

AL71

NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

RE: NEW PARLIAMENTS AND MINISTERS' COUNCILS

4.2.85

1.

The executive, after careful consideration, recommends the following approach to the above question. It is hoped that this recommendations will assist in clarifying the issue. The following is, briefly, the lines along which the issue was thought out.

2.

Congress recognises that the Nationalist government was, until now, the main obstacle to the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial democracy.

3.

However, since the August elections, a section of the Indian and Coloured communities have been co-opted and have become part of the apartheid state.

4.

Congress and all other democratic forces are totally opposed to apartheid - as it was before August 1984 and since then.

5.

Our approach to the apartheid state has been to generally oppose its policies in every possible way. More recently our opposition has taken the specific form of challenging this government's policies.

6.

Therefore, our approach to the new government, which now includes the Indian and Coloured parties in Parliament, is to challenge its policies wherever possible.

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7.

Precisely what form has our challenge taken in the past? There are broadly two aspects:

- (a) the mobilisation of our community so that we facilitate their active participation in our campaigns against the apartheid system;
- (b) specific challenges to government departments directly responsible for issues, which affect our communities and in which issues we become directly involved and struggle with the people.

8.

Having defined our general approach to the "new government" we need to define a programme to implement this approach i.e. a programme which will:

- (a) enable us to extend our organisational network deep into the community;
- (b) become involved in the burning issues/problems which result from this governments policies and in the course of the struggles around these issues challenge the government.

9.

A crucial question which arises from 8(b) above is what are the roles of the political and community organisations in any struggle (or issue) which arises. In order to answer this question, it is important for us to understand the 2 types of organisation clearly:

(a) POLITICAL ORGANISATION

- * Mobilises and organises people around a clearly defined political programme, and around broad national issues.
- * Challenge is located at the level of state organs and structures.
- * Aim is to transform society.
- * Membership transcends class, sector, gender, race and regional barriers.

(b) COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- * Mobilise and organise people around specific day-to-day issues and are locally based.
- * Challenge is located at local organs and structures of the state.
- * Aim is to win concessions on particular issues. Cannot directly transform fundamental structures or policies but contributes indirectly to transforming society.
- * Do not have an ideological base.
- * Membership is restricted by race, sector or other factors.

10.

The factor which will decide the manner in which (and the issues through which) a political organisation will relate to issues in the community is the political consciousness of the community: in other words, the political organisation cannot take up militant campaigns in a situation in which the communities' low political consciousness will not allow for that.

11.

Therefore, in the current situation, the political organisation will have to build its links with the community by becoming involved in the issues/problems affecting the community.

The political organisation cannot build links with the community by distancing itself from the issues/problems affecting it. In other words, the political organisation, although it must continue to campaign around "purely" political issues, must also relate to the community through issues/problems affecting it.

12.

The question we still have to answer is the precise way in which the political organisation will become involved in community issues/problems.

13.

However at the present, the following will serve as guidelines in any matter related to the Ministers' Councils:

- (a) All organs of the state, which includes the Ministers' Council must be challenged.
- (b) All challenges will be made publicly and openly - no secret meetings with state representatives or departments.
- (c) Open public meetings called by the ministers will be used as opportunities to challenge, protest or expose.
- (d) When meetings are called to discuss or debate issues which directly affect people, Congress will involve itself to strongly articulate the peoples' views, and challenge the state to meet our demands.
- (e) Congress will participate with or lead community organisations in protests, demonstrations or other actions which organisations choose to demonstrate their feelings and communicate their demands.

14.

However, our ultimate handling of a Minister's Council in the context of a struggle on an issue/problem affecting the community will depend on the dynamics of that specific struggle.

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