

NATIONAL FORUM

Over 250 delegates and many hundreds of observers were present at the National Forum Workshop in Athlone Cape Town on the 16th December 1984.

The workshop was held to assess the boycott of the New Deal elections held for the tri-racist parliament and to discuss the future of the National Forum.

ELECTIONS

Neville Alexander, from the Cape Action League (C.A.L.) delivered a paper on the August elections. His paper also touched on ethnic consciousness, the liberal response to the New Deal and the achievements of the National Forum thus far. According to Dr Alexander the elections were undertaken as part of the larger plan of co-opting the black middle class in order to give medium term stability to the S.A. state. A mutually reinforcing task was to get middle and working class whites to accept the idea of 'power sharing'. "The elections were also an element in the grand design of neo-apartheid strategy to divide and trap the black workers by creating and reinforcing a number of ethnic identities. For this reason even the elections were held on different days in spite of the inconvenience thereof. This was (and remains) the reason why we insisted on putting forward the slogan of ONE AZANIA ONE NATION. This is the answer of the black working class to the divisive ethnic slogans of the ruling class and of the conservative middle classes." said Dr Alexander.



WORKING CLASS MILITANCY

Alexander also alerted people to the fact that the destination of liberals of all shapes and colours is a national convention. He said "They are creating a climate in which people are made to believe that peaceful methods of negotiations and talking between 'real leaders' are going to solve our problems. This is the way in which the radical militancy of the working class is to be defused. Needless to say, every imperialist agency and symbolical individual from the Nobel Committee to senator Edward Kennedy and a host of smaller, lesser known names are being inspanned to get the supposed juggernaut to this destination of the national convention."

After Dr Alexander's paper, the gathering broke up into four groups where the topics:

"Ways and means of destroying the New Deal and advancing the struggle toward a Socialist Azania" and

"The future structure of the National Forum".

Many creative and constructive ideas were thrown up in answer to the first topic. A campaign to "Isolate the collaborators" was adopted by the gathering. Further it was also felt that:

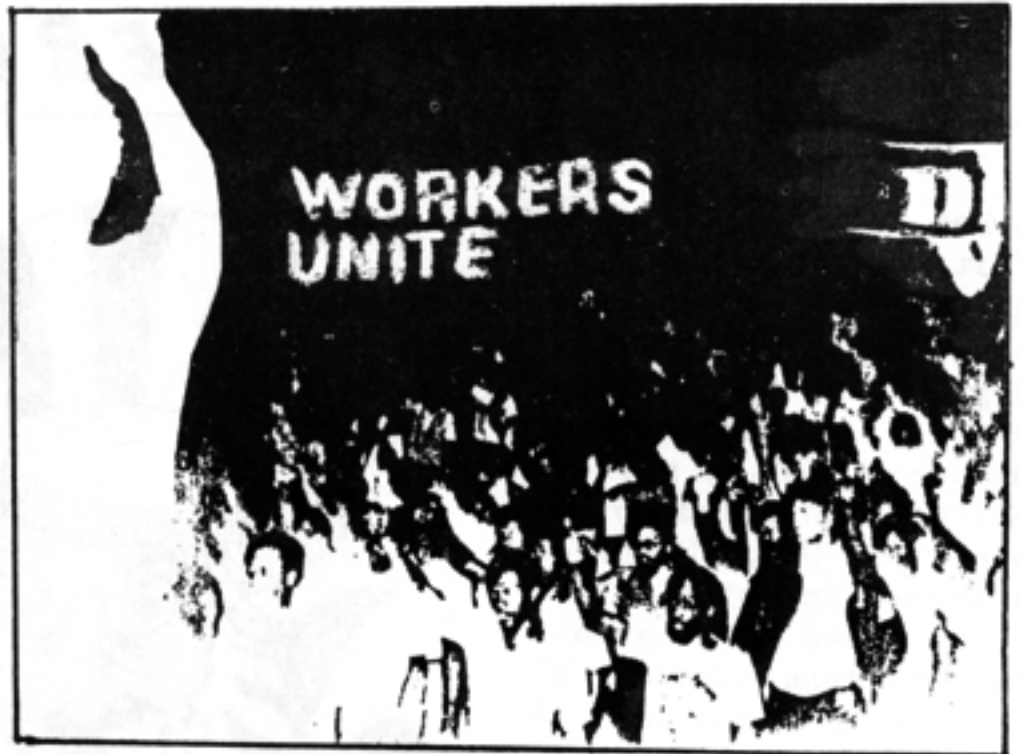
- 1) There should be more concrete grassroots level organising.
- 2) Stronger links with trade unions should be established.
- 3) Organisations in the N.F. should continue working with individual working class organisations with a view to win these over to the principles of the N.F. and the Azanian Manifesto.
- 4) Firmer student/worker alliances should be encouraged and that students from different organisations should work towards this end.

BREAKTHROUGH

Discussion involving the second topic became bogged down on the question on white participation in the N.F. Various organisations put forward their views on this question. It was finally decided by all organisations that all members of any organisations participating in the N.F. should be accorded the same status. This decision has been seen by many as an important breakthrough as this question (white participation) has previously plagued the N.F.

It was also felt that transforming the N.F. into an organisation at this stage would be premature as unity should not be amorphous, unprincipled and from above.

WORKSHOP



N.F. STRUCTURE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Instead of an unprincipled unity of organisations such as the UDF (a popular front) we should rather work towards a necessarily more difficult but imperative United Front.

The Forum structure will now consist of a national working committee of three people and 30 representatives from the regions (Southern and Northern Transvaal, Natal Western and Eastern Cape and O.F.S.) elected by

organisations from these regions (five from each region).

The Workshop ended on a high note with the knowledge that the Forum has helped to create a strong and sophisticated core of activists who have been steeled in struggle through clashes with the machinery of the state. Also, we have produced the Manifesto of the Azanian People a document that sets us

clearly on the road to a socialist Azania. This document has given rise to one of the most creative debates in the public history of our country and has forced people to look again at older political programmes. Finally, the organisations that adhere to the position of the National Forum, can take much of the credit for torpedoing the August elections even if their efforts were largely ignored in the media.



- ★ WORKERS ASSAULTED BY WHITES AND RACIAL INSULTS MADE BY SUPERVISORS
- ★ WORKERS DOWN TOOLS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR COLLEAGUES
- ★ 107 WORKERS DISMISSED IN FEBRUARY 1984
- ★ FOOD BEVERAGE WORKERS UNION INVOLVED THE COMPANY
- ★ SCAB LABOUR RECRUITED BY THE COMPANY
- ★ DISPUTE TAKEN TO THE INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL ENDS IN DEADLOCK
- ★ WORKERS COMMITTEE HAS IDENTIFIED NEARLY 70 UNFAIR LABOUR PRACTISES
- ★ UNION NOW TAKING BATTLE TO THE INDUSTRIAL COURT
- ★ WORKERS SUPPORT COMMITTEE NOW CALLS FOR A TOTAL BOYCOTT OF ALL DAIRYMAID

BOYCOTT CALLED OFF. STRUGGLE SUCCESSFUL. WORKERS REINSTATED AND PAID R70 000.