

Victory is Ours!

Predictably, the 'New Deal' elections were a failure for the rulers. For us, the exploited and oppressed, they were a resounding success. The low poll clearly showed that we know what is in our interests and what is not. Action taken during the elections underscored the militancy and the extent of the resistance ordinary people are capable of.

Again, as in 1976 and 1980, men, women and youth received their political baptism in the pitched battles between unevenly balanced forces of the oppressed and the exploited on the one hand and the state and the state apparatus on the other.

At the top of the page, the names of the state and the state apparatus are listed: Lavis, ... and Lenasia, ... the true nature of the New Deal, the government, ... ate and collabora- ... onist parties shone through the tarnished veneer of 'reform'.

... peaceful ... it was met with ... cious state reaction. ... en with the knowledge ... at violence awaited ... their legitimate protest, workers and students continued with the plan of action they had decided on. Action youth salutes the heroic courage of the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa!

They persevered in the face of state repression.



Unfortunately, attempts were also made by elements within the liberation movement (broadly speaking) to dissuade people from protesting.

Criticism

At this point it should be borne in mind that if we wish to correctly assess both election days we should be frank and open. Criticism of any action or political tendency is done in a positive manner for the benefit of the overall struggle. It is not by covering up our differences that development takes place but by fully arguing them out. In this way the validity of our arguments will be tested in theory and practice.

According to a number of those present at polling stations on both election days, members of the TIC (Transvaal Indian Congress) tried to dissuade people from protesting, although these people had assembled at the booths for that purpose.

'Monitoring'

In the Transvaal and most of the country, the UDF's action on both election days consisted of 'monitoring the voting'. Yet, some of UDF rank and file did take part in active protest.

The UDF are entitled to embark on whatever action they see fit. While we are critical of their action, we are more disturbed by their attempts to wreck the strategies of other organisations.

Students

A student who went to the Plaza, which was opposite the Fordsburg polling station, on the day of the House of Delegates' elections said: 'More than 100 of us had come to the Plaza from Bosmont, Riverlea, and Fordsburg.

We'd come to demonstrate peacefully. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Inter-High School Co-ordinating Committee which represents 40 schools. There were police everywhere that day - Security Police and those from the Reaction Unit. Despite this we still wanted to go ahead. We were scared but determined. We were about to take our placards and go to where we were to demonstrate when some TIC people came to speak to us. They only came to so-called 'Indian' students. They tried to talk us out of protesting.'

A student who went to the polling booth in Lenasia said: 'Some TIC redirected the student march to the Jiswa Centre where they tried to dissuade them from participating in the protest. We had marched all the way from Kliptown because we wanted to show our rejection of the New Deal elections. We didn't see it as an 'Indian' issue.'

TIC

TIC and UDF denied that they gave any mandate for tactics of dissuasion. But if these disruptive actions by UDF individuals did not have the blessing of

the organisation, why have the 'individuals' not been disciplined? Why has no formal, public apology been made to the organisations concerned?

It is disturbing to see how the UDF, through the liberal media, claimed responsibility for the protest and the low poll. Never did they mention other organisations who participated throughout the campaign.

While the UDF, towards the end of the anti-election campaign, was clear on complete boycott, this was not always the case.

ELECTION DAY



SAZAPO and ACTION YOUTH members on election day. This snap shows Saspu National with the inco "UDF supporters". Saspu National mouth piece of the white student Nusas. Nusas is affiliated

At first, elements in the UDF (TIC and NIC) wanted to take part in a government ethnic referendum. When this didn't materialise they organised their own 'people's referendum' - the million signature campaign. (Incidentally UDF claims to have a million members through their various affiliates. If that is so, then why it that after 1½ years UDF has only been able to obtain about 300 000 signatures.)

In the meantime, the building of grassroots organisations have been neglected. There was all talk in UDF circles of putting up boycott candidates. Finally, they all agreed on complete boycott.

National Forum

On the other hand, organisations in the National Forum decided on a complete boycott from the beginning of



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the campaign. Why did we decide on a complete boycott? To answer this we must look at the boycott as a weapon of struggle, how it has been used and our view of the nature of the South African struggle.

The Boycott

The boycott is not in itself a policy but a practical application of the policy of non-collaboration at a specific time. It is particularly applicable at those moments when the sellouts are engaged in the very act of luring the people into putting the noose round their neck. The boycott has the effect of not only arresting the hand that carries the rope, but of holding it up for all to see. The collaborator is, as it were, caught in the act, red-handed.

When an organisation advocates boycott, it cannot just pass a resolution to that effect and merely announce the fact to the masses. That would be meaningless. It takes upon itself the duty of going out to the people and carefully explaining to them why they must boycott a particular institution.

The boycott should

become a live issue, discussed in the streets, the trains and the buses, in the classrooms and playgrounds, in the factories and homes.

Boycott here was not enough for two reasons:

- (1) Whether or not the majority of people support the New Deal it would still be implemented. No matter how low the poll, we knew, and history has shown us to be right, the 'elected candidates' would take their seats in parliament and speak on behalf of 'their people'.
- (2) The anti-election campaign, if it had been limited to boycott alone,

would only have included a part of the oppressed people, the so-called 'coloureds' and 'indians', as they were the only ones eligible to vote.

But the New Deal elections were something which affected ALL oppressed and had to be resisted by ALL, not only by so-called 'coloureds' and 'indians'.

A boycott is also not a very visible form of protest and we needed these kinds of action as well - to show the extent of our dissatisfaction, to show the collaborators that we mean business and to expose the real nature of the elections and the 'New Deal'.

Undemocratic

While 'monitoring the voting' might be interesting, this was not one of the more important tasks for the elections. Three basic things were necessary:

- a low poll
- exposure of the real, undemocratic nature of the elections and those desperately trying to make them work
- shift in the emphasis from the actual elections to rejection.

Our decision to boycott the elections and to take other action as well was based on two things: the history of our struggle and our understanding of the nature of our struggle today.

The collapse of government-erected bodies designed to fool us - such as the CRC, SAIC, Management Committees and Community Councils-

resulted from the successful use of the boycott. The 'New Deal' itself is a response to the failure of these bodies. It is another attempt to save the capitalist system in South Africa.

For us, the struggle is one which is anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and led by the oppressed and exploited workers (urban and rural) in alliance with radical elements of the petit bourgeoisie. The struggle is for a socialist republic.

Simultaneously, our struggle means the building of a single nation, overcoming divisions of our people and our country. Also, our struggle is part of the African and world struggle against imperialist expansion.

National Convention

For the UDF, the struggle is to end apartheid, for 'human rights'. They are not aiming at fundamental change but a negotiated settlement with the rulers - a national convention.

It is not our task to work for reform. It is our task to strengthen democracy among the

oppressed and exploited by building strong representative organisations. We must begin now to lay the basis for the future workers' republic, where democracy will be in the interests of the majority.

FORWARD TO A SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF AZANIA!

