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REPORT OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE TO NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE
CONFERENCE 14 - 16th DECEMBER 1990, JOHANNESBURG.

The OC was set up in June 1990. It was to function as a sub-
committee of the NEC, charged with the task of seeing to the
organisation and building of the ANC.

From the beginning the function of the OC was conceived as being
directly related to our strategic goal, the transfer of power.
In a sense the OC is organising the masses to take power, so that
its task is not merely a technical one, concerned only with
membership figures, but rather a political task. To fulfil this
task we must address the following questions:

Why are we recruiting?

What do we do with the members we have recruited?

How do we retain membership and sustain activity?

How do we destroy apartheid and build upon its ruins peoples
power to serve the interests of the people?

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Therefore the task of the OC entails a correct analysis, and an
understanding of the current phase of our struggle. It entails
understanding the balance of forces, the strength of the enemy
camp, its weaknesses and most important, what needs to be done to
further weaken that camp. In the same way, we need to understand
our own strengths and weaknesses, and in our search of this
understanding we should openly and honestly be able to criticise
ourselves. Self criticism will often be brutal and harsh, yet it
is necessary if we are to overcome our weaknesses and ze-build
our strength.

This report covers the following aspects:

' our strategic priorities

' state of organisation

a) objective factors

b) subjective factors

t building unity - broadening our base

' Programmes of action

' conclusion

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'Our strategic Priorities?

' building democratic regions and branches that activate our
membership and our people into struggle to win people's power.

' developing a national programme of action which takes into
account different specifics in the regions

1 ensuring mass participation in our campaigns

' broadening consultation with other mass formations and
concretising our alliance on the ground

t developing a dynamic recruitment plan and locating that
within various sectors

' ensuring that negotiations becomes an active terrain of mass
struggle

i ensuring democratic participation in all our
structures

In the 6 months of its existence, the OC can report that out of 14
regions that have been set up, 11 are functioning under the
leadership and guidance of democratically elected RECs. In
Northern Natal, where Inkatha violence and vandalism have made it
difficult for the movement to build, the North Western Cape and
the Western Transvaal, we are still operating as regional interim?
structures.

The overall branch total for the country stands at a little above
600, whilst signed up and paid up membership is around a quarter
of a million (250,000). The statistical data that we present is
an eloquent demonstration that we have not been able to live up
to the expectations that we had cherished when the movement was
unbanned.

We had hoped, for instance, that by this time of the year we
would have amassed a million members. But, contrary to such
expectations, what has now emerged from actual experience on the
ground, is that there is a difference between calling people to a
rally and recruiting individuals into the organisation. Given
the indisputable fact that the ANC commands the biggest ever mass

following in the country, and also the fact that we are in a structured alliance with the biggest and most powerful trade union federation (COSATU) in the country, to expect a million members to have been gathered by now, should not have been just a mere posturing on our part. still it is our firm belie! that the

goal is realisable if we take a close look at ourselves, analyse our weaknesses brutally and begin to correct our approach to organisation and recruitment without delay.

We need to do this comrades, now. For us, therefore, to be able to apply ourselves dutifully to the historical task of building the ANC into a powerful, visible, mass based vanguard movement, we shall have to grasp the political backdrop against which we are working, the assortment of hostile forces arraigned against us as well as the strategic direction of the movement and how in the current period we propose to accomplish our ideal. In the absence of such an understanding we shall be tempted wittingly or unwittingly to continue to indulge in all sorts of personal aggrandizement, mutual suspicion, petty bickering and mud-slinging to the detriment of the organisation and very much to the amusement of the enemy in particular and our detractors in general.

It is a historical fact, comrades, that the regime decided to engage us in negotiations, not because all of a sudden it has fallen in love or struck a note of reconciliation with the movement, but because they have conceded that this organisation occupies a central position to the resolution of the Apartheid crime against our people.

A solution that does not involve the ANC as a decisive factor is no solution. But since there is no communality of interests between the ARC and the regime, the latter's strategy could not but be the liquidation of the formidable forces against apartheid colonialism.

Naturally the ruling clique would rather opt to negotiate with an ANC that is weak, fragmented and marginalised from the masses of out people. It would not end just there. On the contrary, it would strive to strip us naked of all support and assistance that we derive from the international community. Simultaneously as it is labouring to isolate us, it will as it does now, begin to build an anti-ANC alliance, something similar to the DTA puppet coalition in Namibia against SWAPO. As a matter of fact that is what is already being planned and implemented. Day by day, as they watch us quarrelling and bickering amongst ourselves, they are beginning to be bold as to suggest that there is no way in which they cannot beat the ANC in an election they would contest in alliance with Inkatha and a host of other pseudo-organisations that are starting to proliferate across the face of our country. We must make the point abundantly clear, comrades, that our demand for a Constituent Assembly will just be "words, words, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing" if we are not

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strong on the ground. That strength in the final analysis, will derive not from mass rallies in the stadia of this country, but from branches of the ANC as such. Whether we stand or fall like a pack of cards, will depend at the end of the day on how strongly and fast we build branches and to what extent we make them a bee-hive of revolutionary political activity and struggle. Because it is that building block, that transmission point to the broad masses that becomes the decisive lever in this period of transmission. If we delay that building process, and are tempted to bask in the glory of the name of the ANC and its leadership, we will suffer the consequences that became the fate of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

Having said that much about the political context in which we must build the ANC for the seizure of power, let us then look into what we have designated as objective and subjective factors that have impeded the kind of growth that we had anticipated.

1) Objective factors:

a) The violence that has engulfed the entire country, and behind which are elements of the regime's security apparatus.

