

DP must not divert itself from fighting the Nats

The TIC is concerned at the launch of a DP branch in Laudium. This is in direct contradiction to the wishes of the majority of the people in this country who have shown their rejection against the tricameral system time and again. Furthermore it is only discredited individuals who have come forth to join the DP in Laudium.

This is an Open letter by TIC President Cassim Saloojee to the Democratic Party (DP)

The DP leadership is yet to decide whether it will contest any seats in the Houses of Delegates (HoD) and Representatives (HoR) during the September 6 election. Whilst the debate rages on within it, we in the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) wish to state our views on the matter in the hope that we can impact positively on the debate.

It is common cause that the TIC, NIC, UDF and COSATU reject the racially exclusive character of the SA state, and that we consider institutions like the HoD, HoR and Black Local Authorities (BLA) as illegitimate. It is no less true that the low polls at all previous such elections reflects the oppressed majority's total rejection of these institutions.

We do not raise these issues to boast the efficacy of the extra-parliamentary strategy for change. Instead we recognise that the political scenario is far too complex for such simplistic analysis. Although TIC rejects any participation in the white-dominated Parliament (including



The tricameral elections: The HoD and HoR have proved to be toothless

the House of Assembly) as a vehicle to bring about meaningful change, we acknowledge that the strong parliamentary culture in the white community may well isolate forces there to the left of the NP. We realise that unlike the toothless Indian and Coloured houses of parliament, the House of Assembly does wield real political power.

We recognise that the DP has an influential role to play in the process of change in SA, and that creative opportunities are available for all anti-Apartheid forces to cooperate and isolate the NP. It is in this context that the DP should view the fielding of candidates in the two junior houses of parliament. The key question that the DP needs

to consider is: Will such a strategy allow for these dynamic possibilities to materialise in the ensuing struggle for democracy? The DP should not allow the coming general election to cloud its major objective of isolating and weakening the NP.

The TIC is of the view that by fielding candidates in the HoD or HoR or entering into election pacts with political parties there would not only be unfortunate, but more importantly, would seriously damage the image of the DP.

It would be a fatal mistake for the DP to underestimate the deep feeling of rejection of the tricameral system in the Indian and Coloured communities. It would similarly be incorrect to underestimate

the antagonism for all those who participate or associate themselves with these institutions. Thus participation by the DP in these institutions will inadvertently sharpen the differences between the DP and the mass democratic movement. In the process, instead of concentrating its energies on a single front fighting the NP, the DP will be forced to open up a second front against the mass democratic movement.

Full cognisance of the implications of the tricameral system must also be taken into account in this regard. The HoD and HoR serve as a mechanism to co-opt and insulate resistance to NP rule from the Indian and Coloured communities.

Moreover, the DP could well

slide into expedient and unprincipled politics, opening itself up to corruption and constant embarrassment as Indian and Coloured DP members cross the floor whenever FW de Klerk dangles a carrot. The DP will be forced to rely on the politics of patronage rather than the politics of democracy and accountability.

Neither should the DP allow itself to be blackmailed by the brown skin of its MPs in the HoD and HoR. The DP's record on non-racialism will be judged by its relationship to organisations representing the oppressed majority, like the UDF, COSATU and the ANC.

The DP's image in the black community will be severely dented if it were to be paternalistic in relating to blacks. The DP has nothing to gain by accepting MPs who are discredited in their own communities.

It would be a sad day in the history of our struggle if the DP allows itself to be blinded by election fever. It should rather lay the basis for a "post-election politics" which unifies the anti-Apartheid forces into a single thrust for change. The situation requires a vision and a will to place the interest of the broader struggle for democracy foremost in our minds.

The responsibility to manage the process of social transformation and to foster national reconciliation is a joint one, but the decision taken on Monday by the DP executive will no doubt determine whether the DP and the mass democratic movement will cooperate in facilitating this process.

Don't vote for a dying, decaying system

ELECTIONS for the tricameral parliament system are due to take place on September 6, 1989.

We, in the TIC believe that the issues facing all South Africans are much broader than that of voting for the tricameral parliament. SA is in a period of transition, a period in which the ANC Constitutional Guidelines serves as the basis for discussion and debate about the creation of a new South Africa.

On the other hand the National Party is unable to pro-

vide any meaningful political solution. As the TIC predicted in 1984, the tricameral constitution sparked off unprecedented resistance in the townships. The Bantustan system and the Black Local Authorities also have failed miserably. Since 1985, the only way the Nats have maintained power is by declaring the state of emergency, detaining thousands of people and banning several organisations.

Furthermore, the tri-cameral system has bred massive

corruption. Several Cabinet Ministers and senior government officials have abused their positions at the expense of the taxpayer.

Economically, the government is bankrupt. Price increases and inflation is robbing the man in the street of his livelihood. Investors and foreign companies are leaving the country in droves. The government is unable to pay its debts as the economy continues to shrink, as shown by the negative economic growth in the last few years.

Militarily, the defeat of the SADF in Cuito Cuinavale, has forced Botha to reluctantly agree to independence for Namibia.

The Nats traditional allies in the West are also demanding that Apartheid be dismantled. FW de Klerk himself realises that the tricameral system will have to be dumped.

The elections to be held in September hold little significance to the future of this country. We therefore call upon our community NOT to vote for a dying and decrepit order.

Instead the TIC believes that Indian South Africans have a positive role to play in preparing for the future SA.

The visit last year to the ANC, the visit to India this year and the recent TIC Business and Economy Conference highlighted the tremendous potential role of the Indian community in the process of change.

The issue facing us presently is our active participation and contribution towards this new South Africa that is waiting to be born.