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South Africa

On the Sidikiwe Vukani Vote No Campaign

- IV Online magazine - 2014 - IV471 - April 2014 -

Publication date: Sunday 20 April 2014

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Though the DLF is not standing in the 2014 elections we cannot and will not be silent. We support the vote No Campaign as articulated by Sidikiwe Vukani. This is a step forward in breaking with support for parties that collaborate with or represent capital and its interests. The Sidikiwe Vukani no Campaign must be placed in context. As we mark 20 years since the end of Apartheid and the advent of democracy, there is a deep rupturing of the post apartheid social consensus in the face of intensifying class struggle. The signal for its end is the Marikana massacre and the great mineworkers' strike and farm workers' rebellion of 2012/13, as well as the low intensity service delivery revolts that have spread to all corners of the country. It's not just the negotiated settlement that is rupturing but the legitimacy and effectiveness of the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance as the political guarantor of the 1994 historic compromise. The Vote no Campaign led by some of the most committed and honest leaders of the ANC and the SACP is further evidence that Zuma's ANC has become too ghastly to contemplate.

This initiative is providing a wake up call for the thousands of honest cadres and activists who fought for the liberation of our country and built the mass democratic movement, and who believe South Africa has to break the shackles of capitalism and imperialism to be truly free. It is an opportunity for our compatriots to regain their voice.

This is not a call for abstentionism. On the contrary this is a call for intensified activism, for political renewal that goes beyond placing a cross on a ballot paper every few years. Those who decry this Campaign for turning its back on those who gave up their lives for fighting for the vote are just being opportunistic. Though the franchise is very important our liberation struggle can never be reduced to the vote alone. Fundamentally it was a struggle to unite workers, communities and youth through regaining control of the wealth of the country. Our struggle continues and the vote, parliament and government are sites of different moments of struggle as we march to fulfill the forgotten aspirations of our liberation struggle.

When it comes to the election the Campaign provides opportunities for the millions disaffected by an ANC that has bought into the game and which plays by the rules of the global elite and the rest of the one percenters. The call for votes to either be spoilt or given to smaller parties is understood as tactical as part of a holding operation until a credible left and radical electoral alternative emerges. And who are the smaller parties we believe those who exercise their vote should tactically support? These are parties that say yes to a living wage of R12 500. These are parties that fight with our people for radical land and agrarian reform and for decent public services. These are parties that campaign for nationalisation of the heights of the economy under popular control and say No to capitalism.

Breaking with the ANC is neither to be cold nor to enter the political wilderness but to join many committed activists that never believed the negotiated settlement ended the struggle for freedom. It is to be in solidarity with a generation of new activists embedded in hundreds of trade unions, social movements and popular organisations that take on the good fight for social justice. We see Sidikiwe Vukani as a bridge that will help our comrades trapped in the wilting and discredited Tripartite Alliance to cross over to begin the long path of renewal of the progressive, anti-capitalist and socialist traditions of our struggle for emancipation. The embrace of people fighting for their dignity 20 years after the end of Apartheid is very warm. Working in solidarity with those fighting for a living wage, decent work, shelter they can call home, for land to grow their food and feed their families, for education that opens the doors to knowledge, literature and culture, for safety and security that guarantee women and children can walk our streets freed from fear, for decent public services, for a society free of corruption, is to be warm.

As the DLF we believe the Sidikiwe Vukani Vote No Campaign can be an important step among several towards the

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building of an anti-capitalist electoral platform for the 2016 local government elections.

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