

anti privatisation forum



11th Floor, Auckland House (East Wing) 185 Smit Street, Braamfontein, 2000
(Tel: 339-4121; Fax: 339-4123)

APF PLATFORM ON NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Where is the power to solve your needs?

As the national elections come closer millions of workers and youth will ask themselves what they should do, and how if at all they should vote. You are told that your vote will make a difference and that the future of the country lies with the way you vote. You are asked to believe that for a few seconds every five years you have the power to decide the future. This, after adding the smiles of the politicians, their **promises and lies**, is part of what is called democracy. **Do you feel this power? Do you feel powerful? Did it solve your needs and problems over the last ten years?**

From 1994 you were promised jobs but today **8 million of us are unemployed** and if you resign from your work you won't get your UIF. You were promised **houses but we face evictions and rightsizing**, the sale of houses to pay municipal arrears and capitalist banks, greedy landlords and forced removals. You were promised **free basic services but millions of us face electricity and water cut offs and the spread of pre-paid meters**. You were promised free education but the youth are **punished for not paying** their fees and locked out for being too old. You hoped for a **decent job** under the ANC employer in the public sector but you faced **privatisation and subcontracting, retrenchment** and a struggle even to defend your declining wages while the employer in government got fatter and fatter pay cheques.

The biggest election lie comes when the ANC says that it is a people's government, serving the people first, when it actually serves the capitalists and their greed for profits first. Today after ten years of ANC rule it is clear that the **ANC government has stolen our hope and used the votes of workers and youth to provide strength and profits for the bosses under their capitalist system**. That is why they continue **privatisation**. That is why capitalists pay billions **less tax** every year whilst the working class faces the higher price of cost recovery. That is why education, health, and other social spending is only the same today, in real terms, as it was in 1995 and hundreds of thousands die of aids as R60 billion gets spent on arms to protect capitalist profits. **Today the capitalist class has a bigger share of profits than it has ever had since 1981 – this is how the ANC that millions of workers and youth un-banned and placed their hope in has betrayed you.**

We need to remind ourselves as workers and youth everywhere that it was this united mass struggle of millions of workers and youth that won us the vote today. This was the power that ensured the "delivery" of the vote. But look at what this bourgeois (capitalist) democracy is. It is the "freedom" to vote every 5 years without the power to control how government serves the profits of a minority of capitalists. It is the "freedom" to go and live where you like BUT only if you are rich and have enough money to pay for a house and transport. It is the "freedom" to be treated equally by the law and the police, AS LONG as you can afford a lawyer and are rich enough to pay your bail when they chose to allow this. It is the "freedom" to speak out and be published as long as you can pay for the

materials and distribution and the capitalist media is willing to let your voice be heard. **It is the “freedom” to vote as long as you don’t bring along your united mass struggle to the elections through strikes, marches and mass unity that won us the vote in the first place.**

So you can see bourgeois democracy is about breaking you up into weak and divided individuals separated from your mass strength, organisation and your weapons of struggle, all the better for the capitalists to expand their profits.

The APF will take up issues facing workers and youth

The APF brings together community organisations, workers and activist groups. We emerged three years ago in the struggle against privatisation. The APF stands for free water and electricity. We say housing, water, electricity; jobs at a living wage and education are a right and not a privilege and we organise, campaign and mobilise around these struggles. Where we can we build unity and solidarity with workers in struggle as we’ve done with municipal workers on wages, with COSATU on privatisation, with Shoprite Checkers against casualisation and with the SATAWU airport strikers. **We organise as the APF because the traditional organisations of the working class have failed to defend against the attacks communities and workers face.**

The APF will use the national election process to **intensify our struggles** around electricity, water, housing and education and through these and other activities to **consolidate our links with other social movements**. We think the most important part of elections is not the vote, but connecting around the problems and issues that you face as ordinary workers and youth, discussing these and agreeing on the strongest possible way to solve them **before the elections, on the day of the elections and after the elections**. We think the strongest possible way is through **mass struggle** on the ground. We have our own demands and campaigns that we want to share and encourage you to build. We have our own opinions on what we think you should do on the day of the elections. We will share these with you. But most of all we want to use the process around the elections to hear your view and your answers, so that together we organise and build the strongest possible road forward for the working class around our needs. We cannot do this honestly, without also exposing the **capitalist agenda of the ANC and confronting the limits of bourgeois democracy** and its “freedoms.”

