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LABOUR PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OUTSHOORN 27/29 DECEMBER 1977

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE
NATIONAL SECRETARY: F E PETERS

LABOUR PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: OUDTSHOORN 27/29 DECEMBER 1977: NATIONAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Guests and Delegates -

To deny that we have shortcomings would serve no purpose and possibly lead to complacency. However, our achievements since the establishment of the Party have been such that in the circumstances we can justifiably be proud of our role in the liberatory struggle. Our success can be attributed directly to an adherence to the principles and policy of the Party as enshrined in our constitution.

To fully appreciate the role of the Labour Party it is necessary to review, very briefly, the political developments since 1948.

At this stage in the history of our country the National Party came into power and immediately applied itself ruthlessly to implementing a policy of strict apartheid and the preservation of White supremacy in all walks of life to the extent of introducing legislation to this effect. And Mr B J Vorster, when elected Prime Minister, made it quite clear that he intended to follow the "Verwoerd Road", meaning that South Africa could never expect any radical changes while the National Party remained in power. He emphasised this soon after the recent White General Election when he said (Cape Times 1977.12.07) "apartheid will not go South Africa did not intend modifying its separate development policy".

We have witnessed the removal of the so-called Coloured people from the Common Voters' Roll; representation for the "Coloured" people in Parliament by four White persons; the establishment of the Union Council; the introduction of the Coloured Persons Representative Council; the creation of a Cabinet Council (stillborn) and, the latest monstrosity, the designing of the new constitutional proposals. What will follow is anybody's guess.

During the critical period, 1948 to 1961, our people resisted the idea of their own political parties and relied almost exclusively on ad hoc committees, comprised mainly of academics and intellectuals, to express their opposition to isolated aspects of the policy of apartheid. In effect, the Government was virtually unimpeded on the road to entrenching apartheid, having simultaneously effectively removed organised Black opposition through bannings, etc.

With the introduction of the CPRC the Labour Party came into existence to fill this vacuum - the need for a means of political expression for the so-called Coloured people. Immediately the Volksbond and the Federal Party, both of which openly accepted apartheid, arrived at a working agreement to create a united front against us.

We realised that the most effective manner of providing direct opposition to the Nationalist Government and eliminating its "Coloured" supporters, was to enter separate institutions and oppose the implementation of apartheid. It was necessary also to demonstrate to the whole world our utter rejection of apartheid and to act as the watch-dogs of the people's interests so that nothing could be done against them in their name without their knowledge and without protest.

The establishment of the Labour Party must have been disconcerting to the Nationalist Government because we immediately posed a threat to the unfolding of its policy in its own creation. Our confrontation politics paid off and we rapidly became a thorn in the flesh of the Government. History will prove that our presence on the CPRC was justified.

We/....

We said we would expose - this we did.

We said we would embarrass - this we did.

We said we would obstruct - this we did.

We said we would reveal separate institutions as fraudulent, created to re-echo Government sentiments and accept Government Government proposals - this we did.

Furthermore, if we had co-operated, agreed to serve on the CPRC Liaison Committee and not frustrated the implementation of separate development, there would have been no need to create a Cabinet Council and much less devise the new constitutional proposals. And in the process we have destroyed the CPRC as well.

If we had remained outside institutions such as the CPRC, the Federal Party and other "Coloured" political opportunists would have enjoyed carte blanche in collaborating with their masters in the implementation of apartheid in the name of the "Coloured" people.

Like the National Party, which enjoys White mass support, we have Black mass support. To what does the Labour Party owe its popularity, recognition and support? To its militant image and because we speak the language of our people, echoing their feelings, frustrations, resentment, bitterness, hopes and aspirations.

We have matched Vorster's shrewdness with shrewdness and this has enabled us to grow from strength to strength. We certainly deserve a pat on the back bearing in mind the peculiar circumstances obtaining in our country.

But the fight has only begun. There is still a long struggle ahead. Are we prepared or equipped to adapt and exploit developing situations and changes? Perhaps we know where we are going, but are we planning to this end or are we still going to say "we'll cross our bridges when we come to them?"

Let me now proceed to organisational comment.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The National Executive Committee met four times during this year, one of which was a special meeting convened to discuss the Nationalist Government's new constitutional proposals. The meetings we held at Uitenhage, Athlone, Stellenbosch and Johannesburg, respectively, and, except for the latter, were very well attended.

