

**Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust Lecture**

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**WHO IS A NON-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICAN?  
MANYI, MANUEL...AND THE BATTLE FOR THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN DREAM**

**The Context:**

In a recent newspaper article Trevor Manuel took on Jimmy Manyi's remarks on race. Trevor Manuel correctly concentrated on exposing the insidious and racist nature of Jimmy Manyi's labour market machinations. The public commentary that has followed has amplified the debate. However, in itself Manuel's critique does not give us an appreciation of what is at stake at this moment in South Africa. Putting it sharply, non-racial nation building is in crisis in South Africa. The Manuel-Manyi issue is merely one of many symptoms of this crisis.

The other symptom is how we are failing to talk about race in a way that addresses the racist inequities we have inherited from apartheid and further exacerbated by seventeen years of ANC neoliberal rule. There is a lack of political leadership coming to the fore to lead this conversation in South Africa. Instead, race talk is used in a banal, simplistic and undemocratic way. Critiquing Zuma, the failings of the government, the shortcomings of the ANC or even voting for a party other than the ANC is reduced to being racist.

Those who think we can rescue nation building by being colour blind also exacerbate the nation building crisis. South Africa is far from being post-racial. Believing that legal prohibitions of racism and discrimination resolve the race dimension of nation building is naive to say the least. Individualising social change, championing an abstract and formal legal equality and punting an individualised opportunity structure will not transform South Africa. Instead such an approach reproduces racial bias because of its assumption that individuals can rise above generations of racialised dispossession, systemic exclusion and exploitation without state intervention. Essentially, without state intervention, the possibility of massive redistribution and transformation is a fiction.

Rather than the above two approaches—non-racism as shown through support for the ANC and naïve, ahistorical colour-blindness—I want to suggest that we look back to the *Freedom Charter* for a richer account of non-racialism. The *Freedom Charter* proclaimed a non-racial South Africa as realisable through a social construction of race equality. Moreover, such a nation-building project has to go to the roots of systemic

racism constructed by decades of segregation and apartheid. Through its declaratory statements the *Freedom Charter* is explicit that political and economic power are necessary to confront the nature of racial oppression endured in South Africa. The *Freedom Charter* is a people's dream of a society in which a race awareness is informed by a historical understanding of institutionalised racism and a constant striving to challenge reverse racism. In its essence it is about making racism socially unacceptable. Such a radical understanding of non-racialism is being lost in South Africa.

### **The Demise of a Radical Understanding of Non-Racialism:**

The demise of such a radical understanding of non-racialism is happening because of the degeneration of the ANC's non-racial nationalism. Such a degeneration can only be appreciated by understanding the contradictions and limits of the key props that organise the ANC's non-racial nationalism:

- (i) national liberation ideology;
- (ii) the Mandela icon;
- (iii) the state and
- (iv) the ANC as a political party. It is this degeneration that is also narrowing the non-racial political base of the ANC.

#### (i) National Liberation Ideology:

The formation of a non-racial nationalism and its contribution to nation formation has happened through the struggle against apartheid capitalism. Crucial in this regard were key moments in the development of national liberation ideology and contributions within National Democratic Revolution theory. Looking back there are two lines of thinking about non-racial nationalism: a people centred non-racial nationalism versus the ANC's version of non-racial nationalism. The former is grounded in the *Freedom Charter* in which there is a conscious social construction of racial equality as expressed through the notion that, 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White'. The ANC's non-racial nationalism is about a qualified non-racial nationalism. This exists beyond the *Freedom Charter* through various elaborations within its *Strategy and Tactics* documents. In such documents there is an explicit articulation of different 'degrees of oppression' amongst the oppressed. This formulation is empirically correct, given that Africans in particular were the most oppressed under apartheid. However, translated into the post-apartheid context this formulation sets up a hierarchy of liberation and talks about liberation for 'blacks in general but Africans in particular'. The ideological and political effect of this has been to tie other race groups to the African majority in an instrumental way. This is expressed in a shift away from the solidaristic concept of 'black' which came to the fore in the 1980s to unify Africans, Coloureds and Indians but which has been subsequently displaced with a representation of non-Africans (Coloureds and Indians) as 'minorities'.

