

## Local election result shows working class has no confidence in ANC, DA or EFF

# Build a socialist mass workers party to remove the ANC in 2019

On 3 August the ANC's support fell to under 54% of the votes cast. This was a drop of over 8% and a loss of 3.3 million votes since 2014. In five of the eight urban metros the ANC does not have a majority. Across the country there are a further 27 hung councils. The ANC is badly wounded and vulnerable to losing its parliamentary majority in 2019. Its image of electoral invincibility is shattered.

To rub salt into the ANC's wounds, where it was knocked into second place, it was by the right wing pro-capitalist Democratic Alliance – a party whose historical origins stretch deep into SA's colonial and apartheid past. In addition to the long-held Cape Town, the DA now leads administrations in Nelson Mandela Bay, Johannesburg and Tshwane. But none of the DA's new gains were based on receiving a majority of votes. Nationally, they got fewer votes than in 2014, falling 3% short of their own target of 30%. What the electorate took away from the ANC they did not give to the DA.

Some on the left have fallen into despair, putting forward the absurd idea that the DA will now begin to return the country to apartheid. But the election results do not show a surge in support for the DA. First and foremost the results reflect a massive rejection of the ANC. Millions stayed away from the polls. Of the 26 million registered to vote, only 15 million did. The ANC's share of the eligible voting population has now fallen to 31% from 35% in 2014.

### The EFF

Winning 8.2%, the EFF improved its share of the vote by less than 2% compared to 2014. The EFF leadership had set itself the target of trebling its vote and winning an undisclosed number of municipalities. But in the end they did not win a single council. The EFF is correct to recognise that it did not obtain a mandate to govern. But this applies as much to the DA who

failed to win an outright majority in any of its new metros.

Therefore, for a party like the EFF that has made the battle against 'white privilege' and the domination of the economy by 'white monopoly capital' central to its political message, the decision to vote for DA mayors in Johannesburg, Tshwane and NMB has surprised many. The capitalist media has praised the decision for its "political maturity". The Workers and Socialist Party believes the EFF's decision to vote for DA mayors was a very serious mistake.

As the EFF itself acknowledges, there is no ideological difference between the DA and the ANC. The new Johannesburg mayor, Herman Mashaba, clearly shows the DA's anti-working class character. He is a former chairperson of the Free Market Foundation which is currently taking legal action to cripple the power

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of trade unions by destroying centralised bargaining in the name of "freedom" – for the DA "freedom" is the right for bosses to pay workers slave wages. In his election campaign he promised to privatise Pikitup. But using service delivery to enrich capitalists is the exact same approach as the ANC. Rather than voting for him, the EFF should have exposed Mashaba as an example of what the DA really stands for – to roll back the gains of workers to the level of the apartheid era.

EFF leaders have tried to justify support for the DA on several grounds. This included that their main strategic objective was to break the ANC's grip on power;

that they did not want to disrupt service delivery by preventing the formation of administrations; that the DA was not a corrupt party; and so on. If the EFF was truly a revolutionary party, its leadership could have linked fresh elections to the organisation of working class and poor communities for a struggle to raise living standards and win decent service delivery for all. Contradicting all of this already, Malema has now said the EFF would consider a coalition with the ANC if they fall below 50% in 2019. Ultimately, this reflects that the EFF does not look beyond capitalism.

### Workers party

In these elections many municipalities, especially the metros and the urban areas where the working class dominates saw a whole range of independent candidates and community structures standing – crisis committees, concerned residents organisations, civics, etc. This represents a search by working class and poor communities for their class independence and a rejection of the capitalist status quo.

The material clearly exists to take important steps towards filling the political vacuum with a socialist mass workers party. Such a party would provide a platform for uniting service delivery struggles across the county with students struggling for free education and for a renewed trade union movement based on struggle and solidarity. Only such a party, capable of uniting the working class majority, can inflict a decisive electoral defeat on the ANC in the 2019 elections and begin a struggle for the socialist transformation of society.

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