The Committee's request for an interview with Paramount Chief Kaiser Matanzima to discuss the position of "Coloureds" in the Transkei with our leadership was ignored. Negotiations with Government Departments proved far more productive through which it was ascertained:

that educational services were now the responsibility of the Transkei Government;

that the Administration of Coloured Affairs would continue to assist financially until 1978;

that "Coloureds" who have not acquired Transkeian citizenship would continue to receive pensions from the South African Government;

that "Coloured" voters resident in the Transkei were eligible to cast special votes;

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that the CPRC Representative had to obtain permission from the Transkeian Government to visit his electorate and hold report-back meetings;

that the South African Government saw no reason why "Coloureds" living in the Transkei could not be members of political parties in South Africa.

Other matters dealt with were the enormous expenditure by the State on defence; the high taxation as a result thereof; the consequent disastrous effects on the economy and the escalating unemployment figures. By focussing attention on these issues the Party exposed the incompetence of the South African Government and the failure of its policy of separate development.

NEC rejected the unity overtures by Dr Bergins because of his audacity in prescribing to us the conditions under which unity talks could be held. Furthermore, we saw Dr Bergins as having been programmed to push the blueprint by the South African Government for the irrevocable acceptance of apartheid by our people.

The talks held at Kimberley, initiated by Mr J Rabie, also came to naught. The proposed alliance was rejected when we realised, inter alia, that its purpose was to create a favourable attitude to the Cabinet Council.

The highlight of the meeting at Johannesburg was an address by Mr Peter Langeni, a former Chairman of the Soweto UBC and the present Chairman of the Soweto Ratepayers Association.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

This Committee deals with matters pertaining to the day to day administrative functioning of the Party and normally meets once a month. During the year it met on nine occasions at the Party Offices (known as Head Office) and at Oudtshoorn in October. The latter meeting was arranged to discuss the final preparations for conference and to enable the leadership to address a public meeting at Oudtshoorn.

Meetings of this Committee are not restricted to the appointed members but are open to members who are interested in what transpires at Head Office. At these meetings Members of the CPRC Executive discuss developments in connection with their portfolios and those present are at liberty to put questions.

We have now extended these discussions, with the blessing of NEC, and meet every Monday afternoon as well to review political situations, press reports, issues affecting our people and developments over the weekends. Out of these discussions statements are issued, if necessary, and decisions taken as to how to act with regard to particular situations. These Monday afternoon gatherings are open to all members of the Party and do enjoy support.

Besides the administrative functions, an interview with the Ministers of Health, Coloured Relations and Community Development on the Modderdam Road squatter issue was arranged where we sought relief for these unfortunate people. It must be remembered that our Party initiated action on the matter in 1976. Furthermore, the eviction of tenants, increases in rentals in housing schemes, the purchasing of council dwellings by the occupants and other local issues received the attention of the Committee.

The Committee was most disappointed with the reply received from the South African Council of Churches in response to our appeal for their co-operation in calling upon all congregations to observe a period of abstinence from liquor and hold Remembrance Day Services.

In the past overseas visitors were interviewed at Head Office but this has now changed since leadership have their own offices at Metlife Building. There have been occasions when other members had to deputise for the leadership. Here the interviews with Mr Groor of the Australian Parliament and two members of the French Cabinet who also served under de Gaulle, come to mind.

Rev Hendrickse and Mr I Richards visited the USA at the request of that Government with the former also paying a visit to Britain. Encouraging news was that our Party enjoyed recognition and credibility overseas. Rev Hendrickse came back to South Africa strengthened and satisfied of the awareness overseas of the South African situation and the hardening of attitudes towards the policy of apartheid.

Members of our Party also addressed meetings and conferences of other political parties such as the Dinkankwebela Party of the Qua Qua Homeland, the Indian Congress and Prog Fed Party. During Parliamentary sessions talks were also held with the latter and the then United Party.

REGIONS

We should not rest on our laurels but get together more often in order to devise ways and means of improving our position and our effectiveness. Such responsibility should be undertaken by Regions because the vital role of organisation rests with such units.

activity

Apart from one or two exceptions, very little appears to have been initiated at Regional level because of the big communication gap between Regions and branches which often results in the latter not being aware of developments within the Party. Such is also the position insofar as concerns Regions and Head Office. Consequently Head Office is obliged to deal direct with branches.

