

For a socialist electoral platform: Elections 2024 – What strategic possibilities for the socialist left?

By Organizing Committee for a Mass Working Class Assembly
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The politically concentrated nature of the electoral period provides the working class with a strategic focus to drive home the idea that nothing is immutable; and that, as a social class, it can overturn the ruling class neo-liberal capitalist agenda which kills lives, planet earth and causes worldwide immiseration.

In a period like this one, the working class requires a sustained program that will amplify its voice in the struggle against the ruling classes and their neo-liberal capitalist agenda. A platform that captures the imagination and aspirations of all oppressed persons organised and otherwise and which gives sound to a collective expression of the kind of society they envisage for themselves.

It is for this reason that the Organizing Committee for a Mass Working Class Assembly (OC-MWCA) will be hosting a public discussion on Sunday 15 October 2023 on the strategic political questions confronting the working class. This discussion will enrich political conversations on a viable electoral platform for Elections 2024 to will be presented for consideration by the MWCA.

The debate is designed to be a build up towards the subsequent development of 9 resolutions that shall represent the political approach of the Mass Working Class Assembly which is scheduled to sit on 25-27 October 2023 on both bourgeois electoral systems and the impending Elections 2024.

The Mass Working Class Assembly shall at its sitting, pronounce - among other things - on the Mass Workers Party, the ultimate organisational instrument carrying out its campaigns and struggle for working class power.

8The OC-MWCA makes a call to socialist activists to participate in the discussion and to prepare to fight unrelentingly for transitional demands towards a socialist democracy.

Summary of Issues

Election periods open up unique possibilities for encouraging popular political activity. In the light of this, and in the run-up to the 2024 general elections, the OC aims to address the SA left and all political activists to organise struggle in workplaces, in the streets, mass mobilisation and educate for demands along the following lines.

- The working class need to unite behind a platform of struggle aimed at forging an alternative political focus to the failed politics of the ANC, the EFF, the Moonshot right, and a myriad of smaller organisations.
- Our objective is to begin a process leading to the building of a mass party of the workers and the poor. However, our immediate aim is not so much to win seats in Parliament. Instead, we hope to rally a core of activists around a platform that can lead the struggle against a decayed and failing capitalist political system before, during and after the 2024 election.

- The mass of the working class must be convinced that the only way to challenge the capitalist system is through direct action and democratic self-organisations of the working class and the poor themselves. The old parties have all failed the aspirations of the mass of the electorate.
- As the left, our influence is however currently limited and mass combat structures and unions are in serious decline. The point would then be to unite around an interim electoral vehicle to challenge mainstream establishment parties at the voting booth. This demands tactical unity across South African left forces.

We aim, by building this unity, to give the working class and poor a collective voice in the political struggle around the general election. A successful campaign for the interests of workers and the poor at election time will also help put pressure from below on the mainstream parties who continue to command mass electoral support.

A common platform must be rooted in an agreement between individuals and organisations to fight together around a set of basic demands. All those still committed to the interests of the working class and the poor will be called on to support these demands. This can also include individual candidates of mainstream parties who still retain some commitment to the masses.

Our approach will be to unite in an 'electoral bloc' with an agreed basic platform, but with each organisation able to put forward its own wider programme if they so wish. We hope to organise the bloc around basic demands such as the following, which are to be finalised in the MWCA:

We stand for:

- Work or full pay to reverse declining living standards and to support families.
- Government to institute a universal basic income of a minimum of R2 500.00 to stem hunger, stunted children, family suicides, the surge in crime and violence against women and children in an economy that expels than absorb people to work particularly the young who are in dire economic distress.
- Government to intervene through subsidies and retail market regulation to lower the barbaric escalation of food prices causing widespread hunger, malnutrition, and family insecurity.
- The defence of all workers' and trade union rights. Demand a reversal of all legislation created to discipline workers militancy to succumb to neoliberal industrial restructuring and curtailing the right to strike and representation. All workers and communities to close ranks against government led austerity bridle against Collective Bargaining agreements.
- An end to the South African Reserve Bank neoliberal inflation targeting strangling economic reindustrialisation and employment creation.
- Worker-community self-defence units in the context of escalating repression and criminality in neighbourhoods, including defence against sex- and gender-based violence. And that community defence rights is accompanied by counter measures against the escalating sentiment that criminality is perpetrated by people of foreign descent such as formations akin to Operation Dudula and the accompanying violence and intimidation meted out and threatened against foreign-born nationals.

- Rebuilding the economy under working class democratic control.
- The return of all land to the sovereign ownership of the people.
- Rural infrastructure development, land rights, the expansion and support of subsistence farming and economic transformation of rural communities.
- The expansion of decent free urban and rural housing outside property markets, free healthcare, and free education.
- Government to cancel all student debt and remove property brokers in the allocation of student accommodation.
- An end to the privatisation of our shared water and energy commons.
- Responses to the climate crisis to be placed at the centre of all government planning through extensive and genuine engagement and consultation with communities of the working class.
- Proper and sustainable mitigation measures to deal with climate change and the displacement of communities.
- The defence of national sovereignty against foreign intervention and manipulations
- An end to the imperialist backed war drive and recolonisation of sovereign countries particularly in Africa. To expose the insidious complicity of local sub-imperialist elites in advancing the plunder of Africa's resources.

The draft demands outlined above will need further discussion and clarification. Participants in the MWCA electoral platform must determine the terms of engagement with bourgeois elections on matters of representation, remuneration and recall of platform members. Our principled position must be to expose bankrupt schemes to accommodate and channel working class struggles away from overturning capitalism.

Submitted by the Organizing Committee for a Mass Working Class Assembly

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