Are Coloureds, Indians and Whites, who have embraced a people-centred non-racialism, now merely strangers in their own country that have to be tolerated? The Ngema song 'AmaNdiya' produced in 2002 is one of many racist assertions that have formed the grammar for a new grassroots racism, which has been documented as alive and well, despite his apology. In this context an ANC non-racialism seems increasingly like a

pseudo universalism, which is not about a genuine emancipatory humanism and a consistent striving against reverse racism. Instead, the ANC's non-racial nationalism is easily put aside for a more explicit African nationalism today, despite having a few non-African faces in the leadership of the ANC and in the ANC cabinet. The inflections of this African nationalism are expressed through the rise of traditionalism, ethnic cleavages and increasing uncertainty with an emergent authoritarian populism in ANC ranks and even xenophobia. Rising greed, accompanied by widening inequality provides the sub-soil for African nationalism to be articulated in extremely dangerous and divisive ways. The more explicit African nationalist ANC of today evokes as necessary a struggle to defend in an uncompromising way a radical people centred non-racial nationalism in South African society.

(ii) The Mandela Icon:

Nelson Mandela is correctly characterised as being part of the generation of 'great deeds'. He brought a morality into South African politics which has not been surpassed and which is a challenge to all of us in the present. Moreover, the symbolic value of Mandela the icon was crucial to give expression to the practice of a people centred non-racial nationalism. He unambiguously showed that reverse racism either biological, socially constructed or implicit in human behaviour had no place in a new South Africa and the national imaginary. Our South African identity was anchored in a collective humanism. This symbolic value of the Mandela icon provided the basis for forgiveness and reconciliation with white South Africa.

Sadly, this did not work. Most of white South Africa appropriated Mandela 'rainbowism' and reconciliation to mean the past can be left behind and there was license to be colour blind about the present and the future. Paying taxes and promoting corporate social responsibility was understood as sufficient to deal with our inherited racial inequities. Moreover, Mandela emboldened this opportunistic and false consciousness by ensuring neoliberal economic policy was placed on the national agenda and implemented in a colour blind way. While liberalisation placated the fears of a nationally bounded white monopoly capital that wanted to globalise, the jobs of African, Coloured and Indian women workers were decimated in South Africa's clothing and footwear industries, for example. The effects of neoliberal policies have not been colour blind. Many of the remaining jobs in South Africa's clothing industry still remain tenuous particularly for Coloured women workers in the Western Cape. Generally white capital has been at the vanguard of a job shedding growth path inducing a crisis of social reproduction amongst mainly the black (African, Coloured and Indian) working class. The Mandela moment did not lead to South Africa's 'economic CODESA'. White monopoly capital was not drawn into a national consensus in which its own sacrifices and contributions to nation building were clarified to address our inherited racial inequities, from which white capital benefited. Instead, capital merely demanded economic management on its terms and this was conceded. This has not worked for South Africa's nation building project.

(iii) The State:

The post-apartheid state is central to nation building and our South African identity. The state has an important educative function to actively promote a people centred non-racial

identity. The Mbeki moment took us the furthest with its advocacy of an African identity that was all embracing and non-essentialist. However, at the same time and in practice Mbeki effectively Africanised the state. The demographic profile of the South African state is essentially African. This is an important achievement and must be celebrated. However, this state has two important short-comings in relation to promoting a people centred approach to non-racial nationalism. First, the current state has not developed a public discourse that enables talk about racial inequities in a way that unifies and gives a common purpose to nation building. Instead race talk in policy is fixated on elite formation through BEE, affirmative action and procurement. While this has an appeal to aspirant elites, it does not speak to the race inequities endured by the black working class and particularly working class women.

