

ANC now a jobs centre, not a political party

YEARS from now, we will be able to see that the major contributing factor in the demise of the ANC was the patronage system it had built up which could not be sustained.

Currently, the handout of tenders to the party loyal, making sure only party members get Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) jobs and cosy administrative positions for branch chairs in municipalities, has resulted in the collapse of its branch structures.

The basic building block of any political party is its branches. It is they that canvass votes, work at voting stations and engage in political activities on the ground.

Without active branches, a political party is dead.

Parties are reliant on the volunteers who work for them without getting paid.

The ANC tried, with initial success, to change this system by giving municipal jobs to their branch chairs.

They then took this one step

further, and gave the responsibility of filling positions for projects in wards to ward councillors, as well as the appointment of community liaison officers for these projects.

Thus, a patronage network was established which would ensure continued support for the party, or so they thought.

This resulted in the nature of ANC branches changing.

From a volunteer-based structure, bound by a common belief in the values of the ANC, to a springboard for getting a job no matter what skills set a member possessed.

Naturally, this led to infighting. Fights often break out at branch AGMs because branch executives would be first in line for jobs. In some instances, these fights would have fatal consequences.

The values and principals of the party no longer guided structures, it became an employment agency.

Thus the ANC lost its ability to organise political activities on the ground because those



WORKERS: DA leader Mmusi Maimane, Premier Helen Zille, Mayor Patricia de Lille, and MEC for Human Settlements Bonginkosi Madikizela at an EPWP in Kensington.

PICTURE: JASON BOUD

who did not get a job then refused to do anything.

In municipalities where the DA took office after the August 2016 elections, some of these ANC patronage networks still existed, but are in the process

of being dismantled.

All DA-led governments are in the final stages of rewriting their EPWP policies, based on the principles of fairness, transparency and equality.

The crucial difference in

the DA's policy framework is that public representatives will have no say in the composition of the workforce responsible for EPWP programmes in their areas.

All publications, data bases and applications will be handled administratively and any political influences in the selection process will be excluded.

The transparency and the demonstrable lack of political interference will re-establish faith in the process.

Fairness, inherent in our processes where we govern, provides a better chance of employment to far more applicants.

In DA-led governments anyone, no matter what political party they belong to, will have an equal chance to get an EPWP job.

Gone are the days of jobs-for-pals, this is the era of a truly open opportunity society for all.

Janho Engelbrecht
DA Gauteng spokesperson for infrastructure development