

# *The Worker*



*Knowledge is power*

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## **SOUTH AFRICA A FAKE DEMOCRACY**

### **DUMMY VOTES IN A FAKE DEMOCRACY**

Now let us remind ourselves what “**DEMOCRACY**” means. Democracy simply means “**GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE”.** The interests of the people are paramount and supreme.

But note the following:

- **South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world.**
- **South Africa is the country with the biggest difference between rich and poor in the entire world.**
- **South Africa has the most service delivery protests of all the countries in the entire world.**

This raises the question: if government in South Africa is of the PEOPLE, by the PEOPLE, for the PEOPLE, if the PEOPLE have political power, why have they not used it for job creation, for promoting equality among all our citizens, for satisfactory delivery of services, etc?

**The reality is that we have the vote but we do not have political power. No matter how much we vote, it does not result in “power to the people”. In South Africa, our vote does not express our will, it does not give us what we need or want. It is a meaningless, dummy vote. This is the history of 17 years of democracy in South Africa.**

# **THE UNITY MOVEMENT REJECTED MEANINGLESS, DUMMY VOTES IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA. WE NOW REJECT THE SAME DUMMY VOTES IN THE “NEW SOUTH AFRICA”.**

## **A FUTILE EXERCISE**

For 17 years, we have been going to the polls every few years, to stand in long queues so that we can cast our vote. And then? And then we cast our vote and go home. For the majority of our citizens, who live in the 2 600-plus “informal settlements”, home is the miserable dumps where danger, crime and disease lurk in every squalid corner. Nothing more is expected of us and there is nothing more we can look forward to.

Real political power belongs to the political parties that we vote into power. They have created the system. **It is a system that ensures that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.** In this system, you vote for a party, not a candidate. Even in the ward council elections, almost a hundred percent of the candidates are party members. Their first loyalty is not to you or me, the voters – but to their parties. Their parties are in fact their employers, since their parties (not we, the voters) can kick them out of office.

What we need first and foremost is a system where the candidates are individuals from our own communities. They need to be answerable to us, the electorate. They need to hold regular meetings with us to find out what we need and want. They need to report back to us on a regular basis. And if they don't deliver, or if their performance is unsatisfactory to us, the electorate, then we should have the right to immediately remove them from office and replace them with someone who carries out our demands.

## **A SYSTEM OF FRAUD AND CORRUPTION**

However, the current political parties will never change the system this way. They have too much to lose. Their main concern is to stuff their pockets with money gained through inflated salaries, blatant theft, and other corrupt practices.

The Ward Councillor is employed by the City of Cape Town – or Durban or Johannesburg – on a part-time basis and is paid approximately R30.000,00

per month. The community therefore cannot recall the Ward Councillor, albeit that his/her salary is paid by the rates and taxes of the community.

If parliament (or the municipal councils) were forums that genuinely represented us, then things would be very different. Then the institutions of government would start to address the real needs of the people. Then our representatives in government would be far more concerned about our needs.

## **LIES AND FALSE PROMISES**

Before every election, the political parties make big promises to attract us to the polls. With this year's local council elections, it's no different. Jobs are our biggest need, so guess what? The government tries to make us feel hopeful by promising us jobs. They are not going to create 5 million jobs by 2020 when they have not been able to solve the unemployment problem after 17 years in office.

## **BIG BUSINESS THE PROBLEM**

They say they are going to rely on the "private sector" – in other words, big business. However, we know all about big business.

- Big business is not the solution. It is the problem!
- Their first priority is their shareholders.
- For years, big business has been shedding jobs.
- The international business network – the capitalist-imperialist corps – has no loyalty to South Africa.
- They will have no hesitation to close local factories and shops, move overseas and/or outsource work to foreign countries such as China or India or any other places where slave labour and starvation wages guarantee huge profits for themselves and poverty for the bulk of the people.
- And, of course, big businesses are themselves not democracies. The workers, who produce the goods and services that create the wealth for business, have no say in the running of the firms. This is the privilege of a small handful of owners and managers, whose main aim is to ensure profits not jobs. What it comes down to is that, like big businesses, the country is run by a tiny handful of powerful people, who are interested in themselves, not us.

## **SECOND CLASS CITIZENS**

- Now because a country is said to be democratic, it does not mean that all its citizens have the same rights, the same freedom and are all equal before the law.
- Corrupt councillors and politicians steal millions of taxpayers' money and get away with it; a poor, unemployed, homeless citizen, who steals a loaf of bread because he or she is hungry, will almost certainly be imprisoned.

## **THE SELL-OUT**

- We must remember that the democratic South Africa was firmly entrenched within capitalism/imperialism at its "birth" in 1994 through the negotiated settlement deal that took place. This in essence was a total "sell-out" of the fundamental rights and freedom of the citizens of South Africa. The economic power and land/property remained in the hands of a privileged few and a small number of the "Black Elite" who were bought off joined them.
- The question to be asked is: must we continually vote ourselves into a situation of total surrender to the domination of "western capital/imperialism"? Are we satisfied to remain landless, homeless, jobless second-class citizens without fundamental human rights in the land of our birth?
- The answer must surely be NO, NO, NO. The "ROT" must STOP.

## ***WHAT MUST WE DO TO BRING ABOUT REAL CHANGE IN THIS COUNTRY?***

What we need to do is to change the system to one that is a genuine democracy, and the only way we can do this is by starting to create our own democracies in the communities and organisations where we find ourselves. If communities across the length and breadth of the country started to organise themselves into local democracies, and if these local democracies combined or united to take forward the demands of the people, then we would become a powerful force – an alternative to this fake-democracy that works so well for the elite but is such a huge disappointment to the rest of us.

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