Why is the state not foregrounding the obscene post-apartheid wage gap that reveals how high white (and some black) executive pay is in comparison to black working class wages? Should not the labour department report on this regularly in parliament and in the media? Should not the labour department report on the racial identity of who is losing their jobs, who is less likely to obtain a job, which farm workers and labour tenants are being evicted and who is more casually employed? Why can't the Treasury report on the racial profile of loans given by South Africa's banks and which black working class communities banks are red-lining? Why can't the DTI report on the investment impact of companies in terms of our racial inequities? Moreover, why can't the state report on the public goods it is supplying like healthcare, housing and education and how this is changing racially skewed patterns? Africans and Coloureds are the most poor in income terms in post-apartheid South Africa and we need to talk about this as the basis to find radical people centred non-racial solutions. Without a social scientific approach to measuring and studying race inequities as part of a state led public discourse we are drifting away from a people centred non-racial South Africa.

A second nation building shortcoming of the current state relates to its failings. Despite the normative commitment of the ANC to a 'democratic developmental state' the actual practice of the state is far from being developmental. One of the essential preconditions for a developmental state is a meritocratic, rule centred and technically capacitated state. Comparative experiences teach us that such a state is staffed by the best in the country. Currently, education, health care and most local governments, for example, don't seem to be working. While the failures are complex, for some this is the basis of racist critique. However, for many (non-Africans and Africans) who want to contribute to the state as part of making a difference to the country and nation building it is not clear how they can contribute. Many do not have and do not want to be part of the patronage links to the ANC political apparatus. Moreover many cannot relate to and do not want to be part of the 'deployment culture' of the ANC. Instead they would prefer to be embraced by the state as professionals, who want to contribute to the professional ethos of the state. The narrowing of space for such a non-racial effort to address the failings of the state is also undermining post-apartheid nation building.

(iv) The ANC as a Political Party:

Finally, and ironically the ANC itself has become a threat to South Africa's nation building. Its ideologues have found it increasingly difficult to speak the language of the National Democratic Revolution with a genuineness as it has increasingly become enmeshed in managing a neoliberal capitalism and class formation. Its dominance in the political system has taken it away from a politics of hegemonic consent and hence it does not seek to strengthen its legitimacy through moral authority, intellectual leadership and a sense of common purpose grounded in the common sense of everyday life. This was there once upon a time in the early days of South Africa's transition and even during the struggle against apartheid. Currently the ANC uses its electoral machine and sleek marketing campaigns to reproduce its electoral majority, while its elite leadership is increasingly detached from the pulse of a shifting and complex society. Moreover, its internal divisions span a wide axis and are fuelled by careerist impulses and various ideological cleavages from 'communist versus nationalist', 'right versus left', 'traditional versus modern' amongst others. In this context an organisation wracked by internal conflict and lacking in internal coherence easily breaks the 'unbreakable thread of non-racialism'. This was most evident with the factional rise of Jacob Zuma. Moreover, with Julius Malema and Floyd Shivambu openly racist and sexist towards non-African journalists, one wonders what non-racialism really means in the ANC today. Hence the question: are the future leaders of the ANC up to the task of non-racial nation building?

### **Reclaiming a Radical People-Centred Non-Racial Nationalism:**

In many ways the ANC's non-racial nationalism is unravelling and it is increasingly difficult for ordinary South Africans to call themselves non-racial within the ANC's conception of nation building. This has very serious consequences for South Africa and the search for a unifying South African identity that is emancipatory. One possible way forward is to reclaim a radical people centred non-racial nationalism. This entails four crucial tasks in the present.

First, a radical people centred non-racialism has to be understood as belonging to the people. The *Freedom Charter* as a document and its non-racial legacy belongs to the people. It does not belong to any single political organisation and has to be claimed as such. Moreover, and crucial is the necessity of claiming a people's history of struggle against racial oppression. The demise of apartheid was a complex process and entailed a role for various social forces. To reduce the end of apartheid to heroic acts by the ANC is to mythologise history and erase a role for the agency of the people. Forced removals like in District Six were not done because those that lived in District Six were members of the ANC. It was a harm done as part of a racist project. At the same time, the resistance that ensued, both formal and informal, visible and invisible, tells the story of a people's history of struggle against racial injustice. Central to this narrative is the unresolved question of the identity of 'coloured people'. For many the term 'coloured' is derogatory and instead the category 'Brown' is preferable. This question can only be dealt with by reclaiming a people's history of struggle, for present and future generations, from below.

