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Youth Politics: The Political Role of AZANYU in the Struggle for Liberation: The Case of AZANYU Thembisa branch, 1980s to 1996.

Moloi, Tshepo Cyril

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Section Two

Documentary Film Treatment

TITLE

CHILDREN OF THE SOIL: THE RISE OF AZANYU

SPINE

This documentary film is about AZANYU's response to the political transition in South Africa from 1990 to 1996.

FORMAT

Country : South Africa

Running time : 52 minutes

Language : English and subtitles (particularly where other languages are used and not English)

Voice of God : Writer/Producer

SYNOPSIS

CHILDREN OF THE SOIL: THE RISE OF AZANYU is an historical documentary film, which recounts how the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania's youth organization, AZANYU, responded to the political transition that was taking place in South Africa in the early 1990s. This film tells a story about the political differences which arose within this organization as a result of the question of whether the PAC should enter into negotiations with the National Party government or not. This caused a split within it, which resulted in the emergence of two opposing factions. One faction referred to itself as the Revolutionary Watchdogs. It opposed negotiations and argued that the country's political crisis could only be settled through the armed struggle. The other faction was derogatorily referred to as *Amazambane* (Potatoes) because it was in favour of the negotiations. *Amazambane* [believed] that negotiations were inevitable.

The film has for its setting the AZANYU Tembisa branch. Former members of this branch will recount the factors which prompted the rise of these opposing political views; how these views affected the members; how the members dealt with them; how the split affected the PAC in the 1994 elections; and how these opposing political views were resolved.

At the end the film raises questions about the youths' role in the post apartheid era. It asks how the former members of the AZANYU Tembisa branch feel about their involvement in the struggle - do they regret or not? Do they feel that things could have been done differently – if so, how? And what are their views about the new government – has it met their expectations or not?

BACKGROUND

In 1990 the NP government, after many decades of ruling the country through the apartheid system, conceded that this system was no longer viable. Proceeding from this view, the government, first, unbanned all the opposition parties and, second, began a process of negotiations with these parties in order to settle the country's political crisis. This was viewed by some parties as a progressive step towards democracy. However, not all parties held this view. Initially, the PAC, together with its structures rejected this step and uncompromisingly vowed to continue with the armed struggle until the government was removed from power.

However, because of the rapidly changing political climate, both nationally and internationally, the PAC changed its position and its rhetoric shifted towards the negotiations. This created tensions within the PAC and its structures. These were most visible within AZANYU. In 1991 AZANYU split into two factions: the Revolutionary Watchdogs and *Amazambane.* Each faction supported their claim by mobilizing arguments about the PAC's formation and evolution.

When AZANYU Tembisa branch was established in 1987 it held the position that the National Party government could only be overthrown through revolutionary means and this was evident when it made its mission to recruit members to send outside the country to receive military training with the Azanian Peoples' Liberation Army (APLA). They were to advance the armed struggle. In the early 1990s this position

continued to appeal strongly to the supporters of the Revolutionary Watchdogs within the branch. However, those derogatively referred to as *Amazambane* within the branch argued that the 1960 PAC's position was not meant to overthrow the government militarily but to persuade it of the necessity to negotiate.

STYLE

To produce this documentary film I will use the **expository** approach. This approach will enable the film to address the viewers directly through the interviewees' voices or the 'Voice of God'. The interviewees' voices will advance a particular interpretation and an argument about the role played by AZANYU during the struggle for liberation and in transition period. The 'Voice of God' will set out arguments, and relate the political changes both nationally and internationally which impacted on AZANYU's response to transition.

This film will have a spoken dialogue based on interviews with the former AZANYU activists both at national and on branch levels. The viewers will see the former activists discuss AZANYU's formation, role in the struggle and views about the transition period.

