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# Bottomline

BECAUSE THE YCLSA SAYS SO

Socialism In Our Lifetime



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. EDITORIAL NOTES
  2. WHY THE YOUTH SHOULD VOTE ANC ? A YCLSA PERSPECTIVE
  3. ARTICLE: REFLECTIONS OF A YOUNG MAN ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION BY KARL MARX 1935
  4. YOUTH REFLECTIONS ON NHI - YCLSA PERSPECTIVE
  5. MZALA NXUMALO - A LEFT PERSPECTIVE
- SA BOOK REVIEW BY PROF MAHARAJH RASIGAN
6. CONTACT US

VOTE X ANC 2024

REVOLUTION AT THE POLLS,  
THE YOUTH VOTE UNLEASHED



SPECIAL EDITION: ISSUED BY THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA

## Editorial Notes:

As the 2024 general elections draw closer, with less than 2 weeks left for the nation to go cast their votes for their preferred organization or their independent candidate(s). This Year's general elections are taking place under murky conditions which in the main are largely characterized by information and disinformation – this disinformation agenda is spread by the opposition parties which propagate baseless narratives which seek to create a view that the governing party the ANC has not done anything in the past 30 Years in governance.

This is outright fallacy, there are a lot of interventions that the ANC-led government has advanced for and has successfully delivered to the people, there is an agreement that not all is well and that there is still a need for more to be done and the ANC led government has set itself the agenda to ensure that the transforms South Africa for the better. This is a testament to the work done in the past 30 years and this is further reaffirmed in the manifesto which has set out for itself 6 key priorities.

The priorities entailed in the Manifesto are key agenda-setting issues that are set to continue to propel the advances of the NDR (National Democratic Revolution) the central and cardinal program of action of the liberation movement which in the main is to build a non-racial, non-sexist and a prosperous society - to attain a better life for all. Since the advent of democracy fought so hard by the people of this country there has been tremendous progress and development made and by this, there also is an admission that not all is Uhuru, the movement has to resolve the obstinate and systemic challenges created by the ghastly evil system of oppression, colonialism, and apartheid which has stripped our people of their identity – the ANC manifesto as outlined present achievable and pragmatic issues given the experience it has in governance.

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As the progressive liberation forces we have set out to do all in our might to ensure that we defend the democratic gains we have won since the 1994 political breakthrough and we do so cognisant of the fact that we are up against the anti-transformation forces which have grouped themselves as pacts, their view is to hinder the electoral successes of the ANC. The one thing to note is the fact that these anti-transformation forces are backed by the imperialist forces and the domestic right-wing instigators whose sole agenda is set for regime change. They intend to impede the movement from achieving progress towards the goals entailed in the Freedom Charter.

The ANC-Led alliance and the broader democratic movement remain the only dependable revolutionary democratic force capable of uniting the nation in order to achieve a united, democratic, non-sexist, non-racial, and prosperous society for a better life for all because ***Together we can do more.***



**Ramatolo Tlotleng**  
**YCLSA NATIONAL**  
**SPOKESPERSON**



# DEFENDING AND ADVANCING FREEDOM IS THE STRATEGIC CHOICE OF WORKING-CLASS YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA.

## Introduction and Context

South Africa's history has been marked by significant political, economic, and social transformation, with the period before 1994 being characterized by the institutionalized discrimination and oppression of the apartheid regime, while the subsequent three decades have seen notable strides in the implementation of democratic policies in pursuit of social, economic, and educational opportunities.

Prior to the advent of freedom and democracy, the majority of South Africans were subjected to systemic discrimination, dehumanization and exclusion of apartheid, with government policies that actively limited educational and economic opportunities available as part of ensuring a conveyor belt of future labour for the extraction of surplus value with the ultimate objective of ensuring the economy remains solely owned and controlled by the white minority.

The transition to democracy in 1994, however, ushered in a new era, with the ANC-led government transforming the



This is evinced by the significant gains that includes various acts of legislation passed by Parliament and implemented by government. Among other things these have changed the labour market and guaranteed protection for basic labour rights, forced companies to empower black businesses and extend ownership to historically excluded individuals, afforded women and children more social and physical protection from abuse, and guaranteed basic human rights through the one of the most progressive constitutions the world has ever seen.