We will not be standing candidates in the elections. **Our alternative to the greed of the capitalists and the ANC government that serves them lies in rebuilding fighting organisations on the ground able to defend and advance the interests of workers and youth**. There has never been a sustained future in partnership with capitalists and under capitalism except a future of mass unemployment and poverty. We will only begin to satisfy our needs through building working class power against capitalism. **We build for a future alternative of socialism where people are put before profits**, social justice before exploitation and economic equality before class privilege and greed. This is a long struggle, but there is no choice. Join us and strengthen this struggle.

JOIN THE APF AND ITS AFFILIATES AT PUBLIC MEETINGS AND THROUGH OTHER MASS BASED STRUGGLE ON THE GROUND

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGNS AND STRUGGLES

BUILD THE VOICE OF THE RANK AND FILE AND POOR COMMUNITIES

JOIN US IN BUILDING AN ALTERNATIVE TO TEN YEARS OF ANC RULE

The APF has said that it is not in principle against standing in bourgeois elections but it will not do so now. This means a time can come where we organise and mobilise votes for our candidates.

The APF calls on people:

NOT TO VOTE FOR THE ANC

NOT TO VOTE FOR OTHER BOURGEOIS POLITICAL PARTIES

BUT IT IS UP TO INDIVIDUAL APF AFFILIATES TO DECIDE WHAT THEY DO ON THE DAY OF THE ELECTIONS

Whatever affiliates decide, they should use the election process to organise, fight and protest around our needs. Use the election process to call the masses to build an alternative to ten years of ANC rule. We do this knowing that elections are one tactic for protest but that our strongest and most powerful weapons lie in building our organisation wherever we are, uniting and building mass action in struggle for our needs.

DON'T LET CAPITALIST POLITICS STEAL YOUR HOPE

We think it is **possible to build a different future but we will only do this through building our struggles on the ground and building a force powerful enough to ensure this future.** We need to remind ourselves of the power we built against apartheid capitalism. We need to look at the growing international struggles. We need to rebuild OUR confidence and OUR organisation and OUR hope in our own strength. Imagine receiving the services you need without an electricity or water cut-off because you have no money in your pocket. This is possible. Imagine a massive mobilisation against the capitalists and the rich to access the wealth stolen from workers so as to build decent houses and create jobs. This is possible. Imagine building and running schools whose purpose was educating and empowering youth without locking gates, throwing out the old, demanding payment and scorning the eyes of the hungry. This is possible. Imagine using state resources to strengthen the power of striking workers and mobilised communities rather than attacking them to protect the private property of the rich with courts and police. This is possible. Imagine decent jobs serving the needs of the communities and not a future of volunteerism, casualisation, subcontracting and privatisation that serve to enrich the capitalist minority. **This is a future that is possible, but it is a future that only the united power of the working class can deliver.**

Ask yourself what you need and what problems you face. Then also ask what is the strongest and best way to win these and what obstacles stand in the way.

The first problem comes from the needs of the capitalists and their greed for profits. It is they who create mass poverty and unemployment as they only and always act and employ to make a profit and not for the needs of the working class. It is capitalists that demand privatisation and lower taxes and lower prices for water and electricity so that they make more profit whilst workers face cut-offs, higher prices, lower wages and mass unemployment. It is capitalists who control all the things we need to produce our need because they own the means of production, including land. But capitalists cannot survive for one day without a government and a state machinery to protect them.