The viewers will watch interviewees in close-up shots being interviewed seated at home or in a secluded and quiet area. This is because in such places interviewees will feel more at ease, and are likely to provide more intimate and individual responses. This will be the case when they are asked to discuss about their feelings as individuals in relation to their organization's politics; their involvement in the organization; their views regarding the transition period. Interviews will be shot in a way that the interviewees "speak" directly to the viewers. The interviewer's face and voice will be edited out of the interview. Only the face and voice of the interviewees will be seen and heard in the film. This will create a dialogue between the interviewees and the viewers.

The viewers will also see the interviewees in long shots (or full shots) when they "take" the viewers to places which were significant to their organizational operations during the struggle. The viewers will see the schools where former members of AZANYU Tembisa branch used to hold their clandestine meetings and political

classes; houses where they hid APLA cadres, sport fields, shebeens, and a graveyard where they met to discuss their plans and set out missions to be carried out.

Revolutionary songs will be an important part of the film. Viewers will see the former activists singing the organization's revolutionary songs. In some occasions the viewers will hear the organization's recorded revolutionary songs. These songs will depict the inter-connectedness between the organization's political tactics and strategy in the struggle for liberation.

Envisioning the film …

The film opens with a footage showing former AZANYU members marching, holding the organization's flag, singing a revolutionary song. The film then cuts to a founding member of AZANYU (national) explaining how the organization was formed, and its envisaged role in the struggle. The viewers then see the title:

CHILDREN OF THE SOIL: THE RISE OF AZANYU

The 'Voice of God' sets out the central conflict by narrating that the beginning of the 1990s – after the unbanning of political organizations – ushered in the period of negotiations between the government and the liberation movements. The film cuts to an AZANYU member supporting the Revolutionary Watchdogs faction explaining the faction's view regarding negotiations. This view is then countered by an AZANYU member aligning with the *Amazambane* faction arguing why this faction was in favour of the negotiations.

ACT I

The viewers see a founding member of the AZANYU Tembisa branch seated at home discussing how this branch was formed in the township. While the narrating the viewers see the photographs of the founding members of this branch in their teens.

The discussion expands to the branch's tactical approach. The film cuts to another former member of the branch discussing the branch's politics which were centred on militaristic politics. He explains the primary objective of their chosen tactic. The viewers see two of the branch's recruits who left the country in the late 1980s to

receive military training in Tanzania and Uganda relating how they were recruited and how they left the country. During the discussion the viewers see photographs of these cadres in exile. In addition, the viewers see the newspaper clips reporting on the exodus of youth from the country to join the PAC's military wing, APLA, in exile

The film switches to the 'Voice of God' recounting about the operations carried out by APLA cadres inside the country at this stage. The viewers see video footages and newspaper clips showing APLA attacks on police stations and the police. The film cuts to a former member of APLA discussing these operations. The viewers hear APLA's recorded revolutionary song.

The 'Voice of God' comments about the state's severe response to these attacks. The film cuts to video footages showing police and the army patrolling the townships. In addition, the viewers see newspaper clips reporting on the massive detentions of activists in mid-1980s.

ACT II

The 'Voice of God' recounts the change in the National Party's leadership, and its acceptance that the apartheid policies were no longer viable to govern the country. The viewers see F.W. de Klerk's 2 February 1990 speech in parliament when he announced that he was lifting the ban on all liberation movements. The film cuts to an interview with a former member of AZANYU recalling how their organization responded to President De Klerk's pronouncement. The film switches to an interview with a senior official of the PAC discussing the movement's initial uncompromising position to negotiations. As the official talks the viewers see newspaper clips reporting on the PAC's opposing stance to negotiations.

The film cuts to a footage showing AZANYU members marching and singing a revolutionary song.

The 'Voice of God' narrates about the political factors which caused the PAC gradually to shift towards negotiations. The film switches to an interview with a senior official of the PAC discussing the organization's newly adopted position to

negotiations. The viewers see newspaper clips reporting on the PAC's changed position to negotiations and the government's response.

