



A dying ideal: Non-racialism and political parties in post-apartheid South Africa

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Abstract

Non-racialism as a concept has a rich and contentious history in South African politics. For many it was a core feature of the struggle against apartheid, uniting a range of forces fighting for a society free from racial discrimination. Indeed it is a central tenet in South Africa's Constitution, forming a core part of the 'founding provisions' of the country. However, there is widespread contestation over what the concept entails, both theoretically and in practical terms. This article examines the concept of non-racialism primarily through the lens of South Africa's largest political opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), but relates its approach to that of the African National Congress (ANC). How has the DA conceptualised and instrumentalised the vision of non-racialism, historically and in post-apartheid South Africa? This article argues that neither the DA nor the ANC has been able to do so coherently. The idea of non-racialism is a fracture that deeply divides both parties; this division is also one that originated historically for both parties. The article concludes that there is a clear shift in how the DA envisaged non-racialism during apartheid and how the party instrumentalises the concept today, and that this change echoes, to some extent, the experiences of the ANC. Both parties now equate non-racialism to multiracialism, on the one hand, and a (interim) racialisation of politics on the other. This raises the question of whether non-racialism, as conceived by some in the early days of the Congress alliance, is a dying ideal.

Understanding Non-Racialism: The Definition of a Contested Concept

Race is a central fissure that runs through the core of South African society. Although there are many concepts one can use to interrogate the importance of race and its place in South African history, the idea of non-racialism is perhaps primary among these. For many anti-apartheid activists, such as Ahmed Kathrada, the concept of non-racialism sat at the heart of the ANC's anti-apartheid struggle.¹ Non-racialism became a central, if contested, feature of the ANC after it adopted the Freedom Charter in March 1956, which stated that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white'.² The history of non-racialism,

¹ Interview with Ahmed Kathrada, 7 July 2011, Johannesburg. Methodologically, this article is not largely based on empirical research or fieldwork; however, where appropriate, the author uses information from interviews she conducted with elite informants between 2011 and 2014. In each case, the interviewee consented to the interview material being used for publication. All interviews for this article were conducted by the author, unless otherwise stated.

² ANC, 'The Freedom Charter', available at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=72>, retrieved 5 July 2012; D. Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism: White Opposition to Apartheid in the 1950s* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2009), p. 198.

however, has a longer past, rooted, according to ANC activists such as Kathrada, in the relations between different (race-based) anti-apartheid Congresses formed between 1894 and 1938. Today non-racialism is enshrined in South Africa's Constitution as one of the key values on which the state is founded.³

The concept of non-racialism, however, has no fixed meaning, although attempts have been made to explain how the idea is defined and applied in South Africa.⁴ For some, the concept has lost meaning, ideologically and practically, it is 'blurrily aspirational' but has no socio-political or economic project driving it.⁵ For others, non-racialism is seen as still contributing to an emancipatory project. Non-racialism relates to the essentialisation of race (as race has a profound presence in history and current social relations), which is necessary in order to achieve a state of being where race does not exist.⁶ This state of being is ontologically related to the idea that, within the strict meaning of non-racialism, there are no such things as biologically or genetically determined, and objectively verifiable, meaningful categories called races. In other words, races are products of social construction and, as such, we can overcome these social constructions.⁷ From this perspective, non-racialism is (whether today or in the long term) about rejecting race thinking and racialism. Race is a social construct: 'biologically it is absolute nonsense but you have to get to the point where it is socially nonsense as well'.⁸ This does not mean, however, that one must deny the effects of racism. Here 'racialism' refers to the idea that 'there are heritable characteristics, possessed by members of our species, which allow us to divide them into small sets of races'.⁹

For most South Africans, it is common reality that race relations are embedded in everyday thinking and experience. Another interpretation of non-racialism, then, refers to the idea of non-racialisation, where racialisation is the interpretation of events, discourses and motivations in terms of race.¹⁰ One can support the idea of non-racialism and still hold on to the importance of accepting and embracing multiple identities. This bonds the idea of non-racialism to that of multiracialism. There are different interpretations of multiracialism,¹¹ but, in the South African context, multiracialism is equated by Maré to a society of more than one race, where it is perceived that there are essential differences between these race groups.¹² Although differences are recognisable through racial appearance, multiracialism does not

³ Republic of South Africa Constitution, Act 108 of 1996.

⁴ Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*; G. Maré, "'Non-Racialism' in the Struggle against Apartheid", *Society in Transition*, 34, 1 (2003); M. MacDonald, *Why Race Matters in South Africa* (Scottsville, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006); R. Taylor, 'South Africa: From "Race" to Non-Racialism?', in P. Ratchiff (ed.), *Race, Ethnicity and Nation: International Perspectives on Social Conflict* (London, UCL Press, 1994); R. Suttner, 'Understanding Non-Racialism as an Emancipatory Concept in South Africa', *Theoria*, 59, 130 (2012), pp. 22–41.

⁵ D. Everatt, 'Non-Racialism in South Africa: Status and Prospects', presentation to Ahmed Kathrada Foundation conference, 'Non-Racialism in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Contemporary Meanings and Relevance', 13 October 2011, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, p. 6; see also R. Taylor 'Deepening Non-Racialism in South Africa', *Politikon*, 39, 1 (2012), pp. 41–51.

⁶ Suttner, 'Understanding Non-Racialism'.

⁷ Maré, "'Non-Racialism' in the Struggle'.

⁸ Interview with Derek Hanekom, Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, 1 August 2011, Pretoria.

⁹ K.A. Appiah, 'The Conservation of "Race"', *Black American Literature Forum*, 23, 1 (1989), pp. 34–60, quoted in G. Maré, "'Non-Racialism' in the Struggle', p. 2. Racism, on the other hand, is defined by Maré as the attribution of negative qualities to a particular person who meets the racists' physical criteria (normally skin colour) for categorisation.

¹⁰ Maré, "'Non-Racialism' in the Struggle', p.2.

¹¹ See, for example, A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994).

¹² G. Maré, 'Making a Distinction', *The Witness*, Pietermaritzburg, 23 September 2009.

embrace the idea that one race is superior to another. Those South Africans who support the idea of multiracialism implicitly embrace the idea of socially constructed racial categories; however, in some cases they see this as a step towards achieving a society that looks beyond race.¹³ This article will address how the DA relates to these approaches to non-racialism: are they non-essentialist, seeing race as a social construct, multiracial or a combination of both, and how does this relate to the perspectives of the key liberation movement and current ruling party, the ANC?

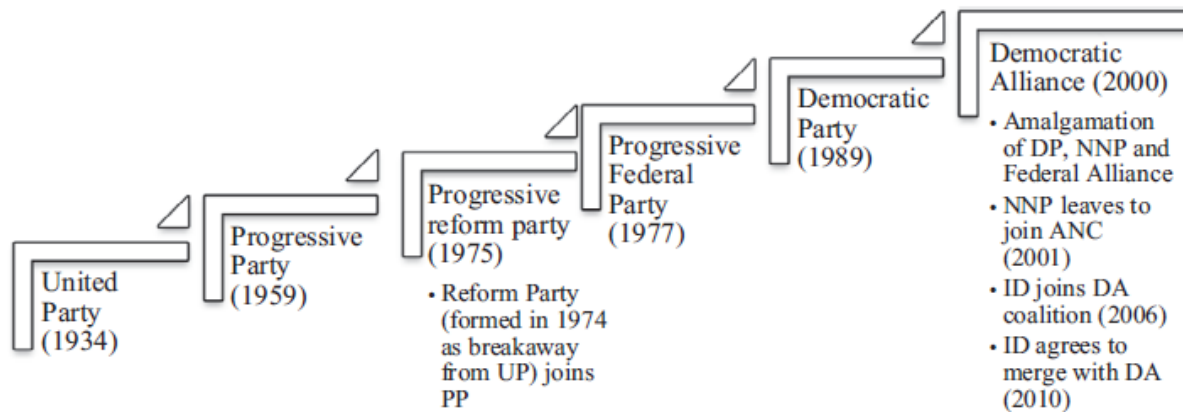


Figure 1. The evolution of the Democratic Alliance.

The Democratic Alliance and Race: Historical Roots

The DA, through its predecessors the Progressive Party (PP), Progressive Reform Party, Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and Democratic Party (DP), has deep and somewhat controversial roots in South African society.¹⁴ Early iterations of the DA operated under the apartheid regime, while opposing apartheid laws. This created a ‘white’¹⁵ opposition towards apartheid that changed into a more conventional liberal opposition to the ANC after the transition to a constitutional democracy. The party continued to evolve through its electoral battles and through building relationships with other political entities. Figure 1 shows the evolution of the DA from apartheid roots to its contemporary formation.

The parties historically did not expressly refer to the concept of non-racialism, and so their approach to the idea will largely be teased out through interrogating their political and

¹³ F. Anciano-White and J. Selemani, ‘Rethinking Non-Racialism: Reflections of a Selection of South Africa Leaders’, *Politikon*, 39, 1 (2012), pp. 149–69.

