state that this appeal, Lembede believed, should consist of a racially assertive nationalism, which would serve to foster sentiment which was part of the ‘natural’ psychological make-up of all Africans. The Youth League would therefore place its emphasis on indigenous leadership and national self-determination: “The leaders of the Africans must come out of their loins and Africa is a Black man’s country’. Political collaboration with other groups could
take place only with Africans acting as an organised, self-conscious unit (Lodge 1983:21).

Marais (2001:15) argues that reacting to the moribund state of the ANC, labelled an organisation of gentlemen with clean hands by A.P Mda, President of the ANCYL, the League fashioned a fierce brand of African nationalism which drew heavily on the “Africa for Africans” philosophy of Marcus Garvey. These militants scorned in equal measure liberal ideology and class politics. They idealised and imagined unity and harmony among Africans, and posited a liberation struggle under the aegis of a reconstituted national movement in which the politics of African nationalism would eclipse class politics as the driving force. According to Marais (2001:16), by 1949, five years after the formation of the ANCYL, the African nationalists had established their authority in the ANC, which had adopted key parts of the ANCYL’s manifesto in its Programme of Action.

The critical role played by the youth in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid continued beyond the generation of the ANCYL of 1944. In 1976, the Soweto township erupted when thousands of schoolchildren took to the streets in peaceful protest over inferior education. By the end of the year, 176 were dead and more than a thousand injured. Though it subsided in the late 1970s, the revolt flared up again in 1980. In response to the exclusion of blacks from the new Constitution enacted in 1983, it erupted in the mid-1980s with unprecedented intensity. At its peak between 1984 and 1986, South Africa was in a state of civil war, and Black youth were at the forefront of events. Young activists were involved in politicising the community, engineering work stay-aways, and enforcing customer boycotts. When the state retaliated, the youth were exposed to brutal retribution. They responded with further violence, throwing petrol bombs at administration buildings, erecting traps for armoured vehicles, attacking symbols of the state (Straker, 1992:1).

The above outline presents in brief the various contributions in the fight against apartheid made by successive generations of young South Africans living during the era of explicit racial oppression. Throughout the history of organised
resistance against colonialism and apartheid, a constant feature in the struggle was the unique and central role played by young people. The youth under apartheid took up their historical task of being the primary agents for social change and their actions, together with the actions of many other sectors of society, ushered in a democratic South Africa in 1994, bringing to an end a long history of racial oppression characterised by white superiority in all aspects of life.

According to Seekings (2008:21) South Africa’s first democratic elections – in April 1994 – marked the achievement of a democratic and free society, but did not usher in a golden age of equal opportunities for all children. Some South African children grow up amid extraordinary affluence and privilege. The boundaries of privilege have extended beyond whiteness to include considerable numbers of Black children growing up within the fast-growing Black elite and middle class. At the opposite extreme are highly impoverished rural children and urban street children, whose regular hunger and lack of access to basic services, health care or schooling serve as an enduring indictment of post-apartheid society. Between these extremes are the majority of South African children and adolescents; many still living in poverty, for whom the transition from apartheid has engendered a mix of opportunities and disappointments, changes for the better, and changes for the worse. Many features of the apartheid era persist, as the legacy of apartheid shapes everyday life after apartheid itself has died.

Further elaborating on the South African reality post-1994 Seekings (2008:12) argues that apartheid is also echoed in the continuing relationships between races, neighbourhoods and classes. The majority of white people are comparatively speaking, well off, as they continue to reside in well-resourced areas and have succeeded in reproducing other privileges, even after the demise of apartheid. Almost all poor people are Black or, more specifically, African, and live in areas with compromised infrastructure and services. For the poor, however, the demise of apartheid might have brought dignity, but it has not brought real opportunity; poor African children typically attend compromised and
struggling schools; acquire neither skills nor qualifications; enter a labour market that offers no prospects for unskilled workers; and struggle to access health care when they fall sick. Seekings (2008:13) further asserts that South Africa remains a highly segregated society; most people reside in neighbourhoods whose populations are – in apartheid terminology – overwhelmingly either ‘African’ or ‘Coloured’ or ‘White’ but not a mix of these; their children attend schools dominated by one race group and few adults or children have racially diverse friends. Race continues to be salient in this supposedly post-apartheid society.

The above outline provides a basic framework of what constitutes the key challenges confronting South African policy-makers, and South Africans in their entirety, post-1994. Previous generations of young people, in the form of the 1944 generation of ANCYL leaders and their 1976 and 1980’s counterparts, fulfilled their respective tasks of delivering a democratic state based on the will of the majority. Today’s generation of young leaders and those they lead are confronted with the task of translating the deliverance of this democratic state to a material improvement in the lives of the majority, in the social aspects highlighted above.

In understanding the contextual meanings of the struggle for freedom in apartheid and post apartheid South Africa it is critical to understand the various conceptions of freedom. This is important, particularly in the context of the ANC Youth League’s struggle for freedom under apartheid and its struggle for economic freedom post-apartheid. This very struggle for economic freedom, in a society defined as a free society, fundamentally means that there exists various types of freedoms. According to O’roukke (1979: 4) it would be difficult to find a basic notion over which the East (communist world) and the West (capitalist world) appear to be more divided than that of freedom. What this opens up is that there are fundamentally different conceptualisations of what constitutes freedom in liberal theory as compared to more radical theory as espoused by the writings of Marx and Lenin. These divergent views are important to understand,
particularly in the context of the ANC Youth League’s call for economic freedom in a democratic South Africa.

O’roukke (1979: 19) argues that in the liberal conception, freedom consists in the maximum absence of restraints on the actions of individuals. It affirms the principle that an individual out to be able to do as he pleases in the course of his own private pursuit of happiness, so long as his actions do not conflict with the similar pursuit of his neighbours. Laws become merely a set of rules indicating the boundaries within which a man must contain his activities.

According to Femia (1993: 19) Marx’s initial thought vehemently rejected this conception of individual freedom on the basis that the liberal vie mistook negative tendencies of man, his egoism for his true essence. According to Femia (1993: 20) the liberal conception of freedom was wrong mainly because it was based on a false conception that viewed men as isolated monads whilst infact men’s very nature is to live together and to co-operate.

O’roukke (1979: 22) argues that there was very little original thought in Marx’s initial critique of liberal conceptions of freedom and that Marx stood out later in stamping his conception of freedom based on his critique of the basic concepts of political economy. Oroukke (1979:23) proceeds to argue that in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts Marx introduced the thesis that the economic life is decisive for man’s entire mode of existence and that the other aspects including the political and religious are only of secondary importance. The separation of political freedom and freedom, in what Marx conceived as the most decisive, the economic realm was the basis of a fundamental conception between liberal and more radical conceptions of freedom. O’roukke (1979: 24) argues that Marx felt that in the capitalist system of production this economic life took such a form, that far from being a result of human self-development, it deprived men of their very humanity, thereby representing a radical loss of freedom. This conception posited that political freedom formed secondary freedoms, and that without freedom at an economic level it could not be argued that man is not free.
In contextualising these thoughts within the ANC Youth League’s fight for freedom under apartheid and the ANC Youth League’s fight for economic freedom in post-apartheid society it can be deduced that as Marx argued the attainment of political freedom which constituted a secondary freedom did not address the fundamental constraints of capitalism which kept man unfree at the primary economical level. The struggle for economic freedom embarked upon by the ANC Youth League was an expression of the continued alienation of labour under capitalist democratic rule.

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

No matter what field of study in which one is working, if one is carrying out research into people’s opinions, feelings, experiences or behaviour, one will be following one of two distinct paths. One owes its identity to the scientific tradition; the second is reflective or experiential in nature. Both paths use some of the same research skills, although not always in the same order. Both deliver useful and informative results when they are well done, but each serves a rather different purpose. They are usually referred to as quantitative and qualitative research (Davies, 2007:9).

Speaking to the basic methodologies that can be adopted in conducting social research Porta and Keating (2008:25) state that the methodological question refers to the instruments and techniques that can be used to acquire knowledge. This section will outline the main tenets of both these approaches to social research and identify one that will best support and satisfy the aims and objectives of this research as previously outlined.

Defining qualitative research, Garbes (1996:283) states that qualitative research aims at the development of theories (grounded theory) and understanding. The objective of qualitative research is to promote better self-understanding and increase insight into the human condition. Unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers do not regard themselves as collectors of facts about
human behaviours that will lead to the verification and the extension of theories and enable researchers to determine the causes of and predict human behaviour. In qualitative research, the emphasis is on improved understanding of human behaviour and experience. These researchers try to understand the ways in which different individuals make sense of their lives and to describe those meanings. Empirical observation is prominent, because researchers need to study actual cases of human behaviour if they are to be in a position to reflect on the human condition with more meaning and clarity. In qualitative research the researcher’s position as outsider shifts to the intersubjective position of insider.

An initial, generic definition of qualitative research can be offered; qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. Qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They seek answers to questions that focus on how social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincon 2005: 5).

Having fully considered the various inputs on the nature of these respective methods, one would need to consider and decide which would be best applicable to the relevant study being conducted. Hakim (2000:28) states that social research can be conducted within a quantitative or qualitative context; both types of research are equally legitimate. He proceeds to argue that the choice of methodology, is determined not about quality but about suitability. In making this choice of suitability as argued by Hakim, Davies (2007:26) highlights a number of areas that should be considered in the process of deciding which method to use, also indicating which method will best suit each respective area. He argues that if the research attempts to:

1. *Describe, monitor or investigate*: Both qualitative and quantitative research can deliver this – but produce different kinds of descriptions.
2. **Explore**: Both methods can be used; quantitative methods through surveys while qualitative methods may entail on interviews or observation.

3. **Interpret**: Qualitative research is especially strong in this area.

4. **Look behind the surface**: Much qualitative research aims to do just that – to reflect upon the feelings and experiences relative to the research question, to explore the nature of the relationship between person and situation, and to take account of the effect of the research analyst’s own background and role.

Based on the above areas and the strength of each method relative to each area, in particular the research aims to interpret and look behind the surface, this research utilised the qualitative method. This study predominantly used an exploratory approach in order to gain understanding of and insight into the ANCYL in contemporary South Africa.

**1.7 METHOD AND TECHNIQUES**

The method that this study adopted in understanding the politics of the ANCYL of both the generations of “Freedom in our Lifetime” and the generation of “Economic Freedom in our lifetime” was based on content analysis. A range of official organisational documents of the ANC from the 1940’s outlines the nature of the politics of the first generation of ANCYLrs and how they defined their politics. This range of official ANCYL organisational documents is also found post 1990. This documentation formed the basis of studying the political and policy positions of the ANCYL and will be outlined below:

**Congress reports**: These constitute both political and organisational reports to the congresses of the ANCYL. According to the constitution of the ANCYL congresses are mandated to develop and implement the policy and programme of the League. The political reports to be studied will provide an in-depth view
and outlook of the Youth League on socio-economic matters confronting the country, what is perceived to be the most urgent challenges confronting the youth and the population broadly. Secondly, the organisational report will detail the political program of the League, addressing specific issues of what has been done within structures to confront identified challenges. This will be critical as it provides an internal assessment of the views and activities of the organisation.

**Press Releases:** These will constitute an analysis of available press releases, media statements or articles on or released by the ANCYL. These will provide a view of what are the predominant areas of focus of the ANCYL that occupy the public space.

**Programme of action:** This entailed the organisational programme of action, which outlines the specific initiatives planned by the organisation to address identified challenges. An investigation was further concluded regarding on whether these programmes of action had actually been implemented or merely remained statements of intent without ever finding expression within the organisation.

**Discussion documents:** These will entail proposed policy positions for consideration by the membership of the ANCYL.

**Bulletins:** These are regular newsletters issued by the leadership of the ANCYL to its general membership, communicating and outlining key decisions taken at organisational meetings. These decisions represent the views of the ANCYL at certain moments.

**1.8. DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES**
In clarifying the process of data analysis in a qualitative study, Patton (1990:371) argues that the purpose of qualitative inquiries is to produce findings. The process of data collection is not an end in itself. The culminating activities of qualitative inquiry are analysis, interpretation and the presentation of findings. The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal.

In responding to the above tasks in the data analysis process, Sarantakos (2005:344) posits that, unlike in quantitative research, in which analysis is conducted after data collection, in qualitative research the timing of analysis varies. In some cases analysis follows the same path as quantitative research, but in most cases it is conducted during data collection and a combination of both models is also possible. On this point, (Walliman 2006:129) argues that in qualitative studies there are usually a constant interplay between collection and analysis, which produces a gradual growth of understanding. You collect information, you review it, collect more data based on what you have discovered, and then analyse again what you have found. Walliman warns that this process is rather demanding and at times difficult and is prone to uncertainties and doubts.

Having considered the above this study will align itself with the views expressed by Walliman (2006: 129) above where it will be guided by the constant interplay between collection and analysis that produces a gradual growth of understanding.

1.9. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the rationale and motivation for the study, outlining the methods that have been adopted in the study.
CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE AND ITS POLITICS

This chapter will provide an outline of the formation of the African National Congress Youth League, placing this process within its historical and organisational context.

CHAPTER THREE: POST-DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA AND OUTLINE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Having considered the historical context of the formation of the ANCYL and locating its programme of 1944 within the challenges of the period this chapter will outline the contemporary challenges of South African society against which the role and relevance of the present generation of the ANCYL will be assessed.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANC YOUTH LEAGUE SINCE RELAUNCH: IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS

This chapter will assess whether the ANCYL has been able to respond to challenges of the democratic dispensation and the evolution of its politics leading to the clarion call of Economic Freedom in our Lifetime. This will be done through focusing on the political and organisational programme of the ANCYL.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Conclusions will be drawn whether, based on qualitative data analysis, the ANCYL has been able to respond to the contemporary challenges of South African society and the prospects of the ANCYL’s Economic Freedom campaign.

1.10. CONCLUSION
This chapter provided a broad introduction to the study focusing on issues such as the context and objectives of the study. A key element of the chapter was the identification of the various sources from which the content analysis was conducted. The following chapter will focus on the history of the ANCYL.
Chapter 2

A history of the ANC Youth League and its politics.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the historical process that created the organisational and political context for the formation of the ANCYL in 1944; firstly, the objective situation of South African society and the experiences of the African majority and, secondly, the state of the ANC. The focus will extend to look at the formative processes of the ANCYL; the ideology and politics of the ANCYL; and its influence on the ANC and its politics.

2.2 SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY LEADING UP TO THE FORMATION OF THE ANC YOUTH LEAGUE

2.2.1 1913 Native Land Act

South Africa’s history over the past 350 years is an unsavoury tale of intergroup conflict, violence, warfare, and plunder. Each of the different ethnic, racial and/or language groups tried to enrich itself by plundering the others. If one considers the multitude of group conflicts and wars in South Africa over the past 350 years, one can distinguish certain patterns in the apparent muddle. One of the clearest patterns is that, during the long period of European colonialism and imperialism, the colonial masters were mostly the victors in group conflicts, with the indigenous population groups mostly the losers. A second pattern – closely linked to the first – is that in the post-colonial period, local Whites were again mostly the conquerors, and therefore in a position to enrich themselves, mostly at
the expense of the indigenous people. The colonial powers and White colonists did so in mainly three ways; firstly, by creating political and economic power structures that put them in a privileged position vis-à-vis the indigenous population groups; secondly, by depriving indigenous people of land, surface water and cattle; and, thirdly, by reducing slaves and indigenous people to different forms of unfree and exploitable labour. These three threads ran ominously through South Africa’s modern history, from the mid-17th until the late 20th century. Any attempt to re-examine South African history would do no better than to do so from one of the following three perspectives: firstly, the perspective of White political and economic domination; secondly, the perspective of land deprivation; and thirdly, the perspective of unfree Black labour (Terreblanche, 2002: 5-6). Irrespective of which one is chosen the other two should not be neglected as the three are essentially inter-connected and mutually reinforcing.

Thompson (2001:159) argues that, by 1910, Whites had conquered the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa. The people whom Whites grouped together as the Coloured people, whose ancestors included the indigenous hunting and herding inhabitants of the western part of Southern Africa, owned scarcely any land; but many Bantu-speaking African farmers were still able to practise subsistence farming, modified but not destroyed by their conquerors, in reserves proclaimed by the colonial governments, or on land they had bought from Whites. Thompson (2001:160) proceeds to argue that during the ensuing years, however, the new state applied a comprehensive programme of racial segregation and discrimination and gained control over the African peasantry. Laws limited land ownership by Africans to demarcated reserves, transformed Blacks who lived in rural areas outside the African reserves into wage or tenant labourers for White farmers, and ensured White dominance in the industrial cities and rural townships. These laws played a huge role in expanding the capitalist order under White control and reducing the Black population to a proletarian status in that order. Three years after the inauguration of the Union of South Africa, without consulting any Africans, Louis Botha’s South African Party administration, enacted a crucial law. The Natives Land Act (1913) prohibited
Africans from purchasing or leasing land outside the reserves from people who were not Africans. The Act listed areas totalling about 22 million acres, or about 7 percent of the area of the Union of South Africa, as constituting the reserves (Thompson, 2001:159).

According to Meli (1988:41), the Native Land Act, under which the White population of one and half million was allocated more than 90 percent of the total land, while the African population of five and a half million received less than 10 percent, was one of the most burning issues of the new Congress. Before 1913, with the exception of the Orange Free State, Africans could purchase and lease land outside the reserves on the same basis as Whites. White farmers were, by 1912, becoming alarmed at the increasing acquisition of farms by Africans, especially in the Transvaal. The Land Act of 1913 was meant to stop this development. It denied Africans the right to own land, except in reserves. This legalised land robbery forced many Africans to the towns, beginning the urbanisation and continuing the proletarianisation of Africans.

Mbeki (1992) argues that the campaign by white farmers against squatting, which culminated in the passing of the Natives Land Act of 1913, centred around the following issues:

[a] According to Whites, squatting on the farms aggravated the shortage of labour.

[b] It was claimed that the presence of settled Africans who led an independent life on the farms they occupied, would result in social contact between them and Whites who occupied adjoining farms. This was regarded as highly undesirable.

[c] Whites argued that as long as the vote was open to Africans on the basis of a property qualification, unrestricted purchase of land by Africans would lead to an increase in the number of registered African voters. This would result in a threat to the white monopoly of political power.
[d] Strong opposition was expressed to the practice of ‘farming Kaffirs’ by absentee landlords and speculators who rented their farms to Africans in preference to European lessees, because it was easy to terminate an agreement with Africans at short notice.

[e] It was claimed that the growing number of Africans on white farms encouraged the foundation of African syndicates that bought up land, thus creating a scarcity, which resulted in rising land values.

[f] Yet another reason advanced against squatting was that the Africans did not use land properly.

It was without doubt that the Native Land Act of 1913 significantly changed the make up of social relations between the Black and White racial groups in South Africa and it is in this regard that Mbeki (1992) concludes by stating that with the passing of the Natives Land Act of 1913, the white government laid firm foundations for a race-based system of oppression and exploitation. The ANC had been formed a year before the passing of the Native Land Act, in 1912, and one of its most immediate challenges was to respond to the realities created by this new legislation. The political and economic realities created by the passing of the Act were to form the basis of the struggles to ensue over the next 100 years, from 1913 to 2013.

