

ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL
***Building ANC as a Movement for Socio
Economic Transformation
And a Strategic Centre of State Power***

***Discussion Document
Western Cape 2015***



*A discussion document towards the Western Cape
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1. INTRODUCTION

The 1994 democratic breakthrough saw the ANC elected into power under the leadership of our icon Comrade Nelson Mandela. In the Western Cape, the ANC has never attained an overwhelming electoral victory (50%+1). In 2004, the ANC came closer by attaining 46% and went backward to about 31% in 2009. Critical to these setbacks was the emergence of deep rooted divisions caused by factionalism that have assumed a permanent state, rife divisions, petty squabbles, rumour mongering, gatekeeping, racial divisions, within the organisation. These divisions played themselves in the public arena and contributed to the ANC losing state power both at the provincial government level in 2009 and in the majority of municipalities in 2011.

These persistent challenges of the 3 demons of factionalism; divisions and intra racism have haunted the ANC's organisational growth; threatened and weakened its successes made when it was in power. The provincial leadership has been seized with the responsibility of to find political solution, build unity and cohesion. It is in this context that the words of one of the late Comrade Govern Mbeki once defined the organisation as 'the collective ability to solve the problems of the people and as a weapon of struggle through which the masses constantly strive to transform their adverse conditions'.

In the recent past the ANC in this province has witnessed the symptoms of re-emergence of factionalism and disunity within its ranks. The leadership worked tirelessly and seriously embarked on the resuscitation strategy to save the organisation from the state of collapse and renew the organisational culture and traditions of unity; cohesion and organisational political discipline going back to basics, the Imvuselelo Campaign.

Following the NWC intervention the PEC was posed to respond to three critical questions, namely

- 1) What must be done to deal with the problems of the factionalism and divisions and the thereby promotion of Unity and Cohesion?
- 2) What strategy must be put in place to deal with the mobilisation and organisation building in the Coloured Community and consolidate the African and Rural Base?
- 3) What must be done to deal with challenge of racism?

These questions were responded by developing and implementing programmes such as Cadre Forums, BGMs, and Service Delivery Campaigns across the province. Through these struggles we should be able to inculcate the spirit of solidarity amongst various communities and classes.

In these deliberations the ANC members were encouraged to liberate themselves from the mental enslavement in that whilst lobbying and caucuses are allowed going to conferences, they must seize after conferences and members and elected leadership must arise above petty politics and extend olive hand to each other and work with everyone in building unity and cohesion.

2. ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL

It will be disingenuous to suggest that factionalism, ill-discipline and in-fighting started in 2011. We must also dismiss the subjective inclination to personalize organisational challenges and attribute them to specific individuals. This approach is both ahistorical and unscientific. While individuals have a role to play in history, new organisational challenges can only be overcome through an organisational and mass approach. The aim of organisational renewal is to comprehensively address all the challenges faced by our movement. We need to put in place measures and take urgent steps to address our weaknesses.

We have to draw lessons from our history but be bold enough to imagine new solutions and new ideas that will endure and survive future storms. As we move towards the 2016, we need the kind of ANC that is enduring and ‘built to last’, a transformative movement that will remain powerful for progressive change right into the future. We will draw inspiration from our forebears while at the same time acknowledging that some of the challenges we face are unique to our times and circumstances of being an opposition party.

The wise words of the late Comrade Walter Sisulu are instructive and encouraging in this context, “Every organisation engaged in national liberation constantly has to analyse, isolate and search for solutions crucial both to its continued existence and growth, and to the success of the struggle as the whole.... in a certain sense, the story of our struggle is a story of problems arising and problems being overcome” Prison Reflections, Walter Sisulu, 1976.

There are four critical common problems negatively affecting the ANC branches wherever they are located;

- 1) Seasonal activists and politics of the rulership. The branches are active only in the run-up to elective conferences and list processes when leaders are to be elected and public representatives deployed.
- 2) Bureaucratisation and personalisation of branch politics. The branch meetings are dominated by administrative matters and personal squabbles rather than debates socio political challenges affecting communities.
- 3) Inability of the ANC branches to provide leadership to communities struggles
- 4) Collapse of the ANC's value system – the breakdown of political discipline, rampant factionalism and selective application of discipline amongst ANC members. That violence and intimidation are fast replacing voice of reason and debate as the mode of engagement.

A set of practical interventions to cultivate grassroots developmental activism whose primary focus is to solve the problems of communities, as a critical response to the dangers of atrophy is envisaged. This requires “renewal from below”. Politically-vibrant and community-oriented branches can rescue the organisation.