¹⁴ This article argues that the DA can be presented as a party with a history stretching back to the apartheid era, as the liberal PP, PFP and DP are early precursors of the current DA. This follows the DA’s own description of its history according to its 2014 election campaign, ‘Know Your DA’, available at <http://www.da.org.za/campaign/know-your-da/roots/>, retrieved 27 May 2015.

¹⁵ For clarity, this article will use racial nomenclature that broadly aligns with apartheid categorisations. According to the 1950 Population Registration Act, the term ‘white’ refers to someone ‘who in appearance is, or who is generally accepted as, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a Coloured person’. The term black (and non-white) refers to racial groups that were not categorised as white (e.g. coloured, black African, Indian) while ‘Black African’ is akin to the apartheid label ‘Bantu’. Following Seekings, ‘coloured’ is a varied, composite category that includes the descendants of relationships between white and black African people, the descendants of ‘Malay’ slaves brought from south-east Asia, and descendants of the indigenous Khoi and San, who lived in the Western Cape before the arrival of either white or black African people; see J. Seekings, ‘The Continuing Salience of Race: Discrimination and Diversity in South Africa’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 26, 1 (2008), p. 3.

economic policies. Through the multiple twists and turns in the historical development of the DA, there is one clear strand, however: all the parties broadly supported the ideology of liberalism. Understanding how the precursors to the DA interpreted and applied liberal ideology is essential to understanding their relationship to the idea of non-racialism.

Non-Racialism as Universal Equality

One of the earliest ways in which the PP addressed the concept of non-racialism was through its approach to constitutionalism and a Bill of Rights. In keeping with core classical liberal values, the party was the first in the apartheid parliament to produce a new comprehensive constitutional model under the guidance of the 1960s' Molteno Commission. The Commission believed enforced separation (and enforced integration) between races was undesirable, and that 'free individual choice in all matters of social intercourse' should be encouraged.¹⁶ An important aspect of the Commission relating to non-racialism was its support for a Bill of Rights.¹⁷ After the Molteno Commission, 'a Bill of Rights became the political darling of the liberal cause'.¹⁸ In this reading, the PP and DP clearly rejected discrimination towards blacks that would impact on their individual human rights.

The liberal idea that non-racialism is about rejecting racial discrimination resonates to a large extent with one way in which the ANC historically conceptualised non-racialism: that of a unifying, nation-building project that transcends ascribed racial differences, while a second approach focused on (a contested idea of) African nationalism. The first view is rooted in the idea that different Congresses (the Natal Indian Congress, formed in 1894; the ANC, formed in 1912, the Communist Party, formed in 1921, and the Non-European United Front, formed in 1938) all worked together to overcome apartheid and, in doing so, fostered non-racial relations.¹⁹ Activists argue that the Congress Alliance played a vital role in the adoption of non-racialism as a founding principle of the Freedom Charter.²⁰ Assumptions that the idea of non-racialism equated to rejecting racialism cannot be made uncritically, however. The Charter itself states that 'All National Groups shall have Equal Rights!', which indicates support for racial differentiation rather than an anti-essentialist view of non-racialism. Nevertheless, early statements and speeches of Luthuli recurrently calling for a 'common society' validate the idea that the ANC viewed non-racialism (in one interpretation) as central to a universalised, generic humanism.²¹ As the head of a national liberation movement, the ANC was, according to Pallo Jordan, an advocate of an inclusive South African nationhood, rooted in the 'universalistic, liberatory outlook of modernity' and the realities and imperatives of accommodation of all South African races, given that they shared a common territory.²² In this line of thinking, it is argued that non-racialism was the 'unbreakable thread' between the ANC

¹⁶ Bruckner de Villiers Research, *The Rebirth of White Political Opposition in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Bruckner de Villiers Research, 1975).

¹⁷ S. Dubow, 'South Africa and South Africans: Nationality, Belonging, Citizenship', in R. Ross, A. Kelk Mager, and B. Nasson (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 58; C. Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power: The Memoirs of Colin Eglin* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 2007), p. 100.

¹⁸ J. Dugard, 'The Quest for a Liberal Democracy in South Africa', *Acta Juridica*, 237 (1987), pp. 237–58.

¹⁹ Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*.

²⁰ Interview with Laloo Chiba, conducted by Johnny Selemani, Johannesburg, 14 July 2011.

²¹ Suttner, 'Understanding Non-Racialism'.

²² P. Jordan, 'The National Question in Post 1994 South Africa', *Discussion Documents* (1997), available at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2352>, retrieved 13 November 2012.

and other alliance members, and that the demand for a non-racial South Africa was the common ground that united a wide range of forces for change, including the ANC and its alliance partners. Thus the goal of the struggle was a democratic, restructured society where people are not differentiated according to racial criteria.²³

More recent documents, such as the 1991 Constitutional Principles for a Democratic South Africa, continue to reflect the values attributed to non-racialism of unity, equality and non-essentialisation of race, where it argues that a 'non-racial South Africa means a South Africa in which all the artificial barriers and assumptions which kept people apart and maintained domination, are removed. In its negative sense, non-racial means the elimination of all colour bars. In positive terms it means the affirmation of equal rights for all'.²⁴ Thus, in this interpretation, ANC anti-apartheid politics was characterised by a universalist orientation which focused on equal dignity for all individuals, regardless of real or imagined differences.²⁵ These values attributed to non-racialism indicated an aspiration by the ANC to transcend recognised and ascribed racial differences. Indeed MacDonald argues that the ANC's non-racialism 'affirms liberal democratic values ... and rejects the right of the state to impose group identities on citizens'.²⁶

This construction of non-racialism has, however, always been contested within the party, particularly where it sits in tension with the concept of African nationalism. The exclusive African nationalism of many prominent ANC Youth League (ANCYL) members of the 1940s to some extent challenged the universalist notion of non-racialism. The ANCYL argued that 'the national liberation of Africans will be achieved by Africans themselves'.²⁷ Although by no means a straightforward theory, there was a sense that an ideology of African nationalism needed to be developed that could 'rouse the African masses to awareness and action'²⁸ regardless of whether it sat in tension with a different reading of non-racialism. Conflicting views over the meaning and practice of African nationalism is not exclusive to the ANC. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni states,

African nationalism was underpinned by very deep antinomies of black liberation thought that have continued to provoke competing views of the nation, contested definitions of citizenship, different imaginations of democracy and disagreements on the teleology of that national liberation struggle itself.²⁹

Indeed, Everatt argues that the fact that non-racialism survived the 'internal ructions of nationalist politics' is 'near miraculous'. Ultimately the party was able to reach some measure of accommodation of both ideals of African nationalism and non-racialism, although Everatt

²³ J. Frederikse, *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racialism in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1990), pp. 3–4, 13.

²⁴ ANC, 'Constitutional Principles For A Democratic South Africa' (1991), available at <http://www.anc.org.za/centenary/main.php?id=35&p=5>, retrieved 14 November 2012.

²⁵ F. Cachalia, 'Revisiting the National Question and Identity', *Politikon*, 39, 1 (2012), p. 59.

²⁶ MacDonald, *Why Race Matters in South Africa*, p. 115.

²⁷ D. Everatt, 'Non-Racialism in South Africa: Status and Prospects', *Politikon*, 39, 1 (2012), p. 15.

²⁸ Cited in A. Johnston, *South Africa: Inventing the Nation* (London, Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 76.

²⁹ S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Africa for Africans or Africa for "Natives" Only? "New Nationalism" and Nativism in Zimbabwe and South Africa', *Africa Spectrum*, 44, 1 (2009), p. 64.

maintains that non-racialism was left as a passive assertion that stood in moral opposition to racism, while African nationalism became the engine that drove the liberation struggle.³⁰

The contestation over the theory and instrumentalisation of non-racialism in the ANC is further exemplified by the fact that, for much of its history, the ANC was organised *in practice* along lines more multiracial (separate but equal) than non-racial.³¹ For Suttner, '[a]s the ANC developed ... there has been continual tension between its growing universal aspirations and its mode of organisation that remained racialised, right up until the late 1960s'.³² This may have been necessary, given the socio-historical context,³³ none the less there were extensive debates in the party before it was agreed that membership of the ANC could be open to all races. This took place in 1969, 57 years after the movement was founded, and it was only in 1985 that 'non-Africans' were eligible to sit on the National Executive Committee (NEC).³⁴ And indeed, even with closed racial membership, the ANC's willingness to work with other races in the struggle contributed to the formation of the breakaway Pan Africanist Congress in 1959.³⁵ This stance was in direct contrast to parties that are perhaps true flag-bearers of non-racialism: the disbanded Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and the reconstituted South African Communist Party (SACP). Both always had racially mixed membership. Indeed the ANC resisted the attempt by the CPSA to bypass existing national organisations and create a permanent 'unity movement', as the ANC felt that this emphasised class above national consciousness. The CPSA and SACP none the less played a pivotal role in challenging the ANC's approach to non-racialism, by frequently calling for the transformation of existing separate national organisations and the formation of a non-racial assembly.³⁶ It is clear that there were ongoing tensions in the ANC regarding the meaning and instrumentalisation of non-racialism; however, as the political analyst Johnston notes, a liberal version of non-racialism provided a convenient and globally acceptable concept. The ANC may have wanted to portray this version of non-racialism to some audiences to generate global (and where possible local) support for a national liberation struggle.³⁷

Returning to the PP, its support for universalised non-racialism in a Bill of Rights was, however, equivocal, as the Molteno Commission called for a system of qualified franchise rather than universal franchise. The franchise policy proposed giving the vote to all South Africans over the age of 21, provided they met minimum educational, income or property qualifications. A supplementary voters' roll would be in place for those who did not qualify but who could pass a literacy test in one of the official languages³⁸ (the predominantly white mother-tongue

³⁰ Everatt, 'Non-Racialism in South Africa: Status and Prospects', p. 16.