### 2.2.2 Proletarianisation of the African Peasantry

In the quarter century between the discovery of gold and the adoption of the Land Act, South Africa experienced revolutionary changes in social, economic, and political relationships. The emerging capitalist nature of gold and agricultural production generated a fundamental change in the nature of the demand – by White employers – for African labour. Both the gold mining companies and White farmers claimed that they could operate profitably only if enough cheap and
docile African labour was available. In their quest for profits, both the gold mines and the large farmers convinced the relevant governments to use extra economic coercion to deliver cheap and docile African labour. Through a comprehensive process of political engineering, the relative economic independence of Africans (in and outside the native reserves) was reduced to structural underdevelopment vis-à-vis the developed and modernising gold and agricultural sectors (Terreblanche 2002:257).

According to Meli (1988:82) the early 1930s was a time of widespread misery for Africans in both the urban and rural areas of South Africa. Previously poor conditions were aggravated by drought, overpopulation on the African reserves, and declining crop yields. This led to real starvation, and thousands of African peasants were forced to the towns and cities in search of employment. Posel (1991:39) proceeds to argue that the size of the urban African population soared by 71.4 per cent between 1904 and 1921, as compared with a growth of 50.9 per cent in the urban White population. In another account Welsh (2009:34) states that, between 1921 and 1936 the urban African population increased by 94.49%, and between 1936 and 1946, by 57.16%, bringing the percentage of the total African population that was urban to nearly 23%, which totalled 1.794 million.

According to Karis and Carter (1987:79), the mass of urban Africans, however, were unskilled and semiskilled labourers, members of the landless proletariat whose movement out of the reserves was due, historically, to overcrowding, the pressure of taxation, and the attractions of economic opportunity. During the fifteen years after 1936, the number of Africans resident in urban areas increased from about one million to over 2.3 million. By 1949, as disclosed in the Fagan Report, more than half the African population had joined the urban and rural working force of the White economy, with Africans who remained in the Native reserves depending largely on remittances from relatives to maintain subsistence levels. By the early 1950’s, according to the Tomlinson Commission, about two-thirds of the African working in urban areas were permanently urbanised.
Posel (1991:33) states that the impoverishment of and malnutrition among Africans were compounded by a dire shortage of serviced municipal accommodation. In terms of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, municipalities were obliged to supply accommodation to all Africans legally resident in their areas. This provision was not being enforced, however, and municipal housing was drastically undersupplied. The bulk of African workers were crowded into backyard shacks in the municipal townships and dense shack settlements scattered amongst the White residential areas or lining municipal boundaries. By 1947, the immediate accommodation shortage in urban areas nationwide was officially estimated at 154185 houses and 106877 hostel beds. However, official figures seriously underestimated the extent of the real accommodation problem, since they took no account of illegal inhabitants in cities. Consigned to conditions of poverty, overcrowding and ill health, Africans in the cities had no effective voice within the state. The institutions purporting to deal with their grievances were mostly ineffectual. The 1923 Natives (Urban Area) Act had authorised the creation of African Advisory Boards in each municipal area, to present the residents’ day-to-day problems to the local authorities. However they were heard, their role was purely advisory. Dashed hopes of a liberalisation of government policy, excited by the temporary suspension of the pass laws in 1942, made the state’s implacable indifference to Africans’ plight all the more injurious and provocative. This mixture of desperation and disaffection proved to be explosive.

Karis and Carter (1987:78) state that in the combustible circumstances of poverty and insecurity, Police action directed at Africans sometimes resulted in violent eruptions. For example on 19 September 1937, in Vereeniging, a defiant African mob beat one African and two White policemen to death, while a number of the mob were wounded. On 28 December, 1942, 17 persons were killed and about 111 wounded in the Pretoria municipal compound after stones were thrown and a White soldier was killed by an African crowd, angry about delays in carrying out promises to raise wages.
Other grassroots action included boycotts carried out by workers of Alexandra, where about 60,000 Africans lived. In protest against increases in fares, there were brief bus boycotts in August 1940 and October 1942. In protest action, in August 1943, thousands of Africans walked some eighteen miles a day for nine days, and in 1944, for a period of seven weeks. Africans were also responsive to trade union leaders who voiced their immediate economic grievances. Early attempts to organise Africans met with varying degrees of success after World War 1, most notably in the spectacular rise during the 1920s of Kadalie’s Industrial and Commercial Workers Union. Trade union activity declined in the mid 1930s only to be renewed in the late 1930s, and 1940s particularly in the organisation of African mineworkers (Karis & Carter 1987:80).

The above highlights some critical factors that were developing in South African society, in particular within Black society, primarily the disenfranchisement of the Africans of land; their subsequent proletarianisation; and the poor living conditions they endured in the urban areas. These difficulties experienced by the newly emergent black proletariat contributed towards a new sense of militancy among the urbanised African proletariat as evidenced by a number of actions such as the Alexandra bus boycotts of 1944.

2.3 Formation of the ANCYL: Ideology and Politics

In January 1912, a large gathering of prominent African men and women met in Bloemfontein to form the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). The principal purpose of this new organisation (which changed its name to the African National Congress a decade later) was to defend and advance African civil and political rights at a time when these were under unprecedented threat. Two years earlier the Union of South Africa had been constituted, signalling the emergence for the first time of a unitary White supremacist state. In line with its nationalist objectives, the SANNC was dedicated to overcoming inter-African ethnic divisions and to extending citizenship and franchise rights to all South Africans.
on a non-racial basis. The SANNC’s leadership was predominantly drawn from those aspirant members of the African proto-middle classes – doctors, lawyers, ministers, land owners and traders who stood to lose most from the post-Union political dispensation. The first major challenge faced by the SANNC was the passage of the Natives Land Act. Under the provisions of this measure, thousands of African labour-tenants were expelled from White farms, especially in the Orange Free State, and just over 7 per cent of the country’s land mass was apportioned to two-thirds of its population. The SANNC sent a delegation to Britain, which attempted unsuccessfully to lobby official and public opinion against the South African government. Deputations, petitions and reasoned argument were the preferred tactics adopted by Congressmen at this stage (Dubouw, 2000: 5).

By the mid-1930’s, during the presidency of the conservative Dr Pixley ka I. Seme, the founder of the Congress, the African National Congress became nearly moribund. Unlike the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union in the 1920s, the ANC had failed to win a mass following, nor had it built an effective organisation or an independent financial base. The All African Convention meetings, which Seme was urged to call jointly with Professor D.D.T Jabavu, who had kept aloof from the ANC, attracted such wide representation and enthusiasm that the ANC appeared to be in serious danger of being declared dead in order to make way for a new organisation (Karis & Carter, 1987: 81).

The guiding personality behind the Youth League’s inception was a former schoolteacher and articled clerk, Anton Lembede. Lembede and his co-founders of the Youth League were inspired by the popular responses to material deprivation in wartime Johannesburg. Here, for the Youth Leaguers, was the potent source of mass support that the Congress movement had so shamefully neglected to exploit. But in order to link this rapidly growing urban proletariat to the ANC crucial problems had to be overcome. What was required to channel the latent energy of working class Africans to the direction of Congress was an appeal that would overcome the psychological inhibitions produced by racial oppression. This appeal,
Lembede believed, should consist of a racially assertive nationalism which would serve to foster sentiment which was part of the ‘natural’ psychological make-up of all Africans. The Youth League would therefore place its emphasis on indigenous leadership and national self-determination. “The leaders of the Africans must come out of their loins and Africa is a Black man’s country’. Political collaboration with other groups could take place only with Africans acting as an organised self-conscious unit (Lodge 1983:21).

According to Mbeki (1992), another important factor, which was decisive in breathing new life into the ANC as well as giving it a sense of direction, was the formation of the ANCYL, which acted as a pressure group within the organisation. Unlike the older generation, the Youth League members had not had any contact with liberals. They therefore pursued a line which that nationalistic and sought to rely exclusively on themselves to revive the ANC into a fighting instrument for the rights of the Africans. They mounted an intensive recruiting campaign among young students, men and women, especially at the Fort Hare University and among workers in the urban areas. The ANCYL competed for pride of position with the All-African Convention and the Non-European Unity Movement, which were weak federal structures given to indecisive armchair talk on the basis of a programme that was never translated into action on the ground. From its inception, the Youth League was constructively critical of the manner of operation of its mother body. It argued that the ANC had tended to cater for the interests of the elite rather than for the masses of the people. The main ideas in its Manifesto were finally incorporated into the Programme of Action, passed by the 1949 Conference of the ANC. Taking its line from the various attempts to fight against the increasingly repressive measures of the 1940s, the Programme called for mass action by means of strikes and other forms of protest. It also called for non-collaboration with government institutions for Africans, such as the Advisory Boards and the Bunga, and rejected separate representation of Africans in parliament.
2.3.1 ANCYL Manifesto – 1944

The ANCYL Manifesto of 1944, produced in March of that year, a month before the actual formation of the Youth League, was without doubt the first piece of documentation that outlined the early ideas and politics of the generation of 1944. The section below presents elements of this founding document which outline these early ideas and politics of the ANCYL.

The African National Congress Youth League’s Manifesto of 1944 (http://www.anc.org.za/list.php?t=Manifesto&y=1944) through its policy statement contextualised the South African political situation as follows:

South Africa has a complex problem. Stated briefly it is: The contact of the White race with the Black has resulted in the emergence of a set of conflicting living conditions and outlooks on life which seriously hamper South Africa’s progress to nationhood. The White race, possessing superior military strength and at present having superior organising skill has arrogated to itself the ownership of the land and invested itself with authority and the right to regard South Africa as a White man’s country. This has meant that the African, who owned the land before the advent of the Whites, has been deprived of all security which may guarantee him an independent pursuit of destiny or ensure his leading a free and unhampered life. He has been defeated in the field of battle but refuses to accept this as meaning that he must be oppressed, just to enable the White man to further dominate him.

This characterisation of the South African situation and the location of the race problem as the centre of South African conflict, through its manifestation at various levels of South African life, were critical to the programme outlined by the League at this time. This characterisation was to form the basis of the political vision and programme of the ANCYL, the pursuit of the transformation of this reality of the domination of South African social, political and economic life by the White man was to form the thrust of the organisation’s activities for decades to come. As
conditions changed, the manner in which this struggle to transform this reality of race relations took differentiated forms, from mass protest to the armed struggle.

In expatiating on the challenges confronting the ANC at the time and locating itself as a relevant political force in confronting such challenges the ANCYL through the ANCYL Manifesto of 1944 point to a number of criticisms laid against the ANC at the time, these mainly being the following:

1. The critics of the Congress attributed the inability of Congress in the previous twenty years to advance the national cause in a manner commensurate with the demands of the times, to weaknesses in its organisation and constitution, to its erratic policy of yielding to oppression, regarding itself as a body of gentlemen with clean hands, and to failing to see the problems of the African through the proper perspective.

2. Those critics further alleged that in that period the Congress had declined and become an organisation of the privileged few - some professionals, small traders, a sprinkling of intellectuals and conservatives of all grades. This, it was said, imparted to the Congress character taints of reactionism and conservatism, which rendered the Congress a movement out of actual touch with the needs of the rank and file of our people.

3. It was further contended by the critics of Congress that the privileged few who constituted the most vocal elements in Congress strongly resented any curtailment of what they considered their rights and, since the popularisation of the Congress character would have jeopardised or brought about the withdrawal of those rights by the authorities, Congress was forced to play the dual role of being the unconscious police to check the assertion of the popular will on the one hand and, on the other, of constantly warning the authorities that further curtailment of the privileges of the few would compel them, the privileged few, to yield to pressure from the avalanche of popular opinion that was tired of appeasing the authorities while their lives became more intolerable.
4. These privileged few, so the critics of Congress maintained, were not an efficiently organised bloc. Their thinking itself lacked the national bias and this made Congress a loose association of people who merely reacted negatively to given conditions, able neither to assert the national will nor to resist it openly. In this connection, Congress was accused of being partly suspicious of progressive thought and action, though it was itself unable to express correctly the views of the mass of the people.

5. Finally, the critics argued that because the privileged few who direct Congress were poorly organised and had no marked following, Congress could not openly defy popular wishes; hence to maintain its precarious existence, it was compelled to be very vocal against legislation that had harsh effects on the African underdog while it gave no positive lead nor had any constructive programme to enforce the repeal of all oppressive legislation.


The 1944 Manifesto sought to placed the Youth League at the centre of providing solutions to the above challenges by arguing that while some of these criticisms were founded on fact, it is true, but it did not advance the national cause if people concentrated on these while little or no effort was made to build Congress from within. In the conception of the ANCYL, it argued through the 1944 Manifesto that African youth wanted action and were in sympathy with the rank and file of the oppressed people. It argues that some of the clear-cut national demands by Youth at the Bloemfontein Conference and the formation of the youth movements and political parties was proof that the youth were a formidable force in the national fight against oppression.

In the early articulation of its ideology, the Youth League, through the Manifesto, state the following as its key foundations:

1. We believe in the divine destiny of nations.
2. The goal of all our struggles is Africanism and our motto is `AFRICA`S CAUSE MUST TRIUMPH`.

3. We believe that the national liberation of Africans will be achieved by Africans themselves. We reject foreign leadership of Africa.

4. We may borrow useful ideologies from foreign ideologies, but we reject the wholesale importation of foreign ideologies into Africa.

5. We believe that leadership must be the personification and symbol of popular aspirations and ideals.

6. We believe that practical leadership must be given to capable men, whatever their status in society.

7. We believe in the scientific approach to all African problems.

8. We combat moral disintegration among Africans by maintaining and upholding high ethical standards ourselves.

9. We believe in the unity of all Africans from the Mediterranean Sea in the North to the Indian and Atlantic oceans in the South - and that Africans must speak with one voice.


The ANCYL Manifesto of 1944 represented the birth of the League into the political landscape of the country. The above articulation of the organisation’s early ideological perspectives posits the ANCYL’s politics as highly centred on the ideas of Africanism, and the affirmation of the African as the key determinant in the struggle against colonialism. Despite the later influence of the politics and ideas of the Communist Party of South Africa and subsequently the South African Communist Party, the central theme of the ANCYL’s early politics of the of Africanism was to find resonance within the ANC for decades to come. This Africanism theme was to transcend beyond the era of struggle against apartheid into the era of ANC governance, where one of the central themes of the ANC
government, particularly under Thabo Mbeki, was strongly influenced by the ideas of the early ANCYL, as outlined above.

2.3.2 ANC Youth League Basic Policy Document – 1948

If, as argued above, the 1944 Manifesto represented an introduction into the perspectives and ideological orientation of African Nationalism, as espoused by the ANCYL, then definitely the 1948 ANCYL Basic Policy Document released by the National Executive Committee constituted a comprehensive elaboration on the views of the League. The ANCYL Basic Policy Document was released four years after the Manifesto and therefore represented the maturation of the ideas initially presented in 1944, combined with the experience of having run the organisation for four years, presenting an opportunity to test the ideas of the youth against those of the African people practically. The 1948 Basic Policy Document went very far in trying to conceptualise in much more detail its founding ideas under the theme of African Nationalism.

On the issue of African Nationalism the ANCYL Basic Policy Document (http://www.anc.org.za/list.Policy_Document.1948) expressed that the African people in South Africa are oppressed as a group with a particular colour. They suffer national oppression in common with thousands and millions of oppressed Colonial peoples in other parts of the world. African Nationalism is the dynamic National liberatory creed of the oppressed African people. It proceeds to state that its fundamental aims were (1) the creation of a united nation out of the heterogeneous tribes; (2) the freeing of Africa from foreign domination and foreign leadership; (3) the creation of conditions which can enable Africa to make her own contribution to human progress and happiness.

The Basic Policy document proceeded to argue that in order to achieve Africa’s freedom, the Africans must build a powerful national liberation movement, and in order that the national movement should have inner strength and solidarity, it
should adopt the national liberatory creed - African Nationalism. It should be led by the Africans themselves.

In an attempt to again highlight the organisational incapacities of the ANC so that the point may be reached that effective struggles may be waged against the White state, necessitating and affirming the need for the formation of the Youth League, the Policy Document states that, from the very outset, the ANC suffered from serious defects. The founders, great patriots no doubt, had no grasp of the concrete historical situation and its implications and were obsessed with imperialist forms of organisation. As a result, the ANC suffered from defects, both in form and matter, and as long as these remained the ANC could not:

1. Create effective organisational machinery for waging the national liberatory fight;

2. Put forward a dynamic Nationalistic programme which could inspire and cement the tribes, and be a motive power and driving force in the militant struggle for national freedom.

The Basic Policy document was critical in cementing and concretising the ideas of African Nationalism within the thinking of the ANCYL. This was a critical period, as the ANCYL was beginning to emphasise on the organisational weaknesses of the ANC and its connection with the African majority within the context of the difficult conditions in which it found itself as described earlier. The Youth League argued that it was for the more politically advanced rising generations to give the Congress such form and substances as would suit the organisation to its historic mission.

### 2.3.2.1 Two Streams of African Nationalism

In an attempt to elaborate and crystallise the ideological perspectives of the League, the document detailed two streams of African Nationalism, and located
itself within one of those streams. The Basic Policy document (http://www.anc.org.za/list.Policy Document.1948) argued as such:

Now it must be noted that there are two streams of African Nationalism. One centres round Marcus Garvey`s slogan - `Africa for the Africans`. It is based on the `Quit Africa` slogan and on the cry `Hurl the White man into the sea.` This brand of African Nationalism is extreme and ultra revolutionary. There is another stream of African Nationalism (Africanism) which is moderate, and which the Congress Youth League professes. We of the Youth League take account of the concrete situation in South Africa, and realise that the different racial groups have come to stay. But we insist that a condition for inter-racial peace and progress is the abandonment of white domination, and such a change in the basic structure of South African society that those relations which breed exploitation and human misery will disappear. Therefore our goal is the winning of national freedom for African people, and the inauguration of a people`s free society where racial oppression and persecution will be outlawed.

The reference made to the two streams of African Nationalism was to become a recurring theme within the ANCYL and within the ANC, as the ideas of the ANCYL began to take root within the ANC. For example, the breakaway led by Robert Sobukwe, which resulted in the formation of the Pan African Congress, was essentially based on the two streams of African Nationalism. Influenced by a number of factors and developments, such as the interaction of the Youth Leaguers over time with White liberals and particularly the Communist Party, the second stream of African Nationalism, which realises that the different racial groups have come to stay, became the dominant stream within the ANCYL and the ANC.

The above highlights three very distinct politics that were introduced by the ANCYL into the ranks of the ANC:

(1) African Nationalism as the ideological paradigm espoused by the Youth League to take root in the ANC.
A shift away from gentle-men like means of struggle to a more militant and confrontational ANC

An ANC that was rooted in popular and mass struggles.

These politics were to be defining in the future of how the ANCYL operated and conceived of itself for generations and decades to come as we will be discussing in Chapter 4.

2.3.3 Influence on ANC

The ANCYL generation of 1944 was to have a profound impact on the ANC, both at the level of its politics and the leadership. According to Johns and Davis Jnr (1991:20), discussions and debates within the ANCYL for several years about the methods of struggle and the growing pressures for action led to the publication in 1948 of the “Basic Policy of Congress Youth League”. This crucial document set forth several themes that were to resonate in African political thought in the years ahead. The ANCYL membership contended that the time was ripe for mass action, and they succeeded in committing their parent organisation to embark on such a course.