The Gordonia Region deserves credit. Without a Labour Party CPRC Representative, the Region continues to thrive because we have there a group of members truly dedicated to the cause. Our recent visit to that area to settle a minor dispute was most successful and we can look forward to the Gordonia Region asserting itself as one of THE Regions.

So too does one look with pride to the Eastern Province Region which now realises that, in order to bring about unity and create a strong base from which to operate, personality clashes must be avoided.

The position in Natal is healthy. Since I accused the Region at Umata of being confused, it has become one of the most co-operative and active units in the Party.

The Cape Peninsula Region remains disorganised apparently because of a series of unfortunate and demoralising incidents during 1976. Only when the clouds of mistrust have been blown away can any improvement be expected. In this connection it is most unfortunate that the Region cannot rely on the co-operation and support of the majority of its CPRC members.

The Western Cape Region should spread its wings further afield and not just concentrate on areas where we already enjoy strong support. Possibly the desired organising activity could be achieved through the reorganisation of the existing unit and the formation of an additional Region, namely the Boland Region. Regrettably, personalities play an important role in the Region with the result that definite division prevails throughout the structure.

The organisation of the South Cape Region is questionable. Its attendance at NEC has been disappointing indeed which leads one to pose the question: is it really functioning?

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A meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee was held at Oudtshoorn and leadership hoped to meet with the CPRC members, Regional Officers and members of branches, in addition to addressing the public meeting arranged. Only one CPRC member and two branch members put in an appearance.

Insofar as concerns this very conference, the Region has played no part in the preparation. All arrangements were left to one branch and one CPRC member - a truly sad state of affairs.

Membership and support in the Griqualand/OFS Region is very strong but the Region itself is dormant. Of particular concern is the state of organisation in the OFS. It would appear that if branches in the OFS were to rely on the Regional Officers, such units would also become dormant.

On a recent visit to the Eastern Transvaal we attracted wide and strong support. Areas which previously were Federal strongholds had swung completely over to Labour. The Transvaal, a very large area, is "ripe for the picking" and the opportunity should not go begging. It would appear that transport and other unfortunate circumstances are proving severe handicaps and unless these problems are overcome, we cannot expect the Region to operate successfully. Nevertheless one must give credit to the few in the Transvaal who remain dedicated in spite of the numerous major obstacles.

A disturbing trend - hopefully temporary - is the lack of interest shown in the affairs of the Party by certain members elected to the CPRC and/or Management Committees. In the latter instance particularly it seems that having achieved their aim of being elected to Management Committees, the Party has apparently served its purpose insofar as concerns certain members.

However, we look forward in the new year to Regions becoming more involved and contributing to a greater extent to the improvement of our organisation and its effectiveness.

BRANCHES AND MEMBERSHIP

Perhaps the most satisfying information I can divulge is that our membership has trebled, numerous branches resuscitated and established, mainly as a result of our campaign meetings. We have more branches today than at any other time in our history - twenty-three established in constituencies where we were defeated in 1975.

Serious thought should be given to the re-organisation of branches where membership exceeds 200. In the rural areas there are a number of such branches (in fact, some even exceed 500) and with the limited accommodation available, it is extremely difficult to hold branch meetings.

It is said that an organisation can only be as strong as its membership. This may be true but if the membership is not cultivated, only taken for granted, what purpose would such mighty membership serve?

In this connection I think particularly of branches continually being made aware of the role they are expected to play and members of their responsibilities. To this end it is essential that continuous contact be maintained between those of us who have accepted leadership roles - particularly our CPRC members - and the branches and members. It is only through greater involvement and dedication from all our CPRC members that our Party can aspire to greater heights.

A disappointing feature is the fact that some of the older branches have not come up to expectations, very often leading to the erroneous conclusion that such units are no longer functioning.

A remarkable feature is the extent to which branches and Regions in the Urban areas have been overshadowed by units in the platteland.

It is with sadness that I have to report the death of three stalwarts of the Party. It is with regret that I have to report the expulsion of P Marais from the Party and the resignation of three other members. With regard to P Marais, the National Executive Committee could take no other decision in view of his public criticism of the stand taken by the Party on the new constitutional proposals and his association with a movement favourably disposed thereto.

COLOURED PERSONS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL: 1977 SESSION

Whatever little respectability and credibility the CPRC might still have enjoyed was finally destroyed during the Fourth Session of the Second Council and, especially, soon after the Council was prorogued when the Minister of Coloured Relations, Mr E Smit, invited members in their individual capacities to discuss with him and the Minister of Defence, Mr P V Botha, the new constitutional proposals with special reference to the defeated amendment to our resolution rejecting the new dispensation.