It is promoted deliberately to:

i) frustrate our building process

ii) tarnish the image of our movement and thus alienate it from the masses, our friends and supporters abroad '

iii) drive a wedge between us and those forces the regime

has targeted to win over as the so-called middle ground

There may be other aims, but of cardinal importance for us as organisers, theoreticians, propagandists and leaders of the ANC, we cannot denounce the current wave of violence and must work hard to expose the villains of the peace. Hence the relevance of all the endeavour the ANC and its allies have embarked upon! And hence the relevance of the recently launched "PEACE AND FREEDOM NOW CAMPAIGN". As we work and begin to engage the regime and its puppets in militant struggle for peace and freedom, we are at one and the same time underscoring the pertinent point that organising and recruitment are void in the absence of an intense struggle waged around local and national issues.

sitized campaign by the regime and its henchmen to
b) :giitpthe revolugioary alliance between the ANC and
the SACP. The ARC must not be hesitant to defend this
alliance. We must not feel xestxained to proclaim the
alliance in the correct and historical perspective is
as a product of the objective reality in our
country.

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The extent to which we are able to defend the all
portray it concretely at branch, regional and national levels d
will determined our capacity to organise and mobilise even azoun
the alliance itself.

me's attem t to categorise our leadership in

C) zzgmgeg: "hawks", popposed to negotiations and bent on
violence and "doves" who are devoted to the "peaceful
process". We must fight this diabolical stance and
proclaim loudly and clearly the oneness and unity of
our leadership at all levels.

eliberate dela to release political prisoners and

d) Elie: the return ofyexiles, the footdxagging when it
comes to the cessation of political trials and repeal
of the Internal Security Act. The aim here is to sow
dissension within the ranks of the movement, to create
a situation of mistrust and eventually a split.

e) the concerted attempt to win the so-called
middle-ground, i.e. homeland leaders, business
communities and religious fraternities. We must defeat
them here too. Our strategy can never be to narrow
our social base but to expand it constantly. At times
we fall prey to the regime's machinations by adopting
ultra-revolutionary postures, particularly those of us
who are working in the rural areas.

We have not exhausted the objective factors that stand menacingly
in the way of building a strong ANC presence on the ground.

2. SUBJECTIVE FACTORS

Some of these have been alluded to above. We provide the
additional following ones:-

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a. exa eration of the concept of "democracy" as ev
iniggall stages of our building process in relation to the
interim structures, all of which came about as a result of
appointment by the ILC.

b. factionalism and cliquism

c. inability to concretise the alliance at all levels, leading
to a situation in which COSATU in particular is not engaged
or is not engaging itself in building the ANC

d. inability to relate creatively to chiefs and other
traditional authorities in the rural areas

e. failure to structure appropriately the relationship between
civic organisations, the ANC Youth League (SAYCO), and the
ANC Women's League on the one hand and the ANC on the other

i. inadequate political education at branch and regional levels
and in most cases absence of any branch activity

9. deplorable lack of resources to build a viable
infrastructure to enable regions to build and administer
proficiently

h. failure by some regions to take into account the non-zacial
content of struggle when it comes to the delegation of
leadership tasks by elections or otherwise. This particular
weakness impacts negatively on our efforts to recruit in the
White, Coloured and Indian sectors or our population.

1) And again our inability to articulate adequately the nature
and content of the alliance between the ANC and the Party.

This weakness of the movement as a whole creates problems
when our organisers get into the field.

POSITIVE GAINS IN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

In spite of all the problems enumerated above and the many others
that the regions will surely identify, we have been able to make
steady progress. Naturally regions will differ according to the
diverse objective situations dictating to them variously.

But the overall impression that we have is that the potential for

phenomenal growth is there. A case in point is the general enthusiasm that is so widespread in such areas as Bophuthatswana which is so violently hostile towards the ANC and the HON. Also the Eastern Transvaal, the Northern Transvaal and the Transkei are doing exceptionally well, given the problems that we have isolated above. We commend the comrades in these areas and hope that they will use the experience of this conference to tap the rich potential in these regions, to the full. It is a pity that

their counterparts in the other rural regions of the North Western Cape and the Western Transvaal have not been able to be rewarded similarly in spite of an expressed eagerness on the part of the masses to take up membership.

We also appreciate the sterling accomplishments of the urban regions though we are of the strong view that they could have done better. In particular we would like to single out Southern Natal and Midlands (Natal) for their courageous drive to build even at the cost of their own lives. We think that the whole province deserves decoration for the tremendous show of boldness, courage and selflessness in pursuit of a noble cause.

Finally, comrades, the task ahead is herculean and the stakes are high. Die tyd vl: speeletjies is now verby. All hands on deck!

Let us make sure that when June next year comes, it will find us on a different plane altogether.

WHAT THEN HAS TO BE DONE?

Our priority objective as builders, organisers and leaders of our people is to ensure that the strategic thrust of transferring power to the people is achieved in full. at the earliest possible moment.

At the same time we should at all times always bear in mind that the realisation of that goal depends entirely on our systematic and diligent work on the ground, a commitment that relegate: all else to the background. The ANC, in the short term, must be seen by foe and friend to be there not only as a visible force but also as the alternative it ie to the apartheid regime. otherwise our involvement in the negotiations in an idle exercise if such an involvement is not going to be as such, that it makes these negotiations a conduit for the transference of power to the people.

Priority in terms of the allocation of the meagre resources at our disposal should be given to building, with all that it entails, e.g. organising and planning campaigns, mass demonstrations etc., at all levels of our existence. The Youth League and the Women's League are critical sectors of the movement, in the work that must start immediately we rise from this conference.

In order to take the movement to the rural masses, rural seminars and workshops should be organised right out there in the villages and not in the urban centres. Lines of communication between leadership organs at all levels should be vibrant to ensure that we are on the ball.

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Once we begin to engage the regime in disciplined m action, building and growth are assured and we will beat the path to victory without a fear.