

Non-Racialism vs Multi-Racialism

IDASA public debate in Port Elizabeth

MAXWELL MAMASE

ROB Midgley of the Law faculty at Rhodes University addressed this gathering on 18 October 1988 at the IDASA offices in Port Elizabeth. He noted that multi-racialism, by which apartheid can be disguised, has been entrenched by the tri-cameral constitution. The Nationalist Party, enjoying a majority status in the House of Assembly, dominates the various houses of Parliament even though these appear to have equal power. The President's Council is a further built-in safeguard for the interest of the Nationalist Party, control and manipulation of which is "policy-guarded" by entrenched multi-racialism.

Multi-racialism embodies cosmetic concessions on the one hand while being a manifestation of arrogance on the other. This is also true of government at the third-tier level where the emphasis is again on groups divided on the basis of "genetic-engineering".

Howard Varney, a Port Elizabeth lawyer, provided a "progressive" critique of multi-racialism. He said that divide-and-rule was the object, control of power ensuring that the "haves" are not challenged by the "have-nots". By careful design control falls into the hands of a few, while maintaining a façade of mutual co-operation and co-existence. Inherently deceitful, multi-racialism has to try to hoodwink the general population; those who attempt to expose the system are made to feel the heavy hand of repression. The key purpose of multi-racialism is thus obviously control of power.

Dr Ian Phillips of Natal University spoke of non-racialism and democracy as political terms which, like societies in general, don't remain static but develop over time. Democracy is a double-sided phenomenon concerned on the one hand with the change of state power and

on the other with the restructuring of civil society. Democracy can only be constructed through the efforts and participation of individuals and communities at the grass-roots level. This, coupled with universal ideas of human rights and dignity, will suffice to rectify the social and political injustices in South Africa. Apartheid, racial discrimination and inequality will have to make way for a non-racial democratic South Africa which itself must of necessity be fashioned

now and not after some magical transference of power or according to some conference-produced blueprint.

The non-racial notion makes no distinction in terms of race, colour or creed, all people being treated as human beings and equal in the eyes of the law. The process of creating a democratic South Africa is already becoming a reality in the townships, factories and schools but can only proceed with the participation of millions of South Africans.

Update on steps being taken towards Monde Mtanga's release

KEITH J WATTRUS

SINCE the last issue of *Democracy in Action*, IDASA's attorneys have successfully lodged an application for leave to appeal against the judgement handed down on 28 September 1988 in the Port Elizabeth Supreme Court. In the prior judgement permission to allow Monde, along with the Security Policemen who had filed opposing affidavits, to lead oral evidence was refused.

Leave to appeal against this decision now having been granted, urgent application has been made to have the appeal heard before the end of 1988. This appeal will be to a full bench of the Eastern Cape Division of the Supreme Court, which bench sits in Grahamstown.

Should we be successful in the Appeal then the Court of Appeal will direct the Port Elizabeth court to refer the matter for oral evidence to be led so that the Court might hear the evidence of the parties prior to making a decision with regard to the application for Monde's release. We do not anticipate that the oral evidence will be given until February 1989, even if the Appeal is heard during the course of this year.

Monde Mtanga, a regional co-ordinator in the Eastern Cape office of IDASA, has been detained without trial since 10 December 1987. **As we enter the Christmas season we remember Monde and the many who, like him, are being held in detention without trial, and pray for their speedy release.**

Xmas Greetings

The directors and staff
of IDASA extend
compliments of the
season to all the
readers of
Democracy in Action,
with the wish that
1989 may bring about
the dawn of a true
democracy in
South Africa



Mr Monde Mtanga — in detention for a year.