In the past 30 years, South Africa has also registered significant strides in the provision of housing sheltering millions, electricity to over 70% of and water to over 80% of all households, roads infrastructure, schools, healthcare facilities, new universities and many other forms of social infrastructure and programs that drastically transformed the

Reminding ourselves of all of these does not mean that all has been smooth sailing, and reactionary elements, often aligned with the remnants of the apartheid-era establishment, have sought to capitalize on this discontent in order to distort and reverse the registered gains of freedom. Conspicuously, these forces seek to impede the progress towards achieving all the goals of the Freedom Charter, including our country's founding vision for a completely non-racial and non-sexist democratic and prosperous society with a better life for all.

History teaches us the important lesson that is not uni-linear but moves in waves bringing progress and setbacks. Sociologists say history is not teleological or does not follow some predetermined path toward an inevitable outcome. Human action or urgency is therefore pivotal in shaping the course and outcomes of history. But as Marx once pointed out we make history in condition not of our own choosing. History can be reversed as attested by the collapse of many ancient civilisations and by the collapse of former soviet bloc and many promising revolutionary projects.

It is against this background, that despite existing challenges, the democratic revolution, which is our shared strategy of struggle and basic programme, to complete the liberation of the formerly oppressed, Africans in particular and Black people in general, and to overcome persisting racialised, gendered and class articulated inequality, as well as unemployment, poverty and the associated social consequences remains relevant and must therefore be defended. Furthermore, for as long as mass poverty, unemployment and inequality persist democracy will remain shallow as only a minority will have influence.

It is from that perspective that we talk about deepening freedom and democracy. These elections therefore also presents an opportunity on popular participation in policy-making, guided by the slogan – Nothing about us without us!

### **Appreciating the gains of our freedom 30 years into democracy**

One of the key initiatives was the establishment of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), which was tasked with coordinating and implementing youth-focused programs across various government departments (NYDA, 2022). These programs have targeted areas such as education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement, with the goal of empowering young South Africans and integrating them into the nation's social, economic, and political fabric.

On the 6th February 2009, the President of the Republic signed into law the National Youth Development Agency Act 54 of 2008 ushering in a new era for youth development in the country. Since then, great strides have been made to ensure that young people are adequately supported and empowered to better their lives. The NYDA remains the most viable and relevant institution to facilitate youth development in the country. Since the inception of the NYDA, more than 6 million young South Africans have benefitted from some kind of product or service to better their lives. Given the millions more who may need support from the Agency, it is imperative that the mandate of the NYDA be reviewed and more funding allocated to supporting more young people in need with integrated and holistic programmes, products and services.

The ANC-led government has also initiated extensive expansion of educational opportunities. We now advanced to near universal access to education attendance for children aged five and six years. Access to basic education for those older than six years, at primary and secondary school levels, has remarkably expanded as well. This is supported, among other government policies, by the School Nutrition Programme. Also known as the school feeding scheme, this programme protects children, mainly from poor households, from teaching and learning on an empty stomach.

Through initiatives such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), this government has also made significant strides in ensuring that financial barriers do not hinder access to higher education. Since its inception, NSFAS has funded over five million students. Prior to the establishment of the NSFAS under its Act of 1999, the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa did not cover Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college students. The ANC-led government expanded student financial aid to TVET colleges, commendably contributing to the provision of free access to college and university education through NSFAS bursaries.

The ANC government has also recognized the importance of addressing the socioeconomic challenges faced by the majority of South Africans, mainly young people, particularly in areas such as healthcare, housing, and social security. Currently, nearly 19 million people receive social grants. These social grants play a critical role in poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, we must appreciate the policy and strategic frameworks on youth development in the first phase of the national democratic revolution. The National Youth Policy released in 2000; the National Youth Development Policy Framework released in 2002; the National Youth Policy 2007; the National Youth Policy 2009 - 2014; the National Youth Policy 2020; the Youth Employment Accord released in 2013; and the Integrated Youth Development Strategy.

