

Elections 2024 (South Africa): It's time for the Left to talk

Tuesday 16 July 2024, by [ETKIND Roger](#) (Date first published: 16 July 2024).

In the feature of this issue we:

- Look back on the election and what messages the results contain;
- Look forward to life with the GNU and what it will mean for the majority of poor and working-class South Africans; and
- Look at the opportunities and challenges for the Left right now.

The Editorial uses the example of the Popular Front in the recent French elections, in which a broad left was able to unite behind a campaign to keep the hard right from becoming the government. It's time for the Left to talk.

Will Shoki takes us on a tour of the array of elections that have taken place this year and those still to come. We pass by the curbing of Narendra Modi in India, the overwhelming victory of Claudia Sheinbaum in Mexico, the victory of the Popular Front in France and the massive parliamentary majority, with a mere 34% vote share, for a right-wing Labour Party in the UK before taking a peek at the US election in November.

After that global overview, we focus on the South African elections. Mazibuko Jara and Gunnett Kaaf explain why there is no GNU but rather a neoliberal pact trying to stabilise a political and social system in deep crisis. They look at the implications for the Tripartite Alliance. Andile Zulu shows how democracy is under attack from big business and how we are in danger of swallowing their story about how their interests are really our interests too. Enver Motala focuses on the indifference of a high proportion of the electorate to the parliamentary process and how we can begin to see an alternative by garnering the lessons from modern experiences of struggle. And finally, in the feature, we interview Siney Kgara, head of Nehawu's Policy Development Unit, for a view of the election and the GNU. He proposes that a popular left front must be urgently built around the material interests of working-class communities and that we must overcome the Left sectarianism of the past. These are interestingly similar sentiments to those expressed in the Editorial.

Our Moment of History in this issue is the 40th anniversary of the Vaal Uprising. Noor Nieftagodien, head of the History Workshop at Wits, takes us through its causes and, most importantly, the profound effect that the alliance forged between workers, communities and students had on the further development of the struggle nationally.

James van Duuren takes a deep dive into the NHI, with a plea to look at it objectively rather than from a position of political partisanship. He explains the problem with the private sector's pursuit of its commercial interest, as well as giving detail on the major deficiencies in the NHI as it is currently proposed. And Jeff Rudin does his best to puncture the fairytale that "is the belief that the political leaders of profit-maximising economies will do anything fundamental to adopt and enforce what climate science says is needed to stop human extinction".

We have a very full international section. In an article on the recent spate of West African coups, Paul Martial explains that, despite some appearances, there is nothing progressive about them. Just a question of “changing masters”. The mass Kenyan protests in June excited the Left around the world, and with good reason. Rasna Warah explains what was unique about these protests and their impact on the future of Kenyan politics. Louis Reynolds exposes, factually, the policy of starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza, and its consequences, especially for children. Sushovan Dhar follows up on his article before the Indian election with an analysis of the results and the impact that his loss of an outright majority may have on Narendra Modi and the BJP. Lewis Barnes asks the question ‘can we vote away fascism in the US?’ and concludes that the answer to the fascist threat does not lie in the Democrats but in building popular resistance. And finally, Lucien van der Walt weaves an obituary of Kenyan activist and author Zarina Patel, into stories of the Kenyan Left and labour movement.

And finally, what you have all been waiting for. The latest episode of our comic strip, ‘The Reluctant President’, in which Cyril Ramaphosa plots with Tshepo how to conceal the ANC’s alliance with the DA by wrapping it up in a GNU...and laments all this politics which is interfering with his real love – his super-expensive cows.

Roger Etkind

P.S.

• Amandla 93. 16, 2024:

<https://www.amandla.org.za/elections-2024-its-time-for-the-left-to-talk/>