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Don't Vote! Organise!

Soundz of the South

April 17, 2014

In the build up to the 2014 (May 7) elections, politicians – whether from the DA, ANC, EFF, or PAC – have been calling on us to vote. As part of this, they have promised to meet people's needs, end poverty and serve communities when they are elected. The promises of all these politicians are lies.

Politicians don't give a damn about workers and the poor; all they care about is their own power. They will tell us anything to get nice jobs in parliament. When politicians get into the state – whether at a municipal or national level – all they do is pass laws and put in place policies that benefit themselves and their rich friends. They protect their own interests and those of their allies in the form of the capitalists when they are in the state. Far from serving us; they wage a war on us.

This is even the goal of the EFF. The EFF says should they get into state power, they will use the state to nationalise the banks and mines. A state nationalising companies, however, means the state takes ownership of these companies, the state then appoints the managers and they grow rich out of this. Under nationalisation, the working class still does not own the state does. Workers still have bosses, expect under nationalisation,

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the bosses are well paid state managers, and workers are still exploited.

So the elite in the EFF, like Malema, want to use the state to enrich themselves through nationalisation. In fact, most of the leadership of the EFF was in the state, or linked to it through tenders, when they belonged to the ANC. They used their positions then to enrich themselves. Why would it be different if they were in the state again as the EFF?

In fact, the EFF is not even anti-capitalist. In their founding manifesto, which is their election platform, they say they will welcome private capitalists – both local and foreign – to invest in manufacturing in South Africa. This means they will welcome capitalists and allow them to exploit workers, and that in South Africa mostly means black workers.

In reality getting into the state power does not abolish the class system, the rule of a few, inequalities nor capitalism. Getting into the state simply changes the make-up and some of the faces of the people that rule. Under states, which are always top down, only a few can rule: the majority of people can never be involved in decision making under a state system. That is why when former liberation fighters or activists have entered into the state, because of its top down structure, they have become rulers and gotten rich. They have become governors and ruled in their own interests. To keep this going they exploited and oppressed the vast majority of the people – using states and their institutions like parliament, the courts and police to do so. Marikana is an example that demonstrates this.

This means if we vote, we are only choosing new faces to join the class of oppressors and exploiters.

Instead of voting, we rather need to organise and build a massive campaign around not voting and strengthen the power of our movements. We can also use this to expose politicians for what they are – ruling class bloodsuckers in service of their own interests and that of their class: the ruling class.

In fact, we need to start building our movements into a massive power that can smash capitalism and the state; and throw out the capitalists and politicians from power – voting does not bring us closer to this; but organising and struggle on the streets, in the mines, farms and factory floor does.

As part of this, we need to build towards the goal of taking the land, mines, banks, farms and in fact everything in to our own hands as the working class through struggle and seizing them directly – and not through hoping that politicians will give them to us (they won't, they will keep it for themselves and their capitalist friends, and stab us in the back). We also need to build and fight so that one day we as the working class can take power in society and run it through direct democracy without a state – using our movements and things like worker councils to allow everyone to have an equal say in how society is run. Voting brings us no closer to this either. In fact all it does is create more illusions in the state and politicians; and it keeps us slaves!

ONLY THE WORKING CLASS CAN FREE ITSELF – SO DON'T VOTE