Significant force of young people towards a Decisive Victory for the ANC: Doing more, together.

South Africa's population is a youthful one. More than 20.1 million are between the ages of 14 and 35 constituting close to 40% of the population. All political parties represented in Parliament, without exception, target young people because of their vulnerabilities both in terms of their composition and the issues that they raise. In fact, the last election was won or lost on the basis of the attraction of the youth vote to each of the political parties.





Young people are therefore a significant force either for continued change of their conditions or its further perpetuation. They are not victims who should deserve pity, but a locomotive for the transformation of the South African society and economy. This should be done by uniting behind a resounding vote for the ANC, and strengthen our organisational and political capacity to hold the government accountable to implement the following election commitments;

- The biggest challenge that we face as a country is how to help young people walk through the front door of the labour market and into decent jobs as well as other sustainable economic opportunities. Industrialisation will play an important role in building national production through the expansion and diversification of manufacturing.

To drive industrialisation, the manifesto that the ANC has endorsed in 2024 commits it to rebuilding and expanding domestic oil refining capacity to produce oil by-products such as petrol and diesel locally and to tackle the rising cost of living.

The ANC manifesto further commits to expanding public employment to sustain 2.5 million work opportunities delivering public goods and services in communities. This includes work done through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, funding to civil society through non-profit companies and organisations to provide work opportunities; expand and institutionalise the National Youth Service in partnership with the SANDF, and work opportunities for unemployed graduates.

- Both access and quality of education are crucial in employability and a focus on simply incentivizing the private sector to create more opportunities without ensuring that young people are educated, skilled, healthy and adequately prepared for the workplace environment can only lead to failure.

Infrastructure development is critical to improving access and success in education. More schools need to be built for poor and rural youth and new classrooms erected in existing schools. Infrastructure development in the education system cannot be over-emphasized if we are to talk about quality, relevant education.

- Despite the great strides made, we continue to face a shortage of dynamic young entrepreneurs and cooperatives and more needs to be done to encourage youth to become entrepreneurs.

In fact, cooperatives can provide decent work opportunities because they allow members to determine for themselves under which conditions they wish to work. This is of course the extreme opposite of exploitation of one by another as experienced under capitalist orientated forms of enterprise. Thus cooperatives provide a viable option for decent job creation and the realization of a living wage.

Cooperatives locally and internationally have always had a stronger commitment to empowered governance and involving their workers in decision-making. These are highly valuable characteristics in the enterprises that will make up a more sustainable and inclusive economy.



Implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) to ensure quality healthcare for all. Following working class struggles, now the parliament has passed the NHI Bill and the president has also signed it into law.

Social mobilization as a strategy for youth development and national development is critical in ensuring a mass-based approach to youth development and the active participation of young people in their own development. The cornerstone of a social mobilization strategy is that of youth service.

The ANC manifesto commits to expanding and institutionalising the National Youth Service in partnership with the SANDF, Expanding to provide skills and meet basic needs in communities, targeting intake of 100,000 young men and women. It further commits to working together with young people, their organisations and institutions, with families and sectoral formations, to tackle bullying, teenage pregnancy, crime, homophobia, gangsterism, gender-based violence, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Young South Africans must accept the responsibilities of today that go with the opportunities of today. Together, young people are benefactors of the South African Revolution to both defend and advance our freedom, to bring about meaningful change and the realization of a truly non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa for all who live in it.

As part of a developmental macroeconomic framework, the ANC manifesto calls for adequate support for co-operatives and small, medium and micro enterprises to flourish.

The health and wellbeing of young people demonstrates the extent to which the country can achieve its development goals as youth represent the present and future human and social capital of any country. Despite the efforts and resources invested in South Africa's healthcare system, the indicators of a healthy nation remain unacceptably high.