The film cuts to an interview with a former member of AZANYU discussing the youth organization's response to the PAC's position.

The viewers hear the 'Voice of God' recounting AZANYU's split into two factions: the Revolutionary Watchdogs and *Amazambane.* The film cuts to newspaper clips reporting on this split.

The viewers hear a recorded revolutionary song and see former members of the AZANYU Tembisa branch moving around in the township.

The film cuts to two supporters of the Revolutionary Watchdogs and *Amazambane* factions discussing their views on negotiations. While the discussion continues the viewers see video footage showing negotiations during the Convention for a democratic South Africa. The switches back to the interviewees discussing the effect the split had on members of the youth organization in the township.

The film cuts to a footage showing AZANYU members marching and singing a revolutionary song.

The viewers hear the 'Voice of God' recounting the PAC's response to this split. The film cuts to an interview with a senior PAC official discussing how the movement dealt with this split.

The viewers hear the 'Voice of God' commenting about the resumed negotiations at the World Trade Centre, which reached an agreement on the election date. The film cuts to a video footage showing negotiations at the World Trade Centre. The film switches to a supporter of the Revolutionary Watchdogs faction discussing their view on the imminent elections.

The film cuts to a video footage and newspaper clips showing people standing in long queues waiting to vote. The film switches to the results, which shows that the PAC

fared poorly in the elections. The film cuts to an interview with supporters of the *Amazambane* faction discussing the effect of the spilt on the PAC's poor results in the elections. The film cuts to supporters of the Revolutionary Watchdogs faction discussing their view of the PAC's participation in the elections.

The film switches to a senior official of the PAC who discusses the split's effect on the organization's performance in the elections. As the discussion continues the film dissolves to newspaper clips reporting on the PAC's performance in the elections.

The film cuts to members of AZANYU singing a revolutionary song.

ACT III

The viewers hear the 'Voice of God' commenting about youths' role in the post-elections era. It notes that youth have lost its meaningful role. The film dissolves to video footages showing youth engaged in the struggle in the 1980s. The film cuts to an interview with an AZANYU Tembisa branch member recounting how the branch's members dealt with the problems which emerged as a result of the split and how they responded to the PAC's performance in the elections. The viewers see former members of AZANYU Tembisa branch at home doing their daily chores.

The film cuts to an interview with mothers of the former members of this branch discussing their views about the struggle and their childrens' involvement, and the y feel now that liberation has been attained.

The see a video footage showing members of AZANYU marching and singing revolutionary songs.

The viewers hear the 'Voice of God' narrates about the initiatives to resolve political differences with the AZANYU and the Africanist movement in general. The film cuts to an interview with two AZANYU members who organized the convention to resolve the differences. The viewers see supporters of the opposing factions sitting together and talking. The viewers see them singing a revolutionary song.

The ‘Voice of God’ reflects on the role played by AZANYU members in the struggle, dating back to the 1980s, and raises questions about their current engagement; how they feel now that the struggle for political emancipation was over; their view of the new government.

The viewers see a group of AZANYU members sitting together in a classroom in one of the schools in which they used to hold their clandestine meetings responding to these questions. As they discuss the viewers see shots of AZANYU members either at home, for those who are unemployed, and at work, for those who are employed.

The film ends with the former members of AZANYU Tembisa branch singing a revolutionary song.

AUDIENCE

This documentary film is suitable for all those who are interested in the political history of resistance in South Africa. It shows the role played by youth in the struggle for liberation in the 1980s and early 1990s. It further narrates how the youth organizations responded to the changing politics from revolutionary politics to negotiations. The viewers get the first-hand explanation about the youths’ role in the politics of resistance from the youth who actively participated in the struggle. Finally, the film looks at how the youth feel about their involvement in the struggle; how they view the new government; what they are involved in now. The film will provide the audience with a “fresh” look at the youths’ role during the struggle and after the struggle.