The NP electoral victory accentuated the questions about tactics. The ANCYL Executive Committee, which included both Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, drafted a “Programme of Action”, which the ANC adopted at its annual conference in December 1949. It claimed for Africans the right of self-determination and called for the use of boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience and other such weapons to accomplish and realise its aspirations. For years, the ANC’s approach had been, in the words of its 1919 Constitution, “to record all grievances and wants of native people and to seek by constitutional means the redress thereof”. The sharp contrast in the tone of the “Programme of Action” clearly indicated the new political mood and circumstances of the African
 population as they faced the new Afrikaner NP government, determined as it was to realise its vision of apartheid (Johns & Davis Jnr, 1991:21).

The ANC 1949 Programme of Action (http://www.anc.org.za/list.PolicyDocuments1949) pointed out the following as areas of focus:

1. To achieve these objectives the following Programme of Action is suggested:
   a. the creation of a national fund to finance the struggle for national liberation.
   b. the appointment of a committee to organise an appeal for funds and to devise ways and means thereof.
   c. the regular use of propaganda material through:
      i. the usual press, newsletter or other means of disseminating our ideas in order to raise the standard of political consciousness;
      ii. establishment of a national press.

2. Appointment of a council of action whose function should be to carry into effect, vigorously and with the utmost determination, the Programme of Action. It should be competent for the council of action to implement our resolve to work for:
   a. the abolition of all differential political institutions, the boycotting of which we accept, and to undertake a campaign to educate our people on this issue and, in addition, to employ the following weapons: immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-co-operation and such other means as may bring about the accomplishment and realisation of our aspirations.
b. preparations and making of plans for a national stoppage of work for one day as a mark of protest against the reactionary policy of the government


These were the basic propositions put forward by the ANCYL in an attempt to put forth a programme that would fundamentally alter the operations of the ANC and reconnect it with its main constituencies. The 1949 Programme was to turn out a decisive intervention from the ANCYL - an intervention that would form the backbone of the South African struggle in terms of the struggle inside the country.

According to Dubouw (2000:27), the advent of the ANCYL in 1943-44 did much to reconfigure the ANC as a vigorous, modern mass movement. This process was accompanied by a protracted generational and ideological struggle, which ultimately saw the Youth League prevail over Xuma’s ‘old guard’. Xuma himself had proved politically adept and retained considerable standing within the Youth League, but in 1949, when the conflict between the Youth League and the ANC establishment came to a head, he was replaced as President by Dr James Moroka, with Youth Leaguer Walter Sisulu acting as Secretary-General. The Youth League’s victory was an auspicious development with far-reaching consequences for the medium - and long-term prospects of the liberation movement. Indeed, in many respects, the Youth League embodies the modern ANC. This hold over the organisation proved tenacious even as its members aged: fifty years after its creation, Youth League veterans like Tambo, Sisulu and Mandela were among the core leadership who finally led the ANC into government.
2.4 Conclusion

The primary intent of this chapter was to discuss the historical processes that led to the formation of the ANCYL in 1944. This chapter was able to demonstrate that the formation of the ANCYL was the result of a growing African urban population that was increasingly faced by worsening social and economic conditions, coupled with a growing discontentment among this African urban population. However, despite these conditions, the ANC was experiencing an organisational and political lull, which limited its ability to keep responding to the worsening conditions and growing discontentment. The birth of the ANCYL was a response to these developments; the new generation of leaders sought to lead the ANC down a new route of popular and mass struggles. This era also saw the firm consolidation of the politics of African Nationalism within the ANCYL and the ANC itself. This generation of ANCYL leaders were to form the backbone of the struggle against apartheid for the next 50 years at least.
Chapter 3

Challenges of a post-democratic South Africa

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, as observed in the previous chapter, the ANCYL had been able to define its own path within the context of the challenges confronting South African society. This chapter will outline the key challenges that confront post-democratic South African society, challenges which constitute the basis of a programme of action of the ANCYL. That programme would be distinctively shaped by the objective conditions that prevailed, heavily influenced by the structural legacy of apartheid. This chapter will also outline the challenges created by the apartheid society and inherited by the democratic state in 1994. It will then consider some of the key policy responses put forward by the ANC to respond to these challenges and conclude by presenting an account of the South African situation post democracy. This is done primarily to create a context of the contemporary challenges that confront South African society, as to be able to understand what the ANCYL needs to respond to in today’s conditions because the ANCYL as we have seen has always based its program and relevance to the challenges of the times.

3.2 OUTLINING LEGACY OF APARTHEID

This section will first provide a brief outline of the society created by apartheid and the socio-politico manifestations of this system. The socio-politico manifestation of the system will largely be presented through initial studies that were conducted in order to assist the democratic government to ascertain the real socio-economic challenges and to determine the extent of the work that lay ahead. One of the studies that will be relied on in this section to illuminate the state of South African society immediately post apartheid will be a 1995 World Bank commissioned Human Development Report. This is important in attempting
to understand the challenges that have confronted South African society post democracy.

A comparative analysis of apartheid South African society and post-democratic society will be presented in a later section. For now the focus is on the socio-economic conditions as the dawn of democracy.

In 1989, the South African Communist Party, at its seventh congress held in Havana adopted a programme under the title “Path to Power” as part of its political outline of the South African situation (http://www.sacp.org.za/list.php?type=HistoricalDocuments). In its “Path to Power” the SACP provided a concise political articulation of the political situation that had developed over the period of historical development of South African society, but which more importantly continued to define the political relations in South Africa during the last days of formal colonialism and apartheid. The SACP argued the following:

there is one specific peculiarity: in South Africa the colonial ruling class with its white support base on the one hand, and the oppressed colonial majority on the other, are located within a single country. On the one hand, white South Africans enjoy political power, racial privileges and the lion's share of the country's wealth. On the other hand, the overwhelming Black majority of our country is subjected to extreme national oppression, poverty, super-exploitation, complete denial of basic human rights, and political domination. There are significant class differences within both the white colonial bloc and the oppressed Black majority. However, the effect of colonialism of a special type is that all white classes benefit, albeit unequally and in different ways, from the internal colonial structure. Conversely, all Black classes suffer national oppression, in varying degrees and in different ways. The social and economic features of our country are directly related to its colonial history.

At political level, the above articulation of the SACP outlined the main content of the struggle against apartheid, in particular as it related to the reality that all
White classes were benefited from the system and all Black classes had suffered national oppression in varying degrees and in different ways. Specific socio-economic conditions were born out of the political context sketched by the SACP. These socio-economic conditions formed the thrust of what the Reconstruction and Development Program needed to respond to.

In 1992, the ANC released its political vision for a future democratic South Africa titled “Ready to Govern” (http://www.anc.org.za/list.php?pageNumPolicyDocuments). In the document it outlined what it assessed to be problems that would be faced by the first government elected under a new democratic constitution, outlining the reality created by the political set up of colonisation of a special type. Ready to Govern puts forward the following as the key problems created by Colonialist of a Special Type at a socio-political level:

- extreme levels of poverty and disease in the rural areas; the creation of urban ghettos where people have been denied even the most basic means of survival as a result of severely limited access to decent homes, electricity, water-borne sewerage, tarred roads, and recreational facilities; an education system preparing the majority of South Africans for lives of subordination and low wage jobs; a social security system geared almost entirely to fulfilling the needs of the white minority; a health system that has seriously neglected the well-being of most South Africans; the social and political marginalisation of the majority of people, the African community in particular, through their exclusion from public life and decision making as well as the denial of their culture, gender discrimination resulting in African women being the most exploited and poverty stricken section of the South African population, one of the most unequal patterns of income and wealth distribution in the world.

The ANC Ready to Govern (1992) document proceeded to highlight the following as key challenges of apartheid South Africa in the area of the economy:
Since the mid-1970s the South African economy has stagnated resulting in a rate of unemployment estimated at over 40 per cent of the economically active population, existence of a significant manufacturing sector but one which is generally uncompetitive in terms of international costs and prices, serious decline in living standards and a situation where Black youth have been deprived economic opportunities.

In addition to “Ready to Govern” the ANC released another critical policy outline called the Reconstruction and Development Programme in 1994. In its Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994:2), the ANC, in positioning the need for such a programme, outlined the challenges confronting South African society at the dawn of democracy:

Segregation in education, health, welfare, transport and employment left deep scars of inequality and economic inefficiency. Violence has had a devastating effect on our society and the need to restore peace and a sense of community security, is paramount. In commerce and industry, very large conglomerates dominated by Whites control large parts of the economy. Cheap labour policies and employment segregation have concentrated skills in white hands. Workers are poorly equipped for the rapid changes taking place in the world economy. Small and medium-sized enterprises are underdeveloped, while highly protected industries lower investment in research, development and training. The informal sector and ‘survival sector’ include many of South Africa’s women workers, who are underpaid and exploited.

Therefore, “Ready to Govern” (1992) and the RDP (1994) both make the argument that any government that would assume the apparatuses of the state in a democratic era would need to be able to respond to all the challenges cited. What is important to note, however, and a critical element of the arguments of the ANCYL in the mid 2000’s as will be discussed in Chapter Four, is that the challenges created by the political system of apartheid are not confined to political challenges such as a lack of access to vote or limited freedom of
movement and other political questions. The challenges of apartheid extend critically to the economic aspect of South African life. This central theme would need to guide the programmes of an incoming democratic government presiding over the transformation of the political landscape of the country and addressing political questions such as restoring the political rights of all. Beyond that, a new, democratic government must ensure that its programmes are able to speak directly to the social and economic problems created by apartheid. This addresses to the theme of ensuring that political freedom is coupled with economic freedom for the majority.

In exposing the concrete social relations created by this political situation (as outlined in the three policy documents of the SACP and ANC), Bhorat and Kanbur (2006:5) argue that while apartheid in South Africa officially came to an end with the democratically held elections in 1994, it left a bitter legacy of a population demonstrating vast inequalities across the racial groups. Bhorat and Kanbur (2006:6) proceed to outline some of the legacy issues inherited by the democratic government in the following:

Using a poverty line of R322 (in 2000 prices), at least 58 per cent of all South Africans, and 68 percent of the African population, were living in poverty in 1995, while poverty was virtually non-existent among Whites. The Gini coefficient was 0.56, making South Africa one of the most unequal countries in the world. The country also inherited vast inequalities in education, health and basic infrastructure, such as access to safe water, sanitation and housing. For instance, while only a quarter of Africans had access to piped water in their homes, Asians and Whites had universal access to this service. Many other aspects of the South African economy are equally challenging. Crime is so prevalent that it has caused many thousands of South African professionals of all ethnic groups to emigrate and has possibly also discourages investment and stifled growth. The broad unemployment rate is estimated to be between 30 per cent and 40 per cent and has been steadily increasing since 1995, making the South African unemployment rate one of the highest in the world. Many communities in the former homelands have little economic activity to speak of; mean unemployment rates in these communities approach 75 per cent. The proportion of the South African workforce employed in the
informal sector constitutes no more than 15 per cent - a figure that is remarkably small compared with countries at similar levels of development. According to UNAIDS, HIV prevalence increased from 10.5 per cent in 1995 to 22.8 per cent in 1998.

According to May (2000:3), in 1995, the South African government was approached by the World Bank with a proposal that an overall poverty assessment be undertaken collaboratively by the World Bank and the government. At about the same time, the United Nations Development Programme also approached government with a request to prepare a country Human Development Report. In October 1995 Cabinet agreed that a Poverty and Inequality Report be undertaken by South African researchers. An Inter-ministerial Committee was convened and agreed to undertake a detailed analysis of poverty and in equality in South Africa covering a broad range of issues relevant to poverty and inequality.

Some of the key outcomes of the Report, according to May (2000: 26) revealed a lot about the socio-economic disparities that existed in South Africa in the transitional years leading to democracy. A summary of these outcomes is captured below:

*The Gini coefficient:* According to May (2000:27) the Gini coefficient, which measures the degree of inequality consistently, serves as the starkest indicator of South Africa’s unequal distribution of income. South Africa’s gini coefficient was about 0.58, listed as second to Brazil only.

*Income shares:* According to May (2000:29), another way of expressing the degree of inequality in a country is to examine the income shares of deciles of households. Using this measure, the degree of inequality is striking, as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of households</th>
<th>% of population</th>
<th>% of income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest 40% of households</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Richest 10% of households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Population share (%)</th>
<th>Poverty share (%)</th>
<th>Poverty rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>50,4</td>
<td>71,6</td>
<td>70,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>49,6</td>
<td>28,4</td>
<td>28,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49,9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Between-group inequality:** May (2000:31) proceeds to state that a disaggregated analysis of inequality shows that between-race inequality was, as expected, considerable. The median white household income in 1995 was R60,000 per annum, compared with R12,400 for African households; R19,400 for Coloured households; and R40,500 for Indian households. Therefore, while half of the White households received an after-tax income of R60,000 per annum, only 6% of African households enjoyed the same standard of living.

**Rural-urban inequality:** On Rural-urban inequality May (2000:33) argues that the median household income in the rural areas (R 10,300 per annum in 1995) was just one-third of the median household income in urban areas (R 28,000 per annum in 1995). This does, however, partly reflect the fact that a higher percentage of rural dwellers are African. As can be seen in the below table most of the poor live in rural areas.

**Poverty and race:** According to May (2000:34) living standards are closely correlated with race in South Africa. While poverty is not confined to any one racial group, it is concentrated among Blacks, particularly Africans. According to the report 61% of Africans were poor, compared with only 1% of Whites, hence the greatest effort is required to achieve poverty reduction amongst the African and coloured population.

**Poverty and education:** According to May (2000:36), the Report established a clear correlation between educational attainment and standard of living. Priority
ranking exercises in many of the communities that participated in the studies consistently listed education as priority area for improved access for the poor. There were two dimensions to this: access to basic schooling for children; and skills training for adults, which would improve their access to opportunities for employment and income generation. Specific problems over access to education identified by the Report can be grouped into the following broad areas:

- The cost of education, as the amount and timing of school fees could be significant barriers to accessing education.
- Lack of physical access to schools is also still a barrier for many poor children.
- Poor planning and resources of schools in some areas, especially those on farms.
- Factors linked to gender, such as teenage pregnancy, are major issues in girls’ access to education.

The above constitute the key areas in South African life that had been shaped by apartheid planning at social, economic and political levels. Most - if not all - of the developmental challenges that confronted communities were to be found within Black and particularly African communities. The results of the World Bank Report in 1995 spelt out precisely where the challenges lay to and how the new government would need to respond.

In affirming the above challenges inherited by the democratic state in 1994 Marais (2011:92) summarises the problems confronting the newly elected democratic state by arguing that, in 1994, when the democratically elected government came to power, it inherited a contradictory legacy: the most developed economy in Africa on the one hand, and major socio-economic problems on the other. The most serious of these were high rates of unemployment, abject poverty among more than 50 per cent of the population, sharp inequalities in the distribution of income, property and opportunities and
high levels of crime and violence. What made these problems so pressing, was the fact it was mostly blacks - and especially Africans - who were at their receiving end.

### 3.3 ANC POLICY RESPONSES

As highlighted above, the democratic government elected in 1994 under the leadership of the ANC inherited a contradictory legacy of development and underdevelopment. The legacy of underdevelopment in a number of areas was highlighted above, with a number of specific areas indicated. The ANC, post its unbanning and particularly after assuming the responsibility of political office as the governing party, had the responsibility to craft policies and programmes that attempted to respond to the insurmountable challenges confronted. The conceptualisation and implementation of such policies and programmes would be key in transforming the lives of the historically disadvantaged groups in the country, in line with the political aspirations of the national liberation movement. This section will consider the key tenets of ANC policy in responding to these challenges. The area of policy would at a later stage become a critical rallying point for the ANCYL in its struggle for economic freedom, and it would also constitute a key area of contestation between the ANC and the ANCYL.

According to Marais (2011:99), when the ANC was unbanned in 1990, it had no economic policy to speak of, a peculiar situation for an eight-decade-old liberation organisation, despite the efforts internationally on the left to train a cadre of ANC exile economists. Its constitutional guidelines had committed the organisation to a mixed economy, but that avowal hung in a policy vacuum and invoked vague passages of the Freedom Charter that had pledged that,

> “The people shall share in the country’s wealth! The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be stored to the people; The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;"
All other industries and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people; All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and enter all trades, crafts and professions”.

This is not, according to Marais (2011:100), to suggest that a blueprint should have been devised. But the outline of a coherent economic programme, based on sound analysis of both local and global economic realities and options, was a necessary platform from which to bargain a new economic dispensation. In 1990, the ANC had no such platform.

Similarly, Nattrass in Schrire (1992:623), argues that, until 1990, the ANC had produced little along the lines of economic policy. Economic issues made their presence felt only in the form of slogans and as brief paragraphs in key political documents calling for redistribution and state control of the economy. Statements calling for redistribution can be found in ANC literature from at least as far back as the 1940’s. By the late 1960’s, class analysis had become the dominant mode of discourse in the ANC-SACP alliance. This was reflected in the 1969 Morogoro conference, at which it was stated, “To allow existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation. Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in very real way bound up with economic emancipation… The correction of centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations”. The manner in which redistribution and redress was to take place, was never really spelt out, apart from the demand for access to land and the nationalisation of the mines and key industries. It was only after its unbanning and subsequent immersion in negotiations with the South African government that the need for a detailed position on economic policy became pressing. According to Nattrass in Schrire (1992:623), the most important and substantial statement on ANC economic thinking was the 1990 Discussion Document on Economic Policy (this was in 1992). This was the end product of a year-long process of deliberation between economic thinkers sympathetic to the ANC and COSATU. In line with Nattrass’s argument, Marais (2011:99) argues that the
ANC’s first serious attempt to fill the policy vaccum had taken the form of a 1990 Discussion Document on Economic Policy, issued by its new Department of Economic Policy. In the main, the document reflected work done by COSATU’s Economic Trends Group.

The key tenets reflected through the “Discussion Document on Economic Policy” (http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID) are as follows:

1. Creating new jobs and progressively eliminating poverty.
2. Raising real incomes, especially for those who are in poverty and deprived.
3. Increasing productivity and output, particularly but not only in those sectors producing goods and services to meet the basic needs of the majority of the people.
4. Correcting racial and gender imbalances in the economy, through affirmative action policies.
5. Implementing a land reform programme capable of simultaneously addressing a national grievance, responding to the acute land hunger and increasing food production.
6. Developing major new housing, education, health and welfare programmes capable of addressing the pressing needs in these areas.
7. Improving the provision of infrastructure to deprived areas.
8. Promoting greater democratic participation in economic life and a more equitable pattern of ownership.
9. Creating a more democratic industrial relations framework based on full rights of workers to organise and growing participation by unions in policy formulation.

In the discussion document the ANC conceived that it was critical that it promoted a new path of growth and development in the economy. The engine of growth in a democratic, non-racial and no-sexist South Africa should be the
growing satisfaction of the basic needs of the impoverished and the deprived majority of the people. Programmes and policies that increased output – particularly of social infrastructure and basic consumer goods – would increase employment and produce new incentives to growth, which would benefit all sectors of the economy. The ANC therefore called for a programme of Growth through Redistribution, in which redistribution acted as a major spur to growth and in which the fruits of growth were redistributed to satisfy basic needs. Therefore, for the most part, the early thinking of the ANC post its unbanning around economic policy was centred on addressing the key challenges confronting the historically disadvantaged and therefore ensuring that as the basis for growth of the economy. Had this approach been fulfilled, most of the challenges cited by the ANCYL in its call for Economic Freedom would have been addressed.