³¹ Suttner, 'Understanding Non-Racialism'; N. Ndebele, 'The African National Congress and the Policy of Non-Racialism: A Study of the Membership Issue', *Politikon*, 29, 2 (2002), pp. 133–46.

³² Suttner, 'Understanding Non-Racialism', pp. 25–6.

³³ See A. Kathrada, 'Preface', *Politikon*, 39, 1 (2012) p. 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁵ South African History Online, 'Pan African Congress (PAC)' (n.d.), available at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/origins-formation-sharpeville-and-banning-1959-1960>, retrieved 8 September 2014.

³⁶ Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, pp. 48–53.

³⁷ Johnston, *South Africa: Inventing the Nation*, pp. 81–2.

³⁸ Bruckner de Villiers Research, *The Rebirth*; J. Strangways-Booth, *A Cricket in the Thorn Tree: Helen Suzman and the Progressive Party* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1976); Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*.

languages of English or Afrikaans). The majority of Commissioners were primarily concerned with the threat of African nationalism.³⁹ They agreed that all 'politically conscious' black South Africans demanded adult suffrage, but argued that this was not because they supported the values of 'personal freedom', 'the rule of law' and 'ordered progress' that 'Western democracy was conceived in', but rather because they were inspired by 'non-white nationalism', which would ultimately be 'totalitarian in its logical outcome'.⁴⁰ In supporting a limited franchise that effectively allowed almost all whites, but only selected non-whites, to vote, the party yielded to a fear of African nationalism and arguably promoted the idea that some races are inherently inferior to others. Although the policy did demonstrate a partial rejection of apartheid ideology, the idea of a qualified franchise was an anathema to black political movements, and it was roundly rejected by them.⁴¹ Indeed, according to one commentator:

The constitutional and franchise proposals adopted by the party in 1960 and 1962 were conservative and racist. Little notice was taken of the dissenting opinions of the black commission members The party was concerned with making the minimum concessions to buy off black protests and defuse the nationalist struggle while appeasing white prejudice.⁴²

By 1978, following the advent of the PFP, the party changed its stance to support universal adult franchise. The PFP explained that political rights must be shared by all South African citizens, and those systems that 'could lead to racial domination are rejected'. It clearly stated that statutory or administrative discrimination on the grounds of race was unacceptable. In particular, PFP leader, van Zyl Slabbert, described how the party was 'fundamentally opposed' to legal measures that prevented different race groups from voluntarily associating together.⁴³ The party saw the need for a break with the ideologies of the past, both liberal individualist and racist, and the adoption of new ideological forms (which would in turn legitimate monopoly capitalism).⁴⁴ This stance begs the question, however, of why the parties continued to operate within a racially unequal legislative system. In its early formation, the PP declared parliament to be the main arena for its struggle. This choice by the PP led to many challenges and inconsistencies for the party, as it had to adapt its programmes to suit the wishes of at least a portion of the white electorate.⁴⁵ In answering the question of whether participation in the apartheid

political system, specifically parliament, conferred legitimacy on apartheid, liberal historian David Welsh argues that parliament 'provided a platform, and media coverage ensured that both the critique of apartheid and the prospect of a more democratic and open society were kept before the public', and that ultimately fundamental change to the system did eventually

³⁹ B. Hackland, 'Incorporationist Ideology as a Response to Political Struggle', in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (Harlow, Longman, 1987), pp. 374–5.

⁴⁰ D. Molteno, *Molteno Report, Volume 1: Franchise Proposals and Constitutional Safeguards* (South Africa, Progressive Party, 1960).

⁴¹ Strangways-Booth, *A Cricket in the Thorn Tree*, p. 191.

⁴² Hackland, 'Incorporationist Ideology', p. 371.

⁴³ F. van Zyl Slabbert, 'The Nature of the South African Problem and the Progressive Federal Party's Approach to its Solution', in Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, *South Africa: A Chance for Liberalism?* (Berlin, Liberal Verlag, 1985).

⁴⁴ B. Hackland, 'The Economic and Political Context of the Growth of the Progressive Federal Party in South Africa, 1959–1978', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7, 1 (1980), p. 13.

⁴⁵ See R. Erkens, 'Limits and Prospects for a Liberal Policy in a Plural Society', in Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, *South Africa: A Chance for Liberalism?*, p. 10.

come through Parliament (which, he clarifies, in no way diminishes the role played by extra-parliamentary movements).⁴⁶ Regardless of justifications, working within parliament could be seen to legitimise systemic racism, and certainly challenged a universalised interpretation of non-racialism.

Indeed, because of its role in the political system, the party was unable to maintain the multiracial party membership it had initially supported.⁴⁷ In 1968, the Prohibition of Political Interference Act precluded individuals from different racial groups from being part of the same organisation.⁴⁸ The PP decided to remain politically functional as a whites-only party, but in 1978 the PFP explained that, once the Act was repealed, any non-white person who had previously been a member would automatically regain full membership of the party. In theory, then, the PFP supported non-racial membership, but this was never tested in practice until 1984, after the party became the DP.⁴⁹ If the PP felt that multiracial membership was non-negotiable, it would have had to leave formal parliamentary politics, which the party chose not to do. At this stage then, non-racialism was, at best, a theoretical aspiration of the PFP, while racism was, in reality, practised by the party.

This viewpoint sits in contrast to that of the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party, formed in 1953, felt that multiracial membership was non-negotiable, with people of all races belonging to the organisation (although, similar to the PFP, they too supported a limited franchise in their early years, though they advocated universal suffrage from 1960, while the Progressives continued to support a qualified franchise until 1978).⁵⁰ Certainly the Liberal Party were critical of multiracialism, with this being their main ‘point of argument’ with the Congress movement.⁵¹ Although non-racialism was a guiding principle of the party, membership of the party was never straightforward (as with the ANC and the PFP), with contestation in their early days over who they should target for party membership. Eventually, by 1956, the Liberal Party had new leadership and a clear vision of change based on mass non-violent pressure.⁵² In contrast to the PP, they focused on activist extra-parliamentary action, including boycotts and sit-ins. They also concentrated on socio-economic rights, whereas the PP focused on civil rights. Eventually the Liberal Party decided to disband in 1968, when the state introduced the Prohibition of Political Interference Act. In contrast to the PP, they would rather disband than legitimise the parliamentary system. What is notable is that although the Liberal Party did not win seats in the whites-only parliament, it attracted a substantial black membership, with the majority of delegates at

⁴⁶ D. Welsh, in M. Shain (ed.), *Opposing Voices, Liberalism and Opposition in South Africa Today* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 2006) p. 12.

⁴⁷ Van Zyl Slabbert, ‘The Nature of the South African Problem’, p. 39.

⁴⁸ Republic of South Africa, *Prohibition of Political Interference Act*, No. 51 of 1968.

⁴⁹ In general, then, the PFP was largely supported by middle- to upper-class white, urban, English-speakers (see van Zyl Slabbert, ‘The Nature of the South African Problem’, p. 39).

⁵⁰ M. Cardo, ‘The Liberal Tradition in South Africa: Past and Present’, *Focus*, 65 (2012), p. 19; Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, Chapter 6.

⁵¹ D. Everatt, ‘Nationalism, Class and Non-Racialism in the 1950s and Beyond: The Search for Convergence’, paper presented at the Yusuf Dadoo centenary conference, ‘Marxism, Non-Racialism and the Shaping of South Africa’s Liberation Struggle’, University of Johannesburg, September 2009, p. 11, available at http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/nationalism_class_nonracialism_1950s.pdf, retrieved 6 June 2015.

⁵² Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, p. 145.

its 1961 conference being black.⁵³ This is certainly a practical application of non-racialism that the PP and PFP could not claim.

Economic Redress and Non-Racialism

A key area to address when unpacking the PP's, PFP's and DP's approach to non-racialism is their economic policy, as this points to the substantive way in which the parties intended to address the racially framed economic policies of apartheid. The PP, PFP and DP had a close association with big business,⁵⁴ with critics claiming that it was concerned about preserving white economic privilege.⁵⁵ The PFP supported liberal values of state neutrality and separation from capital. Capitalism and the free market should be allowed to flourish, and this would lead to the evolution of equal opportunity for all races. The party believed that the role of government is to distribute wealth, not to create it, as this was the role of business, but that all citizens have the right to an equal opportunity to share in the system of free economic enterprise.⁵⁶ By the 1980s, the PFP may have been a party committed to non-racial values, but it did not focus on a need for redistributive economic policies. From this perspective, it could be argued that the party's economic policies supported a universalised, non-racialisation understanding of non-racialism, in that they disregarded racial categories, seeing only individuals in a capitalist economy. However, their economic policies provided little sense of how to 'level the playing field' in order to create equal economic opportunities for all races. The party's economic stance did not directly address structural racism in South Africa. Indeed, this suggests some future challenges that the DA would face in its approach to race and economic redress.

