



19 August 2008

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Objection to the registration of the National Party in accordance with the Electoral Commission Act 51 of 1996

Objection lodged by:

The South African Pagan Rights Alliance

The South African Pagan Council

The South African Pagan Rights Alliance and the South African Pagan Council herewith lodge Formal Objection against the National Party's policy on religion and religious education on the grounds that (1.) said policies propagate the contravention of the constitutional right to freedom of belief and religion to recognized religious minorities, and (2.) said policies intend to prevent membership of said party on the grounds of religious affiliation by excluding identified religious minorities as undesirable.

The following text appears on the website of the National Party...

Quote:

SATANISM NOT RECOGNISED

The National Party respects the practice of all religions in our country, but will not tolerate satanism. The NP will outlaw all practices directly linked to satanism.

End quote.

Source: National Party South Africa Religious Instruction in Schools - <http://www.nationalparty.co.za/religion.htm> Accessed 18 August 2008

In correspondence between myself and alleged member of the National Executive of the NP - Mr. Uys, this Alliance has been informed that the National Party intends to suppress minority religions including Satanism and Witchcraft, should it win the 2009 elections.

Quote:

"We will not allow witches to operate in South Africa under (an) NP Government. We and our supporters can not associate ourselves with anything that are (sic) linked to Satanism. We don't have a problem with your view on our policy, but we will NEVER regard Satanism or witches (sic) as a form of religion. Our major support comes from Christians and Muslims etc, we will never link this party to Satanism or witchcraft. We will make this very clear during elections 2009."

End quote.

Mr. Uys – correspondence to Mr. D. Leff dated 18 August 2008.

The South African Pagan Rights Alliance and the South African Pagan Council objects to the intention of the National Party to suppress Witchcraft and to discriminate openly against South African citizens who self-define as Witches.

The National Party has been informed that in South Africa self-defined Witches constitute a visible and already recognized religious minority and that Witchcraft is regarded by these citizens of the new Republic as a bone-fide religion. Witchcraft is indeed formally recognized as a legal religion in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa. In South Africa, Pagan Witches have been granted official sanction by the Department of Home Affairs as religious marriage officers, in accordance with the Civil Union Act. The

Department of Home Affairs has formally designated three known Pagan organisations, whose members self-define as Witches, as religious organizations in terms of said Act.

As the highest law of the land the constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees all South African citizens, irrespective of religious affiliation or belief, the right to dignity and equality. The National Party's policy of excluding minority religions such as Satanism (not a Pagan religion but a religion none-the-less) and Witchcraft (a Pagan belief system and religion) is in fact unconstitutional in so far as it denies, or intends to deny, the right to belief and religion to citizens of this country.

The National Party's policy to exclude religious minorities which have historically been discriminated against on the basis of belief contradicts the National Party's own statement of intent to "respect the practice of all religions" and to "respect the religious views of all learners" in our country. In suppressing Witchcraft on the basis of prejudicial religious belief, the National Party will in effect be sanctioning and encouraging religious discrimination against learners who may either personally self-define as Pagan Witches, or have parents who define their religion as Witchcraft and or Paganism, Satanism, or any other minority religion deemed by the National Party to be objectionable to its religious position.

The SAPRA and the SAPC objects to the stated intention to use the National Party's above-stated policy on religion and religious instruction to rally support for the National Party in 2009. Under the current constitution of this Republic the incitement to discriminate against children and adults on the basis of belief is not permitted.

To permit the promotion of such a dangerous policy on a political platform, on the basis of permitting freedom to speak against religious minorities, or the right to prejudicial belief, would constitute the greatest threat to the safety and dignity of members of religious minorities deemed by the National Party as not having the intrinsic and constitutionally protected right to exist.

The South African Pagan Rights Alliance and the South African Pagan Council therefore calls on the Independent Electoral Commission to deny registration of the National Party.

Damon Leff

Convener: SAPRA

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