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Never Mind The Ballots!

Sabate Anarchist Collective (NEFAC)

December 24, 2004

“To be GOVERNED is to be kept in sight, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue to do so...”

– Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

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“The anarchists’ electoral abstentionism implies not only a conception that is opposed to the principle of representation (which is totally rejected by anarchism), it implies above all an absolute lack of confidence in the State. And this distrust, which is instinctive in the working masses, is for the anarchists the result of their historical experience with the State and its function, which has, at all times and in all

places, resulted in a selfish and exclusive protection of the ruling classes and their privileges. Anarchist abstentionism strips the State of the constitutional fraud with which it presents itself to the gullible as the true representative of the whole nation, and, in so doing, exposes its essential character as representative, procurer, and protector of the ruling classes.”

– Luigi Galleani, *The End of Anarchism?*

The fake democracy that the ruling class uses to control us will prove once again this fall that we have no voice in their political game. Corporate sponsorship of political events, donations to campaigns and enormous lobbying efforts have disenfranchised us, and still, the bureaucrats, politicians, and capitalists continue to campaign with the fervor of used car salesmen, badgering us to vote for their candidate. With the presidential election fast approaching, the charade continues and the insanity increases. The democrats yell at us, warning of impending evil should we vote for Green Party candidate, Ralph Nader. According to these hacks, every vote for Nader solidifies George W's chances of making it into office, which, they claim, would actually mean different policies than Gore. More progressive liberals like the Greens rant about Al Gore and his wrongdoings, proclaiming that voting for Nader can actually bring positive change.

We should have no more illusions about our democracy. The political system of a capitalist society like ours has one major function; to enforce property relations between the ruling class and the rest of us. Consequently, a vote for any candidate is a vote for not only our continued exploitation but also for increased and expanded misery throughout the world. Our choices in this election, as in the past ones, are meaningless because our vote (no matter

who it is for) will be a vote for more of the same -institutionalized racism, sexism, cutbacks, police, wars, prisons and ecological destruction.

Certainly, the most important thing to recognize amidst all this political fury is that, at no time in history, has positive social change been achieved by the election of a politician. In fact, all laws and policies enacted by politicians that aren't in the ruling class's interest come into being because we put enough pressure on them through our struggles in our neighborhoods, and workplaces. Elections are simply the ratification of hard fought for victories through social struggle. When we organize ourselves along truly democratic lines — by taking grassroots initiative, refusing leaders and personality cults, using open and participatory methods that put us on a face to face level — to struggle for improvements in our lives, and even to further radical demands we possess a power that is frightening to the ruling class. If we take that organizing further and create serious economic and political consequences we can make demands and see to it that they are achieved! This is our historic realm — not theirs — and we should not compromise in these situations. The ability of the politicians to spin-doctor and speak to our concerns in a seemingly genuine way should not be underestimated. Remember, 'they will always promise us heaven before the elections, and give us hell after them'!

Appearing before us like a two-headed monster, George W. and Al Gore have dispensed with nearly all attempts at upholding the illusion that they represent different politics. Having both received significant and similar amounts of bribes from the same corporations and organizations, it should come as no surprise that they stand on the same side of about 90% of the issues. They are unanimous in their support for the laws and policies that will continue to keep us down; use of the death penalty, welfare reform, tough on crime legislation, militarized borders and murderous immigration policies, wage decreases, HMO control of our health, increased

military spending, decreased social spending, rollbacks on environmental protection, and we know the list could go on.

While Nader tends to stand out with his rhetoric of a 'fair' minimum wage and free healthcare coverage for everyone, there is next to no chance at all (even if he were elected) that those kind of laws would ever pass. We might well face the national guard before congress would concede such needed and costly benefits. The main difference between these politicians lies in their strategy to maintain a stable class society. The only difference between the democrats and republicans are that the democrats have a little more fear of the working class. We can see this in the more conciliatory approach that both Clinton and Gore have taken with their policies. Gore's speech is laced with well-crafted statements about his allegiance to the poor of this country but if one looks closely at the policies that have passed while Gore has sat as VP, you begin to see a different story. Nationally, welfare benefits have been rolled back with devastating results. Their tough on crime legislation and zero tolerance drug policy has ended up putting more people behind bars than even before. Access to abortions has been reduced to hospitals and clinics in only 14% of US counties. If any of these repressive measures had been introduced under Republican leadership we would have been in the streets every weekend, but when a democrat signs them into law, we accept it as the best deal possible.

The Democrats and even more progressive liberals like the Greens take a social democratic strategy to maintain both their power and capitalist stability to keep us content. They throw us crumbs while more severe measures are passed right over our heads and behind our backs. The Republicans use no such pretense. Their strategy is to push us to our absolute limits and when we defend ourselves against their attacks, they are prepared with prisons, the National Guard and brutal cops. As divergent as these strategies are, the results are the same.

Rather than willingly grant any of these criminals the authority to rule over us we should force them to concede to our needs and de-

sires by raising the social cost in the streets. Class struggle brings change with fewer compromises and in less time. Whether those changes are improvements in our struggle to survive or changes that take aim at the whole system with the intent of replacing it with a more equitable libertarian society will depend on our demands in the street, not the candidate in the office.