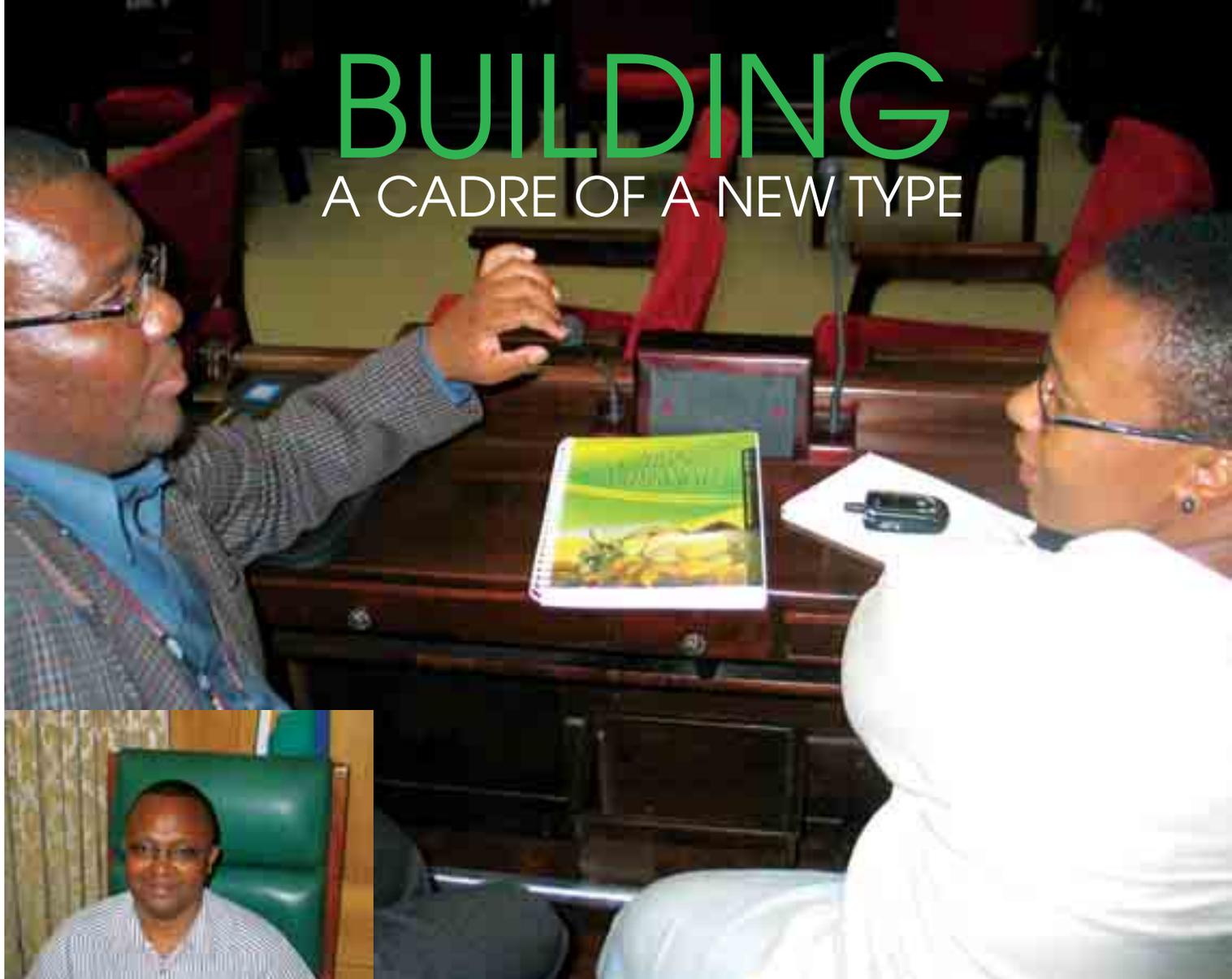


BUILDING

A CADRE OF A NEW TYPE



Political education for staff

By Mzukizi Gaba (Political Education Commissar)

The Sea Point strategic workshop, held last year, called for the appointment of a full-time political education officer. The Office of the Chief Whip has implemented this resolution by introducing the post of Staff Commissar. The task of Staff Commissar is to develop a syllabus for systematic political education of Caucus staff. Since August this year, Caucus has been conducting political education discussions for Members and senior managers on Wednesday. During recess political discussions are adjourned until the next session of parliament.

