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LABOUR PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH TO PLENARY SESSION OF CODESA:REV H.J. HENDRICKSE.

INTRODUCTION.

CODESA HAS GENERATED HIGH EXPECTATIONS AMONG SOUTH AFRICANS IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND ALL POLITICAL PERSUASIONS THAT WE AS A NATION NOW HAVE TO NEGOTIATE AND RESOLVE OUR POLITICAL DESTINY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR TROUBLE HISTORY THERE IS A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM THE HEGEMONY OF MINORITY RULE INTO A GENUINE DEMOCRACY. SOUTH AFRICA WAS AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY, THROUGH THE CODESA PROCESS, TO (RE)JOIN THE COMMUNITY OF FREE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS THAT WE LEARN TODAY THAT NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED IN THE WORKING GROUP THAT DEALT WITH GENERAL CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPALS AND THE CONSTITUTION MAKING BODY.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE POLITICAL DEBATE TODAY UNLESS WE EXAMINE BRIEFLY THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE LAST 44 YEARS OF APARTHEID RULE IN SOUTH AFRICA. AT CODESA TODAY WE ARE DEALING WITH THE NATIONAL PARTY GOVERNMENT THAT HAS GROSSLY ABUSED THEIR POLITICAL POWER TO THE EXTENT THAT:

- (1) THEY HAVE EMASCULATED THE CONSTITUTION BY IMMORALLY REMOVING VOTERS FROM THE COMMON VOTERS' ROLE BY VIRTUE OF THE COLOUR OF THEIR SKINS.
- (2) THEY TRAMPLED ON THE INALIENABLE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE CITIZENS OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE EXTENT THEY MADE THIS COUNTRY THE POLE CAT OF THE WORLD.

IT IS IRONIC THAT THE SAME POLITICAL PARTY WHICH HAS COMMITTED ATROCITIES WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS THAT IS NOW POSING AS THE GREAT CHAMPION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS IDEAL FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA.

THE PRESENT POSITION.

THE PRESENT POSITION IS THAT WE FIND THE NATIONAL PARTY GOVERNMENT WITH ITS BACK AGAINST THE WALL, DECLARING THAT THEY WANT A DEMOCRACY, BUT STILL TRYING TO MAINTAIN THEIR MINORITY MONOPOLY OF POLITICAL POWER. THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GENUINE DEMOCRACY IS SERIOUSLY QUESTIONED. THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY IS THAT ALL PARTIES UNEQUIVOCALLY COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. IT IS CLEARLY EVIDENT THAT AN IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENT TO THIS PROCESS IS LACKING OF THE NATIONAL PARTY. INSTEAD OF THIS COMMITMENT THE NATIONAL PARTY CONTINUES TO CLING TO POWER AT ALL COSTS. FEAR, LACK OF COURAGE TO FACE THE FUTURE BECAUSE OF THEIR PAST IS FOR THEM A DETERMINING FACTOR.

THE FURTHEST THE N P IS PREPARED TO GO IS TO CO-OPT THE MAJOR DEMOCRATIC FORCES INTO THE STRUCTURES OF GOVERNMENT WITHOUT RELINQUISHING THEIR MINORITY DOMINATION OF POWER.

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT WORKING GROUP TWO HAS FAILED TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSTITUTION MAKING BODY. IT REMAINS ONE OF THE MALICIOUS OBJECTIVES OF THE N P TO MAINTAIN A MINORITY VETO OVER THE DECISIONS OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED BODY.

THE PARTIES IN WORKING GROUP 2 HAVE GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO SECURE THE ESSENTIAL CHECKS AND BALANCE AGAINST THE ABUSE OF POLITICAL POWER. UNFORTUNATELY UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED CHECKS AND BALANCES DID NOT SUFFICE, WHAT THE N P REALLY WANTS IS THE ROTTEN CORPSE OF APARTHEID TO RULE FROM THE GRAVE.

WORKING GROUP 2 CAME AGONISINGLY CLOSE TO CONSENSUS ON THE ISSUE OF A CONSTITUTION MAKING BODY, WHEN THE N P GOVERNMENT AT THE 11TH HOUR CAME WITH A PROPOSAL FOR AN UNDEFINED SENATE WITH THE POWER TO VETO THE CONSTITUTION DRAFTED AND ADOPTED BY THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

THE LABOUR PARTY REJECTS WITH CONTEMPT THIS LAST MINUTE ATTEMPTED DERAILEMENT OF REACHING CONSENSUS ON THE CONSTITUTION MAKING BODY.

THE LABOUR PARTY WISHES TO HEREBY RE-ITERATE ITS POSITION THAT THE FINAL CONSTITUTION BE APPROVED BY A 66,7%, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS, WHICH SHOULD BE APPROVED BY A 75% MAJORITY IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE FAILURE OF WORKING GROUP 2, IN REACHING CONSENSUS ON THE CONSTITUTION MAKING BODY, THE LABOUR PARTY WISHES TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMPROMISE PROPOSAL THAT:

- (I) THE FINAL CONSTITUTION BE APPROVED BY A 70% MAJORITY,
- (II) THE BILL OF RIGHTS BE APPROVED BY A 75% MAJORITY,
- (III) THE SENATE SHOULD NOT PLAY ANY ROLE IN THE DRAFTING OR ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION.