

MC 491-31-1-16

MEMORANDUM ON MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM

As the struggle for national liberation in our country intensifies the dream of millions of our compatriots who have been struggling for years for a united, democratic non-racial South Africa in which democracy and equality will be guaranteed, and all violations of basic human rights will be prohibited, becomes a reality which can be achieved within our life time.

A non-racial democratic South Africa will have to guarantee universal suffrage, majority rule and respect of all fundamental human rights including the right of free association. Freedom of association presupposes the freedom to establish or join political parties without hindrance. Through these associations or parties to work democratically for the all round development of the country.

Taken in this context there would be many political parties representing the interest of ideologically related South Africans who group themselves among other things to seek political power in order to carry out programmes that will contribute towards National Development. All parties would have to adhere to certain principles which are set out in the constitution.

- They should be based on non-racial and non-ethnic principles;
- Should prevent the resurgence of racist policies and programmes in whatever form;
- Promote the active involvement of all sectors of the population in government and socio-economic and cultural life;
- Promote the habits of non-racial thinking, the practice of non-racial behaviour and the acquisition of genuine, subjectively held patriotic consciousness.

This would not be in conflict with the principles of freedom of speech, organisation or association but would be contributing towards national unity, and development while combating the stimulation of racial hatred

and tribal division.

It is in this context that the Press Statement of Comrade Oliver Tambo, ANC President of 9th January, 1986 in Lusaka should be seen where he foresees the formation of "political parties of one form or another" within parameters of non-racial, democratic and united people ~~a non-racial, democratic and united people~~. In this statement the President foresees differences arising within the broad national liberation movement led by the ANC on the implementation of the Freedom Charter, whereby certain streams within the movement "see the situation differently at the time and have different approaches to the problems which a liberated South Africa will be faced with".

So far this is the only official statement from our movement which does refer to the existence of a multiplicity of parties or "political pluralism" in a post-liberation South Africa. But this raises many questions especially that we will be one of the last to achieve liberation in Africa and Africa having the experience of one party states. In this statement the President foresees the existence of parties who agreed with the Freedom Charter, i.e. those who are within the ^{ambit} ~~ambit~~ of the broad liberation movement led by the ANC. The problem arises about what attitude would be taken to those who do not agree or ~~do not~~ agree ^{fully} with the Freedom Charter but ^{do} agree that all forms of ethnicity, racism and regionalism should be prohibited, and are prepared to conform to the stipulated constitutional requirements on the formation of parties. Will they be allowed to form parties although they don't agree with the basic principles of the Freedom Charter? Further will the ANC as the vanguard that would have brought liberation contemplate any special role for itself which has to be stipulated in the constitution? These are problems on which the NEC should give us guidelines on.

May 1st, 1986

Lusaka.