Community/ Issue - Based Mobilization

The M-Plan was introduced in the early 1950s to enable the movement to survive under difficult conditions. According to our Icon the late Comrade Nelson Mandela, the underlying four principles of the M-Plan were to:

- a). Consolidate congress machinery (ANC);
- b). Enable the transmission of important decisions taken at a national level to every member of the organisation without calling public meetings and issuing press statements;
- c). Build local branches which will be able to represent the will of the people and
- d). Extend and strengthen the ties between congress and the people and consolidate congress leadership.

In our context as the opposition party, the ANC branches and Alliance partners must be at the centre of championing the community campaigns. They must continue to work with progressive forces in pursuit of these struggles. As in the past, such organisations like SASCO had campaigned against financial exclusion, Pagad campaigned against drugs and crime, TAC campaigned for HIV treatment, Western Cape Anti-eviction and Abahlali Basemjondolo campaigned for houses, Ilitha Labantu campaigned violence against women and

gender campaigns including gay and lesbian program, and most recently the Seskhona Movement campaigned for better and dignified sanitation in informal settlements.

The ANC and Alliance partners must link these campaigns with the broader struggle for push back to the DA agenda and reclaiming the Western Cape. The leadership should continue to engage all these organisations as partners in changing the immediate political landscape and should follow a multi-pronged processes and strategies.

These struggles are critical to the ANC strategic relevance and being the hope and dreams of the masses in making their choice on voting being informed by their recent past and their assessment of the future prospects.

As Cabral points out, *“Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone’s head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children. . .”*

Cadre Development

“Cadre policy, if it is to be correct, must proceed fully from the requirement of the revolutionary task. The revolution needs a contingent of cadres who are equal to their political tasks, with regards to their number and quality as well as their composition, a contingent of cadres capable of fulfilling to the highest degree the requirements of the political tasks of each period” (Le Duan, Some Present Tasks).

In the 1950s, the ANC recruited and trained volunteers politically and ideological in order to enhance their spirit and determination in the Defiance Campaign, and during the process towards the adoption of the Freedom Charter. From the 1960s onwards, the movement trained and deployed cadres to carry out the political line in all the four pillars of the struggle.

The political education curriculum should enable us to deliberately produce a new type of an all-round cadre who:

- Understands ANC history, policies, values, principles and culture and have the attitude, know ledge, skills and discipline to serve the people with distinction;
- Understands the dynamics of our changing society and is committed to taking practical steps in the daily life to push the frontiers of fundamental transformation;

- Understands the dynamics of the international situation and has the basic skills to analyse and interpret events and processes unfolding rapidly in the world;
- Have a general understanding of all the pillars of the NDR.

National Question

Characterised by white minority rule, conquest and dispossession of land and wealth, undisguised white monopoly capital over economic power, cheap labour system, repressive state' Cde Pallo Jordan. This laid the basis for intricate race and class domination. Apartheid was however also a racial hierarchy, graded on the basis of skin colour, resulting in a high degree of differentiation among the oppressed in terms of job opportunities, access to certain types of training, the exercise of property rights, etc. At the core of the system of national oppression was the conquest and domination of the African majority who were the most exploited and oppressed.

These racial exclusions were institutionalised in the 1909 Act of Union, then by extension differentially applied to the other Blacks. Indians, as a numerically weak minority of recent immigrants, were the easiest victims. Coloureds, the majority of whom were the descendants of property less servants and former bonded persons, were to witness steady encroachments on their rights well into the 1970s.

National oppression thus found expression in the palpable form of a number of economic, social and developmental indicators - such as poverty and underdevelopment, the low levels of literacy and numeracy among the oppressed communities, their low access to clean water, the non-availability of electricity, their low food consumption, their invariably low incomes, the poor state of their health, the low levels of skills, the generally unsafe environment in which these communities lived, etc. Thus the uprooting of national oppression required, amongst other things, the correction of precisely these conditions.

In the view of our movement the content of freedom and democracy would be the radical transformation of South African society so as to create an expanding floor of economic and social rights for the oppressed majority. The changes that we felt would bring about this transformation were set out in our Programme, the Freedom Charter. Though it is not a programme for socialism, the Freedom Charter envisaged the seizure of economic assets in the land, the mines and monopoly industry as essential to the transformation of South Africa.

