

POLITICAL SCHOOL - A CONCEPT

The ANC, at its Second National Consultative Conference, ~~set up the~~ DPE and charged it with the task of looking after the political life of the Movement. This entails enhancing patriotism and deepening political conviction among the membership: boundless love for and devotion to the well-being of our country and people.

Love for and devotion to a country and its people are acquired traits in life of a people, they are not inborn. Once inculcated, assimilated and perpetually propagated they become, in the course of time, inherent and form the social norm and custom of that society or people.

In the history of societies the process of inculcation, assimilation and propagation of ideas had developed and come to devolve around particular groups - leaders, activists, propagandists, agitators, etc. The main modes of transmissions of ideas had been oral and graphic and their perception auditory, visual and audio-visual.

The role of educators of the people, of articulators of ~~the~~ their aspirations and their leadership towards ^{set} their goal has, in the course of time, come to rest on the ANC and its allies in the National Liberation Movement of our country.

From the time of its foundation and even earlier, the ANC propagated ideas of liberation through both the spoken and written words - in the main. Some formations of the NLM attempted to formalise the process through the institution of classes. This effort was primordial, not well coordinated nor intergrated, designed to meet the immediate task of propagandists, activists, leaders etc. It did, nonetheless greatly contribute ~~to~~ the production of great national leaders and ~~the~~ revolutionaries of international stature.

The development of our struggle, however, has come to make more and more complex demands on the ANC and its allies. These demands are ^{at} the core of the understanding of the diversification and specialization in the movement. To cope with the process the Movement had had to send cadres to specialization institutions abroad, ~~it~~ ^{in order to build} built various institutions of its own in various African countries..

Still there was no systematic and consistent work in the political and ideological spheres within the context of the NLM despite ^{the} glaring ~~lacunae~~ ^{lacunae} that ~~is~~ ^{exists} in this direction.

It was with the view to correcting this situation that the SNCC decided to set up the DPE. The DPE, ^{in order} to fulfill the task of "looking into the political life of the Movement" had to "have a political consciousness, knowledge and skill of our cadres" which should be ^{political education programme aimed at constantly improving} ~~different~~ ^{different} "depending on the political maturity of the comrades concerned". As a basis of departure the programme had to ensure that every member undergoes a course of basic political training.

TOWARDS AN ANC SCHOOL

The political education programme was conceived by the SNCC within the context of working "towards the creation of a Political School for (the) Training of Cadres". From the foregoing then a picture of the tasks and scope of DPE stands out clearly as:

- "systematic and consistent political and ideological work among the masses of the people
- production of cadres with ~~the~~ sterling revolutionary attributes, loyalty, discipline, dedication, devotion and determination" and "staunch ~~at~~ in their belief in our ideological line, namely, revolutionary nationalism and committed anti-imperialism". Cadres capable of exercising political leadership and be good organisers.

Political education within the Movement took a variegated form since the banning of the ANC. Cadres were sent to Politico-Military and Political Schools as well as to tertiary institutions in the Socialist countries to acquire and deepen their political knowledge. As could be expected such cadres became very proficient in revolutionary philosophy ~~as well~~. The earlier ^{cadres} ~~cadres~~, having been firmly grounded in the politics of our national liberation struggle came back from these institutions as sterling revolutionaries and played outstanding roles as leaders and propagandists at various levels and spheres of operation of the Movement - political, diplomatic and military.

The later generations, particularly the post June 16 ones, lacked the benefit of having been moulded within political activity of the masses and the ANC. On arriving abroad they expressed a craving for the techniques of armed struggle and Marxism-Leninism. As a result much emphasis was laid on these. A corrective measure was added in 1977 with the dispatch of political instructors to the camps who dwell on aspects of the ~~historical~~ history of the struggle.