However, according to Bond (1999:23) a plethora of corporate scenario planning exercises was unleashed after 1990, which had a telling impact on staking out the terms of the debate. The interventions shared an overarching set of assumptions and tenets. Economic policy, they urged, had to be grounded in relationships of trust, negotiation and consensus building. This implied imposing a kind of coerced harmony, analogous to the central dynamics applied in the political negotiations. In Bond’s view, the scenario exercises reflected the desire to come up with a deal, rather than with good analysis. Steering that process was a set of cardinal assumptions, notably the need for macro-economic stringency, restraint in social restructuring, an outward-oriented economy and a facilitating (rather than an interventionist) state. They all demonised a redistributive approach as macro-economic populism and rejected the notion of grounding economic policy in a mutually reinforcing dynamic of growth and redistribution.

According to Marais (2011:103) the Macro-Economic Research Groups (MERG) Making Democracy Work: A Framework for Macroeconomic Policy in South Africa Report was eagerly awaited on the left. That report was expected to chart the ANC’s thinking on economic policy. Central to the document was the
argument that the economy could best be restructured through the labour market (improved training, education and skills-building, and higher wages), as well as interventions aimed at improving the structure and operation of business.

According to MERG (1993:265), to achieve the goals of economic growth and redistribution, the state structures of South Africa must play a strong and active role in leading development, but the state institutions themselves must be economical and efficient. In other words, a strong but slim state is required. South Africa needs a mixed economy, and the change to a new economic system would depend on a strong private sector and a strong public sector. Each depended on the other; the dynamism of the private sector depended on the strong economic leadership of the state, while state finances depend upon private sector growth. The economy depends on both. Redistribution and growth require state leadership, planning and action. According to Marais (2011:103), by late 1993, the language and tone of the ANC and business policy documents were so similar that at times they appeared interchangeable. By the time the group presented its neo-Keynesian final report, Making Democracy Work, to the ANC in late 1993, its proposals were well out of line with dominant thinking on economic policy. The Report was summarily shelved.

The ANC ultimately went to the polls with the Reconstruction and Development Programme as its framework on which it would mobilise society. The key objectives of the RDP (1994:12) were outlined as the following:

- meeting basic needs
- urban and rural development
- democratisation and institutional reform
- economic restructuring

In 1996, two years after the ANC came to power, it unveiled its macro-economic strategy named Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). This strategy became the centrepiece of South Africa’s growth path and, consequently, its
broader development path. The plan hinged on an implausibly large increase in private sector investment. At root, GEAR was an attempt to endear South Africa to private capital by:

- reducing the deficit, limiting debt service obligations and countering inflation by restricting state expenditures;
- liberalising financial controls and ultimately removing all obstacles to the free flow of capital;
- privatising non-essential state enterprises and partially privatising other state run utilities;
- liberalising the trade regime by drastically reducing most tariffs and other forms of protection;
- keeping the exchange rate stable at competitive levels;
- adding infrastructure to address service deficiencies and backlogs;
- adding tax incentives to stimulate new investment in competitive labour-absorbing projects;
- seeking wage restraint from organised workers and introducing regulated flexibility into the labour market;

The adoption of GEAR marked a significant shift from earlier economic policy, such as the RDP, which had anticipated that growth would be at the back of a redistributive framework. As can be seen above, GEAR presented another paradigm, which anticipated that growth would be at the back of success of business and would be achieved through measures such as liberalisation, tax incentives and privatisation.

From the above, it has been observed that the ANC’s policy, particularly in relation to the economy, was driven by its politics, primarily centred on the need to address the conditions of the Black majority. Despite this broad thrust that has guided economic policy outlook, the terrain of economic policy formulation has proven to be an area highly contested by national and international business, as
could be observed by what Bond (1999:23) calls the plethora of corporate scenario planning exercises unleashed after 1990 seeking to influence the future direction of South African economic policy. Between the period of 1990 to 1996, the pendulum swung from a redistributive economic outlook to a more business accommodating economic policy in the form of GEAR. This represented a definitive swing of the pendulum, as the business friendly GEAR resulted in the stabilisation of the macro-economic environment, which created fertile conditions for business to pursue its interests and expand, amongst others, its accumulation beyond the borders of the country. The broader perspective that emerged from many sectors in South African society was that the post-democratic era and its associated policies had delivered political rights to the majority without any change in the economic circumstances of the majority. This was a theme that was to emerge strongly at the turn of the new millennium, resulting in a strong assault on many of the policies that had created the reality of political freedom without economic freedom. This policy shift was to be the target of the generation of the ANCYL that was to lead the charge for economic freedom, as will be observed in Chapter Four.

3.4. Post-apartheid South Africa

The extent to which majority rule and the establishment of a democratic state is judged to be successful is dependent on how this new democratic state is able to respond to the socio-economic realities inherited from apartheid presented in section 3.2. Summarily, these would constitute questions of inequality, unemployment, lack of access to basic service, lack of access to quality health care and education etc. This section will provide a brief synopsis of South African society leading into the second decade of democracy.

Finn, Liebbrandt and Wegner (2011:7) argue that when viewed from a political perspective, the post-apartheid South African landscape looks markedly different from its apartheid predecessor. From a developmental vantage point, however,
the legacy of apartheid is still there for everybody to see. Poverty and inequality continue to detract from what many have referred to as a ‘miracle transition’.

In November 2007, the pages of South African newspapers presented the scence of an unlikely conflict between a non-governmental organisation, South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), and State President Thabo Mbeki. SAIRR released a report, using the World Bank’s definition of extreme poverty as living on less than US$1 per day, claiming that 1.9 million South Africans were living in extreme poverty in 1996, whereas 4.2 million were doing so in 2005. The government responded using a different definition of poverty, a R3000 poverty line, arguing that 53% of the population lived in poverty in 1996, and that this figure had fallen to 43% by 2006 (Butler, 2009:84). This debate was just yet another demonstration of the deep-sited poverty prevalent in South African life at all levels, and the need for the ANC government to present itself as having been able during its time in government to speak to one of the most burning issues in the lives of many South Africans.

Regardless of which definition or measure one uses to look at the extent of poverty in South Africa, it is without doubt at extremely high levels. This section will assess the extent to which the ANC-led government has been able to respond to the challenges it had inherited and confronted since its rise to power in 1994.

Butler (2009:85) argues that South Africa is a middle-income developing country. Its GDP per capita (adjusted for purchasing power parity for purposes of cross country comparison) was $11,110 in 2005. This places its income per head on a par with Poland ($13,847), Chile ($12,027), Uruguay ($9,962), and Costa Rica ($10,180). In a ranking of countries by per capita income, South Africa would emerge in fifty-sixth place out of 177 countries (UNDP, 2007). Yet, income per head tells us only a little about the quality of human experiences in a society. Buttler (2009:87) argues that to explore the ability of household and individuals to command the resources necessary for a ‘reasonable’ standard of living, it is
necessary to use more complex multi-factor measures of poverty which include non-monetary elements in fields such as health and education. Perhaps the best known indicator, used most widely by policy makers to compare human wellbeing in different countries, is the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Index (HDI), which measures a population’s ability to develop its three ‘most basic capabilities’: to be able to lead a long and healthy life; to be knowledgeable; and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living.

In this regard Buttler, (2009:86) argues that South Africa fares exceptionally poorly through the lens of HDI, especially in the light of its relatively high GDP. It is HDI ranked 120th out of 177 countries. Countries with similar GDP’s per head fare far better: Poland is ranked 37th, Chile 40th, Uruguay 46th, and Costa Rica 48th. Brazil, with a per capita income of just $8,402 comes in at 70, a full 50 places ahead of South Africa. In HDI terms, South Africa is ranked alongside countries that are far poorer in terms of income: Mongolia ($2,107 per capita), Kyrgyzstan ($1,927), Bolivia ($2,819), Gabon ($6,954) or Morocco ($4,586). South Africa’s score on the widely used measure of inequality, the Gini Coefficient, was 0.59 in 2000, making it one of the most income unequal societies in the world. Butler (2009:87) posits that while income may be quite substantial overall, much of it is concentrated in a small and privileged segment of the population. In 2000, the richest 20% of households were responsible for 65% of expenditure. By contrast, the poorest 20% accounted for just 2.8%. Almost half of the country’s people live in poverty, with little access to money or credit. Levels of unemployment – the key determinant of poverty in South Africa - are exceptionally high, as a result of the opening of the economy after 1989, tariff reductions and conservative fiscal policy after 1997, accompanied by huge job losses in sectors such as agriculture and domestic work.

According to Seekings and Nattrass (2006:303), data suggests that overall levels of inequality have changed little during the second half of the twentieth century. The Gini coefficient for gross income inequality hovered closer to 0.7 than to 0.6.
The data suggest that inequality worsened between 1995 and 2000, with the Gini coefficient per capita income rising from 0.65 to 0.69 using the STATS SA weighting. Whereas overall levels of inequality might have changed little, there has been a steady shift in the income shares of the different racial groups. Census data suggest that the White population’s share of total income declined from about 71% in 1970 to 52% in 1996 while the African population’s share rose from about 20% to 36%. Declining interracial inequality was accompanied by rising intraracial inequality. This is evident from changes in the Gini coefficients for the distribution of income for South Africa as a whole and the different racial populations within it. The declining importance of interracial inequality and the rising importance of intraracial inequality are becoming a feature of South African society.

In advancing the above argument of increasing inequality in South Africa Finn, Liebbrandt and Wegner (2011:7) argue that income growth has not resulted in any decline in South Africa’s historically high levels of inequality. On the contrary, levels of inequality have widened during the post-apartheid years. A comparison of aggregate Gini coefficients (the most widely used measure of inequality) for 1993, 2000, 2005 and 2008. In presenting the statistics to advance this view Finn, Liebbrandt and Wegner (2011:13) present the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.61</td>
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<td>0.50</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.58</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993–2008, % change</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>12.70</td>
<td>25.60</td>
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<td>19.10</td>
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In an input to "Critical Conversations on Prospects for a Non-racial Future in South Africa", Zwelinzima Vavi, General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, in Newtown on 26 May 2011 argued that seventeen years after the 1994 breakthrough we need to assess how far we have progressed. Vavi, argued that the one massive problem remains that while we have achieved much on the political front, we have failed to make any real progress in reconciling the economic inequalities and injustices inherited from the colonial and apartheid era. Reconciliation, according to Vavi, was surely never intended to mean that the poor majority had to reconcile themselves with inherited poverty, mass unemployment and inequality; yet that is the reality they face today. Inequalities have become worse even than under apartheid. The statistics are frightening. The unemployment rate among Whites is 5.5%; among Indians 7.9%; among Coloureds 21.3%; and among Africans 28.1%. According to an uncited study, Vavi states that being a young African reduces the odds of being employed by 90%, in comparison to being White. Despite similar qualifications, Whites were on average 30% more likely to be employed than Africans. 68% of the increase in unemployment among Africans between 1995 and 2003 could be explained purely by race. Control of the economy and economic opportunities still reflected our history. Altogether 45% of all top management promotions went to White males, 17% went to White females (a total of 62%), which reflected the perpetuation of the historic networks of power that determines promotion and recruitment (www.cosatu.org.za/speeches/CriticalConversationsonProspectsforanon-racialfutureinSouthAfrica).

The 2007 Community Survey estimated that Whites earned eight times more than Africans. An African male earned an average of R2 400 a month whilst a white male earned R19 000. This means that, given an eight-hour working day, Whites earned in one hour what Africans earned in a day. An estimated 81% of Africans earned less than R6 000, whilst 56% of Whites earned more than R6 000. Inequality is deeply embedded. There is inequality in healthcare: only 9% of the African population belonged to a medical aid scheme whilst 74% of the
White population did. This was reflected in terms of life expectancy; a White
person born in 2009 could expect to live for 71 years; whereas an African born in
the same year could expect to live for 48 years - 23 years less. There was
inequality in education: 70% of matric passes were accounted for by 11% of the
schools that are categorised as historically White, Indian and Coloured. The pass
rate in African schools was 43%; in White schools it was 97%. Schools with fees
of less than R20 per year had a pass rate of 44%; while those with fees greater
than R1000 per year, had a pass rate of 97%.

The 2007 Community Survey proceeds to state that in 2007, around 717 000
students were enrolled at higher education institutions. Of these, 62,2% were
African; 22,1% White; 7,6% Coloured, and 8,1% Asian. Though most students
were African, only 2,5% of the African and 2,8% of the Coloured population were
enrolled at tertiary institutions, as opposed to 11,4% of Asians/Indians and 10,8%
of the White population. There were also huge inequalities in housing: almost
75% of Indians and more than 80% of Whites lived in houses with more than six
rooms, compared to 42% of Coloured households and 28% of African
households. Altogether 55% of Coloured households had less than three rooms
and 21% lived in one-room houses

The National Planning Commission’s (2011) diagnostic report on human
conditions stated that changes since the birth of constitutional democracy have
provided the basis for significant shifts and achievements in many areas of
human development in South Africa. Yet, despite many positive outcomes, social
exclusion and alienation persist in poor, economically marginalised communities.
The legacy of racial, economic, gender and spatial exclusion continues to shape
human development among South Africa’s poor majority. Poverty in South Africa
is most evident in the lack of opportunities for economically active citizens to earn
a wage. Income poverty affects individuals and households in ways that are often
degrading and lead to precarious lifestyles. However, the linkages between
income poverty and deprivations in health care, education and social infrastructure are direct, with devastating consequences for individuals and society. Deprivations in health and education are also linked to a lack of access to other assets, such as housing, land, social infrastructure (such as clinics, schools, libraries and cultural resources) and services, such as credit facilities. Without access to quality health and education and income-earning opportunities, the lives of the vast majority of the poor are a daily struggle to simply survive.

The National Planning Commission’s (2011) diagnostic report proceeded to highlight the following as ways in which inequality is reflected in South Africa:

Inequality in South Africa is reflected in the following ways:

• In 1995, the poorest 20 percent of people earned an average of R1 010 a year (in 2008 prices) and the richest 20 percent earned an average of R44 336 a year. In 2008, the poorest 20 percent of people earned R1 486 a year and the richest 20 percent earned an average of R64 565 a year.

• In 1995, the poorest 20 percent of the population earned just 2.3 percent of national income, while the richest 20 percent earned 72 percent. By 2008, these figures had barely changed, with the poorest earning 2.2 percent of income and the richest earning 70 percent.

• In 1995, median per capita expenditure among Africans was R333 a month compared to Whites at R3 443 a month. In 2008, median expenditure per capita for Africans was R454 a month, and for Whites R5 668 a month.

• According to the Income and Expenditure Survey, the Gini coefficient, which measures the gap between richest and poorest, increased marginally from about 0.64 to 0.68 between 1995 and 2005. According to the AMPS data, the Gini coefficient has been broadly constant during this period at about 0.67. South Africa remains one of the world’s most unequal societies.
This section has demonstrated the real outcomes of ANC policy over the past 18 years of its governance. It has demonstrated empirically the deepening inequalities that have prevailed in South Africa post 1994 and the inability of the ANC government to respond to key elements of the economy and its transformation. These are the outcomes that the program of the ANCYL attempted to respond to by tabling a program aimed at radical economic transformation.

These trends reflecting the slow progress in the transformation of the socio-economic landscape of post-democratic South Africa away from those of apartheid South Africa have to a large extent been the galvanising force towards social discontentment and the subsequent rise of the Economic Freedom in our Lifetime movement and politics.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter outlined that, despite the world’s acknowledgement of the political miracle that 1994 represented, the democratically elected government was confronted with enormous challenges. At one level, the challenges spoke to the need to build a strong democratic environment, which had started with the elections. This would entail the establishment of democratic institutions and consolidating the legitimacy of these institutions in society. At a second level, there was the realisation that the political victory was confronted with a historical legacy that had created desperate socio-economic conditions for the majority of South Africa. These desperate conditions were reflected in the high poverty levels, the high unemployment rates, inadequate housing, and lack of access to basic services. The ability of the democratic government to effectively respond to these challenges would determine the real success of the political miracle and, to a considerable extent, it has proven to be unable to respond to these.
This chapter has outlined a sequence of policy interventions tabled within the ANC over the course of the past twenty years, and the inability of these policies to transform the political victory of 1994 into real socio-economic gains for the historically disadvantaged Black majority. This inability to translate the political victory into meaningful socio-economic gains created the conditions upon which the ANCYL were to launch their Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime campaign and challenge ANC policy.
Chapter 4

ANC YOUTH LEAGUE SINCE 1991 RE-LAUNCH:IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters this study focused on the specific conditions that existed in South Africa that served as catalysts in the formation of the organisation of the African National Congress Youth League, further focusing on the development of the ANCYL and its politics under apartheid, ultimately leading to the banning of the African National Congress in 1960. The study further explored the political environment and challenges that were brought on by the electoral victory of the ANC, catapulting South African society into a new epoch of democratic dispensation. This new era of representative and democratic governance under the African National Congress leadership meant that the role and activities of the ANCYL, in its relationship with the ANC and society at large, had to respond to the new tasks presented to it by democracy. In this regard, former ANCYL President Malusi Gigaba, in his Political Report to the ANCYL Congress in 2004 stated the following:

Given the advent of democracy in 1994, which created new conditions for the pursuit of our strategic objective to create a non-racial and non-sexist democratic society, the most urgent challenge that faced the ANCYL at that moment as, to adapt or die. The crucial challenge was how to adapt the ANCYL politically and organisationally to suit the new epoch. The dawn of freedom in 1994 created the urgency not only to craft a new mission for the youth, but also to re-mould ourselves in a manner in sync with the new political challenges and transform the ANCYL into an organisation that is relevant in the new democratic era.
This quotation from former ANCYL President, Malusi Gigaba, raises and highlights a number of themes and issues that this section of the study will attempt to investigate, mainly:

- whether the ANCYL has been able to adapt to the new conditions brought about by the democratic dispensation;
- whether the ANCYL has been able to politically and organizationally reposition itself within the political landscape of a democratic South Africa in pursuit of the ANC’s program of creating a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society;
- whether the ANCYL has been able to craft a new vision and supplement that vision with a new set of policies that are able to mobilise the young people of the country behind its banner and that of the ANC and its programmes.

In this chapter, these questions were answered through a study of the extensive documentary evidence of perspectives, views and policy proposals of the ANCYL post its re-launch in 1991 transcending into the democratic dispensation. The documentary evidence studied, was in the form of official organisational views expressed via national congress documents, National General Council documents, political reports and the official statements issued by the ANCYL and its officials. This assisted in understanding the ideological and policy paradigm of the ANCYL in the democratic era.

For the purpose of enabling a systematic analysis of the ANCYL and its politics since its re-launch in 1991, this section will be structured around the period, 1991 to 1996, 1996 to 2004, and 2004 to the present.

A key limitation to conducting a study of the ANCYL immediately after its unbanning was the relative lack of access and existence of relevant material. For
this reason, for the period 1991 to 1996, Glaser (2012) and Botiveau (2007) will be extensively used as references.

4.2. OUTLINE OF PROCESSES LEADING TO 1991 RE-LAUNCH OF ANCYL

The year 1990 saw the unbanning of the ANC and other political formations that had been banned since the 1960’s and beyond. Particularly for the ANC, it meant that it now needed to contend with the task of rebuilding its structures within the country and asserting itself as the foremost organisation within the mass democratic movement in the country. Glaser (2012:98) states that throughout 1990, after F.W De Klerk had dramatically announced the unbanning of the liberation movements, ANC exiles drifted back into South Africa, and political prisoners were released. The ANC had to re-establish itself as a legal party and negotiate mergers and alliances with the 1980s internal movement. Not surprisingly, one of the key points of discussion was the formation of an overarching ANC youth structure.

