

PROPOSALS TO THE DEPARTMEN OF MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

A F R I C A N   N A T I O N A L   C O N G R E S S (S.S.A.)

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PROPOSALS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT.

Formation of a Technicians/ Engineering COUNCIL.

PREAMBLE:

We believe that we owe it to the future generations to leave no stone unturned, having been historically so unfortunate, yet, perhaps blessed in disguise. Unfortunate in the sense that our Movement was the first one to talk of African Independence from Colonialism and yet it will be the very last one to achieve such Independence. Blessed in disguise in the sense that in the course of more than seven decades of heroic struggle we witnessed the attainment of Independence by the rest of Africa. We also witnessed how the forces of darkness have undermined or tried to undermine the people's achievements by devious neo-colonial schemes and blatant sabotage. Having been witnesses to all this, we feel that future generations of our country would not only judge us as having been poor students of history, but will also not forgive us if we not only repeated some of the mistakes done in many parts of our continent, but also did not plan farsightedly enough to combat whatever manpower problems that might crop up in future. This is the kind of responsibility that rests squarely on our shoulders.

We propose that a Technicians or Engineering Council that would consist of all the Technicians and Engineers the Organisation has trained so far, should be formed under the auspices the Department of Manpower Development. This Council would work very closely with already existing Councils, or Councils we feel should be formed under the same department of Manpower Development, e.g. the Council for Economists etc.

1. <sup>C</sup>FUNTIONS OF THE PROPOSED COUNCIL.

- (a) to unite all ANC Technical personnel under one umbrella.
- (b) to seek an answer to the question of how best our professions could be utilised with regards to the tasks facing the ANC.
- (c) in consultation with the Manpower Development Department, the coun-



cil could devise schemes aimed at upgrading the qualifications of the Movement's Technical personnel.

- (d) the council could set standards of both theoretical and practical competency to be aspired for by the Movement's Technical personnel as well as evolve a code of professional conduct to govern this personnel.

2. PERSONNEL UPDATING

The council would ensure that its members keep abreast with developments in their different fields of speciality by:

- (a) encouraging regular subscriptions to technical journals
- (b) encouraging visits to International Trade Fairs for the comrades to have an idea of what new innovations and inventions have come into their fields.
- (c) encouraging regular attendance of refresher courses.

3. THE POLITICAL ASPECT

The council would endeavour to inculcate a sense of responsibility as well as a correct political outlook amongst its members. This is important because:

The engineer or technician does not operate in a vacuum; he operates within a society and this makes him part of the collective called mankind. This means that he has certain responsibilities towards this collective, as well as certain obligations to fulfil.



HIS PRIME TASK IS THE CREATION of new means of production or to improve already existing ones by translating results and experiences accumulated from scientific research into practice. In doing this, it is vital for the engineer to have a very clear perspective as to who benefits from his efforts within the collective,. Is he doing all this for the benefit of a handful of exploiters within this collective, or are his efforts towards the overall improvement of the lot of the collective of mankind? We shall achieve answers to these and many other questions by doing political work within the units of the council.

#### 4. OBLIGATIONS OF THE COUNCIL.

The council would have to hold regular conferences during the course of which the council would:

- a) review progress made by its members in their various places of deployment.
- b) Devise new strategies as well as improve on already existing ones on how best to carry out the activities of the council.
- c) the different specialist would prepare papers on their, specialities as well as their field experiences and render these to the students. This would enhance as well as assist whatever vocation all guidance effort might be existing at SOMAFCO.

(The suggested venue for such conferences could be SOMAFCO.

#### 5. MODE OF OPERATION.

The council could achieve this by:

- a) encouraging the synchronisation of the holidays of its members wherever they might be deployed, so that the majority would be free to attend conference.
- b) assigning research tasks to its members with the following objectives:
  - i. to research into the structure of the South African industry
  - ii. to monitor its progress.
  - iii. to find out how its lifeline is constructed, e.g. who supplies



it with what technology?

The above would enable the council to provide the movement with very vital information for our future efforts as outlined in the Freedom Charter. From such research could be revealed many technical specialities hitherto unknown to us, and from such information the Department of Manpower Development could be able to plan our manpower needs accordingly.

c) Members of the council would have to be encouraged to take up membership of International engineering councils with the following objectives:

i. to have access to classified technical data. Such councils have their own publications exclusively meant for their membership.

ii. to discourage members of such councils from supporting any South African industrial schemes. It is more often than not, specialists from such bodies that provide expertise to South Africa to enrich themselves. They could also be used to our advantage.

d) The council would have to work out a concrete programme on how the individual technician could play his/her fullest part in all the movements projects both in the military and civilian sectors as befitting a people's war.

e) the council would have to monitor the progress at SOMAFCO in order to:

i. identify potential future members. This could be done by yearly review of the students' results by the council

ii. encourage and assist in the development of this potential membership by promoting hobby clubs under the auspices of the Science club of the school.

6. FURTHER SUGGESTIONS ON THIS ISSUE.

a) We suggest that the Department of Manpower Development should devise means of knowing in advance who is completing and <sup>in</sup> what so that the necessary arrangements could be made in advance for the comrades.



This information could be supplied by the council in future.

- b) The Manpower Development Department could send out questionnaires to all centres of the movement, particularly to technicians to provide information about their specialities. This would facilitate the formation of the suggested committees (see diagram of suggested structures)
- c) We further suggest that existing committees should be informed about the outcome of the discussions on this issue. They should also make comments on the suggested functions of the engineering council and also provide information about their activities so that the newly-formed council could benefit from their experiences.