In the post-apartheid era, the electoral behaviour of Coloured and Indian working people is unlikely to change until visible delivery on the part of the democratic government demonstrates that there are sufficient resources for all the disadvantaged and the impression has quite deliberately been fostered that affirmative action entails the laying off of Coloured and Indian workers or denying opportunity to Coloured and Indian workers to create opportunities for Africans. The mischievous intent of these practices is obvious and it has already produced handsome returns for the DA in both constituencies.

The issue of nation and identity is central to the objective of building a New South Africa. Culture must reflect the broad aspirations of all citizens and central to that is the issue of language. The ANC must as a minimum campaign promote and support the use of indigenous languages even amongst its members. The multi lingual policy must be promoted as means for improving cultural understanding and foundation for nation building.

Proposals

The PEC must develop a strategic programme of action to give effect to these salient points made in the report, namely:

- The Imvuselelo Campaign and building ANC from below
- Identify community issues including addressing racism both in the ANC and the Western Cape
- Political Education programme and Political School
- Elections Campaign programme

Resolutions

Whilst we must reaffirm the resolutions of the 53rd National Conference of the ANC, we must ensure that these are made available to our structures and form part

The ANC must urgently develop a program to broaden its base to non-traditional base. Increase political education programmes to build capacity of cadres.

ANC Regions must ensure ANC visibility through VD units, especially in Coloured areas; Branches and regions must take responsibility for building the ANC;

We reaffirm the ANC's primary mission as servant of the people and we will only achieve this through sectoral work and campaigns; Sectoral work,

especially in Coloured communities must be intensified and finding different strategies in different communities e.g. sports & recreation, arts & culture, faith based organisations must be investigated and implemented; for these, desks must be (re)established e.g. sports desk, arts & culture desk etc;

The issue of gate-keeping must be highlighted and addressed;

ANC structures must find a way and training be done in order to use ICT, especially for young people, social media/networks; finding cadres to do this kind of work must be pursued; we must further urge that social media not be used to insult or breakdown the ANC but to build ANC structures and mobilise;

In respect of the Leagues (Women's and Youth League), the issue of parallel structures and bogus branches must be pursued and resolved;

On the issue of Political education we must stop theorising on the issue and implement a strong programme of action; a strong and proper links with UWC School of Government must be formed and the political school of the province be based there; a political education programme must be established;

Courses of the programme must be accredited; public reps too must undergo this programme; certain modules must be designed for public reps, future public reps must undergo particular programmes (preparing them for their role);

Leadership too, at all levels, must undergo political education and Western Cape must look at the model of Gauteng Province in ensuring a good political education programme; exchange programmes or interactions on programmes with other provinces must be encouraged in order for us to learn from these provinces;

Being conscious of the history of our country, candidates for public reps must have minimum requirements, e.g. Grade 12, though ANC must always have the responsibility of capacitating public reps (in fact all cadres); even courses offered by SALGA require at least Grade 12;

In respect of capacity of public reps and in particular with Local Government Elections 2016 in mind there must be a balance in capacity between ward & using then the proportional reps to "make-up" in "capacity";

ANC must also take responsibility for political education in Leagues though it is not only the responsibility of the ANC, the League too must emphasise political education;

The work of Monitoring and Evaluation must be strengthened;

CPO's, NGO's: we must have a standard approach to all of these so that we can treat all of them equally and consistently; ANC must not 'outsource' their responsibility e.g. mobilisation to these; especially organisations taking up issues of our communities;

Induction of new members of ANC: at all levels e.g. branches, sub-regions;

Membership cards and the effect this has on building branches;

Alliance must meet so as to discuss political education and organisational renewal in order to get a programme but also consistency in thought and action; and,

Organisers must submit frequent membership/structural reports directly to the Provincial Secretary.

3. CONCLUSION

A critical component of the organisational renewal focuses on the important question of waging a struggle against our own weaknesses: "One form of struggle which we consider to be fundamental...is the struggle against our own weaknesses' (Amilcar Cabral, *Weapon of Theory*, 1966)

As individuals and collectives, we are called upon to struggle relentlessly against our own weaknesses in order to improve our capacity and ability to serve our people better. We have to build our movement of the future, the kind of ANC that is potent force for transformation and the strategic centre of power, with adequate foresight to anticipate long term trends and adapt to seismic shifts that to emerge over time.

" Every ANC member in the Western Cape.....should work tirelessly to ensure that the local government elections result in a caring government that will understand the needs of the people of the Western Cape, especially the poor, and that is ANC government" (President JG Zuma, *ANC Today*, 16 January 2015)