

African National Congress
Constitution Committee

Lusaka
4 April 1986

PROPOSALS FOR A NATIONAL FRONT

The Committee's Secretariat considers that certain misgivings expressed in the National Working Committee's letter of 7 February 1986 necessitate remedial action

This memorandum is concerned in particular with the question raised in paragraph 4 of the letter, namely what should be done to ensure that the government of a liberated South Africa will always carry out the will of the people

Our provisional response of 12 February suggested that the answer was to generate a "permanent revolution" which would institutionalise people's power

This concept though useful lacks specificity and should be supported by structural arrangements within the frame of our projected multi-party constitution

We anticipate that when power passes to the people, competing parties with rival programmes will appeal to different sections of the electorate by stressing special interests at the expense of the general good and the welfare of the less privileged black majority

Even members of the former "Congress Alliance" would probably be drawn into the struggle for votes.. Under the usual conditions of ballot box rivalries, the ANC, CP and Sactu might become rivals in a ruthless war of words, to the delight of our enemies and dismay of the people

Under such conditions of disunity, it is conceivable, even likely, that governments will cease to carry out the will of the people

To prevent such a disaster, members of the existing Alliance should do what they can to preserve their existing unity of purpose and action before and after the revolution. For this to happen they would have to combine their forces on a common platform

The Constitution we are now working on could be such a platform

Though necessary, it is not however enough to consolidate the alliance. In addition the partners should move towards some kind of fusion.

Our Committee should therefore discuss whether this is the time for the NEC to contemplate

1. the launching of a National Front embracing parties that have the same revolutionary perspective, ideals and aims; and
2. the formation, under appropriate conditions, of a party (perhaps with the title The South African National Congress Party) consisting of the ANC, SACP and SACTU, each with autonomy in its own affairs, but having a single organisation, goal and platform

The Secretariat
Constitution Committee