# The ANC Youth League: Ohio Short Histories of Africa



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The African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) was a youth organization affiliated with the African National Congress (ANC), a political party in South Africa. The ANCYL was founded in 1944 by a group of young activists who were dissatisfied with the ANC's moderate approach to the fight against apartheid. The ANCYL quickly became a major force in the anti-apartheid movement, and its leaders played a key role in the development of the ANC's more militant policies.

#### **History**

The ANCYL was founded in Bloemfontein, South Africa, on April 2, 1944. The organization's first president was Anton Lembede, a young lawyer who was a strong advocate for black nationalism. Other early leaders of the ANCYL included Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, and Oliver Tambo. The ANCYL quickly gained a reputation for its militancy. In 1949, the organization adopted the "Programme of Action," which called for a mass campaign of civil disobedience against apartheid laws. The Programme of Action was a major turning point in the anti-apartheid movement, and it helped to mobilize a new generation of activists.

In the 1950s, the ANCYL played a leading role in the Defiance Campaign, a mass campaign of civil disobedience against apartheid laws. The Defiance Campaign was met with brutal repression by the apartheid government, and many ANCYL leaders were arrested and imprisoned.

In 1960, the ANCYL was banned by the apartheid government. However, the organization continued to operate underground, and it played a key role in the armed struggle against apartheid.

### Leaders

The ANCYL was led by a number of talented and dedicated activists. Some of the most prominent ANCYL leaders included:

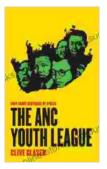
\* Anton Lembede: The first president of the ANCYL, Lembede was a strong advocate for black nationalism. He died in 1947 at the age of 32. \* Walter Sisulu: Sisulu was one of the most respected leaders of the anti-apartheid movement. He was imprisoned on Robben Island for 26 years. \* Nelson Mandela: Mandela was the first president of South Africa after the end of apartheid. He was imprisoned on Robben Island for 27 years. \* Oliver Tambo: Tambo was the president of the ANC from 1967 to 1991. He lived in exile for many years.

## Impact

The ANCYL played a pivotal role in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The organization's militancy helped to radicalize the ANC and to mobilize a new generation of activists. The ANCYL also played a key role in the development of the ANC's more militant policies.

The ANCYL's legacy is one of courage, determination, and sacrifice. The organization's leaders were willing to risk their lives to fight for freedom and equality. Their sacrifice helped to bring about the end of apartheid and to create a more just and equitable South Africa.

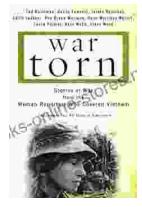
The ANC Youth League was a powerful force in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The organization's militancy helped to radicalize the ANC and to mobilize a new generation of activists. The ANCYL also played a key role in the development of the ANC's more militant policies. The ANCYL's legacy is one of courage, determination, and sacrifice. The organization's leaders were willing to risk their lives to fight for freedom and equality. Their sacrifice helped to bring about the end of apartheid and to create a more just and equitable South Africa.



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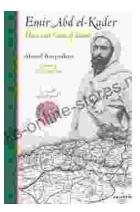
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Print length	: 169 pages

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