Add to this the Government's rejection of every important resolution based on eliminating discrimination (passed during the 1975 session) and its declared intention of going ahead with its proposals, irrespective of CPRC decisions, and it will become clear that the institution has been completely emasculated and rendered impotent.

Unquestionably the unity and discipline in our Party Caucus were decisive factors and indeed impressive and served to underline our loyalty to the Leader of the Party. This session separated the sheep from the goats - those who are dedicated to the cause and those who are motivated by self-interest. Exposed too were those advocating unity or alliances with the proverbial tongue in the cheek. Our attitude now is that you are either with us, which means joining the Party, or you are against us, which means remaining outside the Party.

Because of the refusal to allow Chief Gatsha Buthelezi to open the session, we decided not to attend the official opening. Twelve resolutions against discrimination were passed. The constitutional proposals were rejected as too the budget because the Government did not accede to the request of the CPRC Executive for an additional R114m which would have achieved parity in salaries and pensions.

A motion of no confidence was passed in Mrs Jansen as Chairman of the Executive, calling upon her to resign which, as was anticipated, she was not prepared to do.

Three Bills were passed dealing with Rehabilitation Centres, Mentally Retarded Children and Rural Areas and a Committee of Inquiry appointed to investigate alleged malpractices at institutions under the control of the Administration of Coloured Affairs. I am pleased to be able to report that the Committee has commenced its onerous task. In passing, I feel it is high time that the CPRC appointed a committee to investigate the Crayfish Industry with special reference to control and the relationship and agreements between CDC and the "Coloured" fishermen. From report it would appear that all is not well here and that "Coloured" fishermen are not getting a square deal.

A resolution submitted by our Leader calling for an election of the CPRC on 30 November 1977 on the basis of the rejection/acceptance of the new dispensation was passed by the CPRC but rejected by the Prime Minister.

We are grateful to those independent CPRC members whose support at times extricated us from embarrassing situations. Does it not suggest that there should be serious re-thinking on our approach to the next session or will we

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once again depend on the independents for their support and possibly holding us to ransom?

I fear that the Government, with its increased majority and overwhelming White support, will leave no stone unturned to ensure the successful implementation of its new dispensation and, in the process, try to destroy the Party. Truly cause for concern because the end of the Labour Party could mean the end of all organised opposition to the Nationalist Government for a long, long time.

THE NEW DISPENSATION

A special meeting of NEC was convened on 10 September 1977 where the Government's constitutional proposals were totally rejected on the following grounds:

- a. The plan sought to entrench apartheid in the constitution by preserving ethnic divisions, White baasskap and Nationalist domination.
- b. The plan gave dictatorial powers to the State President.
- c. The plan was a subterfuge for using "Coloureds" and "Indians" as tools to entrench exclusive Nationalist rule by effectively excluding opposition political parties.
- d. There would be no sharing of power and the White Parliament would remain the supreme body in South Africa.
- e. The White Parliament would have powers of veto.
- f. The Council of Cabinets would not have legislative powers.
- g. The plan sought to create an "alliance" between "Whites", "Coloureds" and "Indians" against the African section of the Black population.
- h. The composition of the body responsible for devising the plan did not in any respect accord with the democratic principle that all South Africans must have an effective say in designing a new constitution for South Africa.

Our leadership had been invited in their capacity as members of the CPRC Executive to talks with the Prime Minister but the purpose of the talks only became known at the last minute. After the Prime Minister had outlined the new dispensation, without giving details, the immediate conclusion arrived at was that the Whites would remain firmly in control. The Prime Minister also made it clear that he would not entertain any discussion on accommodating Blacks in the new dispensation.

Mr Jimmy Kruger, Minister of Justice (Sunday Times 1977.09.18), stated that the three parliaments would merely be "talking shops" and that if the "Coloureds" or "Indians" pushed for increased representation, even in the year 2 000, the Whites would say: "this is what we gave you in 1977. We will not allow it to change".

We in the Labour Party are not deceived by the constitutional plan because it was not designed to meet the just demands of all the peoples of South Africa, but to extend the grand scheme to make all "non-whites" foreigners in the land of their birth.

