

FOR THE REGIONAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

THEME: PROBLEMS OF THE REGION.

MAKENI ON: DISCIPLINE: ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTROL.

Talking about discipline in the region, the question arises as to what this discipline is, when is it expected and from whom; also, why is discipline necessary?

Comrades, the African National Congress is a national liberation organisation with a clear set of objectives. The general organised structure which the ANC is, presupposes a measure of discipline!

The ANC is continually joined by scores of individuals on a voluntary basis. These individuals subscribe to central and common objectives, political; organisational and ideological - and this very voluntary commitment to set ideals and objectives is an obligation in itself for everyone to act and participate collectively or at least on the basis of collective ideas and views.

But these collective ideas and views cannot be expected to flounder about in a comical fashion from one vacuum to another. In stead, collective ideas and views have to be canalised or say communicated from one section of the membership to another through structures.

In between conferences, the highest Congressional authority is the NEC. The NEC is the steward on behalf of the general membership. On behalf of the membership, the National Executive Committee is in a position to guide the conduct of struggle in the direction of definite goals and objectives. In this context therefore then, the relationship between the NEC and the rank and file necessitates constant contact. In other words, the NEC is expected to account periodically to the membership and the other way round. It cannot be otherwise. At least the whole history of revolutionary experience indicates to the fundamental importance of this type of communication - which ensures the political and ideological unity of the movement. Already lack of communication between the leadership and the rank and file has done us a lot of harm. Angola is one such example.

Therefore then, the first act of discipline at leadership level presupposes periodical explanation, clarification and discussion on matters of general interest. In the past, when Congress was legal, National Conferences were held every one year - the situation has changed now. But the fundamental principles of running such a huge organisation should not be confused.

It is evident that a large majority of us know a lot about democratic centralism - even knowing it by heart. We also know that it cannot apply mechanically. But the truth is that open and frank discussion is a vehicle towards maintenance of discipline and a search for the solution of problems. So, other than frequent huge meetings which can be prohibited for security reasons: other viable platforms are there to ensure regular communication from top to bottom.

Talking about discipline cannot be done without talking about how it is maintained; the causes or probable causes of indiscipline and also the necessary instruments to ensure the maintenance of discipline.

At different times and for different reasons, individuals commit acts of indiscipline. The degree of differences of committed acts of indiscipline range from petty criminal acts of juvenile silliness to disturbing anti-progress activities which only facilitate the work of the enemy.

Depending on the gravity of the crime, measures are taken. These include suspension of membership, reprimands, expulsion and death by firing squad in the case of treason.

But if discipline is not an end in itself, then it has to be encouraged. There are various ways for this. But as the situation is what it is currently we, by way of immediate recommendation, feel that there is a dire need for an elaborate document in the form of rules and regulations or call it - a code of conduct - guiding the activities of all of us. This legal loop-hole should never be undermined.

Talking about problems of the region, the question arises whether we have the necessary mechanism capable of dealing with regional breaches of indiscipline and if we really do have such structures, are they efficient enough?

(Comrades, perhaps it will be necessary at this stage for one to make an observation: We have two comrades in Makeni, who have committed a crime. The Disciplinary Committee was informed about this, yet the comrades are kept in suspense about their fate as a result of the inactivity of the DC!!).

Also, as we talk about discipline, we consider the possibilities of a national structure commissioned with the task of dealing with problems of discipline.. a type of National Commission of Accounts and Control. Besides, we in Makeni are of the opinion that an explanation will be necessary defining the role of HQ and the Regional Political Committee in respect of matters of discipline and accounting regarding the presence of individual members of every Department of Congress here in Zambia.

In our discussion of discipline, we conclude that the supreme act of discipline is the subjugation of individual interests to the common interest. The type of discipline that is expected is a conscious one and not the one imposed. Typical political discipline completely different from the drill characterising for instance that of discipline of hunger or its enemy army variety.

Assessing the practicality of discipline in the region, we agreed in the branch that lack of time and our scope of knowledge of discipline or - indiscipline as regards regional problems is evidently limited. We therefore opted to single out glaring general problems as indicators of a crisis of legal.

Second after Angola, here in Lusaka the situation is replete with rumours, half truths, gossip, lies and distortions. There are tricksters and thieves both big and small.

Experience has shown that in a situation in which the leadership takes a long time to consult with we ordinary cadres, a very fertile ground is created where from it will emerge ugly creatures in the form of lies, distortions and above all rumours and very disturbing gossip - they have an euphemism for the latter - they call it 'Mgosi! - in such an environment, you cannot avoid this refugee mentality or petty bourgeois fantasies created precisely because there is lack of constant information from informed members of the leadership.

There are ways in which information could be descended down to the ordinary cadre. For instance Departmental meetings (of course not a single such meeting was ever held the whole of last year in the DIP to which I belong for instance. Perhaps we don't have any problems in the DIP). We also have Branches; there are General Membership Meetings; units of three, four or five people. There is also the Youth and Women Sections. But we never make use of these structures for dissemination of information.

Here in Lusaka one perceives a psychological attitude created in such a way that criticism carries no special significance. Criticism is either reduced to character assassination or it can be said to be a feeler programme on TV. Appreciation of criticism depends on the perspective of an individual. No serious revolutionary movement has ever existed without this effective weapon of the working class.

