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Not Another Fucking COP Out!

Shawn Hattingh

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At the time of writing, ruling class scum (the rich, big bosses, politicians and state managers) from across the globe are hopping on fancy planes to descend, like fleas, onto the posh air conditioned Durban Convention Centre for the COP 17 meeting. In between living in luxury, posing for press pictures, attending cocktail parties, closing business deals, and flashing fake bleached smiles; we are told – by these very same ruling class parasites – that they are coming to Durban and COP 17 to solve global warming. To be sure, the ruling class scum want us to believe that they are Armani-clad superheroes who care about us and who are flying in to save us all. But hold the applause and cheers, because nothing could be further from the truth.

It is, in fact, the ruling class parasites – many of whom will be sitting on their arses and talking utter rubbish in the COP 17 meeting – who have caused global warming and environmental destruction. It is the rich and their friends in the state that have stolen and profited from oil, gold and other minerals – so that they could live like kings and queens. It is them

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who have sent workers to die in the mines; it is them who have cut costs and poisoned workers in the factories and farms; and it is them who have dumped their waste and air pollution all over the place, including in and next to our townships. They have done this for two reasons – to make more money and to become more powerful. They are not, therefore, Robin Hoods, good Samaritans, or friendly helpful super-heroes wanting to save us; but are rather scum who have been stealing from the workers and the poor to enrich themselves. While the rich and their politician pals have done all this, we have been forced to work in kak jobs (to increase their profits), to live in shacks and RDP houses that are falling apart, and to live with fokall electricity and to have sewerage running past our doors. When we complain, far from swooping in to help us, these ruling class scum try and silence us with the police!

The truth is that the whole COP 17 meeting is not about saving the world or the environment or stopping global warming, it is rather about keeping this kak system in place: a system where workers and the poor are forced to work and live in misery – which includes being subjected to the bosses' pollution! The COP 17 meeting is a meeting of the ruling class, by the ruling class, for the ruling class! It is about them trying to make money by buying and selling the environment, and screwing us over yet again. They are, therefore, once again trying to steal from us, and through COP17 they are trying to disguise it with a kind word and big smile.

Some people that claim to be 'do-gooders', however, seem to be blind to this reality. These people, sometimes passing themselves off as the guiding lights of the struggle, often tell us we should lobby the government or the likes of the COP 17 meeting to get the rich and politicians to stop polluting so much. They may mean well, but is this really the best way to win what we want? Indeed, some 'do- gooders' say we should not protest, block roads or burn tyres, but rather talk nicely and politely to the government and use the 'proper channels'.

They even say we should be involved in ‘social dialogue’ with the bosses and the state to get better working conditions, and only strike if nothing else has worked. Even when we strike, they sometimes tell us we must not be disruptive! The reality is that after 17 years, this ‘lobbying’ has gained us nothing. In many cases we work and live in worse conditions than 17 years ago. Workers are still poisoned at work, the environment in many townships has gotten worse because many of us have no electricity and are forced to burn polluting coal and paraffin for heat and cooking, and many of us don’t even have flush toilets! Lobbying and dialogue has got us nowhere – it has rather tied our struggles up and robbed us of our power. Even when people have lobbied, the politicians never listen. The reason for this is that the politicians are not workers nor are they poor; they are rather well-off and have their own interests like their salaries and keeping power. They are, therefore, not our friends but are part of the ruling class. They will lie to us to keep us quiet, promise us the earth – and five minutes later they will tear up our ‘submissions’ and petitions and throw them in the dustbin. Lobbying has clearly failed and it will fail at COP 17 too. Politicians clearly think it is a joke anyway. We say no more! Stuff the rich scum and lobbying!

The time, we think, has come to stop lobbying the rich scum and politicians as if they were our friends or as if they cared about us. The state and the rich (including all of them in the COP 17 meeting) are our enemies; not our friends. We need to start treating them as such! It is because of them, and the capitalist and state system that keeps them rich, that we live like dogs. To win the things we want – which includes less pollution – we need to fight them; not lobby them. We need to stop going on our hands and knees and saying “please nkosi or please baasgive me just a few more crumbs or please, please stop poisoning me at work or stop polluting so much”. They don’t care, grovelling makes them feel important and makes us feel powerless. So we need to rather stand up and fight, and

force them to stop doing what they are doing and give us what we want.

This means we need to begin linking our struggles up, we need to build our class pride and we need to start sticking it to the ruling class scum. Already township protests are happening every day, and we need to start connecting these together so that they can become a massive movement. To do so, means recognising who our enemies are and who our friends are. To start to challenge the ruling class parasites, we need to continue to use direct actions, like protests, strikes and occupations, and build on these by directing them towards the right people – bosses, politicians and the state – and linking them up more and more: until they become a massive force. That also means scoring victories here and now through our own actions to win the things we need today like houses, clean water and better, cleaner working and living environments. We also need to think tactically, which means hitting the bosses and rich where and when they are weakest; and laying low when we have to, to fight another day.

While we can and must win things today, if we want true freedom and equality, however, we need to build our movements into a huge force that can get rid of the ruling class, the state and capitalism in the future. We will only be free and equal when there are no more rulers and bosses. To do this we need to build on our existing struggles, and through them, fight for genuine People's Power: where we run our own communities, cities and regions directly and truly democratically without scumbag politicians of any kind. We need to also begin to use our day to day workplace struggles, like for wages and cleaner and safer working environments, to also build our power as workers so that we can eventually seize the factories from the bosses and run them for the benefit of all. We don't need any kak political party to do this! Rather through our own movements, and through our existing struggles, we can

build on our power until we are strong enough to get rid of the scum that rule, pollute and exploits us.

**AGAINST COP17 AND THE RULING CLASS SCUM!
FOR WORKING CLASS PRIDE!
FOR WORKING CLASS POWER!**