It is apparent that the Nationalists themselves are not au fait with their grand plan because every time a Cabinet Minister opens his mouth about it more questions are raised than are answered.

At public meetings and discussions held throughout the Republic our stand has

been/..

been endorsed and votes of full confidence in the Party and its leadership registered. It is only people like Dr Bergins and other political opportunists, who only see the "dangling carrot" and are prepared to sell their souls for a few pieces of silver, who are prepared to accept the deal. The committee appointed to discuss the proposals with the Prime Minister could make no headway and even Mr J Rabie's Declaration of Intent with its 74 questions was treated with contempt. Various other committees have been appointed throughout the Republic comprised mainly of professional people all favourably disposed to the new dispensation and seeking to promote support for the new deal. One has here a repetition of the movement which led to the birth of the Federal Party. The Feds desperately need a new image and developments certainly point to the formation of a "new" party. Why else are the Feds so keen to change their name?

WHITE GENERAL ELECTION

In the final analysis, the recent White General Election was a futile attempt by the Government to assure White South Africa that all is well.

The Labour Party refutes Mr Vorster's claim that he now has a mandate from South Africa to implement the new constitutional proposals because the majority of South Africans were denied the right to express their reaction thereto. Quoting from our press statement released on 1 December 1977, the election was called for the following reasons:

- a. To effectively wipe out the opposition and take South Africa a step further along the road to dictatorial rule.
- b. To create an effective smokescreen to cover up the real issues such as conflict between the Nationalist Government and the Black people and the crumbling economy of the country - typical Nationalist diversionary tactics.
- c. In reaction to growing overseas pressures.

With regard to the latter, it needs to be emphasised that the internal policies of the Nationalist Government invite interference from the outside world, particularly a Western World dedicated to promoting human rights. And all the defiance, retreating into the laager and minority mandates will not prevent increasing application of sanctions and economic pressures to bring about meaningful change in South Africa.

About 70% of the White electorate have endorsed the Government's apartheid policy; voted for an entrenched laager and, in so doing, have voted for their own downfall. The election results have also confirmed our view that White South Africa could never be the vehicle for change.

There will never be peace in our country until all South Africans have been granted full citizenship rights. And those Black South Africans who hope that change will take place and dramatic break-throughs achieved, are living in a dream world.

Whether we like it or not, whether we support it or not, the Government will implement its grand scheme. Are we going to employ all our resources to frustrate the Government's plan or are we going to wait until we come to that much abused bridge.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

A total of 64 public meetings were held throughout the Republic, 25 between April and June in connection with the call for abstinence from liquor, Day of Remembrance and the unity overtures by Dr Bergins. At these meetings we

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received excellent attendances and endorsement of our stand.

Our recent campaign meetings held from September to December, seeking mandates from our people on the constitutional proposals, drew a total of almost 50 000 people at a total of 39 meetings. Not only were the constitutional proposals unanimously rejected at every meeting but votes of full confidence in the Party and the leadership recorded. (I must point out that the foregoing account does not include Management Committee campaign and report-back meetings).

Many of the meetings were held during the White General Election campaign - very often at the same places and on the same dates as White political parties - and significantly attendances at our meetings exceeded attendances at their meetings at most times.

A disappointing feature of the final meeting held this year at Bishop Lavis, was the poor attendance of CPRC members who were informed timeously thereof. Of the nine CPRC members in the Peninsula only three attended. In this regard the record of Cape Peninsula CPRC members leaves much to be desired. In fact, some of them never called public meetings in their constituencies even during their election campaigns.

However, a word of thanks is due to those CPRC members who have co-operated with Head Office in every respect when their services were required.

Serious consideration must be given to organising meetings properly and in advance on a Regional or constituency basis and not haphazardly. CPRC members must start pulling up their socks and make themselves available whenever possible. After all they did give an undertaking in writing to this effect when accepting candidature.

PUBLICATIONS

During the year there has been two issues of "Viewpoint" and one of "Steadfast" and no doubt you would say, and rightly so, a poor state of affairs.

The most effective means of communication which has and can gain us much support is our newsletter. At present we do have a very wide circulation which reaches overseas countries such as Britain, USA, Switzerland and Belgium. But here in South Africa distribution can be more effective. Reluctantly one must again point a finger at the CPRC members and also include branch secretaries. The request that Head Office be furnished with the names and addresses of influential people and opinion-makers to whom publications could be sent, was totally ignored.