According to Botiveau (2007:17), just like the post-Soweto uprisings had been the product of high school pupils, the 1980-81 mobilisation and the 1984 uprisings owed a lot to students and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) in particular. COSAS was a national organisation, well rooted locally, and from its creation (1979) onward, it had called for the creation of a national youth organisation. This initiative was adopted by the UDF and led to the formation of SAYCO a few years later. As from 1983 members of COSAS who had left the educational system played a major part in the creation of youth congresses all over South Africa. These had aligned themselves with the values of the ANC and covered the youth as a whole: students, young workers and unemployed youth. These congresses were then gathered in regional structures, such as the Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO). As a result of this overall process, SAYCO was launched on 28 March 1987. More than 200 delegates secretly gathered at the University of the Western Cape, in a founding congress which
resulted in the adoption of the Freedom Charter and a constitution claiming the full representation of the South African youth.

It is with respect to the above context that Glaser (2012:98) argues that in the re-establishment of the ANCYL, four youth organizations needed to be accommodated in a new structure: the external ANC Youth section; SAYCO; COSAS; and the South African National Students Congress (SANSCO). COSAS had re-emerged as a force in high schools following its unbanning in early 1990. SANSCO was university based, effectively a reconstituted AZASO; it then simply became the South African Students Congress (SASCO) when it merged with NUSAS in 1991. According to Glaser (2012:99), all four groups agreed in principle to the renewal of the ANCYL, but the issue that caused a great deal of disagreement was the shape the new organisation would take. Glaser (2012:99) further notes that early on in the negotiations, COSAS and SASCO decided to retain their independence. They argued, according to Glaser, that they needed autonomy in order to be responsive to their very specific school and university student constituencies. Rather than integrate into the new ANCYL, they would maintain a cooperative relationship and even encourage dual membership. This left the Youth Section and SAYCO to enter into direct negotiations.

Held between 13 and 16 April 1990, the resolutions of SAYCO’s first national congress outlined the “natural” link between SAYCO and the ANC, as well as the necessity to relaunch the ANCYL, in which, according to SAYCO, it would play a major role (Botiveau 2007:20). According to Glaser (2012:100), the Youth Section carried the authority of a exile movement and the ANC name behind it, but lacked a mass organisation and its negotiation position was therefore weak.

The negotiation process between SAYCO and the Youth Section was quickly characterised by conflict over the question of leadership within the organisation to be. In contrast to the rebuilding of the ANC, which was based on an imprisoned or exiled leadership, the construction of ANCYL, in the absence of an
external structure, required an important role for the “inziles”. SAYCO agreed on the principle of fusion with the Youth Section, but its leaders were determined to control the process (Botiveau, 2007:20). Glaser (2012:100) summarises this merger between the two by stating that SAYCO, because of its mass support, was able to control the terms of the merger.

SAYCO’s leadership was granted the main positions in the Provisional National Youth Committee, which was the Provisional Executive Committee of the ANCYL. Peter Mokaba remained President, and Rapu Molekane National Secretary. The provisional ANCYL was officially launched on 27 October 1990, though SAYCO did not disband until the official launch of the ANCYL in December 1991. The preamble of the provisional ANCYL relinquished the Marxist references of SAYCO, focusing on the objectives of the ANC: a democratic regime in a non-racial and non-sexist society. In order to contribute to this aim, the ANCYL was to become a mass-based youth movement. It would serve the interests of the ANC, but also those of the South African youth. These two functions were to be known as the “twin tasks” of the ANCYL: support for the ANC, rallying the youth behind its programme, as well as “championing the general interests of South African youth” in the political and socio-economic life of the country.


According to Glaser (2012:102), there can be no doubt that in the early 1990s, Peter Mokaba was the dominant figure in the re-born ANCYL. In fact, Mokaba’s name was almost synonymous with the organisation. When the League was re-launched in December 1991, there was little opposition to his bid for the Presidency.

Botiveau (2007:22) argues that the decade of the 1980s was a rebellion of the youth based on a strong generational consciousness, on Marxist propaganda
and on the broad conceptions of the armed struggle. The conjunction of those factors gave birth to a struggling generation and did not prepare its members for a negotiated settlement. In their view, the apartheid regime should have been defeated by armed struggle. The “idol” of the South African youth was Chris Hani who represented the ideas and ideals of the youth. Hani was the Secretary General of the SACP and the last MK General, and his freedom fighters were considered heroes.

Glaser (2012:105) writes that in line with this mood, Peter Mokaba persisted with a steady stream of anti-negotiation populism from 1990 – 1993. He was one of the most visible political figures of this period, making numerous fiery speeches in front of huge, adoring crowds of youth and leading them in the toyi-toyi. He publicly upbraided the ANC for making too many concessions. He implied that the negotiations had deprived the ANC of a decisive military victory, which would have allowed them to dictate the terms of the transition. Shortly after Hani’s assassination, Mokaba began chanting the controversial “Shoot the Boer” song at mass meetings. Later, he opposed any kind of amnesty being granted to apartheid leaders, insisting that F.W. de Klerk had blood on his hands and that he should be held to account. According to Glaser (2012:107), most of the new members of the ANCYL who joined up during a recruitment drive in 1991 – 1992 disagreed with the ANC’s negotiation stance. Relations between the ANC and the ANCYL became tense and Mokaba was often rebuked for his excessive language.

In support of Glaser’s outline of Mokaba and the ANCYL’s politics at the time, Botiveau (2007:22) states that in April 1991, an extended meeting of the Provisional Executive Committee of the ANCYL noted that, since 2 February 1990, the ANC had entered a phase of negotiations that compromised certain pillars of the struggle, such as the underground operation and the armed struggle. It added that the ANC was obviously losing its power of initiative and that it should rely on and consults the broad masses of its members and
followers in order to regain the initiative. It was suggested that the ANC should not adopt a reformist approach as opposed to its past revolutionary position. The ANCYL Provisional Executive Committee argued that the process leading to democracy should itself be democratic and that internal democracy should be a major concern.

Botiveau (2007:22) notes a second incident that demonstrated the tensions between the ANCYL and the ANC during this time: during that same period (1991), the Provisional Secretariat of the ANCYL complained in a memorandum addressed to the Provisional Secretariat of the ANC that the latter was intentionally restraining the rise of the ANCYL as an active political actor. The document mentioned the material obstacles the Youth League was faced with. It spoke of basic needs as regard setting up the ANCYL's Regional Offices (unpaid rents, water and electricity bills), as well as the delay of its inaugural conference due to a lack of funding. The memorandum questioned the fact that the ANC did not fund the ANCYL, alleging that this was motivated by a political will not to see the building of an autonomous Youth League. Botiveau (2007:23) concludes that the relationship between the ANC and the ANCYL was therefore tense during the transitional period. This tension focused on hierarchy between the ANC and its youth wing and was also the result of the centralised character of decision-making within the ANC in exile.

In a study conducted by Marks (1995) entitled *Onward Marching Comrades: The career of the charterist movement in Diepkloof, Soweto*, presented at the *History Workshop Conference* at the University of the Witwatersrand in June 1995, in which Marks explores the decline of the Charterist youth movement in Diepkloof in the early nineties, she argues the following about the youth and the ANCYL at the time:

“While youth were encouraged by the ANC to organise themselves into the ANCYL in the early nineties, their role was no longer seen as the central
force for change. Ungovernability was largely frowned upon by the ANC leadership, and youth were asked to support the negotiations process and back up the demands of the ANC with "mass action" For comrade and activist youth who had for the previous six years been waging a struggle to bring the apartheid state to its knees, this was not an easy pill to swallow.

This new mode of politics seems to have given rise to a variety of responses from organised youth in Diepkloof. While members supported the ANC, they did not all support its strategies or decisions equally.

Marks (1995) proceeds to argue that four different "ideological" groupings seemed to have emerged from this period, namely:

- Youth activists, particularly the "old guard" from the eighties, who, while they may have disagreed with some of the decisions taken by the national executive committee, felt morally bound to support the ANC and publicly did all they could to strengthen support for its decisions;
- Those youth, primarily the "new wave", who supported the decisions of the ANC more uncritically, perhaps because they had never been part of the eighties resistance politics;
- A large grouping of youth, consisting of a combination of the "old guard" and the "new wave", who felt frustrated at the decisions and strategies of the ANC and stated their opinions openly; and
- The comtsotsis within the organisation who, while angered at the apartheid system, were more concerned with the personal gains they could make through criminal activities than with developing any ideological orientation.

The ideological cohesion that was present in youth organisations in the eighties - partly as a result of the ideological force of the UDF and the common goal of attaining "peoples' power" - weakened significantly in the early nineties. This perhaps reflected the lack of ideological cohesion in the ANC generally and was compounded by the lack of consultation between national, regional and local structures about decision making. Many local youth complained that no guidance
was been given by national and regional leaders of youth organisations (Marks, 1995)

From the above, it is clear that the early years of the ANCYL were predominantly influenced by the militant culture of the youth of the 1980’s, which in itself was a product of the conditions of the time. This militancy and culture of internal democracy at organisational level came into conflict with the more conservative and beaurocratic nature of the organisation of the ANC developed in exile. Politically, there were great expectations among the youth of an armed seizure of power and they actively agitated this view internally and externally of the organisation, and this came into conflict with the stance taken by the ANC on negotiations.

This conflict is best articulated by a report by Rapu Molekane (then Secretary General of the ANCYL) to the ANCYL following a meeting between the ANC and the government in which he participated in September 1992, expressing his feeling of marginalisation. He speaks of how strange he felt while seating face to face with the enemy whilst the ANC leadership appeared comfortable [Botiveau 2007:22].

According to Marks (1995:12), soon after the re-launch of the ANCYL, the organised youth of Diepkloof took the directive from the new national structure and began to launch a local branch of the ANCYL. The provisional ANCYL branch of Diepkloof was launched on February 24, 1991. During the subsequent months, Cosas continued to take up clearly defined - though poorly planned and carried out - school-based struggles in Diepkloof. The newly formed ANCYL differed from the old Soyco (Soweto Youth Congress) branch in that it never developed a clear programme of action. It tended to be more reactive in the campaigns it took up. For example, when the municipality decided to increase rents in mid-1991, it campaigned for a renewed rent boycott.
Glaser (2012: 107), however, states that ideologically the ANCYL drifted rightwards during the negotiation era and argues that Mokaba came increasingly under the sway of Winnie Mandela and, by late 1993, Thabo Mbeki. Both were African nationalists with little sympathy for the left. Mokaba, as the public face of the ANCYL, was massively persuasive among his own followers and clearly drew them along ideologically. In any case, in a country historically so skewed by racial inequality, African identity politics were in many ways easier to advocate than socialism. Secondly, and perhaps most significantly, the dramatic collapse of the Soviet Bloc between 1989 and 1991 discredited socialist politics and economics. Partly linked to this, the 1990s saw the emergence of a highly aspirant, consumerist generation, which was confronted by opportunities for self-advancement rather than an egalitarian society. Though a Communist Party aligned faction did survive in the ANCYL, it was never able to capture the leadership.

Glaser (2012: 108) proceeds to argue that Mokaba and the ANCYL played a crucial role in securing Thabo Mbeki’s victory over Cyril Ramaphosa in the ANC’s succession race in 1993-1994. As the former General Secretary of the powerful National Union of Mineworkers, Ramaphosa enjoyed strong support from the trade union movement. As the Secretary General of the ANC, chief negotiator at the CODESA talks and Nelson Mandela’s preferred successor, he was a formidable candidate for the deputy presidency of the ANC. According to Glaser (2012:109), it was understood that the deputy would succeed Mandela as president. Mbeki had built up his power base mostly in the external movement and it was important for him to secure the backing of powerful internal structures in his bid for the position. He was able to take advantage of the fact that Ramaphosa had alienated two hugely popular local figures in the internal movement, Winnie Mandela and Peter Mokaba. During the late 1980s, Ramaphosa had been one of a group of internal leaders who had disciplined Winnie for her involvement in the killing of Stompi Seipei and for implicitly endorsing “necklacing”. She had never forgiven him for this humiliation. In 1993,
Ramaphosa publicly rebuked Mokaba for singing “Shoot the Boer” in spite of the ANC’s banning of the song. Winnie had a devoted following, both among the militant youth and in the revived ANC Women’s League. While Mokaba’s leadership of the youth movement was virtually unquestioned.

Glaser (2012:110) concludes that shortly after Mokaba’s run-in with Ramaphosa – according to Gumede- Mbeki quietly approached Mokaba and expressed his personal sympathy. At the next meeting of the ANCYL Mokaba engineered an endorsement of Mbeki as the organisation’s next deputy president and Mandela’s heir apparent. Winnie also secured the Women’s League backing. Mokaba remained an Mbeki loyalist until his death in 2002.

From the above, it can be observed that at the re-establishment of the ANCYL in 1991, there was a firm commitment to revolutionary Marxism-Leninism in the Youth League; a commitment inherited from the radical politics of SAYCO. In the initial stages of its life the ANCYL identified with the Communist Party and its politics, seeing itself in a working-class alliance with COSATU. Glaser’s outline above portrays how the shift in the politics of the League occurred, hugely centred on two issues; firstly, the global decline in the acceptance of leftist politics and the rise of market economics following the fall of the Soviet Bloc and the politics of the big man of the ANCYL at the time, Peter Mokaba. These newly emergent politics were to be the foundation of ANCYL politics for a decade to come.

In 1994, Mlungisi “Lulu” Johnson, Mokaba’s former Deputy, took over the ANCYL presidency. Johnson, who according to Glaser, had little impact, served only one largely uneventful term and was replaced by Malusi Gigaba in 1996.

Consistent with its acknowledgement of the changed material conditions of South African society post democracy, the ANCYL in 1996 released a document entitled “The Political Vision of the ANCYL – Youth Mobilization for the consolidation of people’s power” (http://www.ancyl.org.za/show.php?id=5517), in it making a broad analysis of the South African situation two years after the first democratic elections and into ANC governance. This document provided insight into the role the ANCYL saw itself playing in the context of it being the Youth League of a ruling party in a democratic society.

The Political Vision of the ANCYL document, containing a wide spectrum of themes, ranging from the tasks to the challenges of the Youth League, was one of the first elaborations of the organisation that attempted to locate the ANCYL within the democratisation era and processes that were unfolding within the country at the time. The nature of the issues identified, was synonymous with the period within which the document was produced; 1996 representing two years into the democratic dispensation, reflected through themes such as “Dealing with Counter-Revolution”. However most of the themes identified in the document spoke to a very large extent to the ANCYL’s role in contributing towards the improvement of the real circumstances and conditions confronted by the many South Africans who had experienced racial oppression under apartheid which ultimately contributed to them finding themselves in dire economic circumstances.

The repositioning of the ANCYL in the era of democracy, outlined above, was further affirmed by former ANCYL President Malusi Gigaba in a 2001 ANCYL National Executive Committee Bulletin (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=14), in which Gigaba states that the political achievement of 1994 required of the ANCYL to re-orient itself and renew its machinery to focus on the new challenges
of the new era. The principal challenge before the youth remained the accomplishment of the struggle for the creation of a new non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous society.

In 2001, Gigaba proceeded to argue that in the previous seven years, the ANCYL had been seized with trying to redefine and recreate itself. He argued that, quite clearly, a constellation of historical factors had determined that the ANCYL should occupy the unique and advantageous position as the youth organisation of the ANC. Accordingly, the ANCYL had a duty to fully optimise the advantages that accrue from the fact that the ANC was now a governing party to both build itself and champion youth interests, and to develop a unique character as a political mass youth organisation of the ANC.

In putting into actual practice these concepts Gigaba outlines what the ANCYL conceived as some of its immediate tasks:

- Robust engagement with capital, government and society at large, as well as other institutions that have the capacity and an obligation to intervene in youth development.
- Occupying the forward trenches of the ideological and political struggles, occupying the centre stage of the battle of ideas in our society, guided by the conviction that it is always the task of the youth organisation to defend and advance the revolution and deal with challenges to transformation.
- Linked to the above, it must serve as the cadreship university of the ANC, where all future cadres of the ANC are produced, trained, nurtured. Cadre development must become part of its preoccupation and unique contribution to the ANC.
- Being at the forefront of social campaigns such as fighting AIDS, substance abuse among youth, women and children abuse, illiteracy and others.
• Of course, above all these matters, it must lead the struggle to combat racism and sexism in our society, especially among the youth, in order to raise in our country a cadre of youth that epitomises the new society that we are building.

These themes of youth unemployment, youth development, improving access to health and education, transformation of the economy, promoting Black business and youth Black business in particular, as addressed in the League document, were to form the crux of the various programmes that would be developed by the successive ANCYL leaderships from that point going forward. These issues ultimately found expression within Youth League policy discussions and were further elaborated within the broad thrust of mainly economic transformation, social transformation and youth development.

The 1998 political report presented to the 20th National Congress of the ANCYL introduced its perspectives on social transformation by stating that one of the most immediate and visible outcomes of national liberation would be the social emancipation of Black people and Africans in particular, setting the scene for its perspectives on the idea of social transformation. The greater part of the report concerned itself with developments in the area of education as a foundation for social transformation, arguing that major advances had been made in education and training and that during the previous two years, the democratic government had concentrated on developing new legislation that would precipitate the education and training transformation. In this, we were driven by a burning desire to modernise our entire system of human resources development. The report outlined that the South African Schools Act was passed in 1996, spelling an end to Bantu education and heralding a new era of people’s education. Education was made compulsory for a period of ten years; and schools were mandated to become democratic institutions. No child could be turned away from public schools on the sheer basis of his/her parents’ failure to pay school fees, and no
child would be compelled to study in a language forced upon him/her (www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=15).

This focus on education was an indication that to the ANCYL, this area of education formed the pillar of social transformation. However, besides highlighting and noting the advances and progress made in the area of education in the state, the ANCYL in its own documents at that stage did not provide its own policy perspectives and proposals on the transformation of the education system. This lack of generation of policy proposals of its own and the trend of citing developments were further seen in its input in the report on higher education, where it states that the establishment of a task team on further education and training was a milestone in the education struggles of our people.

Youth that could not finish their studies as a result of apartheid would be given a second chance to education and training. The establishment of community colleges was a further contribution to the continuous development and training of young people. These colleges must be expanded in order to enable them to deal adequately with the problems confronting the many students either out of school or who have obtained poor Matric results.

Of particular interest, however, is the pronouncement by the report on the question of free education where it argued that the following point must be made to higher education students: Free higher education is neither possible nor sustainable at this stage. They, as well, should shoulder the responsibility of both raising some of their funds and of paying back their loans, especially when they work, to sustain the fund. Overall, the perspectives of the ANCYL political report of 1998 represented an organisation grappling with the ability to craft its own policy perspectives outside of the views and actions of the ANC in government.

The 21st National Congress of the ANCYL in 2001 saw a more comprehensive and thorough input on the question of social transformation than had been tabled in 1998 at the 20th Congress. The input was thorough, in the sense that it
proceeded from an initial point of assessing the total conditions of Black people and in particular young people, emerging with a much broader conception and scope of social transformation than just education and training, as seen in the 1998 report. The following conclusion emerged, “the majority of Black youth have been denied opportunities to education and training, health and social welfare, economic participation, sport and recreation, arts and culture etc. They have been subjected to poverty and denied an opportunity to develop to their full potential (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?pageNum_rs=1&totalRows_rs=32&t=7). The focus of social transformation, in particular in the context of youth, now stretched from education and training to health and arts and culture, a significant shift from the 20th Congress perspective.

