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PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICA
ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROJECT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF PASA BY THE ANC.

A. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Five years ago the African National congress approved the establishment of the South Africa Economic Research and Training project. It was decided that this project be initially based in Amsterdam, Hollland, from where essential poreliminary organisational work would be carried out. This work would include,

- 1).The establishment of an administration structure for the project.
- 2).The cultivation and development of linkss, worldwide, with academic, research and training institutions involved in research and training on South Africa .
- 3).The preparation of reference material giving information on existing publications on the South African economy.
- 4).The compilation of reference material on research currently taking place on South Africa.
- 5).The establishment of contacts with revolutionary and progressive academics involved in research work on South Africa throughout the world including those within South Africa.

It was agreed that at a later stage and at the opportune time when the preparatory work have been satisfactory carried out, a decision would be taken by the ANC to establish an economic research and training institute in Africa at a location to be determined by the leadership of the ANC. This Institute would proide facilities for economic research and the training of South African academics. These academics activity were conceived and understood as essential to the provision of vital information crucial to effective planning for the establishment of a free and democratic Post-Apartheid South Africa.

Recently the ANC took another decision approving the establishment of the Post-Apartheid South Africa Project (PASA). This project also aims to achieve precisely the same objectives as those outlined for the South Africa Economic Research and Training Project.

Clearly those two projects cannot co-exist as projects of the ANC. Their co-existence is bound, inevitably to result in unhealthy competition and rivalry detrimental to the ANC. Indeed, and regrettably this has already occurred. It is, therefore, most urgent that a solution be found which will ensure the preservation of the ANC as a responsible organisation, which it is. What we are confronted with here is a major political problem demanding immediate action to resolve this crisis.

B. STRUCTURE OF THE TWO PROJECTS

It is important to point out that, apart from the two projects having precisely the same objectives, they are also envisaged as requiring exactly identical organisational structures.

(1) AUTONOMY

For both these organisations the ANC has decided that they should each have constitutional autonomy. This means that they have to be organisationally and constitutionally structured in a manner that will ensure that they are perceived as independent organisations and not as organs of the ANC. This constitutional autonomy is understood as necessary and essential to guarantee and encourage the broadest participation in academic research to be undertaken both inside and outside South Africa. Formal constitutional autonomy from the ANC provides the best possible protection to academics inside South Africa from attack and victimisation by the Apartheid regime for involvement in ANC activities.

(2) DIFFERENCES

The only difference between the two projects is that, whilst PASA still in process of formation, the South Africa Economic Research and Training Project is already well established and operating. This project is legally registered as a charity and has a functioning Board of Trustees.

(3). TRUSTEES

1. T.T. Nkobi (Treasurer-General - ANC)

2. Proffessor G. Junne

(German)- Professor and head of International relations department at the university of Amsterdam, member of the Anti-Apartheid movement (AABN), Chairman of the Govan Mbeki Fund, University of AMsterdam as well as Chairman of the board of Trustees of the South Africa Economic Research and Training Project (SAERTP).

(4) PROFESSOR R. GREEN

Long standing scholar an African Political Economy. Has taught, researched and advised in over 20 African countries. Has studied employment issues on Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and the other SADCC countries and holds a consultancy with the ILO. His main manpower work has been on Namibia. He is a trustee to the International Centre on Law in Development; a rapporteur of the Advisory group on Economic matters of the World Council of Churches; a member of the SADCC's London liason Committee and of the Catholic Institute for International Affairs Education Committee.

(5) Dr. A. Van der Heuvel

Director of the Dutch Christian Radio and Television network. Dutch representative to the World Council of Churches and a strong supporter of the ANC. He would not serve on the board of trustees until he saw the letter of support from the ANC signed by the Treasurer-General.

Note: The SAERTP board of trustees is still to be augmented to tot, and as far as possible to be internationally balanced in close consultation with the ANC and the board of Trustees. -Since the history of Apartheid and it sperpetuation has international dimensions, the rationale is to internationalise the support for this research and training effort.

SPONSORS

1. Basil Davidson

Internationally renouned scholar on African history. Well known to African liberation movements including MPLA, Frelimo, SWAPO and the ANC.

2. Archbishop Trevor Huddleston.

Well known to ANC.

3. Dr. Beyers Naude

Well known to ANC.

4. Peter Weiss

A prominent constitutional lawyer (USA) Tireless campaigner against USA foreign policy on the 3rd World. First President of the Africa Committee (USA) and well known to the ANC.

