

ANC's election campaign shifts into first gear

LLOYD COUTTS

THE ANC's election campaign moved into first gear yesterday when its Witwatersrand regional executive committee announced plans to adopt a three-phase programme of action for a "mass-driven" election campaign.

ANC PWV region secretary-general Paul Mashatile said the campaign would be discussed and adopted at a general council in Mayfair, Johannesburg, on Saturday and Sunday.

The first phase would include the motivation of campaigners and consolidation of the ANC/SACP/Cosatu alliance, the mass democratic movement and the patriotic front, said Mashatile.

Phase two would include door-to-door campaigning, marches and house meetings aimed at recruitment and at disseminating information on ANC policy.

The third phase would mark the transition from the preparatory stage to a "Votes for All" campaign, encompassing subregional and regional conferences, rallies and public meetings focusing on unemployment, education, housing and health.

Throughout the phases the ANC PWV would redouble its efforts to create and consolidate peace initiatives in the region.

"Central to these meetings will be the issue of the climate of free political activity, political tolerance and peaceful coexistence of different organisations," said Mashatile.

"The successful adoption and implementation of this programme should ensure the broadest possible support for democratic forces led by the ANC and its allies to bring an end to more than 300 years of minority rule and usher in an everlasting peace and democracy for all South Africans," he said.

Thirty-three outstanding resolutions from an annual regional conference last year, including resolutions on the peace accord, socio-economic issues, self-defence units, VAT and food prices, the restructuring of the SABC, affirmative action relating to women and education would also be discussed, Mashatile said.

ID book backlog affects millions

GERALD REILLY

PRETORIA — More than 2.5-million potential voters — most of them black — are still without identity documents less than a year away from a possible election, government sources said yesterday.

The figure is about 15% of what is expected to be a total voters' roll of 18-million people from all race groups.

The total excludes the TBVC states, where there are an estimated 3-million potential voters.

If the four states were incorporated into SA before an election in early 1994 (an unlikely occurrence, the sources said), it would be impossible to register all those eligible to vote and provide them with ID documents.

It is estimated that black voters will number in excess of 12-million, whites just less than 3.5-million, coloureds 1.7-million, and Asians about 600 000.

Between 15 000 and 18 000 ID documents were being issued weekly during 1992, but current figures were not available from the Home Affairs Department yesterday. It is estimated that by the end of last year virtually all whites, coloureds and Asians had ID

books, but only 78% of blacks.

The sources said that if the election was fought on the basis of proportional representation the need for voters' rolls would fall away and a mountain of work in delimiting constituencies and preparing rolls would be eliminated.

It would be impossible to complete the preparatory work in time for a constituency-based election next year. However, there appeared to be broad agreement that the election would be conducted on a proportional representation basis.

Meanwhile, the Home Affairs Department is making whatever infrastructural arrangements it can, given the uncertainty over what form the election will take.

For instance, more than 6 000 ballot boxes have been assembled in SA prisons and distributed throughout the country. These are considerably larger than those used in the all-white elections — as there will be 600% more voters.

By day 21/1/93

Elections

ANC prepares to woo voters

By Kaizer Nyatumba
Political Reporter

With the first all-in general election expected to take place not later than early next year, the African National Congress's PWV region has decided to embark on a phased programme which will prepare the region for "a mass-driven election campaign", ANC PWV regional secretary Paul Mashatile announced yesterday.

Priority

At a press conference in Johannesburg, Mashatile said that his organisation had made voter-education a priority for the next few months.

He said that he aimed to reach more than

2 million potential voters during its campaign.

Mashatile said the three-phase campaign would begin with the motivation of activists and the consolidation of the ANC-led tripartite alliance and Patriotic Front.

This would be followed by intensive door-to-door campaigning, marches and house meetings.

The third and final phase of the campaign would concentrate on public meetings and rallies that would focus on socio-economic issues and urge people to vote for the ANC.

ANC PWV regional executive committee member and spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa said that the programme would be presented to the organisation's regional general council which would hold a meeting in Mayfair, Johannesburg, over the weekend.

The council meeting, to be opened by regional chairman Tokyo Sexwale, would discuss and adopt a programme of action on elections, peace and the building of the ANC.

ANC national executive committee member Ronnie Kasrils would deliver the keynote address.

Meetings

Mamoepa said that in an effort to restore peace, his region would organise peace summits and meetings with other political organisations to discuss the creation of a climate of free political activity, political tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

He said that 33 resolutions left over from the ANC PWV's regional executive conference last year would also be discussed at the weekend.

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Patrick Laurence looks at failure of political parties to break traditional racial moulds

Campaigns to woo blacks falter

THE pending addition of millions of black voters to South Africa's electorate confronts two of the three mainstream white-controlled political parties with a daunting challenge.