The overarching strategic objective is to build a cadre of a new type who is dedicated to the liberation of the people. Essentially, a cadre of a new type is among the people and leads them in the reconstruction and development efforts. In pursuit of the overarching strategic objective, the critical secondary objectives must include ensuring political and ideological maturity at

constituency, study group and portfolio committee levels; as well as ensuring unity and cohesion of the ANC.

The objectives should also involve the empowerment of cadres with analytical tools to understand the dynamics of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR); and developing political consciousness to advance the strategic objectives of the NDR.

The secondary objectives must further encompass encouragement of critical enquiry; promotion of constructive criticism and self-criticism; strengthening of the ANC to discharge its hegemony in society; as well as developing staff into effective professional cadres of reconstruction and development.

Human beings do not only reflect social being, above all, they have the capacity to transform it. Central in the transformation of social being

is the role of the subjective factor, the driving force of social change. Of critical significance though are the values that underpin the agent of social change.

Broadly stated, values reflect interests of social groups that are themselves the products of a given mode of production - the latter being determined by concrete historical circumstances. In the course of the NDR against apartheid colonialism, opponents of white minority racist rule in struggle defined values of a cadre of a new type.

Defined values are political consciousness, loyalty to the cause of the people, Batho Pele, conscious discipline, commitment to the cause of the NDR, solidarity with fellow human beings, honest labour as well as integrity. In societies torn asunder by class antagonisms, national oppression and gender discrimination political struggle is inevitable. Understanding



the interplay of the objective and subjective factors in the development of political struggle is the principal function of political education. Since 1912 the ANC has underscored the supremacy of politics in the NDR.

The fundamental political statement of the ANC for the transformation of South Africa is embodied in the Freedom Charter. On the occasion of its 93rd anniversary, the NEC echoed the words of Oliver Tambo in 1980, when, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Charter during what he proclaimed as the Year of the Charter, he said:

"The Freedom Charter contains the fundamental perspective of the vast majority of the people of South Africa of the kind of liberation that all of us are fighting for. Hence it is not merely the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress and its allies. Rather it is the Charter of the people; it remains still a people's Charter, the one basic political statement of our goals to which all genuinely democratic and patriotic forces of South Africa adheres."

Affirming the significance of the Freedom Charter on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the ANC NEC declared, "The Charter embodies a vision of an alternative society to the society we inherited... It guides us about the broad outcomes we must pursue to

achieve the strategic goal we have set ourselves- to eradicate the legacy of racism, sexism, colonialism and apartheid, as we said when we marked our 90th anniversary."

Evidently understanding of politics is of critical importance in overcoming antagonisms of societies torn apart by inequalities. The overwhelming victory of the ANC in the historic elections of 27th April 1994 heralded the beginning of the victory of the NDR. Political power in the hands of the majority should be used to effect socio-economic transformation. In this regard the political variable constitutes the environment wherein socio-economic transformation occurs.

Caucus staff operates in parliament that in its own right is a terrain of struggle for the prosecution of the NDR. The transformation of parliament as an embodiment of people's power is critical in the consolidation of the NDR. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party (ANC) in his annual report correctly pointed out that, "One of the victories achieved by our people with regard to the transformation of Parliament is the adoption of the vision of a People's Parliament that sets a framework for the transformation of Parliament into a tribute of the people. Central features of the vision of a People's Parliament are encapsulated in activities of Parliament in both Houses:

- Visits of NCOP & NA to provinces- taking parliament to the people
- Anniversary of the Freedom Charter in Kliptown
- Budgetary allocations for progressive people centered programmes
- Recognition and acknowledgement of people with special needs and other innovative changes including improvement in Members facilities."

Necessarily Caucus staff should be orientated to understand the new challenges posed by parliament that represents the tribune of our people. Caucus staff is challenged to provide quality service that enhances ANC hegemony in society. Political education should empower ANC cadres with ideological clarity and continuous development of political consciousness. In the course of constituency work and the general activities of PCOs, our cadres should be the spearhead of implementing a people's contract to create work and fight poverty. As cadres of the ANC we have a collective responsibility to combat our detractors and strengthen the unity of the movement. In the light of the enormous challenges of reconstruction and development Political Education is our indispensable weapon.

Welcome all in the battle of ideas in The Year of Popular Mobilization to Advance the Vision of the Freedom Charter.

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