A non-essentialised view of non-racialism sat in direct contrast to a second way in which the ANC conceptualised non-racialism during apartheid: that achieving non-racialism required the racialisation of economic policy, an approach that could be linked to their support for African nationalism. Here some leaders in the ANC argued that non-racialism developed in tandem with policies dealing with the national question,⁵⁷ and strategies such as the national democratic revolution (NDR). Jordan explains that the ANC has always maintained that democracy, national liberation and non-racialism are inseparable; however, if democracy is to advance national liberation, it necessitates the empowerment of the most historically oppressed, being Africans, coloureds and Indians.⁵⁸ In essence, the NDR entails the 'liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage'.⁵⁹ Alongside political change, it was recognised that economic equality must be addressed in order to facilitate social transformation. There was a perceived need to go beyond legal equality to give non-racialism real meaning, and an understanding that achieving racial equality (in

⁵³ Cardo, 'The Liberal Tradition in South Africa', p. 20.

⁵⁴ W. Cobbett, D. Glaser, D. Hindson and M. Swilling, 'Regionalisation, Federalism and the Reconstruction of the South African State', *South African Labour Bulletin*, 10, 5 (1986); Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, p. 61.

⁵⁵ N. Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000) p. 168.

⁵⁶ Hackland, 'The Economic and Political Context', pp. 13–14.

⁵⁷ The idea of 'the national question' broadly refers to the right to and practice of self-determination in a context of historical oppression of a people or a number of peoples by a dominant colonial power. See Jordan, 'The National Question'.

⁵⁸ See *ibid.*

⁵⁹ ANC, 'Tasks of the NDR and the Mobilisation of the Motive Forces', *Discussion Document* (2000), available at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2356>, retrieved 30 June 2012. Here 'black' broadly refers to coloured, Indian and black African racial groups, while African refers to black African.

the path to non-racialism) required fundamental structural social change.⁶⁰ For some ANC thinkers, there was recognition that both attitudinal and institutional racism are functions of the development of South African capitalism in a colonial setting, which then found resonance within society at large.⁶¹ An institutionalised racial hierarchy was a consequence of productive relations structured and determined by colonialism of a special type (CST). This resonates with the SACP's class-based approach to race relations. For the SACP, CST put bourgeois whites in the middle of a unique system of exploitation, which demonstrated characteristics of both an imperialist state and a colony; CST, however, emphasised the fundamental character of class rather than racial division.⁶² The effect of CST is that 'all white classes benefit, albeit unequally and in different ways, from the internal colonial structure. Conversely, all black classes suffer national oppression, in varying degrees and in different ways'.⁶³ To overcome this institutional racism, empowerment of blacks in general and black Africans in particular required the 'radical restructuring of key aspects of the economy so as to destroy the material basis of the White racist power structure'. Cachalia alludes to this thinking during the liberation struggle as 'anti-racist racism' – as a path that can lead to the elimination of racial difference.⁶⁴ This relates directly to the understanding of non-racialism as an emancipatory project.

In concluding this historical overview, it is clear that the DA and its precursors did not have a uniform approach to the idea of non-racialism, and indeed neither did the ANC. For the ANC, both ideological and practical factors informed and compounded the theory and practice of non-racialism and explain to some degree the challenges, and at times seeming contradictions, in instrumentalising a vision of non-racialism.⁶⁵ The DA's historical approach to non-racialism too was complex. On the one hand, the parties were overtly racist where they supported a racially qualified franchise, whites-only party membership and operated within (and potentially legitimised) a racially delimited parliamentary system. On the other hand, the PP, PFP and DP subscribed to ideals that support a universalist, non-essentialist understanding of non-racialism. They theoretically placed individual identity and merit above that of racial groupings. When asked on public platforms if the implementation of PP policies could result in a black prime minister, the then leader of the party, Steytler, answered 'yes, of course'. He explained that 'it's not the colour of a man that is important, it's his merit as an individual'.⁶⁶ In fact, in their approach to individual rights and capitalist economic policy, one could argue that they did not see race at all, even if their economic views on how to achieve a non-racial society required a long-term and very optimistic outlook on the role that the free market can play in creating meaningful 'equal opportunity'. The internal contradictions in their approach to race flags concerns about whether the concept of non-racialism, for the post-apartheid DA, would equate to a universal, non-essentialised meaning or to a racialised form of multiracialism. Could

⁶⁰ Cachalia, 'Revisiting the National Question', p. 60.

⁶¹ Such as Jordan, 'The National Question'.

⁶² A. Butler, *The Idea of the ANC* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2012), pp. 63–4.

⁶³ SACP, 'The Path to Power: Programme of the South African Communist Party as Adopted at the Seventh Congress 1989', available at <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=2638#3.1>, retrieved 3 June 2015.

⁶⁴ Cachalia, 'Revisiting the National Question', p. 58.

⁶⁵ F. Anciano, 'Non-Racialism and the African National Congress: Views from the Branch', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 31, 1 (2014), pp. 35–55.

⁶⁶ R. Swart, *Progressive Odyssey: Towards a Democratic South Africa* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1991), p. 111.

the PFP's liberal 'colour blind' universalism support an ANC version of non-racialism that equated to universalised, generic humanism?

New Forms of Non-Racialism: The Democratic Alliance Post-Apartheid

How does the DA currently understand and instrumentalise non-racialism, and does it now present a coherent and comprehensive vision? In analysing its approach to non-racialism, it is also important to question whether the party's policies and ideology have moved far from the liberal ideological roots of its predecessors. To interrogate the DA's understanding of non-racialism, it is necessary to look at two key, and interlinked, areas: the party's support for the 'individual political unit' versus collective identity (and its concomitant approach to party membership), and economic policy, including racial redress.

(In)visible Race: The Individual as Primary Political Unit

The DA and its precursors largely regarded the individual as a primary political unit, as opposed to, for example, the National Party's view that South Africans are, first and foremost, members of primordial groups (which struggle to relate to each other and thus function best under separate political systems). Thus liberalism for the DP, for example, meant 'rejecting identity politics and overcoming ethnic, religious and racial differences to build united communities based on universal humanistic values'.⁶⁷ For example, the 2002 DA Federal Constitution focused on traditional liberal values, such as the right to freedom of association, the rejection of unfair discrimination, and equality before the law. While the vision supported the idea that South Africans should aspire to relate to a 'South African identity' ahead of any other ascribed group identity (noting that this requires overcoming historical racial divisions), it still largely promoted a liberal notion of individual identity above group identity. Indeed, in an interview with this author in 2011, discussing her understanding of the concept 'non-racialism', current DA party leader, Helen Zille, clearly favoured the liberal view of individual identity:

My perception of non-racialism is approaching each person as a unique individual and not merely as some kind of representative of the category. So race is one identity marker and obviously given our history it is an important identity marker, but it is not the only identity marker. To make race subsume everything else and to believe that racial categories are the only ones that can define a person's aspirations, views, positions, political philosophy, is fundamentally false ... The common experience of a racial reality is certainly one identity but it cannot be seen as the defining identity imposed on other people ... in a free society people don't have an identity imposed upon them by virtue of racial category prescribed by others.⁶⁸

Yet, in contradiction to this approach, the DP in 1999 fought national elections with the campaign slogan *Fight Back*. Although not expressly racist, it certainly appeared to focus on group identity, drawing parallels with the reactionary white fear of assimilation with black African South Africans during apartheid, the *Swart Gevaar* (black fear). On the one hand, the DP was

⁶⁷ T. Leon, 'Resolving Political Conflict in a Polarised Society – The South African Experience', *Liberal International*, available at http://www.liberal-international.org/editorialIndex.asp?ia_id=1343, retrieved 15 January 2014.

⁶⁸ Interview with Helen Zille, leader of the Democratic Alliance, Cape Town, 1 August 2011.

standing for core liberal values, which centre on protecting the Constitution and acting as a check and balance to the government. In practice, however, many South Africans implicitly understood the party to be saying that South Africa was being overwhelmed by a black African majority that needed to be fought against. It certainly targeted racial minority groups.⁶⁹ The DA's Gavin Davis explained that the election campaign resulted in the party bonding with coloured, Indian and white voters, as each group harboured fears of being excluded in a country that, they perceived, was increasingly favouring Africanisation.⁷⁰ This further points to the likelihood that the 'fight back' slogan compounded already racialised electoral politics. It certainly did not strengthen a view that the DP was supporting non-racialism, or individual rather than collective identity.