Then you will see that the **second problem comes when organisations that we built and placed trust and hope in, serve the needs of capitalists and not the workers and the poor.** Millions overwhelmingly voted for the ANC from 1994. But the ANC has become a government of the capitalists, a government of cut-offs, evictions, privatisation and mass unemployment. These are the policies of the capitalists. The ANC government serves capital. This does not mean it does not deliver some things – even capitalists are getting worried about massive inequality and how this could threaten their profits. It does mean that it only delivers after the needs of bosses for services and support are satisfied. It does mean that it only delivers to the working class if this also serves the interests of the capitalist class. Imagine a state that always put the needs of the working class first.

Many working class people still feel loyal and support the ANC even as they know how their trust was betrayed and that it will never meet their needs. It will not be an easy thing for many to throw away the movement that first gave them politics and hope, a movement that they un-banned through their struggle. For many giving up support for the ANC is giving up hope. But **supporting the ANC will not solve your problems; it will only make them worse.**

The seeds of the alternative lie in the strikes and struggles that workers build against their bosses and the resistance and campaigns that residents in the community build. **Together we CAN BUILD AN ALTERNATIVE based on organisation struggling for your needs, standing on your power and guided by your collective voice.**

There is **no longer space inside the ANC to shape its policies and political action. There is no independent ANC outside of parliament.** No, the Tripartite Alliance does not change this day-to-day reality. Look how the SACP leadership acts for the ANC as ministers and other government officials to implement cut-backs and cost recovery in municipalities, privatisation everywhere, splitting public sector trade unions so as to retrench and pay lower wages, politically directing police protection of private property and attacks on community struggles and protecting the government from the anger of workers. Look how COSATU leaders organise for an ANC victory in the election but refuse to build sustained struggle on the ground against the privatisation and cut-offs that the ANC government implements for the bosses. COSATU leaders know that poverty and high unemployment exist in every township, yet fail to organise real working class power to confront this, making sure that the concerns and anger amongst workers is controlled and not developed, tying the hands of workers behind their backs.

The ANC in government organises and manages the capitalist state for the bosses. And now they do this not only for the capitalists outside the ANC, but also for those capitalists that have taken over the top ranks in the ANC itself.

***THE APF CALLS ON WORKERS AND YOUTH:
NO VOTES FOR A GOVERNMENT THAT SERVES THE BOSSES
AGAINST THE NEEDS OF WORKERS
NO VOTE FOR THE ANC UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES***

A vote for the ANC is a vote for privatisation, school fees and lockouts, evictions, pre-paid water and electricity meters and cut-offs, poverty wages and casualisation. A vote for the ANC is a vote to deliver higher profits to the bosses on the back of greater attacks on the working class, a vote for more corruption and enrichment of a tiny minority who only smile during election time.

There are other parliamentary political parties that collaborate with capitalists, but they cannot do the job of the ANC and deliver workers to the bosses, they just do not have enough support inside the working class. **The needs of workers and youth will not be solved through voting for any of the current parliamentary parties** all of whom have adopted aspects of the capitalist political programme. Our alternative does not lie in supporting any political party that supports capitalists and the exploitation of workers. Our alternative lies in building the power to deal with capitalism through our mass strength and struggles on the ground.

***NO VOTES FOR PARTIES THAT SUPPORT CAPITALIST
POLITICS
NO VOTES FOR ANY OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN
PARLIAMENT***

CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE DESPITE THE ANC'S BETRAYAL

There are others amongst the working class and the youth that understand the betrayal of the ANC and of other organisations they might have built hope and trust in. **You do not think the answer will come from voting. You do not think the answer will come from voting for the ANC. But you ALSO do not believe in a collective working class solution and struggle.** You say all politicians are there to fill their pockets and withdraw from collective and organised struggle. Instead you look to your own **individual progress**.

TO YOU WHO THINK AND ACT LIKE THIS WE SAY:

You will not show your sense of betrayal, your loss of hope and your anger by withdrawing and holding your burning problems to yourself. You will not solve and answer your problems individually without organising to share these problems collectively and building the strongest possible collective power to do this. Withdrawing from struggle only strengthens the hands of those who attack and betray you and assists their project of enriching themselves and the capitalists they serve.

