1.   One Party or Multi-Party System?

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Handwritten notes on attached slips:

D.E.
Discussion docs,
for ConCom & NEC.
- further responses
to NWC.
~~produced this as important~~ .

See doc bundle
for who prepared
what.
Minutes of Con-Com
7 April 1986

27/6/07. I am not sure
who wrote this. I suspect
it was a composite, with
different authors of particular
parts, but adopted by
the Consal Cttee as a
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1.   One Party or Multi-Party System?

A one party system is not something which should be decided upon in the abstract. If it is to be soundly based, it must result from the position which a particular party has, as a matter of objective fact, come to occupy in a particular country.

For example, in the Soviet Union, there was a prolonged civil war in which the progressive side, which was eventually victorious, was organised and led by a single party. Similarly in Mozambique there were only two combatants in the war of liberation - the Portuguese government on one side and Frelimo on the other. In these situations, a one-party system was the natural result.

In the people's democracies of Eastern Europe, what may broadly be described as one-party systems (though the term is not quite accurate in some cases) were the results of coalitions and amalgamations between several left-wing parties. Similar cases exist in Africa.

These examples may prove to be relevant to the case of South Africa. It would, however, be a grave error for the ANC at the present stage of the struggle to proclaim that South Africa will be a one-party state and the ANC will be the one party. Such a proclamation would invite all other political organisations to unite in an anti-ANC coalition. We, however, must strive for just the opposite - an anti-government coalition in which a variety of allies will join us, some perhaps only temporarily and other perhaps so permanently that the ANC will eventually absorb them.

Therefore the constitution should be silent on the subject of parties. It should neither give a special position to one party nor entrench the multi-party system.

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2. Ethnicity: General Political Considerations

Our committee is rightly determined to take a principled stand against ethnicity in any shape or form. I think this has made us nervous of tackling certain issues. We are reluctant even to use words like "Zulu" or "Sotho". This reluctance is understandable but we must not forget what happened to ZAPU in Zimbabwe. ZAPU was the senior liberation movement in Zimbabwe and it had all the correct policies. It called for one nation and it expected the people to rally to that concept. But ZAPU's enemies portrayed it as the party of the Ndebele and ZAPU never found adequate answers to that accusation - which began as a slander but became true as members of other groups were wooed away from ZAPU.

Let us have no illusions. Our enemies are going to try the same trick. Inkatha already exists to try to persuade Amazulu that Zulu language and culture will be in danger if the ANC comes to power. Similar reactionary organisations will be formed, if indeed they do not already exist, to exploit chauvinist sentiment among Basotho.

If such manoeuvres are to be defeated, the ANC must be able to tell people in concrete terms how their languages and cultures will be safe-guarded in the South Africa of the future.

3. The Language Question.

Our committee has so far only endorsed the general proposition in the Freedom Charter, that all shall be entitled to the use of their own languages. This is fine as a basic proposition but what does it mean in practice?

There are at least six languages which have substantial claims to official recognition. They are, in alphabetical

order:-

Afrikaans

English

Sotho

Tswana

Xhosa

Zulu

It is perfectly practicable for all six to be recognised
for certain purposes - eg in Parliament (cf, the European
Parliament, which recognises eight languages and manages to
cope, with the aid of a large staff of interpreters). It is,
however, not practicable to have six official languages
enjoying fully equal status for all purposes throughout the
country. Therefore we must go for a regional solution to
the language question. There are many precedents.
Switzerland is a trilingual country: a Swiss banknote is
printed in German, French and Italian and all three languages
are used in the federal institutions. All three are not,
however, used in the daily lives of Swiss citizens. Switzer-
land consists of 19 German-speaking cantons, 6 French-speaking
cantons, and one Italian-speaking canton. Belgium is a
bilingual country but Brussels is its only bilingual city.
Everywhere else, one is either in a French-speaking or a
Dutch-speaking province. In the Soviet Union, numerous
languages enjoy official recognition in particular republics
of the Union, while Russian is recognised everywhere and serves
as a unifying element.

I therefore suggest that South Africa be divided into
regions on a linguistic basis. Each region will have two
official languages - English and one other. It will be quite
easy to map out certain regions in which there is no doubt
about the language entitled to be the second official language.
The difficult problem is what to do about the Southern and
Central Transvaal. This region I think will have to have a
special linguistic status. Perhaps English alone would appear

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on public notices, etc, but schools would be provided
offering tuition in all six languages and all six would
be recognised in the regional assembly and regional courts.

4. Traditional Law

The suggestion made above also provides a basis for the
recognition of traditional law. We cannot admit the right
of a man to say "I am a Zulu and therefore have the right to
be governed by Zulu law wherever I go". This would be a
fatal concession to ethnicity, since it would lead to
classification of individuals as belonging to particular groups.
On the other hand it is perfectly feasible to say that in the
region in which the Zulu language is recognised (ie roughly
speaking, the present province of Natal), the Zulu traditional
law is also recognised.

5. Problem of Dual Citizenship

There are a large number of people who are resident, with
varying degrees of permanence, in South Africa but who were
born, or are domiciled, or have some claim to citizenship, in
Lesotho, Swaziland or Botswana. On what basis will such
people be allowed to participate as citizens in the political
life of South Africa?

It is politically important to get the answer right.
Particularly in the case of Lesotho, there is serious risk that
reactionary and divisive elements may try to exploit the
potential clash of loyalties among the substantial section of
the population which has roots both in South Africa and in
Lesotho.

The question therefore arises whether we should recognise
some sort of special relationship with these three countries, so
that their people can acquire South African citizenship more
easily than other foreigners, or alternatively so that their

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citizens have a vote in South Africa if they are ordinarily resident in South Africa. There is a lot to be said for the second alternative, since it does not confront the individuals concerned with any need to make painful choices between two citizenships.