It was only in late 2004, after a party-wide 'visioning process', that the DA, for the first time, started to use the term 'non-racialism' explicitly in its documents and vision, and in so doing presented a more nuanced view of individual versus collective identity in a South African setting. DA party leader Tony Leon listed five 'cardinal principles' for which the DA stood, the second of which was 'non-racialism and diversity'. For Leon, although the individual should be the 'touchstone of value in our society', individual identities are shaped by the communities in which they live. He equates non-racialism and diversity to the idea that everyone is equal even if they have differences of religion, culture, and so on. The party acknowledges the impact of apartheid racism and exploitation and the concomitant need for measures to increase access to opportunity for those 'fellow citizens who were deprived and oppressed in the past'. However, Leon is very clear that, from his perspective, the answer to racism is 'not more racism'; the DA will not 'put colour above all else' in terms of jobs and public services. Thus the party believes in 'diversity', but not the ANC's version of 'representivity'; where representativeness is based on the idea that only someone from a particular group can represent that group.⁷¹

Leon stressed that the ANC's perspectives on 'demographic representivity' ignored individual differences within race groups.⁷² Certainly, from his perspective, the world view of the DA, which sees the individual as the building block of society, is a fundamentally different view from that of the ANC, which sees 'the racial group as the building block of society'. Thus Leon was very critical of the ANC's approach to non-racialism. He felt that President Thabo Mbeki had continually 'played the race card', undermining what the true principle of non-racialism should entail: not seeing race.⁷³ Leon explained that 'to simply start a racial scorecard and say we have not transformed unless we have X percentage blacks and X percentage whites, is actually a re-racialisation ... you're saying that the only antidote to racism is more racism'.⁷⁴ While at times recognising the complex manner in which South Africans ascribe a social

⁶⁹ Z. Jolobe, 'The Democratic Alliance: Consolidating the Official Opposition', in R. Southall and J. Daniel (eds), *Zunami! The South African Elections 2009* (Auckland Park, Jacana, 2009), p. 133.

⁷⁰ N. Southern, 'Political Opposition and the Challenges of a Dominant Party System: The Democratic Alliance in South Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 29, 3 (2011), p. 285.

⁷¹ T. Leon, 'A New Vision for the Democratic Alliance', DA federal congress speech, Durban, 20 November 2004, available at http://supportservices.ufs.ac.za/dl/userfiles/Documents/00007/4231_eng.pdf, retrieved 17 January 2014.

⁷² T. Leon, 'An Imperfect Democracy: The Case of South Africa', *Harvard International Review*, 30, 1 (2008), pp. 50–53.

⁷³ Leon, 'A New Vision for the Democratic Alliance'.

⁷⁴ BBC World, *Hard Talk*, with Tim Sebastian – guest: Tony Leon MP, broadcast 22 September 2004.

identity, and noting historical racial issues, the DA, at this point in its trajectory, largely avoided references to racial identity, rather viewing the individual as the primary political unit. On the surface, this presents a non-essentialised view of non-racialism; however, it sidesteps the reality of socio-economic inequality experienced largely along racial cleavages.

Nearly 10 years later, this tension between embracing racial (or group) identity, as experienced through the lived reality of most South Africans, and liberalism's focus on individual identity had become a growing challenge for the party. As its Federal Chairperson, Wilmot James, explains:

... liberalism's vision of non-racialism presents an intellectual and moral quagmire. If South Africa is on a journey to a non-racial society ... should we use apartheid's racial taxonomy to determine the categories of persons disadvantaged by discrimination to qualify for broad based black economic empowerment (BBBEE)? Is this not, as some liberals aver, simply not perpetuating the saliency of race? Does it leave the principles of non-racialism and equality under the law intact?⁷⁵

The party's general response to this 'quagmire', evident in many of its policies and public statements, has been to use disadvantage (mostly historical), rather than race, as a criterion for preferential 'opportunity': 'previous disadvantaged, not race, should guide redress or we risk reverting to the kind of backwards, divisive thinking that has defined our history'.⁷⁶ Zille further explains:

Obviously some South Africans, often on a racial basis, have faced great oppression in their lives and lack of opportunity ... But the point is race is not the only marker of that. Of course we believe in equity and affirmative action but not as an imposition of racial categories as the only marker of redress and not in the way that sees redress as a zero sum game ... the DA looks very much at increasing opportunities and not at manipulating outcomes and certainly not through imposed racial categories.⁷⁷

As the party developed, it became evident that there was an ever increasing need to accept the salience of racial identity; it was unclear how they envisaged doing this while still criticising the idea of representativity, and holding on to an individualised, liberal notion of identity. Certainly this resulted in an approach to non-racialism that was becoming increasingly contradictory, even in light of the party's own recognition of the 'quagmire' it faces.

The Necessity of Embracing Racial Identity: Rebranding the DA to Attract Black African Support

As South Africa's democracy evolved, it was becoming increasingly clear that, if the DA hoped to move from the margins of opposition into government, it would need to attract black African

⁷⁵ W. James, 'Liberalism Has Always Been a Powerful Force in South Africa', available at <https://www.da.org.za/2013/06/liberalism-has-always-been-a-powerful-force-in-south-africa/>, retrieved 18 December 2013.

⁷⁶ W. James, 'Mantashe: The ANC has Abandoned Non-Racialism', *Democratic Alliance* (2011), available at <https://www.da.org.za/archive/mantashe-the-anc-has-abandoned-non-racialism/>, retrieved 18 December 2013.

⁷⁷ Interview with Helen Zille, 1 August 2011.

support. This is not to say that South Africans vote along only racial lines;⁷⁸ however, evidence suggests that the DA was strongly associated with protecting white, or minority, interests, which alienated it from large sectors of society, and that it was not seen as a viable political alternative for many black African voters.⁷⁹ Indeed, DA MPs conceded that ‘race is central to voting in South Africa’.⁸⁰ Analysis of the motivations of South African voters does show that the relationship between race and party images dominates voter choice; however, voters are primarily motivated by inclusivity rather than exclusivity. Almost all voters think that their preferred party is inclusive of all South Africans, yet they do not regard ‘other’ parties as inclusive – and these notions of inclusivity and exclusivity are largely race-based.⁸¹ It is thus not surprising that the DA wanted to change perceptions that it had previously created of being an exclusive ‘minority party’.

There were different ways in which the DA attempted to change their party image. In 2004, Leon stated that the DA’s vision of non-racialism included implementing a programme to achieve ‘better diversity in our party’s membership and our leadership structures’; in other words, to increase support in black African communities. The document called for DA leaders to work closely with black African DA activists.⁸² Although framed by a perceived political necessity to mobilise voter support, this stance presented a clear tension between the ‘non-racial’, ‘individual’-as-primary-political-unit approach, and an essentialised view of racial identity. When Helen Zille took the leadership reins in 2007, the DA began overtly to rebrand itself in order to attract black African support and be deemed more inclusive, a party ‘that delivers for all’. Zille, in particular, targeted black African voters, campaigning in townships. She frequently and publicly spoke in a black African language (Xhosa) to break the perceived bonds of exclusivity in the DA. In rebranding, the party hoped to lose its image as a white, or indeed minority only, party.⁸³ This distinct change of image before the 2009 election amounted, according to Southern, to the keenest attempt, out of all South African political parties, to do justice to the idea of ‘unity in diversity’: ‘it conveys the idea that the party is paying more than lip service to post-apartheid South Africa’s core principle of non-racialism’.⁸⁴

Under the new DA brand, Zille, in contrast to earlier DA writings, actually referred to race groups. She explained that, under apartheid, ‘blacks⁸⁵ were far poorer than whites and had worse education, housing and health care’ and that the remedy for this is to ‘give full and equal

⁷⁸ Schulz-Herzenberg notes that partisan support still appears to be racially aligned, or at least motivated by notions of group politics. More detailed analysis shows, however, that levels of partisanship has actually fluctuated considerably more than expected, and that there has been a reduction in levels of partisanship among all racial groupings. Relevant to the DA in particular is evidence that, in the 2009 elections, 44 per cent of black Africans were ‘independents’, in other words, not unquestionably loyal to the ANC. C. Schulz-Herzenberg, ‘Trends in Party Support and Voter Behaviour, 1994–2009’, in Southall and Daniel (eds), *Zunami!*, pp. 24, 30.

⁷⁹ P. Graham, ‘Party Identification in South Africa: Profiles for the ANC and the DA’, *Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 108* (2012), p. 3, available at http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Briefing%20paper/afrobriefno108_16dec2012.pdf, retrieved 2 February 2016.

⁸⁰ Southern, ‘Political Opposition’, pp. 290, 296.

⁸¹ Schulz-Herzenberg, ‘Trends in Party Support’, pp. 35–6.

⁸² Leon, ‘A New Vision for the Democratic Alliance’.

⁸³ Jolobe, ‘The Democratic Alliance’.

⁸⁴ Southern, ‘Political Opposition’, p. 287.