Second, a new politics of citizenship and rights has to be struggled for. Such a struggle has to take us beyond abstract citizenship and towards an empowered notion of citizenship grounded in the values of the constitution. Such a conception of citizenship

should advance the substantive nature of civil, political and socio-economic rights, for all who live in South Africa, and guided by a class perspective, inflected with race. In other words we need to construct a rights-based political discourse and practice that shapes the public policy agenda in a manner that addresses race-class inequities through social scientific understandings. This has to be part of furthering rights and class based transformation for those at the bottom of society: the black working class (African, Coloured and Indian).

Third, we have to openly challenge and call for the end of provinces. Besides the parasitic nature and fiscal waste associated with provinces, this political construct was the product of a political compromise with the racist National Party and allows for regionalised racist and ethnic identities to undermine a unified South African identity. Such a challenge to provincial government must be linked to deepening democracy where it counts the most, that is, through strengthening local government through representative, associative and participatory forms of democracy. Abandoning provinces should not be used to further centralise power at the national level.

Fourth, civil society has to become a re-invigorated terrain to defend and advance a radical people centred non-racial nationalism. In this regard we need to bring back through a reclamation of a people's history of struggle, conversations about racial oppression both in South Africa and beyond and how struggles against racial injustice have been waged. We also have to bring into popular conversations understandings of what is racism, how it works and how we should actively combat it. We assume in South Africa that we understand racism or some of us are just beyond it but yet the racist ghost of apartheid still haunts all of us. The conversation that played out in the media between Manuel and Manyi is a spectacular example of the ANC's failings with regard to non-racial nation building. While Manyi was racist, Manuel held up a version of ANC non-racialism that is not working. South Africa needs a grassroots nation building activism so we can secure the South African dream; a people's dream!

## Dr Vishwas Satgar: Questions from Harold Wolpe

- 1) You mentioned coloured people who prefer to be called 'brown' rather than 'coloured'. I think you should also have mentioned that there are many many coloured people who are very proud to be coloured who want nothing else than to be called coloured. On the question of provinces, I have always believed that South Africa is unable to move forward from yesterday because of the racial stratification across provinces, not just in provinces but across the whole of South Africa (Zululand belongs to the Zulus etc). As long as we continue to think like this, we will not be able to move away from yesterday...I don't know what other people think of that.

**Vishwas:** I'm not going to answer all these questions. Clearly on the whole question of "brown vs coloured", the talk isn't about pretending to have an answer, it's about saying it is an unresolved question. It is something that the community can have a discussion about from below. I don't think it's something we can wait for from the ideologues of the ANC to define us going forward.

I think on the issue of provinces, there's already an interesting critique emerging about the place of provinces in the country. I sketched out one position on this, obviously there'll be a vicious federalist counter position...but in the end, this just doesn't make sense economically, politically etc. Hopefully the ANC can facilitate this debate given that local governments are failing to the extent that they are.

- 2) On the issue of coloured. In the newspaper of today, there was a picture of 1936 where white people gathered and removed people from the voters roll and they described people as coloured. What I'm saying as an option, to those who are classified as people that they would not be comfortable with, let us get together and go to the Parade. There was a District 6 in every town. Dr Satgar – whatever (laughter) - there was towns in the Eastern Cape, there was a whatever in Somerset East where I'm coming from... we were removed. Let us go to our towns and burn, burn those birth certificates, that whoever gave them to us, and let's reclaim us as citizens of this continent.
- 3) There's clearly a wide diversity of views and opinions amongst us. The first two speakers; the first said he's proud to be coloured, the other said the very opposite. It simply highlights the diversity. I have a question, a comment and a question. My question is why concentrate on nationalism rather than class, given your own class perspective? The comment relates to that, for those of us who haven't left the class perspective. Vish, you spoke about the problem within the ANC, I see it rather as a problem of the left, because we perpetuate racial thinking. We, you, spoke about white capital. You started by defining some of the categories. Please define what white capital is as distinct from black capital or any other capital you

wish to name. And my final question...if I could remember it... and I can't remember it, let me stop there.

