



APDUSA VIEWS

ISSUE No. 53

APRIL 1994



FOR
WHOM
TO
VOTE?

INTRODUCTION

As the election dates draw closer, people's concerns and anxieties increase. Many are not sure about taking part in the elections by voting. And if they decide to vote, they are not sure who to vote for.

For the overwhelming majority of the people in this country, these elections are the first of their kind. It is also the first time that the African, Indian and 'Coloured' people have been offered the franchise, that is, the right to vote or elect and to stand for election to all the law making-bodies of the country.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE VOTE

The vote is a basic human right and a very important component of democracy.

The vote has been fought for for over 100 years and has been won through great effort and sacrifice:

- * Many have given their lives for this cause.
- * There are those who spent long years in prison.
- * There are those who were subjected to intimidation, persecution, banning and house-arrest orders.

- * Detention without trial, torture and deaths in detention.¹
- * Victimisation and dismissal from jobs.
- * Consistent opposition to and rejection of dummy bodies and the tricameral system by very effective boycotts.
- * Financial and moral support to the struggle for freedom.
- * Active involvement in the struggle.

It will, therefore, be seen that the struggle for the vote is NOT the work and sacrifice of ONE person or single organisation alone. Millions of people have worked and struggled for the vote over many decades.

Remember, a flood is the sum total of millions upon millions of raindrops. On its own a single raindrop does not look impressive. But in combination with many other raindrops, the spectacle that is the flood, can be not only impressive, but positively awe-inspiring.

It is, therefore, the height of arrogance and dishonesty for any ONE organisation to claim credit for the political change which is taking place at present.²

¹ This fact alone gives lie to the NAT claim that they did not kill anybody.

² The NATS, ANC and PAC have claimed on various occasions (separately, of course) that they and their leaders were responsible for the present political change.

The oppressed people of this country, namely, the African, Indian and 'Coloured' people have NO need to be grateful to ANYBODY for the right to vote and to stand for election. Their own effort, through sweat and blood, was one of the main causes for the change.

WHO TO VOTE FOR?

Having the vote is one thing; exercising it is something else. Who does one vote for?

You vote for that party which stands for your interests and which will help you to realise all your reasonable dreams. Your interests and aspirations as an ordinary person cannot be different from those of millions of ordinary people in this country.

What are these interests and aspirations? The most important ones are:

1. **PEACE** - This is the most powerful desire of the vast majority of our people. True peace means an end to all types of violence. For there to be real peace, you need a party which is caring and sensitive to the different needs of the people. You need a party which has on the top of its agenda, a firm determination to heal our country which lies torn and bleeding from the many conflicts.
2. **REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH** - Our position is that those who produce the wealth, that is the workers, must get a fair share of that wealth. No person should live in poverty and squalor while others live in the lap of luxury and abundance.

3. **NEW DIVISION OF LAND** - This is necessary so as to put an end to the present situation where 87% of the land is owned by whites who make up only 13% of the population of South Africa.
4. **PROSPERITY** - Only through prosperity can there be meaningful work for all who want to work. And it is only through such work that people can enjoy a decent standard of living.
5. **EDUCATION** - The need for proper schools, books, an atmosphere of serious learning and study. This means an end to school boycotts, destruction of schools and study material. It also means an end to strikes by teachers over matters like salaries.
6. **WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE** - This means decent housing, free and latest medical care, liveable pensions and state assistance for those who require it.
7. **FREEDOM AND CIVIL LIBERTIES** - The right to hold and advocate differing political views without fear of harm to oneself and family. This means an immediate end to intolerance and political thuggery.
8. **HONEST GOVERNMENT** - The need for honest and public-dedicated civil service; an all-out war against corruption, graft, bribery and all other types of dishonesty which government employees and politicians are so good at inventing.

WORDS ARE CHEAP ...

Whenever elections are to take place, politicians can and do make all sorts of promises which they do not intend keeping, but which they make to win your vote. This happens all over the world. Therefore, the voter must never exercise his or her vote for a particular party solely on promises made.

We all know that words are cheap. At election time, words come flying at you like sand on a windy day. Promises made must be checked against the track record of the organisation making them.

For example :

1. If the NATS promise housing for all, you test this by posing the following question: The NATS have been in power for over 40 years and, therefore, had 40 years to provide decent housing for all. And did they do this? NO, they provided virtually no housing for the African people. It is for this reason that millions of people are living in makeshift shacks in so-called squatter settlements all over the country. These shacks are unfit for human habitation. If they did not attend to the housing needs of the African people over a period of 40 years, we would be foolish to believe that they would do so now.
2. When the ANC promises peace, democracy and justice, you test this by asking: What about the numerous necklace murders by people claiming to be ANC supporters? What about the Self Defence Units set up by the ANC and which have gone crazy and terrorize the local population? Why has the ANC put on its Election List persons who have been found guilty of human right violations, torture and the like?

Again, with a track record of intolerance and gross violation of the freedoms of speech, conscience and assembly, you will obviously not be too ready to believe promises of peace, democracy and justice made by the ANC.

CONCLUSION

If there is an organisation which stands for your interests and which is truly committed to build a new South Africa based on peace which is a product of contentment and happiness and not a peace of the graveyard, then vote for such a party or organisation.

What if there is no party which truly represents your interests and that of the majority of the people? Our advice, then, is that it is senseless to exercise your vote.

Hopefully, there will be other elections after April 1994. You will have 5 whole years to judge the performances of the various parties. By that time, political parties would have shown their true colours which are kept carefully hidden during election time. By that time you will know which parties make promises just to grab your vote and which really care for you.

- **GUARD YOUR VOTE!**
- **VOTE ONLY IF YOU ARE SURE!**
- **VOTE ONLY FOR THE PARTY WHICH WILL PROTECT ALL YOUR INTERESTS!**
- **DON'T VOTE IF YOU ARE NOT SURE!**
- **YOU BREAK NO LAW IF YOU DO NOT VOTE!**