NO, WE ARE NOT HOLDING OUT THE PROMISE THAT YOUR VOTE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE. BUT WE ARE SAYING:

- **Unite and join with us** in struggle to build a solution for your problems on the ground – **vote with your feet through mass action** and campaigning;
- **Speak out** at the public and mass meetings as we open forums to build an alternative to ten years of ANC rule
- **Join our mass actions** around electricity, water, housing and education not on one day, but on every day as activists and rank and file that can organise and **rebuild hope and confidence**.
- Help **build the alternative to bourgeois democracy**: collectively we can discuss, agree and act to solve our problems under our control and leadership
- Real **power does not lie with the vote nor in individual progress**, it lies through the united action of workers and youth around their needs and against all the obstacles that stand in the way.

Most of all without this, without your active involvement in struggle a serious disease spreads amongst ourselves that says: there is no answer to the injustice of the way we live every single day. Only the rich get richer. There can be no collective answer; only the disease of capitalist competition of dog eats dog. You become part of the problem.

APF DEMANDS AND STRUGGLES AROUND THE ELECTION PROCESS

For the youth and the working class there are many problems and many attacks. The APF organises around some of these. We call on you: participate in the election process by sharing your understanding of why and what causes your problems and together planning and building struggle to win our needs based on our strength and our organisation on the ground. We call on you to **join the APF and its affiliates**.

WORKERS, YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

- Share your problems and answers so that together we build the strongest possible way forward on the ground in mass struggle.
- Join us in exposing ten years of ANC rule
- Join us in exposing the limits of bourgeois democracy

**UNITE AND STRENGTHEN OUR STRUGGLES AROUND WATER,
ELECTRICITY, HOUSING AND EDUCATION:**

END PRIVATISATION AND CORPORATISATION

- ❑ Free quality basic services provided to meet needs and not for profit
- ❑ Workers who provide the services should receive a living wage, permanent and secure jobs
- ❑ All services are starved of national funding from the government, government should finance them and the rich should pay.

ELECTRICITY

- ❑ End pre-paid meters and all cut-offs
- ❑ Community (resident) control over electricity provision and distribution
- ❑ Street lights for all areas
- ❑ A halt to arresting people who reconnect their own or their community's electricity

WATER

- ❑ End pre-paid meters and all cut-offs
- ❑ Community (resident) control of water provision and distribution
- ❑ Free water for domestic consumption, public schools, clinics and hospitals
- ❑ Free sanitation services for all
- ❑ Water taps and flush toilets in all houses
- ❑ Free and maintained public toilets in all communities and workplaces

EDUCATION

- ❑ Free quality education from childhood to adulthood
- ❑ An education system empowering learners to free themselves from all forms of capitalist oppression
- ❑ No exclusions based on age, race or finance
- ❑ All learners must have free transport, library access, uniforms, nutritious food and basic health check-ups
- ❑ An end to sexual harassment of female learners and a safe and secure environment
- ❑ No exclusion for documented or undocumented refugees

HOUSING

- ❑ An end to the privatisation of housing
- ❑ Prioritise the public provision of housing with community control over housing projects
- ❑ No evictions
- ❑ Adequate and free housing for all
- ❑ Rent control that forces affordable access to rented accommodation
- ❑ No profits in housing

AGAINST MORE DEATHS FROM AIDS

- ❑ Free provision of drugs and care for those with HIV-AIDS

**USE THE CAMPAIGNS AND STRUGGLES TO BUILD SOLIDARITY
BETWEEN US, WITH OTHER COMMUNITY STRUGGLES, WITH A
STRIKE AND BETWEEN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

**DEFEND, EXPAND AND USE OUR RIGHTS TO ORGANISE,
MOBILISE AND ACT COLLECTIVELY**

- ❑ Change the election act to allow united mass action as the foundation of working class strength
- ❑ Demand free access to public venues for meetings and rallies
- ❑ Demand the right to protest without banning orders, interdicts and jail

ALL OUR MAJOR PROBLEMS COME FROM CAPITALISM
BUILD AND ORGANISE THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CAPITALISM
BUILD THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