⁸⁵ In this context, one can read Zille as referring to black Africans rather than a broader category of ‘black’.

opportunity to black people'.⁸⁶ She was quick, however, to decry the manner in which the ANC implements policies that are intended to address racial inequality. Moving away from Leon's position of criticising the ANC for its approach to 'representivity', she instead criticises the party for being a closed, crony society, where the prospects of 'each individual are determined by his links and access to the small leadership network in the ruling party'.⁸⁷ In this way, Zille is able to criticise the ruling party but avoid a negative focus on race that could be seen as indicating a lack of support for race-based economic transformation policies. It is also perhaps indicative of a DA that may, in the future, more explicitly recognise the social reality of racial identities affirmed by most South Africans, and choose to support policies that are based on racial representativity. These viewpoints certainly marked a change in the party's direction regarding the salience of race-based identity. The party may not have moved so far as to support race-based policies; however, it was a noticeable shift from focusing on minority concerns.

This inclusive approach to campaigning continued in the lead-up to the 2014 election. Here the DA appealed to black African voters through identifying with their history: that of being oppressed under apartheid. In order to undo the negative perceptions regarding its role in the apartheid system, the DA attempted to reframe its past through an association with anti-apartheid activists. Notably they used the Freedom Charter to rebrand their history, stating that '[w]e recognise the importance of the Freedom Charter in articulating a non-racial vision for South Africa',⁸⁸ and then attempted to weaken the ANC's ownership of this vision by stating that 'the Charter's claim that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white", is being undermined by the ANC's project of racial nationalism'. The party further linked PP leader Helen Suzman with Mandela, and used her legacy to claim a position in society as a non-racial party that always rejected apartheid and were pioneers (within the system) in the fight against apartheid. Indeed, the party explicitly links itself with Mandela when they state that their current vision includes: 'the idea that South Africa is "for all", or as Nelson Mandela famously said, "belongs to all who live in it, both black and white"'.⁸⁹

Membership

It is evident that the party believes that much of the work that needs to be done to allow potential black African voters to align themselves with them is actually to show racial change, or what they call 'diversity', within their party. Indeed, the party and its precursors had only white leaders (including Colin Eglin, Zach de Beer, Tony Leon and Helen Zille) until 2015, when the first black leader, Mmusi Maimane, was elected. Furthermore, a merger with the New National Party (NNP), although a failure within a short period of time, left the DA with a membership base infused with ex-NNP members, few of whom were black Africans. This membership base, in conjunction with the original DP membership base, which promoted ideas such as the

⁸⁶ H. Zille, 'SA Today – Only the Open, Opportunity Society will Overcome the Legacy of Apartheid, *Democratic Alliance* (2009), available at <https://www.da.org.za/archive/satoday-only-the-open-opportunity-society-willovercome-the-legacy-of-apartheid/>, retrieved 20 January 2014.

⁸⁷ DA election manifesto, 2009.

⁸⁸ DA, *The DA and the Freedom Charter*, (n.d), retrieved 6 January 2014 via www.da.org.za/, but since deleted.

⁸⁹ DA, *Our Vision*, available at <http://www.dakzn.org.za/our-vision/>, retrieved 15 December 2014.

minority-group-targeted ‘fight back’ campaign, would have strengthened the perception that the DA is a home for minority race groups.

There is, however, undoubtedly a growing cadre of black African leadership in the party, and the party has made significant strides to deliberately change the racial composition within the party’s senior leadership.⁹⁰ The majority of the candidates for premier in the nine provinces in the 2014 elections were black African.⁹¹ Most significant is the election of Maimane after Zille decided not to contest the leadership position in 2015. His rise the leadership has certainly been swift. He became active in the party only in 2010, yet stood as the DA’s mayoral candidate for Johannesburg in the 2011 elections. He was elected DA leader in parliament after the 2014 elections. The leadership changes in the party are not unproblematic. Commentators suggest that there is a cadre of mostly black African ‘young Turks’ driving a particular agenda in the party.⁹² The party denies this, claiming that ‘the idea of a black [African] caucus is a myth’.⁹³ The perception exists, however, that the top leadership of the party, and Zille in particular, have to mediate between this group and the ‘old guard’: ‘[t]here’s a group of older conservatives that is still powerful in the DA’, who ‘are afraid that the young black African professionals who are rising up the ranks could take over’.⁹⁴ Notwithstanding the internal racial dynamics of the party, the DA face the challenge of being seen to identify with black African South Africans while still holding firm to the relatively liberal, non-essentialised view of non-racialism.⁹⁵ This is a challenge, we shall see, that manifests itself even more starkly in the party’s approach to economic policy.

Economic Policy and the Role of the State: The Coalface of Non-Racialism

Historically, the DA broadly supported the idea of a free market economy, believing that economic development in a system of free entrepreneurship, guided by correct policies, will stimulate economic growth. This growth would ultimately cancel out any historical inequalities in the system.⁹⁶ These ‘guiding’ policies were fairly narrowly conceived. The 2002 Federal Constitution, for example, supported ‘growth in prosperity created through the exercise of the market economy’, seeing a role for government only to ensure that ‘no one must be left behind’;

⁹⁰ Not all attempts have been successful. In January 2014, the DA tried to have a black presidential candidate, Mamphele Ramphele, through a merger with Agang South Africa. This merger was short-lived, with Ramphele withdrawing her support within hours of the announcement. See Z. Jolobe, ‘The Democratic Alliance Election Campaign: “Ayisafani”?’ in C. Schulz-Herzenberg and R. Southall (eds), *Election 2014 South Africa: The Campaigns, Results and Future Prospects* (Auckland Park, Jacana, 2014), p. 61.

⁹¹ N. Mailulua, ‘DA Reveals Candidates for Premiers, Parliament’, *Business Day*, Johannesburg, 25 January 2014, available at <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/politics/2014/01/25/da-reveals-candidates-for-premiers-parliament>, retrieved 27 January 2014.

⁹² Interview with Zwelethu Jolobe, University of Cape Town, 24 January 2014; A. Makinana, M. Mataboge and V. Pillay, ‘EE Bill: Is Black the DA’s New True Blue?’, *Mail and Guardian*, Johannesburg, 15 November 2013, available at <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-11-14-is-black-the-das-new-true-blue>, retrieved 10 January 2014. This is not to say that Maimane is one of the ‘young Turks’; rather, evidence indicated that he is close to DA stalwarts such as Eastern Cape leader Athol Trollip. In the 2015 DA party elections, there was a clear affiliation between Trollip and Maimane, while the candidate opposing Trollip (Gana), who lost, is a ‘young black’ leader.

⁹³ W. James, ‘Is the DA Split on Employment Equity’, *702 Talk Radio* (2013) available at <https://soundcloud.com/primediabroadcasting/is-the-da-split-on-employment?in=primediabroadcasting/sets/midday-report>, retrieved 20 January 2014.

⁹⁴ Makinana, Mataboge and Pillay, ‘EE Bill’.

⁹⁵ The challenge of appealing to black African voters may be lessening, however. Voting patterns from the 2014 election show that the party is growing in traditionally black African ANC-dominated areas, although not to such an extent that it is challenging ANC hegemony. The party itself claims that it got 760,000 black African votes. Jolobe, ‘The Democratic Alliance Election Campaign’, pp. 67–8.

⁹⁶ H. Kotzé, ‘A Consummation Devoutly to be Wished? The Democratic Alliance and Its Potential Constituencies’, *Democratization*, 8, 1 (2001), p. 123.

in particular, providing access to education and promoting the progressive realisation of access to social security, housing and health care. Leon argued that there was no need for economic policy to target certain groups specifically: '[i]f we are fixated on racialism – if we're fixated on redress, rather than on economic growth, we aren't going to get the unemployed into employment'.⁹⁷

This approach is markedly different from the ANC's current focus on racially based economic policies, such as affirmative action and black economic empowerment (BEE). It must be noted at this juncture that there is no obvious way to interpret the ANC's current approach to non-racialism; contemporary views on non-racialism must be extrapolated more broadly from ANC economic, political and social policies, and from direct comments on non-racialism made in a range of sources, including NEC documents, ANC discussion documents, policy documents, speeches and interviews, although these comments are not widespread, nor offer any detailed vision.⁹⁸ To understand fully the ANC's current approach to non-racialism, it is necessary to look beyond uncomplicated, symbolic references to the term 'non-racialism' and examine ANC policies more generally. As discussed previously, a primary aim of the ANC was, as a liberation movement, and is, as a party in power, to work towards the NDR. For the ANC, a non-racial future can occur only as an 'act of black self-emancipation, with the African people taking the lead in their own liberation'.⁹⁹ To counter the consequences of apartheid, structural transformation of society is required, with the ANC directing the state and giving leadership 'to the motive forces in all spheres of influence and pillars of our transformation project',¹⁰⁰ where 'motive forces' generally refer to 'drivers of change' including 'black workers and black communities'.¹⁰¹ In other words, if the system caused the crime, then building a non-racial South Africa requires a 'transformation of the material conditions themselves'.¹⁰² In practice, this means that it is necessary to recognise, accept and act on racial difference in the present as a means to achieve a non-racial future, reflecting Cachalia's references to 'anti-racist racism'. This includes the conscious and deliberate re-racialisation of South Africa by undertaking a host of measures, including affirmative action, to ensure that the results of decades of systematic discrimination and denial of job opportunities are reversed.¹⁰³ This is, in other words, a racialised approach to economic development that is in contrast to the DA's historical 'colour-blind' view on economic policy.

