

(2)

SOLIDARITY PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

CREATING THE CLIMATE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR FREE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In the new South Africa, the entire population of the country will become involved in political participation. The creation of the climate and opportunity for free political participation is imperative.

This exercise is fraught with various difficulties. Therefore it is necessary to identify problem areas which need to be resolved.

It is generally accepted that the SABC/SATV as at presently regulated is one-sided and biased. The media should observe strict neutrality and impartiality.

\* The State-controlled electronic Media has to be restructured if the media are to play a meaningful role in creating the climate conducive to a democratic new South Africa.

It is necessary therefore to institute an independent service. Fair and reasonable access to the media should be given to all political parties.

Such a service is, moreover, necessary in the present climate in South Africa including the TBVC States to present a true picture of the political scenario to the people. The media should be employed to educate and prepare the people on the new political dispensation in a democratic non-racial South Africa.

Equal opportunities for all political parties to promote mass communication should be made available.

The role of intensive and continuous educative and informative campaigns in respect of political tolerance, the working of democracy and the processes of CODESA should form an important and integral programme of all political parties and organisations.

Hitherto a large part of the population of S.A. has had no opportunity in political participation.

This situation, of necessity, poses a tremendous challenge to the leadership of political parties to prepare the 'soil', for the democratic political participation of the masses. The masses among us are not afloat how democracy works. A great deal of work has to be done at the grass-roots level in educating the people and preparing them for participation in democratic elections and institutions. In order to achieve this goal party political machinery has an important role to play.

The culture of tolerance has to be faithfully promoted and propagated. To this end party political structures from the top to the grass-roots level should be utilised to the fullest extent in cultivating a spirit of tolerance that transcends party politics.

The government should not fund any political party overtly or covert. Each political party should fend for itself.

All political parties and organisations must have unimpeded access to public facilities and meeting venues. Schools, civic halls, stadia, bars and other venues developed out of public funds should be accessible to all bonafide parties and organisations. Suitable venues are necessary to enable advice and information to reach out to the people through out South Africa including the rural areas. The report of an impediment by any political party should be investigated by the authorities and the position regularised in a spirit of democracy.

All political parties should have unrestricted access to potential voters no matter where such voters stay. In this respect voters living on private properties such as farms, compounds and mines should be allowed to be canvassed by the political parties.

There is a great and pressing need to foster a spirit of tolerance among political parties. As a beginning this culture of tolerance should be fostered among the members in each political party.

Tolerance is a priceless commodity in present day South Africa.

Therefore tolerance should be promoted with all the faith and zeal that a party could command. Unless every political party adopts an attitude of fairplay and democracy, the anticipated progress in curbing intimidation and violation and creating the climate and opportunity for free political participation would be remote.