How much more effective could this mouthpiece not be if every CPRC member would undertake to distribute 500 copies in his or her constituency?

It must be realised that we are at a great disadvantage having to "compete" against a powerful Afrikaans press and our newsletter offers the only means of overcoming such a handicap.

Newsletters have never been issued with the intention of financial gain though the cost of each issue runs into three figures which does not include postage. (To send one newsletter overseas costs us 40c). In fact, the November issue was distributed gratis to all units.

To ensure regular editions of the newsletter requires two things:

- a. donations towards printing and postage costs;
- b. the submission of articles and photographs to Head Office. The newsletter should be a joint effort and not left to just one or two persons.

Regular/...

Regular issues of the newsletter and pamphlets have now become a dire necessity and I would recommend the appointment of a committee of at least three persons to undertake such responsibility.

This Party must now prepare itself for any eventuality failing which we will be caught with our pants around the ankles.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

The question immediately arises whether anything is to be gained through participation in the Management Committee system. A valid question when one considers that many members have not the remotest concept of their responsibilities whilst others very often act contrary to the policy of the Party, making due allowance for the fact that the latter attitude does on occasion arise in giving priority to the immediate interests of the group they represent.

Since we are serving on Management Committees it is imperative, therefore, that the aforementioned shortcomings be remedied. In this connection it is recommended that Regions arrange regular discussions on Management Committees and various aspects of local government. (On the local scene it is my intention, as a CPRC member, to arrange teach-ins on Management Committees to supplement any efforts by the Region in this direction. It is hoped that other areas will follow suit, if necessary).

In spite of the seriousness of the situation one could not help but be amused by the stampede to serve on these separate institutions. Such was the scramble to become members of Management Committees that in a number of cases Labour opposed Labour and certain members were even prepared to face expulsion.

Of the 116 Management Committees elected in the Cape Province on 7 September 1977, 43 have a full complement of Labour members, 25 have Labour majorities and 21 have two or three Labour representatives.

Although the Party captured the majority of Management Committee seats, some of the election results really shook us. In this connection complacency poses a real threat. I am reminded here of the words of one of our senior CPRC members who said: "why should we exert ourselves the name of the Labour Party alone will carry us through". Such a negative approach almost proved disastrous and the member concerned just managed to scrape through.

The absence of proper organisation in the election campaigns was equally disturbing. We had all the time in the world to prepare ourselves, yet when the election was upon us we were found wanting.

The approach of the National Party in the recent White General Election should serve as an example to us. Assured of an overwhelming victory, the National Party nevertheless left nothing to chance and stretched its organisational machinery to its utmost limits.

We must face realities. In order to retain our dominant role it is imperative that we be on an election footing always. To talk is all very well, but it is more important to act.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have stated earlier in my report that the Party owes much of its credibility to the militant image it projects. We dare not, therefore, allow ourselves to become inhibited by the intimidatory tactics of the Government and fear of criticism within the Party itself.

One does not advocate adopting a reckless role but we cannot permit our scope for operating to become restricted more than it already is. After all we

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entered the game with our eyes wide open, aware of the risks involved. We have said this so often from public platforms. Let us draw comfort and inspiration from the words of Morris West:

"History was not made by those who shied away from risks: the Gospel was preached by men who took death as a daily companion".

One immediately thinks here of the Labour Party continuing its dominant role in the liberatory movement and offering direction to the country in the pursuit of peaceful change.

It is necessary to lay the foundation now and create the machinery through which our objective can be achieved. To date we have merely called for an supported the call by other groups for a National Convention. We recognise such a move as the only vehicle for peaceful change.

Whilst the National Party remains opposed to the idea, it should not discourage us from convening a National Convention of all groups and individuals favourably disposed thereto. Since such a movement will of necessity have to be an on-going process, it is likely to attract growing support and provide the desired impetus to the movement for change in our country.


The situation in South Africa is grave with all the signs pointing to an escalation in urban "terrorism". Not surprising when one examines the attitude of our youth.

The death in detention of people like Steve Biko, which we mourn, the beatings, detentions without trial, etc, are certainly aggravating the situation. We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by these potentially demoralising events.

Finally, I must express my sincere appreciation to those members, regardless of rank, and units whose co-operation I enjoyed during the past year.

I am supremely confident that our Party will be instrumental in bringing about change in South Africa together with other groups working to this end.

Thank you for being patient.



NATIONAL SECRETARY

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