Globally we have the highest rate of inequity of access to health services. The public health system serves the vast majority of youth but is chronically underfunded and understaffed. The wealthiest 20% of the population use the private health care system and is far better served. This a contributing factor to youth



**KARL MARX'S**

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# REFLECTIONS OF A YOUNG MAN ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION

Written between August 10 and 16, 1835

First published in the yearly *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*,  
Ed. K. Grünberg, Leipzig, 1925

Nature herself has determined the sphere of activity in which the animal should move, and it peacefully moves within that sphere, without attempting to go beyond it, without even an inkling of any other. To man, too, the Deity gave a general aim, that of ennobling mankind and himself, but he left it to man to seek the means by which this aim can be achieved; he left it to him to choose the position in society most suited to him, from which he can best uplift himself and society.

This choice is a great privilege of man over the rest of creation, but at the same time it is an act which can destroy his whole life, frustrate all his plans, and make him unhappy. Serious consideration of this choice, therefore, is certainly the first duty of a young man who is beginning his career and does not want to leave his most important affairs to chance.

Everyone has an aim in view, which to him at least seems great, and actually is so if the deepest conviction, the innermost voice of the heart declares it so, for the Deity never leaves mortal man wholly without a guide; he speaks softly but with certainty.

But this voice can easily be drowned, and what we took for inspiration can be the product of the moment, which another moment can perhaps also destroy. Our imagination, perhaps, is set on fire, our emotions excited, phantoms flit before our eyes, and we plunge headlong into what impetuous instinct suggests, which we imagine the Deity himself has pointed out to us. But what we ardently embrace soon repels us and we see our whole existence in ruins. We must therefore seriously examine whether we have really been inspired in our choice of a profession, whether an inner voice approves it, or whether this inspiration is a delusion, and what we took to be a call from the Deity was self-deception. But how can we recognise this except by tracing the source of the inspiration itself?

What is great glitters, its glitter arouses ambition, and ambition can easily have produced the inspiration, or what we took for inspiration; but reason can no longer restrain the man who is tempted by the demon of ambition, and he plunges headlong into what impetuous instinct suggests: he no longer chooses his position in life, instead it is determined by chance and illusion.



Nor are we called upon to adopt the position which offers us the most brilliant opportunities; that is not the one which, in the long series of years in which we may perhaps hold it, will never tire us, never dampen our zeal, never let our enthusiasm grow cold, but one in which we shall soon see our wishes unfulfilled, our ideas unsatisfied, and we shall inveigh against the Deity and curse mankind.

But it is not only ambition which can arouse sudden enthusiasm for a particular profession; we may perhaps have embellished it in our imagination, and embellished it so that it appears the highest that life can offer. We have not analysed it, not considered the whole burden, the great responsibility it imposes on us; we have seen it only from a distance, and distance is deceptive.

Our own reason cannot be counsellor here; for it is supported neither by experience nor by profound observation, being deceived by emotion and blinded by fantasy. To whom then should we turn our eyes? Who should support us where our reason forsakes us? Our parents, who have already travelled life's road and experienced the severity of fate – our heart tells us.

And if then our enthusiasm still persists, if we still continue to love a profession and believe ourselves called to it after we have examined it in cold blood, after we have perceived its burdens and become acquainted with its difficulties, then we ought to adopt it, then neither does our enthusiasm deceive us nor does overhastiness carry us away.

But we cannot always attain the position to which we believe we are called; our relations in society have to some extent already begun to be established before we are in a position to determine them.

Our physical constitution itself is often a threatening obstacle, and let no one scoff at its rights.

It is true that we can rise above it; but then our downfall is all the more rapid, for then we are venturing to build on crumbling ruins, then our whole life is an unhappy struggle between the mental and the bodily principle. But he who is unable to reconcile the warring elements within himself, how can he resist life's tempestuous stress, how can he act calmly? And it is from calm alone that great and fine deeds can arise; it is the only soil in which ripe fruits successfully develop.

Although we cannot work for long and seldom happily with a physical constitution which is not suited to our profession, the thought nevertheless continually arises of sacrificing our well-being to duty, of acting vigorously although we are weak.

But if we have chosen a profession for which we do not possess the talent, we can never exercise it worthily, we shall soon realise with shame our own incapacity and tell ourselves that we are useless created beings, members of society who are incapable of fulfilling their vocation. Then the most natural consequence is self-contempt, and what feeling is more painful and less capable of being made up for by all that the outside world has to offer? Self-contempt is a serpent that ever gnaws at one's breast, sucking the life-blood from one's heart and mixing it with the poison of misanthropy and despair.