Key to the 2001 discussion document on social transformation was the articulation of critical points of intervention and broad policy objectives for youth policy, encapsulated as follows:

- Reduce youth unemployment by providing opportunities to become involved in meaningful economic activities and be integrated into an overall economic strategy
- Provide another opportunity for youth who missed out on education and training
- Access to further and higher education
- Provide more equitable access to health, recreational and social services
- Rehabilitate juveniles within the context of reducing crime
- Improve the quality of life of all young people
- Create conditions that will develop self-esteem and responsibility amongst youth, and empower them to play a meaningful role in society.

Besides a simple exercise of identifying policy objectives, the discussion document proceeded to highlight and expatiate on a number of key
programmatic interventions as a response to the challenges of youth in the country. To demonstrate the extent to which the 2001 discussion document was better able to respond to some of these challenges via concrete and tangible proposals it made the following suggestions:

**Umsobomvu fund:** The intention to set up a fund was announced in 1998 from the proceeds of demutualisation, the Board was set-up in 2000 and two key objectives of the fund were identified as job creation, and skills development and transfer. An amount of R800 million was set aside, however, given the magnitude of the task at hand as a number of strategic choices had to be made.

In the short term, the fund was intended to focus on building the leadership and skills base of the sector as part of a long-term investment; providing once off bridging finance for this purpose; supporting institutional arrangements for the evolution of a massive National Youth Service; partnering institution/s for the development of best practices for youth SMMEs; whilst simultaneously mobilising capital and partners for youth entrepreneurs.

The 2001 Discussion Document on Social Transformation was a clear demonstration of the development of the ANCYL into an autonomous league of the ANC, able to provide analysis and policy and programmatic proposals of its own. This was a demonstration of an ANCYL that was beginning to assert itself as a key player in social policy in the Youth sector. Despite these developments, the Youth League continued to formulate its perspective in line with ANC policy.

On the key question of the economy, the 1998 report argued that the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Programme had been adopted in pursuit of economic transformation and the Reconstruction and Development Programme. This strategy the ANCYL argued was aimed at reducing government deficit, whilst promoting economic growth and redistribution; increasing government investments in employment creation, infrastructure and
human resources development, and improving social expenditure. On the impact of GEAR and the broad economic policy the ANCYL argued that the country’s international competitiveness was gradually increasing, the inflation rate was at an all time low, and foreign investments were increasing, even though they were not creating jobs. The economy was being modernised to enable it to confront the future challenges of globalisation, competitiveness and job creation. On the question of the role of private capital, the ANCYL argued that the relationship the ANC state established with the private sector was critical in that period of transformation and globalisation. However, that must be based on the objective to ensure that capital ownership and control is extended and that it contributes in the building of a democratic society. Its approach to capital accumulation must be influenced by both a comprehensive and modern understanding of national and global economic trends and it must ensure that the private sector sees itself as an important player in the construction of a democratic society.

This line of thinking around the economy was further elaborated in the 2001 Economic Transformation Discussion Document (www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?pageNum_rs=1&totalRows_rs=32&t=7) in which the ANCYL argued that an important element of the restructuring of the economy to prepare it for challenges in the global economy was the adoption in 1996 by government of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR). Its key tenets included fiscal deficit reduction, trade and exchange liberalisation, the restructuring of state assets and promoting skills development. Achieving a balance between greater openness and improved competitiveness, while pursuing a process of industrial restructuring aimed at expanding employment opportunities and productive capacity, was identified as a major challenge.

The ANCYL proceeded to argue in the 2001 Economic Transformation document (www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?pageNum_rs=1&totalRows_rs=32&t=7) that the ANC - led government had been able to capitulate the current account, the capital account, the gross gold and foreign reserves, which were in deficit. The SARS had also
shown an improvement in its tax collection efforts, thereby boosting the central fiscus, releasing substantial amounts and expanding on the social expenditure. According to the ANCYL prudent macro-economic management led South Africa to escape the impact of the Asian crisis in large measure, unlike other emerging markets economies, though this had caused a slowdown in growth. It concluded by arguing that the ANC held the view that macro-economic stability remained a necessary condition for growth and job creation, but it was not a sufficient condition for growth and development. It was convinced the economic fundamentals, as laid through GEAR, were sufficiently sound to effect the required structural change in the economy. Measures and consensus on the Growth Path or Strategy that would accelerate delivery of services were needed.

In his political report to the 2001 National Congress (www.ancyl.org.za.political.report=2001.ph16) then President of the League, Malusi Gigaba, argued that in 1993, the RDP stated that to finance reconstruction and development, government needed:

- to avoid undue and excessive inflation and balance of payments difficulties that would worsen the position of the poor, curtail growth and cause the RDP to fail;
- to redirect government spending to increase capital and consumption expenditure and improve revenue-recovery, rather than increase government spending as a proportion of the GDP;
- to address the existing ratios of the deficit, borrowing and taxation to GNP, and, above all;
- achieve macro-economic stability in order to achieve micro-economic improvements.

Gigaba proceeded to argue that it should be remembered that the RDP did not elaborate in detail how this macro stability was to be pursued, except to direct the need to address it. In 1996, the ANC embarked upon this macro-economic stabilisation programme and, by 2001 the country had begun to progress towards
micro-economic reform. The point made here was that to address the challenges of the RDP, it became necessary that the ANC make certain political choices with regard to some economic matters; choices, including the stabilisation process itself, that were objectively imposed by concrete material conditions such as the structural crisis of the apartheid economy and economic integration into the processes of globalization. However, this stabilisation programme would be limited in that it would not immediately resolve some of the urgent challenges facing the country such as unemployment.

The above perspectives, outlined by both the ANCYL discussion document, and Malusi Gigaba’s comments on the political reports touched on an issue that was rather controversial at the time: relating to the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy as the macro-economic framework of the country. The ANC had been receiving a huge amount of criticism from its Alliance partners COSATU and the SACP on this Strategy. The main point of argument, from what was commonly considered as the left axis of the Alliance with regard to GEAR, was that it represented a shift towards the right and away from the economic outlook of, firstly, the Freedom Charter and, secondly, and more recently, the RDP, which had prioritised redistribution as the basis of growth. COSATU and the SACP argued that this policy catered for the interests of the business sector rather than for the workers and the poor. This led to a strain in Alliance relations between the Alliance partners.

The views expressed above by the ANCYL and its President located the ANCYL during those turbulent times. Gigaba’s comments gave unequivocal support to the ANC and its adoption and implementation of GEAR, citing a number of positives achieved in the economy since the adoption of the policy. By arguing that the RDP did not elaborate in detail on how macro-stability was to be pursued and that the macro-economic stabilisation programme implemented by the ANC in 1996 (GEAR) represented such necessary elaboration, an attempt was made to link the GEAR policy to the Alliance accepted RDP. This view was
initially espoused by the ANC, but was totally rejected by COSATU and the SACP. This line of argument without doubt located the ANCYL in a total opposite to the SACP and COSATU and clearly within the ANC line.

In elaborating the above view, Glaser (2012:113) states that it is hard to find examples of the ANCYL leadership taking a position contrary to the senior ANC leadership on any key issue between 1994 and 2004. It supported Mbeki’s business-friendly developmental economic agenda and there is no record of any criticism of government policy on HIV/AIDS or Zimbabwe. Although a lively left wing did often take critical stances inside the organisation, these divisions were rarely apparent on the surface. According to Glaser, the ANCYL came across as almost non-ideological, mostly highlighting problems around education and youth unemployment. It involved itself in the National Youth Commission and set up the Umsobomvu Youth Fund, which assisted young entrepreneurs. Although, with its huge membership, the Youth League had the potential to influence ANC politics significantly, the leadership remained steadfastly loyal to the senior body.

To illustrate the location of the ANCYL in the broader politics of the ANC and the Alliance based on its consistent compliance to its mother body the ANC, Malusi Gigaba argued in his political report to the 22nd National Congress in 2004, in a section entitled “Defending the ANCYL and its relations to the ANC”, that the ANCYL was an organised body of opinion within the ANC, and a mass political youth organ of the ANC. He argued that, certain tendencies opposed to the ANC, including some leadership mongering and self-seeking opportunists, had sought to turn the ANCYL into an anti-ANC instrument in the name of spurious left-wing militancy.

Gigaba proceeded to demonstrate his and the ANCYL’s loyalty to the ANC by arguing that, since its foundation, the Youth League believed that the ANC was the symbol and embodiment of the African’s will to present a united national front against all forms of oppression. Hence the ANCYL had insisted on unity and
cohesion, militancy and discipline, underpinned by the belief that a militant struggle demanded strict discipline. Lack of discipline could make a militant and heroic struggle degenerate into chaos; just as discipline without militancy could render a revolutionary struggle blunt. This theme of lack of discipline was to emerge again from Gigaba in his capacity as Minister of Public Enterprise and ANC NEC leader in reference to the ANCYL under the leadership of Malema.

Gigaba concluded by arguing that the ANCYL had consistently rejected the thesis both that for the League to be militant, it must, by definition, be anti-ANC and not disciplined. He argued that the ANCYL had rejected the falsehood that the ANCYL’s militant past was predicated on being anti-ANC and the untruth that the ANCYL had been formed to fight the ANC, depose its leadership and take the ANC over along the path of anarchy and hooliganism defined as left-wing militancy. He stated that as the ANCYL had left the task of opposing the ANC to its genuine opponents, whilst conducting themselves as its loyal activists and agents for its historic cause.

In elaborating on the ANCYL’s relations with the left axis of the Alliance Gigaba, argued in the 2004 political report that young communists joined the ANCYL as individuals, and not as an organisation or collective. As members of the ANCYL, they were bound by the same organisational discipline and were required to adhere to and represent the same political directive, policies, culture and traditions as other members, and advance its ideas and leadership position amongst the youth. They were required to assist the ANCYL in defeating factionalism and sectarianism and growing and developing both in organisational stature and political maturity. In that regard, within the ANCYL, there was no left-wing platform, nor was there is a sub-organisation of young communists who must present themselves as a platform, a conspiratorial group or a faction. The ANCYL had an obligation to fight against and defeat factionalism and sectarianism.
The second era of the ANCYL politics post its re-launch in 1991, straddled between the years 1996 to 2004. It was an era under the leadership of Malusi Gigaba, who Glaser (2012:113) describes as a technocrat rather than a charismatic populist in the Mokaba mould. The politics of the League in that era were characterised by on-going attempts to locate the ANCYL within the democratisation processes within the country; the need to locate the ANCYL as the centre of attempts to address the socio-economic challenges of the youth through creating viable institutional capacity within the state and tangible programmes; the need to be the primary youth political formation and the breeding ground and political school for “disciplined ANC members”; a rather un-confrontational approach when dealing with the ANC, but direct confrontation with those who challenged the ANCYL of a lack of robustness and militancy when dealing with the mother body; and a steady adherence and allegiance to the ANC and its policy positions, particularly on the front of the controversial economic policy of GEAR. The ANCYL under the leadership of Gigaba proved in elements to be the ANCYL of the ANC.

4.5 COMING TO LIFE OF ANC YOUTH LEAGUE (2004 – 2012)

In August 2004, Fikile Mbalula took over the presidency of the ANCYL. With the endorsements from the outgoing President, Gigaba, and most senior figures in the senior ANC, he was elected unopposed at the 22nd National Congress. Throughout the rest of 2004 and into early 2005, Mbalula, though in style more populist and less intellectual than Gigaba, appeared to be Mbeki loyalist who accepted the authority of the senior ANC. He supported Mbeki’s business-friendly economic policy and prominently rebuked the left Alliance partners when they took issue with the ANC President. Then, quite suddenly in 2005, Mbalula and the Youth League leadership turned against Mbeki and his leading faction in the ANC. At the same time, the Youth League threw its weight behind Jacob Zuma, the ANC’s beleaguered Deputy President, whose presidential hopes
seemed to be waning as the arms deal corruption case of his associate, Schabir Shaik, dragged on in early 2005 (Glaser 2012:120).

According to a Mail and Guardian report of 11 February 2005, the increasingly bitter debate over the presidential succession had taken a new twist, with the African National Congress Youth League suggesting that Thabo Mbeki should quit as ANC leader when he leaves the presidency. Youth league President Fikile Mbalula told the Mail & Guardian that any proposal to separate the party presidency from that of the country was divisive and would be a distortion of ANC history.

Mbalula’s comments came at the back of recent comments from a Mbeki loyalist, KwaZulu-Natal ANC Chairperson Sbu Ndebele, who had adopted a contrary position, telling the Sunday Times of 12 January 2005 that nothing stopped Mbeki from staying on as Party President after the 2007 National Conference. This idea was later supported in unsigned comments on the ANC website.

The Mail and Guardian report stated that the Youth League, which, in past weeks, had noisily endorsed Deputy President Jacob Zuma as South Africa’s next President, rejected the notion of two centers of power. It quoted Mbalula as arguing that “the suggestion is some people in the ANC are indispensable, and that is a lie. All ANC leaders are equally capable. I suspect there is another debate they are trying to sneak through the back door. Why are we creating two centres of power which will only create confusion? We have seen that it does not work in the provinces. Zuma is by history, by culture, by seniority the most appropriate ANC president. If comrades want to suggest alternative names let them do so openly. Zuma has the right leadership skills because of his ability to keep the alliance together and negotiate internal ANC issues” (http://mg.co.za/print/2005-02-11-youth-league-mbeki-is-not-indispensable).
An NEC Bulletin for ANCYL branches, issued by the ANCYL Communications department in January 2006 (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=14) after the League’s National Executive Committee Lekgotla stated the following:

We remain firm in our resolve on the succession issues within the ANC. The NEC Lekgotla re-affirms its position against the creation of two centres of power and will seek to advance this debate within the structures of the movement. Our support for the Deputy President on both corruption and rape charges remain unwavering. In reiterating its support the NEC is guided by the fundamental constitutional principle of “innocence until proven guilty” and a need for fairness in the administration of justice. The NEC remains pained at the gross injustices the ANC Deputy President has been subjected to throughout the investigation of both the corruption and rape allegations (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=14).

According to Glaser (2012:121) it was in this context that an Alliance in support of Zuma started to take shape. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the Youth League’s turnaround was that it found itself on the same side as COSATU, the Communist Party and the Young Communist League.

Despite this new alliance around Zuma between these organisations, the politics of the ANCYL, in particular as they related to the economy, did not necessarily shift to those of its new allies. In the January 2006 ANCYL NEC Bulletin, the ANCYL welcomed the ASGISA initiative and argued that it believed that this intervention carried great potential to advance South Africa’s economy around a higher growth trajectory (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=14).

As the ANCYL welcomed ASGISA, COSATU released a statement arguing that the ASGISA framework identified the key problem of slow and inequitable growth, pointing to some key reasons rooted in the inherited economic structure. While many of the proposed solutions had considerable merit, they did not adequately reflect the overall aim of inclusive, shared growth. Taken together, they seemed inadequate to achieve the desired aims. COSATU stated it could
only support the strategy if agreement was reached for it to be redesigned to ensure that our common commitment to shared rather than inequitable growth runs through all its programmes. The Trade Union Federation proceeded to argue that to exempt small and medium-sized enterprises from some labour laws reduced workers’ rights and weakened the scope of centralised bargaining and that the elements of ASGISA were inadequate to achieve the desired transformation of the economy. On infrastructure development, one of the pillars on which the Strategy rests, COSATU describes the projects as “more a shopping list of ideas from individual state entities than a coherent strategy to support growth. The measures on the second economy seemed entirely delinked from the proposals for infrastructure development and sector strategies. That would inevitably lead to the perpetuation of the inequitable two-tier economy rather than overcoming it. COSATU concluded by arguing that until these tasks were undertaken, it would be difficult to take Asgisa seriously as a strong programme to bring about shared growth (www.cosatu.org.za/responsetoasgisa).

Similarly in response to ASGISA, in a statement issued by the Young Communist League on 19 March 2006, it argued that as the YCL it rejected the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) announced by government earlier that year. In the view of the YCL, ASGISA was based on the same neo-liberal thrust that informed the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme, which had failed to create any jobs despite a decade of growth in the economy. It contended that the nature of capitalist growth was increasing profits for the owners of capital, but built on the exploitation of an increasingly smaller number of workers whilst, millions more were subject to job losses, unemployment and poverty. ASGISA required growth first without any clear programme of how to ensure the redistribution of wealth. The YCL did not agree with this capitalist logic arguing for the redistribution of current wealth as a sustainable basis for pro-poor and pro-youth socio-economic development. ASGISA was based on the need to lower the costs of doing business, which would ensure lead to lower government spending in real terms. Lowering the cost of doing business would ensure more secure profits for the bosses but greater
insecurity for the workers and the poor. In such a situation, there was no hope of a better future for the young people of our country, instead, poverty, HIV/AIDS, exposure to crime and joblessness would be perpetuated (http://amadlandawonye/YCLcriticisesASGISA).

The YCL proceeded to call for massive state investment in social and economic expenditure for township and rural infrastructure. Publicly owned companies, it argued, must be used for job creation and development, rather than the enrichment of a few CEOs and consultants. The YCL called on government to take active measures to direct and discipline all investment, including private investment. This must include higher levels of corporate tax and obligations on the private sector to invest in job creation, infrastructure and social needs. It was to merely expect that capitalist growth would be shared and lead to job creation as ASGISA did. ASGISA was GEAR in new clothes. Job creation and development would not be achieved by merely tinkering with what remained a capitalist economy: fundamental economic restructuring was required. The YCL called for massive state investment, higher levels of tax and the state directing all investment as part of this fundamental economic restructuring (http://amadlandawonye/YCLcriticisesASGISA).

It is important to note that this criticism of ASGISA from both the YCL and COSATU took place at the back of the already formed alliance in support of Zuma between these organizations. From this, it is clear that despite such an alliance there was no convergence between the ANCYL and the left relating to perspectives on critical matters such as the economy, with the Youth League seemingly still more adherent to the economic perspectives of the Mbeki-led government than those of its new political allies in the Alliance. In line with this contradiction, Glaser (2012:122) argues that the ANCYL had an established record of anti-leftism; the leadership mostly approved of Mbeki’s brand of Africanism. In any case, Glaser contends, there was no reason to believe that Zuma’s ideology was significantly different from Mbeki’s. If anything, the emerging alliance with the left seemed to suggest a possible shift away from
Africanism under Zuma. Therefore, according to Glaser, the Youth League simply read the mood of the party and sensed that dissatisfaction was mounting against Mbeki’s aloof and centralising style of leadership and positioned itself on the likely winning side. This was essential if the League was to continue to receive patronage from the senior ANC.

Despite these contradictions, the ANCYL was firm in its position towards the 2007 National Conference in Polokwane, as can be seen in its 26 February NEC Bulletin, in which it stated its support for the ANC Deputy President and its unambiguous and principled support for the ANC Deputy President for the position of ANC President later that year, and that of the country in the fourth coming National General Elections in 2009.

