

ARTICLE FOR DEURBRAAK

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The decision to participate on the enlarged Cabinet Committee that has to investigate Black Constitutional Development has to be seen in its proper context. We warned that the implementation of the tri-cameral Parliament would have a severely polarizing effect between Black and non-Black in South Africa. The U.D.F. and the Conservative Party are the direct consequences of the new constitution being implemented.

Now, we are in the midst of unrest in the cities, a breakdown of Government for Blacks in those areas, increasing alienation between the Government and the majority of those governed; in short we are facing a constitutional vacuum at one of the most critical periods in the history of our country.

The only options crystallizing evermore clearly by the day are those of siege or negotiation. Any attempt to promote negotiation politics must be encouraged. Negotiation must and can only be initiated by those who control constitutional change, i.e. the Government of the day. Therefore, if the President is prepared to create negotiating instruments, however incomplete and fragile, their potential and viability has to be explored. That is why the PFP is prepared to work on the enlarged Cabinet Committee.

This does not mean that we are co-opted to make Separate Development work; nor that we will be silenced when we wish to criticize actions of the Government; nor that we are locked into an artificial kind of consensus with the Government. We are there to explore the sincerity of Government in declaring its willingness to negotiate; to establish what kind of declaration of intent is possible which can induce the widest possible response to participate in the negotiations. The process of negotiation has to begin somewhere and somehow. We are there to see whether this perhaps could be it.

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