

Boycott the elections

Workers' Solidarity Federation

1995

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Because so few people bothered to register for the upcoming local elections, the deadline has been extended to the beginning of June.

But its not surprising that there is so much apathy. The government has not delivered.

Only 800 houses have been built so far! Meanwhile the police have been used against strikers (at Pick n' Pay, truckers Blockade, Spar etc.), squatters (Johannesburg, Zevenfontein), and students (Cape Town, OFS Technikon).

NO ACCIDENT

The State is not some neutral tool at the disposal of voters. The State always serves the bosses.

Look at the South African State: this was built in the course of 350 years of genocide and capitalist colonialism. It won't change just because we put some ballot papers in a box every five years.

Obviously its better to live under a bourgeois democracy. It's a whole lot better than a racist dictatorship.

But even now, the State remains the tool of the bosses. Real power does not lie in Parliament. It lies in the military, in the civil service and in the boardrooms of the companies. If the bosses were really threatened by the Parliament they would remove it by military force or by fascism.

In any case the ANC is not exactly a party of revolutionary socialists. They believe that there is no real alternative to capitalism and that capitalism can be returned to meet the needs of the majority in South Africa. This means that they will always put the needs of the bosses first.

Whatever their original intentions, most MPs and other "elected representatives" soon get a taste for the power and privilege their position brings. This is called the gravy train. The effect is that they no longer share anything in common with ordinary people.

We also reject parliamentary action because we disagree with the idea that 400 people (even if elected) have the right to take decisions on behalf of another 40 million .

At most it will create a new Black elite but not address the majority's needs.

The WSF believes that the only way we will win any improvements is if we stop looking to parliament and so called leaders for change and organize on the ground. Struggle broke apartheid and only struggle will end its legacy.

BOYCOTT THE LOT

This is why we believe the call to set up a so- called Mass Workers Party in time for the 1999 elections is futile. This is also why we also disagree with those who think the election of the ANC is the first phase-in the transition to socialism.

The idea that we should vote for the ANC again in order to defend the process of change against racists like the NP is also wrong. The ANC has repeatedly attacked the struggles of its Black working class supporters.

This idea also puts things upside down. Our rights do not originate in parliament. They were forced on parliament through struggle and sacrifice. And they will be defended in the same way.

Just imagine what would happen if the NP won the elections and tried to reimpose Apartheid!? Action, not votes, is the key to change.

Others say that we should boycott the elections because the Interim Constitution and the Government of National Unity structures are a sell out of Black demands.

The nature of the State does not change just because the Constitution is worded differently. We can only expect redress of our grievances if we struggle.

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE BOYCOTT:

When we call for a vote boycott we are not calling for apathy. We are calling for an active campaign.

1. Boycott the vote and explain why to your workmates, friends etc. your reasons .
2. Write to us and we will supply you with bundles of anti vote posters. This is why we are calling for a vote boycott.

We have no illusions that this campaign will stop the elections but we have to start building for real socialism now.

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