

# The World Cup and Class Struggle

Even for those of us who love sport, the saccharine liberal puff that accompanies any major sporting event can be a little nauseating.



Once you realise that it's not an insufficient quantity of football in the world that causes poverty, racism etc, and that these things cannot be magicked away by the unifying power of the beautiful game, you begin to begin to find things like FIFA's "Win With Africa" campaign very tiresome:

"The goal is to reach beyond football... FIFA hopes... to ensure the entire African continent will benefit from the long-term effects of the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa TM..."

It's just as well FIFA doesn't specify which people in "the entire African continent" it hopes will benefit from the World Cup, because the Cape Town slum-dwellers who've been evicted to make the city look tidier before all the foreign fans arrived, probably feel that it's only the city's rich that are benefiting.

Cape Town residents from the 20,000-strong Joe Slovo slum have been forced into Tin Can Town, a refugee camp for evicted slum-dwellers established as an allegedly temporary settlement in 2008.

Cape Town authorities plan to clear slums in order to build 600 new brick homes, but this wouldn't even make a dent in the housing crisis faced by Cape Town's poorest residents.

With the South African government shelling out £3 billion for the World Cup, plus building a new stadium in Cape Town, it's easy to see why residents of Tin Can Town might not quite feel like entering into the "festival of football" spirit.

The plight of Cape Town's slum-dwellers is just one example; sporting events like the World Cup mean misery for millions of other workers — sweatshop workers in the Far East making kits and balls for poverty wages, or construction workers risking death to build the stadia without basic health and safety regulations. The hyper-exploitation that lies just behind the World Cup's paper-thin philanthropic veneer doesn't make it wrong to enjoy the tournament, but it

does show us that sport, as much as anything else, is locked into capitalist organisation within which profit comes first and even people's most basic rights don't even register.

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