Meetings of criticism and self criticism should not be left to the volition of the individual. These meetings should be an obligation communicated down to ordinary members by the NEC. The NEC is demanded that such meetings are held as regularly as possible.

Criticism and self meetings should not be confused with general political discussion meetings or mass meetings in which people are fuming, angry at the time lost before such meetings are held. We certainly cannot afford to be bundled into motor-cars off to Liland or Makeni to attend a high temperature meetings - general meetings only because a crisis situation has arisen!!

Criticism meetings are a tested instrument in the struggle against the class enemy. Through criticism and self criticism meetings we come to know who is serious and who is not. And above all, it is much easier for junior chiefs to account in such meetings than to report individually to heads of departments!

Very many people here in Lusaka drink liquor during working hours. (I also drink liquor) Drinking to get drunk. Others simply do not perform well in their work. Others are in a position to change Departments as they wish. These and many other things happen because there is no strict control. Others squander funds while others steal material of value only to smile with confident arrogance because otherwise there are persons more corrupt than themselves.

These things are happening because we are not a closely knit net-work.

There are loop-holes.

Let's face it.

Political life here in Lusaka is pathetic. Only thanks to the coming conference there is a measure of activity. Political life here in Lusaka leaves a real great deal to be desired - hence this middle class fantasies and refugee mentality that is threatening common sense.

- Comrades, if you do not read everyday because you think you know, you become dry - you become a windbag.

- We are all agreed that material conditions of life determine one's consciousness. Again Lilanda. We think, by way of recommendation, that it will be important for Cde Awolo to satisfy logistical needs of the comrades. Two things: either we have representatives in the Logistics Department or Cde Awolo de-centralises some of the functions of his Dept. If not, it will be important for Cde Awolo to buy storks

at wholesale price and stop giving us cash. This is because retail price is devastating.

- In the same spirit, we in Makeni are of the opinion that there is a need to increase our monthly allowances because objectively prices of soap etc, have increased sharply whereas the arbain has remained where it was more than ten years ago. We sincerely believe that the question of arbain is a social problem and it need a sober social solution.

We are not after money as such., Rather, we know exactly where our money is... Clause Three of the Freedom Charter has the hint.

As we want to help solve problems of discipline in the region, we in Makeni would like the RPC to say something about people of different sex putting up together without a certied marriage staying as hubby and wife without a legally constituted court of law.

It is true that the ANC is modernistic generally. But we do have people with a traditional touch. So, we just want the disciplinary Committee to be sensitive and consider the fact that our South African background has it that small young boys cannot punish elderly people.

Talking about the causes and solutions of the problem of discipline, we here in Makeni feel that a number of factors will have to be considered when we address problems of breaches of discipline. (Moreover, we generally like talking about scientific approach to problems) For instance, a number of factors will need consideration / work; whether the subject person is capable of doing the given task or even assessing the relations of the subject person with work mates. There are many other factors belonging to this context. Such an approach will contribute stacks and stacks to our Cadre Policy.

Accounting: When we talk about accountability, we talk about the need for follow up. We talk about feed back based on earlier resolutions, common agreements etc. In the process, a number of issues are clarified, information is disseminated and discussion swings. Let us be more practical. At the moment there is a serius hammering by the enemy media on talks between the Nationalist Party and the ANC. We feel, it is the duty of the leadership to clarify this from time to time. It helps. We feel it is not enough to be clarified by the Presidential statement of January 8th only.

This is so because in Information Dynamics, there is what we call continuity. In other words, old things are said in new ways. Old bourgeois tricks are repeated from time to time. Our response should at least be from time to time.

When talking about accountability we do not mean we want strategic - information from the leadership. We do not want a type of information that will be tantamount to giving away secrets of the organisation to the enemy.. we simply want explanation regarding general problems. Some living examples. So many bails of clothing were allegedly lost - what happened later? Comrades shoot one another right here in Lusaka - Can we briefed what happened?

Another example - We were told an Independent Commission would report back on the Angolan Findings: can we be privileged to know something, at least after all those extensive Inquiries. We maintain that to Brief us about such developments seriously make it difficult for fault finders and noise makers to have a chance.

Again, the NEC is the steward of the membership. And to clarify such general issues in the form of informative discussion instill confidence in us and also make us feel that we are part of the management of our own affairs, taking part in the policy making exercise. Above everything else, it is only in this way that the political and ideological unity of the movement is guaranteed.

TRANSPORT: Here in Zambia there is what is called transport problem. There is nothing like that. The thing is, we do not have a firm control over our transport system. We do not utilise our resources rationally.

For the section of our community staying at John Laing, the DIP and the Creche in Makeni there are more than twenty people, yet there is not a single motor-car. In case of emergencies we will be expected to leave everything to Jesus Christ. At the moment Makeni Branch is remaining behind so far as the current preparations for the N.C. Conference are concerned. This is because we are not able to transport branch members, yet we are expected to succeed.

Finally, Comrades still express fear that they will talk a lot and will be victimised. In such a climate, open and frank discussion - for the purpose of identifying mistakes and shortcomings - will not be possible.

Also, one thing which is discouraging here in the movement is that we talk a lot about problems, yet there is little done or nothing at all. The relationship between theory and practice as we ought to understand it is very disturbing.

And without Discipline, accounting and control, there can be successful revolutionary struggle.

I thank you all.