

Boycott action is a weapon of oppressed and exploited people. It is a kind of action that has a long history among the oppressed majority in South Africa. Unlike strike action, boycott action is primarily community based, i.e. workers, students, church groups, cultural groups, etc take part simultaneously. Furthermore boycott action has a two-fold objective; firstly a short-term objective in that it is an act against an immediate and passing event, or part of an immediate boycott campaign; secondly a long-term objective in that it is a means through which a community can test its unity in action, learn the skills of organising and develop a sense of achievement by scoring victories against the oppressors.

Once more the question of boycott action has come to the fore as our people come out against various happenings and events. We say once more because it is important for those of us involved in these actions to remember that while the events we stage boycotts against may be new, the boycott tactic is not new to the oppressed people of South Africa. Indeed boycott action in our country has a long history of both success and failure. Those of us involved in boycotts now have to study and learn the lessons from the past.

There are now in South Africa calls to boycott various kinds of things including certain sports events, certain cultural and musical events, and, last but not least, the apartheid regime's "Republic Day Festival". Some of these calls have caught groups and individuals representing the oppressed people on different sides, some for and some against various boycott calls. What has gone wrong here? Let us look at this question.

* All foreign groups and individuals whether sporting or cultural, who are directly or indirectly invited or encouraged by the racist regime or its allies must be boycotted. This is because the regime is already being slowly but successfully isolated and this work must be continued in a determined fashion until the regime's final defeat. Such visits by foreign groups or individuals must never lend credibility to the status of the regime.

* Social groups, individuals and institutions directly or indirectly aided by the government or linked to the regime in any way must be likewise boycotted, both inside South Africa and internationally. At all costs the P.W. Botha regime must not be allowed to score propaganda victories over the progressive forces, forces which are working night and day to bring the regime to its certain end.

the apartheid regime to its certain defeat. The regime must never be able to achieve favourable publicity for itself through Bantustans or "Republic day festivities" or internationally through Big Tates, O'jays or Ipi-Tombis.

* However, those of us who engage in boycott action must realise and understand that such action requires hard work and good organization. There are no short cuts. We must be fully conscious of where South Africa is going to beyond P.W. Botha and the present regime. We must be part and parcel of the large and progressive force which is all the time hitting and hitting again at the racist regime in South Africa and wherever else it shows its face. We must also realise and understand that whereas at one time our people will lead us, at another time they will need guidance and that this requires that we be clear in our objectives at all times. We must be especially clear that the people have the right to discuss and understand the issues involved since it is a major focus of boycott action that the people themselves score victories and that the consciousness of everyone is raised. No single grouping can go it alone in boycott action without consulting all the relevant groups and discussing and planning action with them.

* Therefore rather than being hasty in scoring easy points and appearing progressive and popular, all groups should subject themselves to the principle of democracy and the discipline of good organization.

MEDU Editorial Board

Collection Name: MEDU ON-LINE

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

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