C. CO-OPERATION PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO PROJECTS

1. NON-CO-OPERATION WITH COMRADE S. MATLHAPE

Since the process towards the establishment of PASA begun, comrade S. Matlhape, the Director of the South Africa Economic Research and Training Project has been excluded from participation in all discussions and activities concerning the establishment of PASA. This has been done despite the fact that it is known, within the ANC economic unit, that comrade Matlhape is already involved in similar work to be undertaken by PASA.

(2) HARARE CONFERENCE

In May 1987 a conference was held in Harare organised by the ANC to which academics from inside South Africa, from outside South Africa and the ANC were invited. The purpose of this conference was, on the main, to promote PASA. Comrade Matlhape was not invited to this conference and did not take part.

(3) SWEDEN

In June 1987 another conference was organised by the ANC in Sweden involving academics from inside South Africa, from outside South Africa and from the ANC. Again comrade Matlhape was not invited to this conference. It was only after comrade T.T.Nkobi intervened and instructed that comrade Matlhape to invited to the conference that he was told about the conference and invited to the conference.

(4). SAREC DISCUSSIONS

During 1987 a representative of SAREC visited Lusaka to discuss, among other things, funding for ANC research activities and the South Africa Economic Research and Training Project directed by comrade Matlhape. On this occasion, again, comrade T.T. Nkobi insisted that comrade Matlhape be invited to come to Lusaka and participate in the discussions. Again, despite the fact that comrade Matlhape was in Lusaka specifically to attend these consultations between the ANC and SAREC, he was excluded from taking part.

(5) AMSTERDAM SEMINAR

During 1987 a seminar was organised by comrade Matlhape to which academics from inside South Africa, from outside South Africa and the ANC were invited. Since the establishment of the South Africa Economic research and Training Project comrade Matlhape has always ensured that the ANC comrades in Lusaka are kept informed about the work of the project he was directly. He has supplied the comrades in Lusaka (Economic Unit) with all documents and reports that he has produced. This he has done despite the manner in which he has been treated.

1). INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY OF THE SOUTH AFRICA ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROJECT

1). The project directed by comrade Matlhape enjoys a very high prestige among a variety of organisations, academics and Governments. This high regard and display of confidence in the project is occasioned by the high quality of work that has already been produced (e.g. Publication by Motlhape entitled 'The role of Gold in the South African Economy'). This publication is so highly regarded that it is now being used by Anti-Apartheid groups in the campaign for sanctions against Apartheid.

2. Confidence in the project has also been enhanced by the highly professional quality of publicity material produced and used to introduce the project to the International Community, and, also by well prepared, professionally documented fund applications submitted to various donors.

3. The well organised seminar held in AMsterdam and the highly professional quality of contributions by participants has also contributed a great deal to the prestige of the project.

This seminar has generated great interest in the work of the project among a variety of internationally important grant-giving organisations which include SIDA and SAREC, among others.

E). SIDA/SAREC QUIRIES

It is important to point out that despite the good impression that has been made by the South Africa Economic Research and Training Project on potential donors, the fact remains that its co-existence with PASA has created doubts and uncertainties as to why the ANC supports two organisations which have exactly the same aims and objects. Representatives of both SIDA and SAREC, among others, have raised quiries and sought clarification as to how the ANC reconciles its support for PASA and the South Africa Research and Training Project. Further clarification has also been requested as to which of these two organisations is given priority over the other by the ANC. The central problem here is which of the two organisations is regarded by the ANC as more important than the other.

A further problem is that some academics in South Africa and in Europe have expressed their uncertainty as to which of the two projects to support. Others have begun to wonder whether they should continue to give their support to South Africa Economic Research and Training Project. They have begun to express doubt as to whether this project is a genuine ANC project. The eclusion and non-participation of comrade Matlhape in ANC organised PASA activities is having the effect of ssystematically discrediting the South Africa Economic Research and Training Project and undermining its work.

CONCLUSION

The political crisis that has arisen from the ANC support for both these projects demands urgent action if political embarrassment to our organisation is to be avoided. We appeal to our leadership to take this issue into their consideration and to provide political guidance towards the resolution of this very serious problem.

In searching for a solution every effort should be made to focus our attention on the best and most constructive way forward towards arriving at a solution authentic to the true interests of our organisation. We have a duty to avoid unhealthy confrontation and destructive polemical exchanges between members of our organisation, especially those who are directly involved in the two projects.

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