However, as the salience of racial identity became more difficult to ignore, the DA, under Zille's new leadership, started calling for more state intervention that *implicitly* aligned with racial categories. The DA was now accepting that you can't leave everything to the market and

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ See Anciano, 'Non-Racialism and the African National Congress'.

⁹⁹ ANC, 'ANC Submission to the World Conference against Racism NGO Forum' (2001), available at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2683>, retrieved 2 December 2014.

¹⁰⁰ ANC, 'Organisation Renewal: Building the ANC as a Movement for Transformation and a Strategic Centre of Power – A Discussion Document Towards the National Policy Conference' (10 April 2012), p. 12, available at <http://www.anc.org.za/docs/discus/2012/organisationalrenewalf.pdf>, retrieved 2 December 2014.

¹⁰¹ Jordan, 'The National Question'.

¹⁰² J. Cronin, 'The ANC's Non-Racial African Nationalism', *Politicsweb*, 17 June 2011, available at <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/news-and-analysis/the-ancs-nonracial-african-nationalism?sn=Marketingweb+detail>, retrieved 2 December 2014.

¹⁰³ Jordan, 'The National Question'.

that the state needs to provide some form of welfare intervention.¹⁰⁴ Although Zille stressed a desire to limit the ‘wrong kind of state intervention’, she explained that liberals in plural and unequal societies need to find credible ways of addressing poverty, when wealth and poverty largely coincide with racial categories.¹⁰⁵ Where the party had acknowledged the historical salience of race in regard to poverty and inequality, it now placed a focus on redressing the racial legacy of apartheid. The move to rethink the role of the state was exemplified in the DA’s 2009 and 2014 manifestos. Both expressly mentioned the need for redress for historically disadvantaged (that is, black African, coloured and Indian) South Africans. The 2014 manifesto explains that ‘the nature and extent of economic exclusion under apartheid ... require *active measures in support of redress*’ (emphasis in original).¹⁰⁶ The manifestos also supported BBBEE as a means to empower ‘disadvantaged South Africans’. The discussion of BBBEE is significant, as the party, in a noticeable change from its 2004 manifesto, states that it is ‘fully behind’ BBBEE, as ‘removing the discriminatory laws of the apartheid government is not enough on its own to empower disadvantaged South Africans’.¹⁰⁷ The 2014 manifesto is clear, however, that broad-based empowerment must lead to economic growth, and the existing policy should be reformed. It is also clear that redress of historical inequality should not be based simply on race: ‘[w]e believe that race and disadvantage are not the same, but that a significant correlation between race and disadvantage remains today’.¹⁰⁸ Supporting any race-based policy, however, signalled a new direction in the party’s conceptualisation of non-racialism.

In the DA’s 2012 *Plan for Growth and Jobs*, there was again recognition that the state must play an important, active role in reducing the legacy of race-based inequality and poverty. It acknowledges the need for partial state intervention in the economy, including providing critical infrastructure, correcting market failures and ensuring fairness by promoting broad-based ownership and participation. A key section focuses on the need to break down ‘barriers to inclusion’, where fairly wide-ranging state intervention is called for in the form of financial incentives to enhance BBBEE, among others. However, this support for some degree of racial categorisation by no means pointed to a step change in the DA’s approach to group/race-based identity. The *Plan* still used a liberal lens in its vision of ‘building an equal opportunity society’, talking about those who have opportunities and those who don’t, and it only very occasionally referred to racial categories. Aside from references to BBBEE, the word ‘black’ is used 10 times in the 88-page document. Of the other traditional race groups ‘white’ is mentioned three times, ‘Coloured’ once and Indian twice, with the bulk of the use of these terms in the historical overview.¹⁰⁹ This is not a policy perspective that uses race-based analysis. In this light, it views the political unit as the individual and not a member of an ascribed group. Where citizens are grouped, it is largely along income lines (or an implicit class analysis) of poor or wealthy, gender lines, or by age group. Thus, from an economic perspective, the DA continued to put forward

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Zwelethu Jolobe, University of Cape Town, 24 January 2014.

¹⁰⁵ H. Zille, ‘For an Inclusive Society’, speech delivered at the Liberal International Congress, Belfast, UK, 17 May 2008.

¹⁰⁶ DA election manifesto, 2014, p. 16.

¹⁰⁷ DA election manifesto, 2014.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ DA, ‘The DA’s Plan for Growth and Jobs’ (28 July 2012), retrieved 15 January 2014 via www.da.org.za/, subsequently replaced by the 2014 version.

a disjointed view of non-racialism; acknowledging the need for state intervention, which at times has a racial dimension, but more broadly trying to avoid racial grouping. There is neither a strong commitment to non-racialisation, nor a clearly multiracial approach to non-racialism.

Fractures in Façade: The Employment Equity Bill

The challenge of reconciling race-based economic redress with liberal values came to a head in 2013, when the party voted in favour of the Employment Equity Amendment Bill of 2012. The Bill effectively supported setting racial targets that take into account national and regional demographic profiles. Arguably, this contradicted many of the core values that the DA had stood for. For example, the Federal Chairperson previously strongly objected to the idea of setting racial quotas, stating that

if national or regional demographics determine opportunity, the state needs to be able to define what determines a person as 'Black' or 'Coloured', 'Indian' or 'White' in order to assess what they qualify for and which demographic they represent. How will the state determine this? With a pencil test?¹¹⁰

Certainly, according to some commentators, 'DA support for this kind of racial engineering will come as a shock to many ... It also betrays the non-racial principles for which the party has historically stood'.¹¹¹

This change of heart did not last long, however; within weeks, and after a Federal meeting, the party rescinded its support for the Bill. Zille, apologising, stated that '[w]e dropped the ball Our representatives on the portfolio committee were inadequately prepared', and that submissions on the bill were rushed through the portfolio committee.¹¹² Ex-DA senior analyst van Onselen argued that this apology was disingenuous, as the representatives to whom Zille refers were not in fact poorly prepared; they had simply had the wrong position. DA representatives had previously commented on the Bill in committee meetings, and in fact

stated, when the final bill was tabled for adoption, that the DA 'fully supports the constitutional provisions for affirmative action and the objectives of the Employment Equity Act to promote redress and diversity in the South African labour market'. The DA's change of stance on the bill was, according to van Onselen, 'a matter of profound ideological disagreement'.¹¹³ The DP had indeed strongly opposed the original bill when it was introduced into parliament in 1998. Leon stated at the time that it was a 'pernicious piece of social engineering ... it does nothing for the poor ... it uses race as a proxy to advancement' and that '[g]roup-based thinking

¹¹⁰ James, 'Mantashe'.

¹¹¹ A. Jeffery and F. Cronje, 'The Democratic Alliance and the Employment Equity Bill', *Weekend Argus*, Cape Town, 3 November 2013.

¹¹² G. van Onselen, 'The Anatomy of a Hollow DA Apology', *Business Day Live*, 11 November 2013, available at <http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2013/11/11/the-anatomy-of-a-hollow-da-apology>, retrieved 13 January 2014.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

as proposed in the Bill formed the cornerstone of apartheid'.¹¹⁴ The DA's changing stance on the Employment Equity Bill highlights fundamental contradictions in trying to apply a non-essentialist version of non-racialism in a country with a racially infused history and high levels of inequality distributed along racial lines. The contestation over the bill brings to a focal point the question of what exactly the DA means when it says it supports the ideal of non-racialism.

To address the extensive criticism the party faced over its seemingly confused stance on employment equity, the party held a federal conference to discuss its policy on 'economic inclusion': in effect, race-based policies. At the end of 2013, it disseminated a policy on economic inclusion that essentially acknowledges the need to implement race-based redress policies in a 'transitional phase' in order to overcome the legacy of apartheid. The document focuses on how the racial dimensions of apartheid and the 'exclusionary racial culture' created a context where the circumstances into which one is born significantly affect one's life chances. A focus on race-based redress is necessary, as formal equality does not ensure a just society. Sections of the paper talk about poverty, inequality, unemployment and education in racial terms, providing statistics according to racial groupings of black Africans, whites, Indians and coloureds. The party also explicitly supports the new broad-based BEE scorecard. They will measure the success of their redress programmes by the opportunities that have been created for 'black advancement'. It is thus clear in this document that the DA has, more than ever before, embraced the idea of racial categorisation. The document contains the term 'black' (not counting references to BBE) 31 times in 22 pages, in stark contrast to the jobs and growth plan of only a year earlier. This is a distinct change from the use of racially neutral terms, such as 'disadvantaged', conventionally used by the party. This new economic policy shares much with the ANC's implicit approach to achieving non-racialism through racial categorisation. However, the ANC is unclear about how long racial categorisation is needed for, while the DA stresses that race-based policies should be short-lived. They do not want to 'entrench' race as the 'determining factor of our future', but rather support a transitional phase, in which race-based redress is used to overcome apartheid legacies. In this way, they seek to retain their long-term vision of a 'non-racial society'.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the 2014 election manifesto is clear that redress programmes are 'transitional measures that must be subject to regular review'.¹¹⁶

Although the party, in a distinct change from the past, now expressly refers to race groups, it does still try, as far as possible, to use not only race as a delineator: they use terms such as 'previously disadvantaged' or 'creating diversity'. When they state that '[w]e recognise the need to promote economic inclusion with a specific focus on previously disadvantaged individuals who *faced legislated and institutionally organised exclusion*'¹¹⁷ (emphasis added), they are, given apartheid's racially legislated history, plainly referring to individuals who are black (in its broadest sense). Not using racial terminology may be one way in which they attempt to

¹¹⁴ T. Leon, address by Tony Leon MP, leader of the Democratic Party, about the Employment Equity Bill debate, National Assembly, 1998.