An illusion about our talents for a profession which we have closely examined is a fault which takes its revenge on us ourselves, and even if it does not meet with the censure of the outside world it gives rise to more terrible pain in our hearts than such censure could inflict.

If we have considered all this, and if the conditions of our life permit us to choose any profession we like, we may adopt the one that assures us the greatest worth, one which is based on ideas of whose truth we are thoroughly convinced, which offers us the widest scope to work for mankind, and for ourselves to approach closer to the general aim for which every profession is but a means – perfection.

Worth is that which most of all uplifts a man, which imparts a higher nobility to his actions and all his endeavours, which makes him invulnerable, admired by the crowd and raised above it.

But worth can be assured only by a profession in which we are not servile tools, but in which we act independently in our own sphere. It can be assured only by a profession that does not demand reprehensible acts, even if reprehensible only in outward appearance, a profession which the best can follow with noble pride. A profession which assures this in the greatest degree is not always the highest, but is always the most to be preferred. But just as a profession which gives us no assurance of worth degrades us, we shall as surely succumb under the burdens of one which is based on ideas that we later recognise to be false.

There we have no recourse but to self-deception, and what a desperate salvation is that which is obtained by self-betrayal!

Those professions which are not so much involved in life itself as concerned with abstract truths are the most dangerous for the young man whose principles are not yet firm and whose convictions are not yet strong and unshakeable. At the same time these professions may seem to be the most exalted if they have taken deep root in our hearts and if we are capable of sacrificing our lives and all endeavours for the ideas which prevail in them.

They can bestow happiness on the man who has a vocation for them, but they destroy him who adopts them rashly, without reflection, yielding to the impulse of the moment. On the other hand, the high regard we have for the ideas on which our profession is based gives us a higher standing in society, enhances our own worth, and makes our actions un-challengeable.

One who chooses a profession he values highly will shudder at the idea of being unworthy of it; he will act nobly if only because his position in society is a noble one.

But the chief guide which must direct us in the choice of a profession is the welfare of mankind and our own perfection. It should not be thought that these two interests could be in conflict, that one would have to destroy the other; on the contrary, man's nature is so constituted that he can attain his own perfection only by working for the perfection, for the good, of his fellow men.

If he works only for himself, he may perhaps become a famous man of learning, a great sage, an excellent poet, but he can never be a perfect, truly great man.

History calls those men the greatest who have ennobled themselves by working for the common good; experience acclaims as happiest the man who has made the greatest number of people happy; religion itself teaches us that the ideal being whom all strive to copy sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind, and who would dare to set at nought such judgments?

If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually at work, and over our ashes will be shed the hot tears of noble people.

A Young Marx





## Exploring Revolutionary Insights: Prof. Maharajh Rasigan Reviews 'Mzala Nxumalo - Left Thought and Contemporary SA

### Comrade Mzala in the Battle of Ideas and our Contemporary Conjuncture

Rasigan Maharajh, PhD, MASSAf.

The later Jabulani Nobleman Nxumalo, or as remembered by his nom de guerre: Comrade Mzala, remains an inspiring intellectual leader and revolutionary. Comrade Mzala influenced many of my generation as we rendered apartheid South Africa ungovernable whilst significantly impacting upon our understanding of our struggle for national liberation. The period of the 1980's in the history of struggle against Apartheid and Racial Capitalism was intense, violent, and yet: full of revolutionary determination and possibilities. Reading the words, prose, and perspectives of Comrade Mzala gleamed then from our illicit copies of Dawn, Journal of Umkhonto wa Sizwe; Sechaba, the official organ of the African National Congress of South Africa; and the African Communist, the Journal of the South African Communist Party, offered to us critically clear, coherent, and cogent assessments of our contemporary conjuncture whilst also critiquing the praxis of our struggles.



