

Democratic South Africa has recently acquired a valuable treasure in defining its objectives: the Freedom Charter, which Mr. Moretsele so properly described as embodying "the dearest aims and aspirations" of the oppressed people. The Charter is the rock upon which we must build. But a tremendous amount still remains to be done in discussing and deciding upon a thousand problems which still beset all who work for the implementation of the Charter. In such discussions it would be very wrong to ignore the world background against which our own struggles take place, or the essential need to learn from similar struggles in other places and other times. We disagree strongly with the criticism expressed by one reader, who apparently resents *Liberation* dealing with any problems beyond our borders.

Yet, it is true that our first preoccupation must remain with our own country, its present and its past as well. For there can be no proper understanding of what we face to-day if we ignore the roots of to-day's happenings in the history of our country. The true history of South Africa has yet to be written, and what is palmed off on innocent schoolchildren to-day as "history" is largely a tissue of propagandist distortions, compiled in the interests of "white supremacy".

It is therefore a duty and a privilege for us to devote a large proportion of the present issue to Mr. Jaspán's important article. For Mr. Jaspán, we believe, has not only carried out a splendid work of research, he has also laid an incalculably valuable basis for what will be a whole school of future historians, basing their labours not upon the facile and superficial assumptions of the orthodox school stemming from Theal, but upon a real investigation of the past of all the peoples of our country.

Liberation would welcome comments from interested and qualified readers on Mr. Jaspán's conclusions, as for that matter we do in respect of all articles in these columns. The magazine is there for you to use; in using it you will help others who have, perhaps, the same problems as yourself.

At the same time, we also appeal to our readers to help the magazine in other ways as well. We need more agents, subscribers, donors. By helping *Liberation* you are helping to light up the road ahead.

PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION IN THE A.N.C.

By BANNED LEADER

THE African National Congress is a national liberatory movement at present confined to the African people. It has an outstanding record of struggles. In recent years it has become the accepted leader of the South African people, and the alternative to the herrenvolk Nationalist Government.

Its political task is to unite various African groups throughout South Africa into the African National Congress and to form an alliance with other racial groups in the country for the purpose of attaining economic and political rights for Africans, other non-European groups and indeed for the South African nation. It believes in the establishment of a true democratic system of Government to which people over the age of eighteen irrespective of colour, creed or sex, shall have a right to elect and be elected and to participate fully in all Councils of State. (*The People shall govern.*)

The position of the African National Congress in the South African nation places the greatest responsibility on its leadership. The direction in which the African National Congress travels can therefore no longer be the exclusive right of its members. It becomes a matter of concern to all people who accept Congress leadership, and its programme, whether they are Africans, Coloureds, Indians or Europeans.

The task of the African National Congress has been further increased by the adoption of the Freedom Charter which demands a completely new approach and new methods to all our struggles in the mobilisation of our freedom forces, and in the conduct of our political struggles. This demands the highest political clarity and responsibility and the most efficient organisational ability.

Our tasks in the political and ideological spheres are to raise the theoretical level of the African National Congress members to a higher plane; to increase the Congress ideology and propaganda amongst the broad masses of the people: workers, peasants, intellectuals and the middle-classes who are convertible to the programme and policy of the African National Congress; and systematically to expose the feudal and herrenvolk ideology and all trends that are hostile to the democratic policy of the African National Congress. The National Executive, being aware of the tremendous task which the African National Congress is faced with, ably drew up a comprehensive report analysing the political situation in the country, and raising the organisational problems of the African National Congress, and in addition made concrete suggestions.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

The organisational problems are part of the political problems. They are due to lack of unified ideology and theory, and also due to social background of its members. **There is complete lack of theory, not aimless or abstract theory, but a theory which can give confidence and understanding of issues which the people in the liberatory movement are faced with;** and a lack of the appreciation of unity of theory and practice, which could enable people to understand not only how and in what direction the liberatory movement is moving at the present time, but also how and in what direction it will move in the near future.