At the back of this new re-alignment between the ANCYL and the left axis of the Alliance Jacob Zuma was elected as President of the ANC in 2007 at the Polokwane Congress. Many argued that the ANCYL had returned to its historical status of kingmakers within the ANC politics, referring to the ANCYL generation of the late 1940’s that was central in the election of two ANC Presidents, namely James Moroka and Albert Luthuli. The 1949 election of James Moroka was coupled with the election of Walter Sisulu, a Youth Leaguer, as the Secretary General of the ANC. It was interpreted that the election of Sisulu in 1949 as Secretary General of the ANC was possibly a sign to come of the ambitions of the current generation of Youth Leaguers.

Key to some of the developments that the Mbalula leadership brought to the thinking of the Youth League was consistent attempts to put issues pertaining to youth on the table. This could be observed in the Youth League’s 2008 documents for Congress. In the political report to the 23rd National Congress of the ANCYL, Fikile Mbalula stated that one of the key mandates given at the 22nd National Congress of the Youth League was to promote the issue of youth development, and responding to this call at the National Committee of the 22nd National Congress, Congress resolutions around youth development and related
agencies, especially the NYC and UYF were drastically streamlined in to meet the ever-growing demands of young people. The move to establish an Integrated Youth Development Agency (IYDA) which would function in a seamless and integrated way was as such a remarkable achievement (http://www.ancyl.org.za/events.php?t=2).

On socio-economic transformation, Mbalula argued that the Youth League fearlessly championed youth interests in the arenas of free education, sports and culture, private corporates and related institutions, with a view to mobilise the youth whilst conscientising them in the vision of the revolution, as led by the ANC (http://www.ancyl.org.za/events.php?t=2).

The 23rd National Congress of the Youth League which was held in April 2008 was really at the back of the successes of the alliance of the Youth League with its new found allies on the left. There was general agreement on many issues between the league and the left, but this agreement did not seem to shift the ANCYL on its long established perspectives on the economy and its future. This is evidenced in its Economic Transformation discussion document (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?pageNum_rs=1&totalRows_rs=32&t=7) where it puts forward its pillars that it views as important in bringing about a fundamental shift in the realms of the economy. The document argues that the key pillars of the Youth Leagues’s perspective that will realise a fundamental shift in unemployment, inequality and poverty include the following:

(a) Thriving and integrated economy

(b) Increasing social equality and a growing economy rising productivity – innovation and cutting edge technology, labour-absorbing industrial growth, competitive markets and a thriving small business and cooperative sector and the utilization of ITC with efficient forms of production and management.
(c) Promote fair labour practices, social security for the poor, universal access to basic services.

(d) Based on mixed economy, where the state, private capital, cooperative and other forms of ownership complement each other in an integrated way to eliminate poverty and foster shared economic growth.

(e) Economy that is connected to the world, and which benefits from vibrant and balanced trade with the rest of the world; and

(f) Sustainable growth and development

From the above it is clear that despite the new alliance with the left that propelled Jacob Zuma to the presidency of the ANC, there was no commensurate shift in the perspectives of the Youth League to align itself with its new found friends on the left. The politics and perspectives of the Youth League proceeded along the lines of Mbeki perspectives. There was still a strong sense of commitment to creating an environment in which private business would play a key role as the catalyst of providing jobs and direct state ownership and intervention in the economy was not envisaged. This was consistent with the business friendly posture that had developed since the early 1990’s under the leadership of Mokaba and extending to the ANCYL of the ANC under Gigaba.

4.5.1 The rise of the Economic Freedom Fighters

On 28 April 2008, as part of the proceedings of the ANCYL’s chaotic 23rd National Congress, South Africa woke up to the news that Julius Malema had been elected as the new President of the ANCYL, taking over from Fikile Mbalula. Despite the fact that he was an active campaigner in the Jacob Zuma campaign, Malema was a relative unknown in the mainstream of South African politics. The South African public first learnt of Malema during his tenure as the president of the student organization COSAS and, as Glaser (2012:134) states his first big step up the political ladder came in June 2001 when he was elected
National President of COSAS. His COSAS Presidency is well remembered for a protest rally in Central Johannesburg in 2002 over a decision by the Education Department to lock school gates during school hours. After a typically stirring speech, Malema was unable to control the crowd, which went on to cause havoc in the city streets, smashing windows and attacking and robbing informal traders. This incident made national headlines in 2001. After his term of office as COSAS President ended in 2003, Malema returned to Polokwane, where he was soon elected as Provincial Secretary of the Youth League in Limpopo.

Malema’s presidency of the ANCYL was marred by controversy on controversy; the detail will not be recorded here. The most notable controversy that catapulted him into the national scene was, according to Glaser (2012:136), dated back to June 2008: Zuma faced corruption charges and Malema disturbed many South Africans when he threatened to take up arms and kill for Zuma. The following month, he listed the opposition Democratic Alliance as among the remnants of counter-revolutionaries that needed to be eliminated, later referring to its leader, Helen Zille as a “racist little girl”. This was followed much later by the continued singing of the song “dubula ibhunu”, loosely translated to “shoot the boer”, which had been made famous by the late Peter Mokaba.

In 2009, a significant development began to transpire in the politics of the ANCYL. On every platform occupied by the ANCYL, and particularly Julius Malema and the League’s spokesperson Floyd Shivambu, there was a consistent and growing call for the nationalisation of mines. Initially, these calls were considered by many within the ANC as arbitrary discussions by the League that would have no impact. However, the contrary transpired, as the call for the nationalisation of mines began to develop momentum within the ANC, ANCYL structures and within the COSATU and SACP alliance partners. These perspectives on the nationalisation of mines were at total loggerheads with commonly held perspectives on the economy within the ANC. The mantra of nationalisation had become a distant memory within the policy arsenal of the ANC and its government, which had until now been firm in promoting the market
as a key player in the economy. By implication, the new attitude of the Youth League on the nationalisation question placed it in conflict with the ANC on a key aspect: the economic perspective. Until this point, even the leadership of the ANCYL under Fikile Mbalula, which had taken a firm decision against the incumbent leadership of Mbeki on the Jacob Zuma issue and formed new alliances with the left, had not ventured far from questions of standing policy considerations within the ANC. As the discussion on nationalisation gained momentum, so the leadership of the Youth League under Julius Malema intensified its calls and their mobilisation efforts.

The apex point of the Youth League’s nationalisation calls was the release of a discussion document in February 2010 entitled “Towards the transfer of mineral wealth to the ownership of the people as a whole” (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=11), which essentially formalised the now popular perspective of the Youth League on nationalisation among the rank and file of the ANC and its alliance partners. These developments, and in particular the policy discussion document, seemed to have awakened a sleeping giant, as all sectors of society, ranging from academic, students, intellectuals, workers, ordinary ANC members and ANC leaders at all levels and business started taking notice and the nationalisation debate became an issue that dominated all national discussion forums. The Youth League linked the nationalisation discussion to the questioning of the limited transformation in the South African economy, in the interests of the Black majority, an issue that drew many to the new perspectives of the League and, critically the League itself among the youth and unemployed. The 2010 ANCYL discussion document argued as follows:

The attainment of the Freedom Charter objectives remains the strategic objective of the African National Congress. The Freedom Charter’s clause on the people sharing in the country’s wealth states,

"The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people; the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people
as a whole; all other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people; all people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions”.

It is against this background upon which a concrete position on the nationalisation of mines is formulated in order to guide the ANC in the transfer of mineral wealth beneath the soil to the ownership and benefit of the people as a whole. This is to ensure that the “use of natural resources of which the state is the custodian of on behalf of the people, including our minerals, water, marine resources in a manner that promotes the sustainability and development of local communities and also realises the economic and social needs of the whole nation”, as resolved in the 52nd National Conference of the African National Congress in December 2007.

The ANCYL Discussion Document proceeded to argue the following as the contemporary basis of its call for nationalisation:

Whilst the Freedom Charter says the democratic government should transfer minerals wealth beneath the soil to the ownership of the people as a whole, such cannot be the only reason why nationalisation should be pursued in the current context. Various reasons added to the Freedom Charter exist on why nationalisation of mines in South Africa ought to happen in the current economic and political conjuncture. These include but are not limited to the following reasons:

(a) nationalisation to increase the state’s fiscal capacity and better the working conditions; (b) nationalisation as a basis for industrialization (c) nationalisation as a means to safeguard sovereignty; (d) nationalisation as a basis to transform the accumulation path in the South African economy; (e) nationalisation to transform South Africa’s unequal spatial development patterns.

On the question of how the nationalisation drive should be financed the ANCYL argued as follows:
Concretely, the African National Congress should utilise its capacity to lead society, parliament and government to re-introduce the Expropriation Bill in Parliament, which clearly spell out how the state should expropriate mines and other property in the public interest without or with compensation, depending on the balance of probabilities. The expropriation bill should be consistent with the ANC’s Strategy & Tactics (2007) that "since 1994, the balance of forces has shifted in favour of the forces of change" and that such "provides the basis for speedier implementation of programmes to build a truly democratic and prosperous society".

The document with the above proposals was released on 2 February 2010, and it seemed to create an immediate tension within the ranks of the leadership of the ANC and government, particularly as it related to the potential impact on the confidence of investors in the economy. In this regard, on 3 February 2010, a day after the release of the ANCYL discussion document, the Minister of Minerals and Energy Susan Shabangu, addressed a Mining Indaba in Cape Town, arguing that the nationalisation of the country’s mining sector was not government policy and would not be adopted as such in the foreseeable future. She proceeded to state that, in her life-time, there would be no nationalisation of the mines and that the nationalisation of mines was an “open debate”, which did not mean any harm. Shabangu continued that government would not stop young people engaging in an “intellectual exercise” or exercising their debating skills on the subject. However, what was important, was government policy, and Shabangu reiterated that the ruling party had not, and would not, adopt nationalisation as a policy. The nationalisation of the mining sector was not a strategic imperative for the ANC, she added ([http://www.miningweekly.com/article/mine-nationalisation-wrong](http://www.miningweekly.com/article/mine-nationalisation-wrong)).

This drew an immediate response from the Youth League namely that it noted the comments attributed to the Minister of Minerals, Susan Shabangu on the nationalisation of mines, to the effect that the nationalisation of mines would not happen in her lifetime. The ANCYL went on to state that if these were really the views of the Minister, she was disingenuous, dishonest and did not understand the African National Congress. The ANCYL statement further stated that the Youth
League had called on the Minister of Minerals to stop misleading investors, because these investors should also make input into the discussion document on the nationalisation of mines, which would be reality in the not too distant future. The ANCYL was beginning to have doubts about the capability of Minister Shabangu to translate ANC policy objectives into practice in the Ministry of Minerals, the statement read. The ANC had requested the ANCYL to write a detailed, coherent and concrete perspective on the nationalisation of mines, and it had done that, yet the Minister chose to ‘jump the gun’ and make false assurances to investors and role players in mining. The statement concluded that as disciplined members of the ANC, the ANCYL would raise this concern with the leadership of the ANC (Statement issued by the ANCYL, February 2 2010, http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=4&y=2010).

This heralded the start of a long battle between the ANCYL and senior ANC and government officials on the issue of the nationalisation of mines which was to lead to the polarisation between the ANCYL and senior ANC leadership over the coming months. For example, the Public Enterprises Minister Malusi Gigaba, in a talk to the American Chamber of Commerce branded the mine nationalisation demands of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) as “reckless” and “cheap”, while Trade and Industry Minister, Dr Rob Davies, told the Swiss-South Africa Chamber of Commerce that expropriation without compensation was not only unconstitutional, but also “remote”, because it would violate “tons of investment protection agreements” that South Africa had with a number of countries around the world (http://www.miningweekly.com/article/mine-nationalisation-wrong).

In early March 2010, Joel Netshitenzhe a leader and leading theoretician of the ANC, released a document entitled State Ownership and the National Democratic Revolution: Debating the issue of Nationalisation (www.anc.org.za.nationalisation=umrabulo.2010) in which he provided a more comprehensive and theoretical critique of the ANCYL’s position paper. In it, he
provided an extensive articulation of why the ANCYL’s location of its demand on the Freedom Charter had weaknesses. Netshitenzhe argued as follows:

the movement had in the 1980s started re-examining its interpretation of the “wealth clause” of the Freedom Charter. It is in this broader context that the debate on the nationalisation of the mines should be understood. At the one level it is about the profound issue of the approach to property relations in a national democratic society – the relationship between the state, the markets and the citizen. At another level, it is about an understanding of the balance of forces and the difference between what may be desirable and what is actually possible. This then is the shift that has occurred over the years in the ANC’s approach to state ownership of the means of production. It may as well be that a reading of the global and domestic balance of forces informed a particular stance in each phase.

Netshitenzhe concluded by arguing that in a nutshell, the call for *holus bolus* ‘nationalisation of the mines’ was not supported by strong enough evidence. The ANC adopted an approach to state ownership of the means of production, based on weighing the balance of evidence in each particular case. This differed from an earlier interpretation of the Freedom Charter, which *a priori* posited the nationalisation of mines, banks and monopoly industry as a given for a national democratic society.

Similarly, ANC veteran, leading theoretician and NEC member, Dr Pallo Jordaan, provided a rather upfront assessment of the ANCYL Discussion Document ([www.anc.org.za.nationalisatin=umrabulo.2010](http://www.anc.org.za.nationalisatin=umrabulo.2010)) arguing the following:

Although the ANCYL document has brought to light some distressing failures in our management of the nation’s mineral endowment, particularly the failure to maximise the fiscal and developmental impacts, it does not necessarily follow that the nationalisation of the mineral exploitation operations would constitute the best remedial action. On the contrary, nationalisation could have profound negative impacts on both the operations and international investor confidence.
These comments from the ANC leadership only seemed to spur the ANCYL on to intensify its campaign, which had by now been canvassed through mass rallies and consistent appearances on radio and television by its chief lobbyists in the form of Julius Malema and Floyd Shivambu.

In COSATU, the ANCYL found a reliable ally in the nationalization debate. In February 2010, COSATU released a discussion document titled *Towards the Nationalization of the Mines and Monopoly Industry* ([www.anc.org.za.nationalisatin=umrabulo.2010](http://www.anc.org.za.nationalisatin=umrabulo.2010)) as a response to the ANCYL document. The document starts off by commending the Youth League in its call for nationalisation and the release of its nationalisation discussion document, by stating the following:

This contribution welcomes the discussion document on the nationalization of the mines by the ANCYL. Faced with steep resistance and major distractions, the ANCYL has demonstrated its steadfastness and resolve to defend a consistently democratic understanding, which has characterized the approach of our movement, to the question of fundamental transformation of the relations of production in our economy. The discussion on the nationalization of the mines, which has been re-opened by the ANCYL, offers an opportunity for the working class to assert its perspectives and ensure that efforts at fundamental economic transformation reach the vast majority of our people. For these reasons Cosatu will remain steadfast behind the Youth League in its call for the nationalization of the mines.

As part of its response to the ANCYL document on Nationalisation, Cosatu proceeded to urge the ANCYL to assist in building the maximum possible coalition of left forces to ensure that the revolution produced thorough-going outcomes. This included engaging in bilateral discussions with all the formations of the Alliance and mobilising the Progressive Youth Alliance behind its programme. The Youth League and Cosatu must also join forces to mobilise communities. This would require involve mastering the art of mass base support, key to which was the mobilisation of the working class. For its part COSATU would mobilise the
South African working class to push for the nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy.

These divergent views, particularly between the ANC and the ANCYL on this key policy issue ultimately led to a showdown of the contending views at the National General Council (NGC) of the ANC held in Durban from the 20 to the 24 September 2010. Leading up to the 2010 NGC, the ANCYL had intensified its work around the campaign, to the extent that the nationalisation of mines began to find resonance within branches of the ANC itself. By the time the National General Council was held, there was such a groundswell around nationalisation within the rank and file that the final resolution of the Economic Transformation Commission on the issue of Nationalisation read as follows:

the ANC should ensure greater state involvement and control of strategic sectors of the economy. There was greater consensus in the commission on the nationalisation of mines and other strategic sectors of the economy. The NGC therefore mandated the NEC to ensure further work be done, including research, study tours and discussions, and to report to the Policy Conference for decision at National Conference in 2012 (Report to the 3rd National General Council of the ANC, www.anc.org.za/events.php?t=National%20General%20Council20-%202010).

This was without doubt a victory for the ANCYL, in the face of strong opposition from the leadership of the ANC, and surprisingly apparent opposition from the South African Communist Party. Through these victories on the nationalisation front, the ANCYL gained recognition as a significant force both within the ranks of the ANC and broadly within society.

The ANCYL had become a significant force within the body politic of South Africa to the extent that presenting the Political Report to the 24th National Congress in 2011 Julius Malema stated that the ANCYL’s 24th National Congress was South Africa's biggest congress and one of its most important political gatherings, not only with regard to numbers, but also politically and ideologically. Malema alleged
that there was nowhere else in South Africa and the African continent where an autonomous youth formation could assemble more than 5000 delegated youth representing branches, regions and provinces in one meeting to discuss the future of their country, the continent and the world (www.ancyl.org.za/show.php?id=8036). The ANCYL had found itself and asserted itself as a significant political force.

The affirmation of the ideological shift in the politics of the Youth League confirmed the emergence of an ANCYL that had started to define its own politics outside of the mainstream and dominant thinking within the ANC. In displaying this shift the President of the ANCYL, in the 24th National Congress Political Report stated categorically that the ANCYL was the Youth of the ANC, a national liberation movement which appreciates that the history of the struggles of the existing society, thus far, was the history of class struggle. In the class struggle between the working class (those who do not own the means of production) and capitalists (those who own the means of production), the ANCYL was unapologetically on the side of those did not own the means of production. In the class struggles between the colonial oppressors and the colonised oppressed, it would defend and fight for the freedom of the oppressed. In the struggle between imperialists and the political, economic and social victims of imperialism, it would stand with the victims of imperialism.

In articulating the ANCYL’s new found confidence Julius Malema stated that there was no doubt that the ANCYL was currently at the forefront of major political and ideological battles in South Africa in a manner that inspired many youth movements across our continent and the world. Its call for mines to be nationalised and land to be expropriated without compensation were the most important rallying points to mobilise society behind the vision of the Freedom Charter. More inspiring was the fact that the ANCYL had succeeded in rallying the ANC, South Africa and the world to begin to ask critical questions about mining and the role of the state in this important sector of the economy. Some people had already convinced
themselves that South African mine ownership by a few conglomerates and multinational companies was a natural phenomenon. The ANCYL had demonstrated, through sound political and ideological arguments, that mines in South Africa could be and should be nationalised. The nation was talking about the economy because the Youth League spoke about the economy. The ANCYL was leading almost all key ideological and political questions in the South African economy on issues of economic transformation, social transformation, education, social cohesion, a non-racial South Africa under construction, and the challenges thereof (http://www.ancyl.org.za/show.php?id=8036).

This 24th National Congress of the ANCYL was the platform that gave birth to a new generational call, like none that had been seen within the ANCYL since its re-establishment in the early 1990’s. In the political report, Julius Malema introduced for the first time the concept of economic freedom fighters and placed the ANCYL and its membership at the centre of the struggle for economic freedom. In his articulation, he argued:

In re-emphasising the Left character and anti-imperialist outlook of the ANC, we have identified our mission and our mission is attainment of economic freedom in our lifetime. Our Congress is sitting under the generational theme of Youth Action for Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime. This theme is a clarion call to all Economic Freedom Fighters that we might have won the political battle in 1994, but the war for total economic and social emancipation of the oppressed people of South Africa is still on-Aluta Continua! Pamberi Nehondo! - until all Power is Transferred to the People. It is a clarion call to the whole nation that we should fight with the determination, consistency, honesty, love and passion of Nelson Mandela to ensure that our total Freedom is realised. Political Power without Economic Emancipation is Meaningless!