Under the present triracial constitution the franchise is restricted to white, coloured and Indian voters; when South Africa holds its first nonracial election within the next 15 months, their collective share of the vote will shrink from 100 percent to barely more than 30 percent.

Between now and then the present electorate will expand from roughly 6.6 million to at least 21 million voters with the enfranchisement of nearly 14.4 million black adults.

Blacks will constitute nearly 70 percent of the enlarged electorate; whites, who are the prime force under the present constitution, will comprise less than 20 percent of the new electorate.

These changes are concentrating the minds of FW de Klerk's ruling National Party and Zach de Beer's Democratic Party. Unless they can win a modicum of black support their chances of being viable political forces in the new era of nonracial elections are not good.

Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party — which represents the

main ideological challenge in the white community to the NP's newly adopted nonracial approach — appears to have excluded itself by narrowing its vision to the white community and, more specifically, to the Afrikaner people within white society.

Focusing on NP and DP campaigns to the black populace — as distinct from the coloured and Indian communities — the omens so far are not good for either party.

Opinion polls conducted by the Human Science Research Council show that the NP has made negligible progress so far in wooing black voters into its ranks. Black political support for the NP is well under 10 percent, HSRC polls show.

The last of these polls — quoted by HSRC director Lawrence Schlemmer in the journal, *Indicator South Africa* — reflects the position in mid-1992. The NP's black support stood at 7 percent then.

Since then two factors may have affected the NP's standing in the black community adversely. First, the humiliating retreat of De Klerk from Boipatong last June after the massacre of blacks there; second, the covert role of military intelligence, uncovered by the Goldstone Commission last November in discrediting Nelson Mandela's African National Congress.



Treurnicht . . . CP excluded itself through narrow vision.

NP spokesmen, Piet Coetzer and Sheila Camerer, remain hopeful. They talk of "concentrating on getting the NP's infrastructure in place" and "concentrating on getting the party machine well oiled".

They seem unwilling or unable to give specific details on actual recruitment: the number of blacks members in different areas up to a certain date and the number of branches established in different townships.

Coetzer parries questions about

black membership. "We don't look at the political market on a segmented basis," he says. "We want the NP to expand as a properly integrated whole."

Asked whether the NP is campaigning in black areas, he replies: "Oh yes. But we are not holding large meetings. We prefer target-oriented house meetings . . . The NP is avoiding high-profile stuff."

Coetzer's namesake, Julia Coetzer, who works in the NP's office in Auckland Park, Johannesburg, speaks about an "undercover" campaign in Soweto and the need for potential recruits from Soweto to meet in a neutral area like Hillbrow in Johannesburg.

On the question of whether the NP's past espousal of apartheid is a problem, Piet Coetzer says: "People accept that the NP has changed. But people of colour complain that, though apartheid as a legal system is dead, the actual day to day behaviour of white people has not changed."

Judging from their comments black NP members do not exactly proclaim their beliefs from the rooftops; they are diffident and ever-conscious of their status as potential victims of what Julia Coetzer labels "frightening intimidation".

The DP, unburdened by past advocacy of apartheid and embol-

dened by its image as the guardian of liberal values, is campaigning more visibly in black areas. But it has hardly made a bleep on the computers of psephologists.

Two of its recent meetings in townships on the outskirts of Cape Town have been broken up by black militants, the first in Khayelisha last month and the second, more recently, in Guguletu. Fingers have been pointed at the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Organisation.

James Selfe, the DP's executive director, concurs with Piet Coetzer that intimidation and intolerance are major impediments to the DP campaign to recruit black members.

"The liberation movements are prepared to tolerate us as long as we are not a threat to them," Selfe says. "But the moment we threaten to become a serious contender, they get uptight."

Selfe cites developments in Mabineng in the eastern Transvaal where the DP has won black converts to its cause and established the biggest branch in a black township.

Its success, however, evoked aggression from young ANC militants: DP scholars were physically driven out of school and barred from entering school examination halls; the house of a DP official

was burnt down in a replication of the fate suffered by an NP convert in Soweto.

Selfe, however, remains hopeful. He speaks of DP successes in areas where neither the ANC nor the PAC have a strong presence, citing townships in the eastern Free State and partially self-governing territory of QwaQwa.

Even so the DP recognises that in wooing black voters it is involved in a long battle. Hence it has proposed that political parties need only win 1 percent of the vote in the first nonracial election to qualify for the right to representation in the constituent assembly.

The solace for the NP and DP — if it can be termed that — is that the ANC, with its commitment to nonracialism, has made virtually no headway in winning white support. According to HSRC research the potential white ANC vote hovers between one and three percent.

The failure so far of these avowedly nonracial organisations to break the racial mould has ominous long term implications. Where political parties represent racial or ethnic forces, democracy becomes — in Schlemmer's words — "a form of census taking" and a basis for divisive conflict rather than a spur to healthy political competition. □

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