It is clear that the situation demands the overhaul of the entire

machinery and methods of work, and the throwing out of all that is out of date and rusty; and all the ideas of 1912 which are no longer in keeping with the present-day situation and which have become an obstacle to the progress of the movement. It has become necessary to forge new weapons and new styles of mobilising the country to meet the new forces of fascism and further to meet the ever-increasing police raids, the passes for women, the mass deportations, the mass removal of the people from their homes, low wages, poor health services, the fostering of tribalism, site and service schemes and all forms of oppression. Therefore, we must eliminate many trends which, of course, are born by the historical conditions of the people.

WORKING PROBLEMS

There exists great inefficiency at varying levels of Congress leadership; the inability to understand simple local situations, inefficiency in attending to the simple things, such as small complaints, replying to letters, visiting of branches.

There is complete lack of confidence of one another, lack of team work in the committees, individualism and the lust for power. The result is sabotage of Congress decisions and directives, gossip and unprincipled criticisms. Some of the officials become the big bosses of the movement. The position into which they have been elevated by the people becomes a permanent position of inheritance. They become bigger than the people.

Some of these problems are due to backward ideologies of the past, political backwardness and the constitutional structure which is based on the old forms of the 1912 constitution. Hence its identity with parliamentary institutions, the provincial autonomy and the lack of centralisation in the movement. These constitutional obstacles introduce too many formalities which are used to evade checking up of the Congress work. There are also difficulties of mechanical instructions which are sometimes used with complete disregard to the local conditions.

EMOTIONALISM

In the past some of the more mature Congress leaders who have now been banned and who can therefore no longer participate in the affairs of Congress, relied more on their personal influences and did not use their experiences and political knowledge to train others. They laid much emphasis on agitational and propaganda work with very little attention to the organisational aspect. This is also responsible for creating tendencies of being more emotional and of regarding conferences as a place where people show their eloquence, not a place of examining political and organisational problems. This explains some of the emotional resolutions which have no deep relationship with the concrete situation

in the country. The last year's annual national conference, despite the high tone set up by the National Executive's report, and the subsequent provincial conferences, are a proof of this.

PETTINESS

Another dangerous thing in the organisation is the inferiority complex which can only be understood and be solved by examining the conditions which have given birth to it: the political and economic set up in the country. "One has to fight racialism and chauvinism daily in the liberatory movement," the whipping up of racialism, the varying degrees of cultural level of various groups in the liberatory movement, the privileged position of some groups and the denial of these privileges to others.

The inferiority complex manifests itself in different forms. Hence the tendency in some circles of our movement not to examine objectively the correctness or otherwise of ideas, but rather the source of origin. Also due to this is irresponsibility, factions and cliques, gossip and petty jealousies which do harm to our organisation. This is one of the reasons why unpolitical and unhealthy discussions are found in our organisation and at conferences. Trial of strength, slander and disputes become the most important issues for discussions. There is too much fault-finding. No one ever openly admits his mistakes. It is always this or that official who has caused the failure.

The reason for some of these trends and attitudes can be found in the absence of the most fundamental principle of criticism and self-criticism which alone can remedy the serious trends mentioned above, which alone can bring progress into our organisation. "The maximum good for the greatest number of people—this is the highest criterion of truth and consequently, the highest criterion of all the activities of our leaders and members, not selfishness and conceit."

Is it possible to solve the problems which are facing the African National Congress to-day? Yes, it is. Similar problems have existed elsewhere. They have been solved. They might not have been exactly the same. But the study of the history of struggles with similar problems can enrich our own experiences. The immediate re-orientation of the African National Congress must be brought into line with the new constitution which is coming before conference in December this year. The discussion and **not shelving** of these problems and weaknesses, **criticism and self-criticism**, are the only methods whereby we can overcome these weaknesses and problems, not only by analysing, not only by discussions, but also by practical steps of remedying them, the giving of political education, exchange of experiences in the actual work done by the leaders of all levels in the areas in which they live.

That is the scientific approach, to state a theory and test it in practice—the unity of theory and practice.