In addition to many of the above cited pronouncements and specific characterisations of the ANCYL in the context of contemporary politics and challenges what surprised many was the blatant attack on the South African Communist Party by the Youth League at this Congress. History had until this point
witnessed many attacks on the left within the Alliance, particularly the SACP, specifically related to some or other attempt of the left forces to impose their politics and their agenda on the ANC. What was distinct about the Youth League’s attack on the SACP was that it came from a different premise, which questioned the SACP’s credentials as a real left alternative for the South African working class and questioned its commitment to working class struggles. This was further affirmation of the significant shift that had occurred within the politics of the ANCYL from the days of Gigaba and later Mbalula. In commenting about the SACP the ANCYL Report argued as follows:

Whether we have a conscious working class which uses Marxism-Leninism as our guide to action and tools of analysis in South Africa today is a question we should always ask because what is supposed to be the vanguard of the working class in South Africa has degenerated into a lobby group in the ANC. The organisation of Moses Kotane, Joe Slovo, and Commander-in-Chief, Chris Hani, played a very important role in shaping the ideological direction and political strategies and tactics of the National Liberation Movement, but it has now degenerated into a lobby group, as we have mentioned, in the ANC, concerned more on who becomes a Mayor, MEC, Minister or Secretary of the ANC, than struggles of the working class and the poor. There is nothing ideologically sound and coherent that comes from what is supposed to be the vanguard of the working class, despite the fact that we are in a class struggle.

The Youth League, however did not end at a mere critique of the politics of the South African Communist Party in relation to the working class, its politics, its plight and the role it needed to play within the ANC. It extended its articulation to a point where it saw itself as the true representative of the working class and its interests. The Report argued:
In the absence of a vanguard of the working class politically, ideologically and organisationally, the ANCYL should assume the role of the vanguard of the working class. Nature does not allow a vacuum and once a vacuum is created, it will be occupied by something else, in this instance a more better positioned something else is the Youth League. Ideologically and politically, the ANCYL has been at the forefront of working class struggles, which seeks to change property relations and transfer wealth from the minority to the majority. Politically and organisationally, the ANCYL has openly associated and supported struggles of the working class and workers, even in instances where workers were confronting the democratic government of the ANC. We are not apologetic about this character because that is who we are.

When we are at the forefront of the ideological, political and organisational struggles of the working class, those who call themselves “vanguards of the working class” have been looking for reasons and creating conspiracies on why the struggles of the working class are not genuine. In our call for nationalisation of mines, those who call themselves “vanguards of the working class” developed a conspiracy theory that we are simply saying nationalisation of mines because we are bought by Black business people, and now that we have raised the bar to speak about expropriation without compensation, the so-called vanguard of the working class say we are reckless.

As part of the preparatory discussion documents for this 24th National Congress the ANCYL produced a discussion document on economic transformation titled *A Clarion Call to Economic Freedom Fighters: Programme of Action for Economic Freedom in our Lifetime* ([www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=7](http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=7)). This Discussion Document identified 7 cardinal pillars of economic freedom in our
lifetime which it argued would fundamentally transform the South African economy for sustainable development, and real and sustainable economic transformation mainly (a) Expropriation without compensation for equitable redistribution, (b) Nationalisation for Industrialisation, (c) Inclusive and Decentralised Economic Growth and Development, (d) Land Restitution and agrarian reform, (e) Building of a Strong Developmental State and Public Service, (f) Massive investment in the development of the African economy, (g) Provision of education, skills and expertise to the people.

The 24th National Congress duly re-elected Julius Malema as President of the ANCYL and commander in chief of Economic Freedom in our Lifetime. Buoyed by his victory, Malema continued promoting nationalisation and called for the ousting of Zuma and the ANC Secretary-General, Gwede Mantashe. The ANCYL made it clear that it would support Kgalema Motlanthe for President and Mbalula as Secretary-General at the ANC's 2012 Mangaung conference. In June, Malema astonished even the most cynical of observers by praising Thabo Mbeki and suggesting that he should return to active politics. He was flexing his muscles, but making many enemies in the process.

In August, he infuriated the government by calling for regime change in Botswana and labeling President Ian Khama a western puppet. In the same breath he questioned South Africa's standing in the field of international relations, in particular within the African continent, alleging that the Zuma government was not adequately representing South Africa in Africa and betraying the African agenda. He proceeded to draw comparisons between the Thabo Mbeki government and the Zuma government and arguing that the African agenda had been better served under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki. Shortly after, the ANC leadership announced that it would introduce disciplinary procedures against Malema and he was charged for sowing divisions in the ANC and again for bringing the party into disrepute. The ANC top brass had finally run out of patience Malema's blatant defiance of party policy and decorum.
In September, the Malema hearing began in Luthuli House (ANC headquarters) in Central Johannesburg. On the first day, thousands of ANCYL and Malema supporters created major disturbances outside the ANC headquarters, forcing the NEC to postpone the hearings, and change the venue (Glaser 2012:142). The charges brought against Malema and two of his colleagues, Floyd Shivambu and Sandiso Magaqa, and their subsequent expulsion from the ANC ignited conflict between the ANC leadership and the ANCYL.

In October 2011, during his hearing, Malema openly defied the ANC, demonstrating his strength and the support he enjoyed among the youth by leading a march for *Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime* in which thousands of young people participated. As part of his offensive against “white monopoly capital”, the march targeted institutions such as the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, which the organisers argued, represented the interests of “white monopoly capital”, and again called for the nationalisation of mines. Despite this demonstration of strength and claims of being disciplined, in early November 2011 the ANC disciplinary committee handed Malema a five year suspension from the ANC, Magaqa and Shivambu were also suspended. After a long appeal process, and Malema’s continued onslaught against the ANC leadership and policies during this process, the Appeals Committee chaired, by Ramaphosa, pronounced the shock verdict that it had decided to expel Malema from the ANC.

The ANCYL led by Malema was made up of the economic freedom fighters; the ANCYL was not the same organization as the one led by Gigaba. It was an ANCYL that was born out of the womb of the ANCYL of Mbalula which was integral to the toppling of Mbeki and therefore a break with existing leadership. The ANCYL of Malema was a defiant Youth League that saw itself as a serious social force, to the extent, as argued by some, as equal in influence to the ANC. Therefore, this defiant ANCYL would not take the decision to expel their Commander-In-Chief lying down. In line with this, a special National Executive
Committee was convened on 5 March 2012 to discuss Malema’s expulsion. The Committee released the following statement:

The NEC stands by the Lekgotla resolution that the leadership of the ANCYL as elected by the 24th National Congress of the ANCYL will never be removed by any process that does not include the structures and membership of the ANCYL. It is only the internal process of the ANCYL that can decide to elect or un-elect leadership of the ANCYL. The ANCYL will never agree that its leadership be subjected to unfair and unjust treatment or banished for narrow political purposes. In this regard, the leadership of the ANCYL as elected by the 24th National Congress of the ANCYL remains in office as elected members of the ANCYL National Executive Committee of the ANCYL. It is our strong conviction that it must never be easy to remove an elected President of the ANCYL, particularly a President who was elected uncontested by the membership of the ANCYL. The leadership of the ANCYL stands guilty of articulating policy positions that the ANC has the power to disapprove. The reality of the situation is that the charges brought against the leadership of the ANCYL are based on political developments and realities and it is only a political discussion and solution that can bring the differences to rest (http://www.ancyl.org.za/list.php?t=4&y=2012)

To this end the leadership of the ANCYL refused to elect an Acting President, as mandated by its Constitution, firmly arguing that as far as it was concerned, Julius Malema remained the President of the Youth League. So resolute was the Youth League to undermine the ANC’s decision, that the statement was issued under the name of its by then suspended spokesperson Floyd Shivambu. The majority of the structures of the Youth League stood firm with its leadership, denouncing the ANC’s decision.

Subsequent to these expulsions, Malema and others proceeded to form some quasi-organisation called Friends of the Youth League, designed to provide Malema with a platform to continue with his calls for nationalisation, economic
freedom and the removal of Jacob Zuma as a President. ANCYL Economic Freedom rallies, lectures and mass meetings had become the order of the day coupled with Friends of the Youth League rallies, lectures and mass meetings, to such an extent that the *Economic Freedom in our Lifetime* generational theme and the call for nationalization of mines caught the attention of South Africa, and the investment world. Its chief lobbyists were invited abroad by international investors to places such as London to voice their views and what they meant for the future of the country. Senior ANC and government leaders felt forced to chase the tail of the economic freedom fighters to put out what they believed were fires caused by the unruly youth led by Julius Malema.

The above history portrays the birth of a new generation brought together by the challenges of attaining political freedom, but without the corresponding better life for all.

### 4.6 CONCLUSION

The year 1990 saw the unbanning of the ANC and other political formations that had been banned since the 1960’s and beyond. For the ANC, this meant that it now needed to focus on the task of re-building its structures within the country and asserting itself as the foremost organisation within the mass democratic movement in the country. This meant that the structures of the ANC, such as the ANCYL, banned along with the ANC, were confronted with a similar task, that of re-establishing themselves, as the dominant political forces within their own constituencies. As this challenge beckoned on the ANC and its structures, the youth movement was confronted with reconciling two cultures that had become dominant within the movement, broadly represented by those who had been active in the exile-based ANC Youth Section, and the internally based SAYCO movement. These two organisations, both centered in the Charterist politics of the ANC, were distinct in their organisational culture. Both were influenced by the context and environment in which they found themselves operating. The SAYCO
movement was a product of the highly militant culture that had come to dominate the 1980’s South Africa, responding to the ANC’s call to make the country ungovernable, while the Youth Section was driven by its own beaurocratic exiled culture. These cultures came together in the early 1990’s to re-establish the ANCYL, all driven by the desire to complete and fulfill the generational mission initially established by the ANCYL leaders in the 1940’s, namely the attainment of Freedom in our Lifetime.

Consequently, the first generation of ANCYLrs in the post-1990 era leading to the 1994 elections defined their politics around the attainment of freedom, their politics fundamentally based on protest politics as part of the momentum towards the final victory.

Post-democracy, the Youth League was faced with the task of defining its role within the context of the Youth League of a governing party charged with the electoral mandate to lead the transformative and democratisation processes within the country. During this period, the Youth League was grappling to find its own identity, and its politics were centered around the politics and policies of the ANC and government. To this end, one could find minimal, if any, policy differences between the ANC and its Youth League.

Based on a leadership issue within the ANC, the Youth League was able to show the first signs of being able to break with sitting leadership of the mother body on certain issues. The Youth League had played a pivotal role in the demise of Thabo Mbeki and the rise of Jacob Zuma; however, however despite this break with leadership, the ANCYL remained rooted within the policy prescripts of the ANC and towed ANC policy line. However, the developments under the leadership of Mbalula sowed the seeds of the next generation of Youth Leaguers who would break out of the stranglehold of the ANC and in a true sense begin to imprint itself on the political landscape of South African society.

What has been significant in the developments over the past four years in the life of the ANCYL has been the popularisation of politics within the ranks of the
youth, who had until that point been considered apathetic and politically ignorant. This was displayed in the economic freedom march organized by the Youth League in 2011, where the youth from all walks of life came together to respond to the clarion call for Economic Freedom in their Lifetime.

According to Joel Netshitenzhe, commenting after the 24th National Congress of the Youth League which gave birth to the slogan Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime and the concept of the youth as economic freedom fighters, as the ANCYL delegates rose from their seats after their 24th congress, the slogan "Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime" on their lips, the lost generation seemed to be returning the favour of generational stereotyping. Netshitenzhe stated that the older lot in society, bemused by a misshapen movement taking root in spite of their apprehensions, had by some quirk of fate become the "bewildered generation". Mesmerised by the antics of individuals, irritated by the seeming immaturity of it all, and bedazzled by the media focus on palace politics, the historic nature of the moment seemed to escape them. It was as if the older generation 1976 youth uprising was playing itself out all over again (ANCYL’s inverted logic, http://www.anc.org.za/docs/anctoday/2011/at25.htm).

The ANCYL had become a serious force within South African society and its imprints were firmly entrenched.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In the introductory chapter, a number of questions were asked of the current generation of ANCYLrs, such as whether or not the current generation of Youth Leaguers has been able to emulate their predecessor generations in asserting their leadership and authority in confronting contemporary challenges of their generation.

5.1 GENERATIONAL CONTEXTS OF RISE OF ANCYL: 1944 vs 2008

The emergence and rise of the African National Congress Youth League happened in the context of the politics and the political environment of the late 1930’s and early 1940’s. The ANC leadership was grappling with the challenges of their time, it is observed that there were two distinct factors that created the conditions for the formation of the ANCYL. The first was the worsening economic situation of the African peasantry and the working class, which conditions resulted in the deterioration of the quality of their lives. The second factor was the weak state in which the organisation of the ANC found itself. The organisation found itself in conditions that it could not respond to because of its leadership and organisational incapacities.

It was into this vacuum that a new generation of more militant urban intellectuals stepped in the mid 1940’s. The youth were generally frustrated by the inability of the ANC leadership to confront these challenges and organised themselves into a Youth League that introduced a brand of politics within the ANC that forced it to take a much more militant approach to struggle and connect it with the masses of South Africans.
The political programme of the 1940’s ANCYL was rallied under the ideological auspices of African Nationalism and its organisational programme under the articulated need to build a mass-based and campaigning organisation.

Today’s ANC leadership is grappling with the challenges of its own time in the form of stubborn unemployment, growing inequality and grinding poverty. Similarly to the 1940’s, today’s ANCYL is rallied around the societal challenges of the time and the perceived inability of the ANC to step up and provide adequate solutions to these challenges. However, today’s Youth League seems to be rallied more around the ideological auspices of a working class leader and its organizational programme under the articulated need to take ownership of the economic means of production to change the material circumstances of South Africans.

What is common between these two generations is the ability to read the politics of the time, place itself at the centre, of and create a programme that has the ability to appeal to the mass of South Africans, because of where they find themselves.

With a very strong leadership, the 1940’s generation of the ANCYL was able to, within five years, assert its leadership and authority in the ANC with key elements of its manifesto forming significant parts of the ANC Programme. It was able to assert its authority within the ANC by being able to have some of its key members within the leadership of the ANC, particularly by the fact that Walter Sisulu served as Secretary-General a position seen as key in terms of driving the program of the ANC as a whole.
5.2 1949 PROGRAMME OF ACTION VS 2010 PROGRAMME OF NATIONALISATION

Elements of the ANC’s programme of nationalisation, which forms a key component of its *Economic Freedom in our Lifetime* Manifesto have started to feature strongly in the resolutions of the ANC, such as the resolutions of the 2010 National General Council, and have found wide-ranging acceptance from branches in the ANC and key components of the Alliance. The second element is the re-hashing of the ANCYL’s strategy of wanting to influence the outlook of leadership, in particular its drive to make its former President, Fikile Mbalula, Secretary-General - model initially adopted by the ANCYL of the 1940’s, in placing Sisulu as Secretary-General.

5.3 TWIN TASKS OF ANCYL: 1944 vs 2008

An interesting comparison between the two generations has been the response of the ANCYL to the twin tasks, of which one has been that of recruiting and politicising young people for the ANC. The generation of the 1940’s consistently rallied young people behind the programme of the mother body ANC, but never mobilised society against the leadership role of the ANC. Today, the distinct difference that we see is not just of an ANCYL internally opposing the ANC in terms of direction and programme but of the League explicitly organising support specifically for the ANCYL in its conflict with the ANC and its leadership, but still maintaining itself as a component of the ANCYL. Questions of criticism of the leadership of the ANC under the 1940’s generation were always internal and all external efforts were focused on promoting the ANC politically and organisationally. Today’s ANCYLrs in certain instances have acted more as an opponent of the ANC and its leadership in public, which has been a foreign practice in the ANC.
5.4 IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS: 1944 vs 2008

The 1940’s generation of ANCYL militants scorned in equal measure liberal ideology and class politics. What is distinct about the 2012 generation of Youth Leaguers is its embrace of class politics. This could have been influenced by the historic background of the Youth League’s main theoretician of the time, Floyd Shivambu. Shivambu is a former SASCO activist, with very strong leftist politics in the student movement. He was subsequently elected into the National Committee of the Young Communist League, before being expelled from the League. Shivambu has been observed to be very close to Malema and had strong influence on the leader.

A contradiction has been observed between the lifestyles of the Economic Freedom Fighter’s chief campaigners, particularly Julius Malema, and the politics that they espouse. Malema is known for his extravagant lifestyle: top of the range luxury cars, multiple high value properties, expensive accessories and extensive business interests. Recently are accusations and investigations into corruption and fraud that have allegedly that has netted him a small fortune have emerged. These are some of the issues that his detractors point to when they argue that the Youth League and in particular Malema are insincere in the issues that they are advocating. The common claim is that, unlike their forebears in the 1940’s generation of the Youth League, Malema and his peers have been influenced not by a spirit of self-sacrifice, but rather by a desire for self-enrichment. The current generation of the Youth League is accused of an ability to tap into the sentiments of the masses but pursue political power to serve their interests of self-enrichment. According to Glaser (2012:143) Malema responded to this accusation by arguing that the day socialism comes and he has to share his wealth, he will be the first to relinquish everything and share it with the masses. In typical fashion he accused even those who threw such criticism at him,
claiming to be the true representatives of the working class, as driving expensive German sedans at the expense of taxpayers and generally embracing an affluent lifestyle.

5.5. GENERATIONAL TASKS OF ANCYL

Previous generations of young people, in the form of the 1944 generation of ANCYL leaders and their 1976 and 1980’s counterparts, fulfilled their task of delivering a democratic state, based on the will of the majority. These generations were able to attain their generational clarion call of “Freedom in our Lifetime”. What is still to be observed is whether or not this generation of youth under the leadership of the ANCYL will be able to attain their own generational clarion call of “Economic Freedom in our Lifetime”. However, the current generation of Youth Leaguers confronts a number of distinct challenges as they proceed forward in their struggle. The first is that of dispelling the commonly held view that questions their commitment to the cause and the issues they raise, often being accused as opportunists using the plight of the poor to gain political power for the purposes of self-enrichment.

As was stated above, this criticism and skepticism have been made harder to dispel because of the extravagant lifestyles lived by these young leaders. The second is that the ANC of today has been harsher in dealing with the ANCYL. Such harsh measures of discipline against an ANCYL leadership have never been meted out, not even in the era of Peter Mokaba, an eternal radical at a very sensitive period of negotiations in the ANC. The remaining leadership of the Youth League may well observe the implications on those who have been dismissed and opt not to adopt a similar radical posture against the mother body. As it is, it is the very same Youth League that has often commented to those who have left the ANC (such as the breakaway COPE) that it is cold outside of the ANC. In real terms, the coldness refers to the economic security offered by ANC membership and leadership: such as job security, deployment, tenders etc.
Despite what transpires in the struggle for Economic Freedom, what is apparent is that the ANCYL will continue to be the breeding ground of ANC leaders as could be observed in the rise of former Youth Leaguers such as Gigaba, Nathi Mthethwa and Mbalula who are all Ministers in the Zuma government. What remains unclear though, and only time will tell, is whether or not the ANCYL can again play a decisive role in re-positioning the ANC in relation to it being able to address the key challenges facing South African society, as had been witnessed with the 1940’s generation of Mandela, Tambo, Lembede and Sisulu.
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