We appreciated the courage and fearlessness of Comrade Mzala in challenging certain orthodoxies and strategic perspectives of the national liberation movement. In hindsight, our admiration may even have bordered upon an elementary cult of personality. Comrade Mzala had achieved such a status not through narrow populism, but rather its dialectic opposite: a thorough and trenchant critique of our political economy based on a materialist perspective to advance beyond capitalist reforms and realise Peoples Power. For many, including myself, this life-lesson has been implemented in defining my own scholar-activism and continued application in seeking decolonial institutional transformation and the building of anti-capitalist alternatives within the decaying relations of production that define our contemporary conjuncture in the dynamics of world systems.



**Jabulani "Mzala" Nxumalo**

The emergent narrative across the Book is a serious and urgent call for much more serious research on the realities of capitalist development in post-Apartheid south Africa and in world systems. Kwame Nkrumah had presciently warned us that “... neo-colonialism of today represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage” (1965).

The words of Nkrumah also serve to remind us that the genocide being practiced in Palestine, the escalation of wars across West Asia and their extension into the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, the counter-revolutionary violence in Sudan, and ongoing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo are not just geopolitical flashpoints, but rather represent attempts by the group of seven highly industrialised core capitalist economies (G7) and their armed wing, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to retain and extend hegemony in world affairs. It is upon these valuable insights, collated within the Book, that we can suggest some concluding remarks regarding emerging challenges in our contemporary conjuncture.

The invaluable insights and trenchant critique collated in the Book affords us the following conclusions amongst others. Our contemporary conjuncture remains mired within Capitalist dynamics that serve to reproduce conditions of inequitable development for the global majority, whilst only at least a ‘golden billion’ of the eight billion of our living species-being enjoy a quality of life that exceeds the capacity of our home-planet to provide for us all. It is estimated by those that measure our ecological footprint that we would require

5.1 planet earths to meet the same living standards enjoyed by the elite and privileged residents of the United States of America.

Our collective and common advances in scientific and technological development have however afforded us the knowledge and competences to not only measure our impacts upon the living systems of our only home planet, but also the means and mechanisms to radically challenge hegemony and unequal exchange. An effective progressive response to the biophysical precarities of rapid and accelerated climate change demands that we consider thorough challenges to the political economy of capitalism and emphasises that we should not continue to just await catastrophe. Rather, we should already be incubating and nurturing post-capitalist alternatives to neoliberal reform under corporate-captured states. Herein a clear resonance with John Pampallis and Mandla Radebe’ argument that, “It is perhaps the rise of narrow nationalism that makes issues contained in this book so pertinent. To understand nationalism, we must contend with the national question and the role of community and the state in confronting socio-economic challenges, as well as the global world, in particular the failure of neoliberal capitalism in combating global inequality (2024: 2).

We are also extremely grateful to those that have contributed to ensuring that the legacy of Cde Mzala is preserved and made available for inter-generational learning and teaching such as that by the late Percy Ngonyama, Mandla Radebe' The Lost Prince of the ANC, and the wider work of the Mzala Nxumalo Centre for the Study of South African Society. It is largely out of the work of the Mzala Centre that the current volume: Mzala Nxumalo, Leftist Thought and Contemporary South Africa, emerges.

The Book is composed of 14 sections which include a prescient Introduction by John Pampallis and Mandla Radebe, 12 chapters divided into two parts, and a succinct Conclusion by Robert Balfour. The Introduction presents an excellent overview of the life of Cde Mzala and links the various chapters in the volume to aspects of his revolutionary thinking, interventions, and publications. The 12 core chapters in the Book were developed from Papers originally presented in three conferences organised by the Mzala Centre and are organised into two parts. The first part brings together six chapters that the editors suggest aligns with the theme of the National Question. The second part which also has six chapters is orientated towards the themes of the community, state, and global dynamics. It is in this later part, that Sigfried Tivana and I have contributed a chapter on our ecological precarity in late-stage capitalist development. We can ill-afford such prevarications in confronting our contemporary conjuncture and the ecological precarities, economic inequities, political tyrannies, and social incoherence now engulfing us all.