7. GAINING PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AFTER GRADUATION.

Engineering is a very difficult field of study. What is more, a graduate engineer is only half an engineer; he still needs a period of 2-3 years industrial apprenticeship to complete his training. In this way, he gains the experience on how theory gets modified or even fails to apply in certain practical situations. Because of the nature of the subjects involved in the principles of engineering, the rate of depreciation of the theoretical knowledge gained is very fast. After a year of inactivity, the engineer rusts. After yet another year, the engineer can forget about engineering because technology is advancing at a very fast rate. In some cases, the body of knowledge doubles every five or so years. Hence practising engineers go for refresher courses at regular intervals.

In the light of this, we wish to appeal to the movement to negotiate with countries that train us to provide us with a minimum of one year industrial experience before being returned to Africa, the main reason being that our newly-graduated engineers would get the feel of industry and also get to know what the daily routine of the engineer entail.

What is more, this would be done in the same language our comrades were trained through, before having to relearn these engineering concepts



in English Because every country trains technicians at different levels, in order to satisfy specific demands peculiar to that country's industry, It is up to those who go to a particular country to examine the programmes offered and decide how these could best meet their specific needs.

We came to the conclusion that our needs could best be met by the following programme: Anyone wishing to study engineering in the socialist countries should be sent there immediately after completing "O- Levels and enrol for vocational training concurrently with "A- Levels". This lasts for three years. After completing, the prospective engineer would qualify for admission into a technical or University, depending on the results.

This suggestion is in painful cognisance of the glaring deficiency and mutilation of the Black child's intellectual development which is deliberately caused by the inferior Bantu Education and the appallingly depressive environment under which we are forced to grow up in racist South Africa. Those of us who have been lucky enough to hear of such things as engineering, have never set foot in a factory before. Such products do not even know how a lathe looks like for instance. This presents problems to those who will have to go and study in the Socialist countries after obtaining "A -Levels" and thus qualifying for entry into University. At this level, these countries offer M.Sc programmes wherein they train people for research or administrative functions. There is very little room for practically-orientated work While the Professor is busy trying to explain means of modifying the parameters of a lathe for instance, we find ourselves trying to imagine what the object actually looks like, whereas our colleagues who have had eight years industrial experience as part of their polytechnical education find it easier to grasp. Our suggestions would therefore ease the pressure from our students and greatly improve the quality of the future engineers.



THE ILO TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR DAKAWA.

8. Having had the opportunity of seeing the outline of the contents of the technical courses of the ILO, we were very impressed. However, with the level of manpower we presently have, the ILO will have to provide both the equipment and the personnel to man this project. The problem of manpower shortage can be curbed if we could start now with the training of our cadres. We have the following suggestions:

- a) We could make use of the engineers we have at the moment, especially the newly-qualified ones. This is how this could be done:
  - i. We could find out if the ILO could give these comrades training that would give them some supervised industrial apprenticeship under the guidance of experienced engineers.
  - ii. On completion, we could also ask the ILO to provide these comrades with the Instructors Course so that they can return to DAKAWA.
  - iii. On returning, our council could provide a rotational schedule, e.g. comrade A is to spend X years serving or helping in DAKAWA before being released for other duties.

During the period of service, the council would have to see to it that the comrades receive the following benefits:

- i. they should be supplied with technical journals.
- ii. they should be given a chance to attend an International Trade Fair once a year.
- iii. they should attend a refresher course once a year.

(NB.) The funding of the above could be made easier if members could be asked to contribute a certain percentage of their incentive/salary towards such project. Those amongst our comrades serving in DAKAWA with senior qualifications should be allowed to register with the Tanzanian Government or the SADCC as consultant engineers. This is why comrades should be sent to DAKAWA after completion of industrial training under the scheme mentioned hereinbefore.

We wish to make our stay in DAKAWA as interesting and as challenging



as possible in order to avoid under-utilising senior engineers. Such consultative projects could be tackled collectively by our comrades.

- b) Another source of potential manpower for Dakawa could be the students completing Form V this year. They could be utilised in this way:
- i. We could ask the ILO to provide them with vocational training<sup>n</sup>. This ~~a~~<sup>^</sup> should preferably be done concurrently with "A- LEVELS". After this the students could go for a technicians certificate, followed by the Instructors Course.
  - ii. Depending on the manpower needs, the students could come back to DAKAWA before proceeding with further studies.
- c) We think that it is possible for us to offer a combined vocational-technicians Certificate Course in DAKAWA. The Technicians Certificate could be the internationally recognised City and Guilds Technicians Certificate. On completion, our graduates from DAKAWA would then only need an extra two years for their B.Sc. engineering or four years for their M.Sc. programme

#### 9. CONCLUSION

We wish to conclude by appealing to the YOUTH COMMITTEE of the Movement to adopt this as their project and at all times fully and adequately staffed<sup>it</sup> from within their own ranks and <sup>in</sup> an efficient way. Although the ideas as expressed herein above do not necessarily serve as a blueprint for other professions, we hope some of them will receive your approval. Other professionals could devise their own schemes or improve on this one in accordance with their demands.

ALL FOR THE STRUGGLE IN THE YEAR OF UNITED ACTION FORWARD TO A PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT!!!!

A M A N D L A !!!!! M A A T L A !!!!!

( SOLLY MAKWAKWA (30th November, 1983-----MAZIMBU.) )



## DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

SUGGESTED  
STRUCTURE