¹¹⁵ DA, 'DA Policy on Economic Inclusion', 2013, available at <https://www.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Economic-Inclusion.pdf>, retrieved 10 January 2014.

¹¹⁶ DA election manifesto, 2014, p. 18.

¹¹⁷ DA, 'Policy on Economic Inclusion'.

reconcile liberalism's focus on the individual with policies that focus on group identity. It is, however, clear that the party now supports race-based policies.

This point of view is clearly exemplified through the discourse on non-racialism that emerged between party leadership candidates in the 2015 DA electoral congress. Wilmot James, who challenge Maimane for the leadership position, has consistently argued that non-racialism does not equate to racial essentialisation, and that 'race is a bad proxy'.¹¹⁸ Indeed his supporters are clear that they backed him because of his views on race; BEE beneficiaries, for example, should be chosen for socio-economic disadvantage, not race.¹¹⁹ Maimane's views on non-racialism are not altogether clear, having been articulated in various ways on different platforms.¹²⁰ During his leadership campaign, he explained that '[w]e must recognise that race shaped our identities and opportunities, but we mustn't keep people trapped in racial boxes. Our end goal must be to transcend race so that all may be truly free, both socially and economically'.¹²¹ He later becomes clearer about race essentialisation, explaining that he self-identifies as a black person and wants 'first and foremost' to be seen as black. He acknowledges that a difference between him and James is that he 'recognises race as a proxy for disadvantage'.¹²² In his first speech as party leader, he stated clearly that '[n]on racialism does not mean being colour-blind' and '[i]f you don't see black then you don't see me at all'; he did add, however, that skin colour should not define South Africans indefinitely.¹²³ These statements resonate to a large extent with Cachalia's definition of the ANC's 'anti-racist racism'. Maimane's non-racialism certainly recognises the importance of racial categorisation, equating non-racialism to multiracialism, rather than an earlier DA version (and indeed James' view) of anti-essentialisation of race.

Contradictions in the DA towards racialisation are not new. The party has in theory consistently expressed loyalty to the idea of non-racialisation, with its focus on individual above group; yet, in practice, it has lobbied racial groupings for support, as is evident through campaigns such as 'fight back', and, more recently, in its appeal to black Africans. A related contradiction is the tension between liberal values and the need to redress race-based inequalities created historically. How does a party that theoretically subscribes to the individual as the key political unit deal with policy implications that have historically affected a group? The DA tried to do this by staying close to the principle that equal opportunities for individuals will eradicate race-based inequality. Indeed its current vision still states that 'positive action must be targeted at individuals who still suffer the effects of

¹¹⁸ M. Shackleton and D. Thwala, 'Why We Support Wilmot James', *PoliticsWeb*, 6 May 2015, available at <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/why-we-support-wilmot-james>, retrieved 10 June 2015.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ See E. McKaiser, 'Breakfast with Next Leader of the DA?', *IOL News*, 29 April 2015, available at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/breakfast-with-next-leader-of-the-da-1.1851825#.VYFaE0ZpZNs>, retrieved 25 May 2015.

¹²¹ M. Thamm, 'DA Leadership Race: Maimane and James Race to Define Party's Future', *Daily Maverick*, 27 April 2015, available at <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-04-27-da-leadership-race-maimane-james-raceto-define-partys-future/#.VYFVDEZpZNs>, retrieved 17 June 2015.

¹²² McKaiser, 'Breakfast with Next Leader of the DA?'

¹²³ G. Nicolson, 'Mmusi Maimane Wins DA Leadership Race', *Daily Maverick*, 10 May 2015, available at <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-05-10-mmusi-maimane-wins-da-leadership-race/#.VYFgnUZpZNu>, retrieved on 20 May 2015.

discrimination, not at groups'.¹²⁴ Their 2015 Values Charter also reaffirms the importance of building 'successful individuals', who can realise their full potential 'as individuals'.¹²⁵ However, it has become clear that the *longue durée* of eradicating racial inequality through a focus on individual economic growth means it may be more difficult to generate support from the majority of the voting public in South Africa.

It is thus unsurprising that the party has recently started to support race-based policies explicitly. It is arguable that many in the DA would like race *not* to be the litmus test for group identity that requires redress; they would favour the idea of 'disadvantage'. This is problematic, however, both in the context of a racially unequal society and in the context of government policies that expressly focus on racial categorisation, in particular BBBEE and affirmative action. The party is an opposition party in a country with a highly racialised past, governed by an African nationalist party. They may not ideally choose to engage in supporting racialised group thinking, but they function within a circumscribed political context. The DA is forced to deal with and acknowledge racial fault lines. The challenge for the party is that it cannot easily marry liberal concepts with multiracial ones, and it is a multiracial understanding of non-racialism that the majority of the South African electorate seem to relate to.¹²⁶ Thus even if many in the party may wish to subscribe to a non-essentialised version of non-racialism, they have arguably turned down the path of multiracialism.

Conclusion: New Forms of Non-Racialism or a Dying Ideal?

For the DA (and indeed the ANC), their current conceptualisation and instrumentalisation of non-racialism faces the same contradictions and inconsistencies that they have historically, albeit in different iterations. The DA is caught between traditional liberal notions, where non-racialism equates to universal, colour-blind equality, and a contemporary support for race-based economic policies. This echoes tensions in the ANC between more a universalist, humanist vision of non-racialism and an analysis correlating race and socio-economic class, following the idea of CST, which results in the essentialisation of race. Arguably, both the DA and the ANC have, in effect, instrumentalised a view of non-racialism that reflects and supports multiracialism. For both parties, transitional race-based policies are necessary (in the short term for the DA and longer term for the ANC) in order to achieve 'true' non-racialism. These contradictory approaches to the ideal of non-racialism also play a divisive role within both political parties. The DA's previous federal chairperson stated that 'at the heart of the ruling party [ANC] there is one fundamental fracture: non-racialism'.¹²⁷ Surely that fracture belongs to the DA too.

What does this tell us about the concept of non-racialism in South Africa today? Is non-racialism to be understood as meaning, in effect, the racialisation of economy and society? Arguably there is little vestige left of a vision of non-racialism that equates to the idea that race is a social construct and that the state can and should be 'colour blind' – in essence, what

¹²⁴ DA, *Our Vision*.

¹²⁵ DA, *Our Values: Freedom, Fairness and Opportunity*, 2015, available at <http://www.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/DA-Value-Charter.pdf>, retrieved 1 June 2015.

¹²⁶ See *Politikon*, 39, 1 (2012).

¹²⁷ James, 'Mantashe'.

Luthuli may have been thinking when he referred to a ‘non-racial democratic South Africa which upholds the rights of all who live in our country to remain there as full citizens with equal rights and responsibilities with all others’.¹²⁸ In many ways, non-racialism is now more akin to Cachalia’s ‘anti-racist racism’. The concern here, as voiced by the ANC, is that racial categorisation creates the risk of freezing racial and cultural categories, rather than allowing for organic development.¹²⁹ As Cachalia asks, ‘is a stable, essentialised subject with a fixed identity still required for a non-racial project?’¹³⁰ He questions, in other words, whether is it necessary to accept a fixed sense of racial identity in the short term to achieve non-racialism in the long term. This analysis of the positions of the DA on non-racialism resonates with Taylor’s argument that what remains of the project of non-racialism is, at the elite level, ‘largely a politics of non- performative incantation; where to simply express commitment to non-racialism has become ritualistic, but has no deep effect on the incontrovertible truth that South Africa remains a highly racialised society’.¹³¹ Instead, current approaches to non-racialism on the part of the DA and the ANC reinforce the racialisation of society. Non-racialism now equates to, on the one hand, multiracialism, and, on the other, racialisation. Was non-racialism always (at least on the part of the ANC) conceived in this light or is it a dying ideal?

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¹²⁸ A. Luthuli, ‘Africa and Freedom’, Nobel Peace Prize lecture, Oslo University, 11 December 1961.

¹²⁹ ANC, ‘National General Council 2005: Discussion Document: The National Question’, Discussion Documents (2005), available at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2570>, retrieved 2 December 2014.

¹³⁰ Cachalia, ‘Revisiting the National Question’, p. 59.

¹³¹ Taylor, ‘Deepening Non-Racialism in South Africa’, p. 42.