1. Transcribed from speaking notes delivered during a panel discussion of the Mz'ontsundu Book Festival Pre-launch on 21 April 2024 at the Trevor Huddleston Memorial Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.
2. Institute for Economic Research on Innovation, Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Finance, Tshwane University of Technology, and Member of the Academy of Science of South Africa.
3. The G7 compromises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America together with the European Union.
4. NATO member states and year of joining the North Atlantic alliance: Albania (2009), Belgium (1949), Bulgaria (2004), Canada (1949), Croatia (2009), Czechia (1999), Denmark (1949), Estonia (2004), Finland (2023), France (1949), Germany (1955), Greece (1952), Hungary (1999), Iceland (1949), Italy (1949), Latvia (2004), Lithuania (2004), Luxembourg (1949), Montenegro (2017), Netherlands (1949), North Macedonia (2020), Norway (1949), Poland (1999), Portugal (1949), Romania (2004), Slovakia (2004), Slovenia (2004), Spain (1982), Sweden (2024), Türkiye (1952), United Kingdom (1949), and United States (1949).



## Youth Reflections on the National Health Insurance (NHI): A YCLSA Perspective

In the evolving landscape of South African healthcare, the National Health Insurance (NHI) stands as a beacon of hope for equitable access to quality healthcare services. As members of the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA), we see the NHI not just as a policy, but as a fundamental step towards the realization of social justice and equality in our nation. This article reflects our perspective on the NHI, underscoring its importance and addressing the opposition it faces.

### **A Legacy of Struggle for Quality Healthcare**

The struggle for quality healthcare for all South Africans is deeply rooted in our history. In the early 1990s, Chris Hani, the then General Secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), spearheaded the HHH Campaign. One of the campaign's pillars was the fight for quality healthcare, a vision echoing the Freedom Charter's call for a preventive health scheme and free medical care for all, with special care for mothers and young children.

The NHI is a continuation of this struggle, aiming to dismantle the deeply entrenched inequalities in our healthcare system. It seeks to replace the current two-tier system, where the wealthy minority enjoys high-quality private healthcare while the majority depend on an underfunded public system.

The NHI promises to bridge this gap, ensuring that all South Africans, regardless of their economic status, have access to comprehensive healthcare services.

### **The Neo-Liberal Opposition**

Opposition to the NHI is largely driven by neo-liberal agendas fixated on profit accumulation. The SACP national spokesperson, Dr. Alex Mashilo, aptly describes how these agendas are rooted in the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, where quality healthcare was a privilege of the white minority. Today, this opposition is often disguised under the rhetoric of efficiency and choice, yet it fundamentally seeks to preserve the profits of private healthcare oligopolies at the expense of public health.

The private healthcare sector, dominated by a few large corporations, continues to profit from a system that commodifies healthcare. This sector caters primarily to those who can afford exorbitant medical aid schemes, leaving many South Africans either without coverage or with coverage so limited that they must make out-of-pocket payments for essential services. This exploitative model underscores the urgent need for a publicly funded and managed healthcare system like the NHI.

By voting for the ANC, we endorse a government committed to implementing the NHI and ensuring that healthcare becomes a right, not a privilege. We must remember that we are members of our communities first and foremost, and our collective vote can drive the change we wish to see in our society.

### **Addressing the Challenges Facing Young Workers**

The YCLSA is acutely aware of the challenges facing young workers, who are often exploited due to high levels of unemployment. Employers use this situation to maintain a cheap and disposable workforce. Non-compliance with labor laws, such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Employment Equity Act, and the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, exacerbates these issues.

Moreover, the implementation of Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act, which often leads to the "last in, first out" principle, disproportionately affects young workers. This further marginalizes youth in the workforce and underscores the need for comprehensive healthcare coverage that the NHI aims to provide.

The NHI represents a historical victory for the majority of our people. It is a step towards fulfilling the vision of leaders like Chris Hani and the aspirations of the Freedom Charter. As the YCLSA, we stand firmly behind this initiative, recognizing it as essential for the social and economic development of our country. We call on all young people to support the NHI, engage in the political process, and vote for a government that prioritizes the health and well-being of all South Africans.



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