With the coming into being of SOMAFCO in 1979, deeper content was ~~given~~ ^{given} to the political upbringing of the youth. ~~As~~ At the moment political education is given from the creche right through the Secondary education levels. It covers the following areas:

Nursery - teaches children to:

- a) know national flag
- b) sing national anthem
- c) know main leaders of the ANC and the entire liberation movement
- d) share things among themselves
- e) help one another
- f) know aspects of ANC policy and apartheid
- g) understand why we are in exile

Primary:

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- a) in class through various subjects particularly HISTORY OF THE STRUGGLE.
- b) through talks by leadership, teachers and administrators
- c) personal examples by the staff
- d) through participation in sports and other cultural activities
- e) through videos depicting the struggle in South Africa

Secondary - Lower:

- a) History of the struggle
- b) History (SA & world)
- c) Geography and English
- Higher
- d) Development of Societies - Philosophy, Political Economy and History and theory of the South African revolution
- e) History
- f) Weekly discussions mainly on contemporary issues. News analysis and discussions based on thematic papers for general populace (in East Africa).

These are complemented by political studies in the Socialist countries as referred to above for both military and non-military cadres. The courses range from One to 5 years, the longer years being done at a degree level. All these complimentary political studies have helped the Movement to produce outstanding cadres who are today exercising leadership at all levels of the Movement and in various sectors of and fronts.

The scope of political education touched upon above for SOMAFCO and at the camps would seem adequate in meetings ~~to~~ ^{to} demand of DPE to ensure that every member undergoes a basic course in political training. What seems necessary is the study of the programmes followed ~~by~~ both at SOMAFCO and in the West to see in what way they may need further elaboration and modification to ensure that the programmes are differentiated according to appropriate levels of understanding of the cadres. They should also be consistently pursued and sufficiently comprehensive. Once this is assured basic political education provision to members would be presumed to have been accomplished. Sending cadres abroad for one year for political education courses, could mean a whole year of development lost for what they are provided with in one year is pretty well covered within the institutions of the ANC in Africa. This could perhaps be one of the underlying causes of ill-comportment by our cadres in the institutions.

What is beneficial to the Movement are the four or five year (degree) courses in these countries. This introduces cadres to variegated disciplines indispensable in their training as activists, propagandists and leaders. It is in these years that they become acquainted with principles of international relations (political, diplomacy, economic, military, etc.), law (particularly ^{international} law), trade unionism, Economics, Philosophy and the military art. These are knowledges to be possessed at this level - the level of pointing the way out to the masses, the level of activism, propagandist and leadership.

Having acquainted cadres with elements of our struggle and Philosophy, as is done at SOMAFCO, the West and the one year early school courses, the stage is then set for ^{movement} Movement to the next stage - production of activists, propagandists and leaders. This is the stage of problematization of concepts rather than merely imbibing them.

This is where a Political School for the Training of Cadres as envisaged at the Second National Consultative Conference comes in. The logical level at which instruction would be conducted is clearly post-secondary level and the obligatory disciplines would be :

1. Principles of law
2. Military
3. Diplomacy
4. Economics
5. Philosophy
6. History of the struggle
7. History
8. trade Unionism
9. Art of Persuasion and public speaking.

Such a political school then makes a number of demands the most important of which is the academic level of teaching staff. Institutions of a similar nature draw on graduates in the disciplines enumerated above - there is no alternative to this.

The movement disposes of qualified cadres in most of the disciplines. Where we are lacking we can draw on appropriately qualified personnel from Socialist countries and friendly political organisations and parties.

To bring together such a significant army of qualified personnel and only engage them for about two hours a day for any length of time is extremely wasteful. What could be done perhaps is, in conjunction with other departments of the Movement engaged in the advancement of the academic levels of cadres to work out an integrated approach for ~~an~~ accelerated towards university level arrangement - passing through a university college transitional set up.

At home opportunities exist for this type of training of leaders, propagandists and activists. There are some openings at Wits. The University of Western Cape has styled itself the intellectual house of the left. Scope, also exist at the University of Cape Town. Others are the University of Natal.

On this front a body of developing social scientists exists. The ~~new~~ movement needs to enter the debates accompanying this development - through colloquia, symposia, seminars, workshops, etc organised with the country and in Southern Africa in a multitude of ways - and pull it, broadly, speaking, towards the main-stream of the national liberation drive or at least ~~make the~~ objective scientists.

Once this has been achieved the goal of a political school inside the country would be that much nearer attainment. Forces within the country could be mobilised towards this end.