**Vishwas:** On the issue of class, you know, I thought about that. I just feel in the South African context, given our historical legacy, and given where we come from, class is actually not adequate to help us understand our society. But more than that, I think class as a lens to try and understand things tends to be colourblind. And I think in the South African context, by itself that also has some problems. I also think that we need to understand that 'race' and 'capital' or 'race' and 'class' is a dynamic relationship, and it's been remade, the patterning of that relationship has been remade, the way that neoliberal paradigm has affected this dynamic is something that we need to relook at. How does that reflect in the income distribution pattern in our country today? But I also think that race has an important place in consciousness of this country and in particular in that of the working class. And I think anyone of the left who wants to tackle the challenges of this country cannot ignore that.

- 4) Hi, I need three minutes or four minutes or five minutes on this topic. I am pleased that the debate on non racialism started in the Western Cape so thank you to the Harold Wolpe for starting this conversation here. I think it's important to say to my comrade Vish that the debates on non-racialism predates the Freedom Charter. I think it's important to say we need to locate it elsewhere within the history of South Africa and within the movements that exist in South Africa. So the question of non racialism is, I think, a debate, a question, that started with the unity movement, and it was, and I this evening perhaps people will speak to it later, and I think it's important that we locate this question of nonracialism within a historical context, and not simply a context that starts or that ...comes in the 1970s or 1980s. It has a context that goes back to political movements and political organizations seeking to find strategies that can unite the oppressed masses of South Africa among a common political platform or a political programme. That's my first point. I think it's important to say there've been many theorists, many people on the left who have had a particular position, who have argued, and I think Alexander and others have made important contributions as to how race has been used as a social construct, how race has been used in this country to further Apartheid, and how the ANC has never had a non racialist approach in this country. I think we must correct some of the wrongs, some of the theories that perpetuate itself in this in our country. The most important boost on the theory of non racialism came with the black consciousness movement, with Steve Biko who used the theory of non racialism as a way of uniting black people. I've always considered my friends not as brown or as coloured, but as a South African. And I think it's important we see this South Africans and that we do not distort these histories.

Those of us who have put forward the idea of non racialism must always take criticism, because within the question of non racialism we didn't sufficiently talk



about diversity, that we are diverse, that we have language differences, cultural differences, class differences, and I think that confused some of the debates.

- 5) I hesitate to talk. Firstly, because I've been having a bit of a drink, but secondly I am white and tenuous. In my background is sexism, racism and classism. And I have to now pose the question of culture, which is something that I have pondered since I came back to this country, 19 years ago, 20 years ago or more. But there is a sense that I have that people always seek someone to be beneath them. Now, having had Harold been my mentor, having been brought up intellectually in structural terms, having been denied the role of psychological factors,..... I want to pose the question, what is racism? Is it not the case of having someone worse off than you, of having someone under you who you can blame for your position? So my question is – what is racism, how do you define racism, is there any way that it is different to cultural differentiation, and how do you eliminate it? Does that make sense?

**Vishwas:** On the history of non racialism, I'm really not going to dispute those issues. And I think it's great, those are the kind of conversations we need to have. And the issue of the ANC and not being non racial, in that regard I'm a bit more sceptical about that, I really think the ANC made some important commitments to this in the struggle against apartheid when it adopted the Freedom Charter. But I think as its ideology evolved, which is really the influence of the Communist Party, and it was the Communist Party, which was very much inspired by Stalin's understanding of 'the nation' – it was very crude, very mechanical. A lot of these things shaped the political imagination of the ANC around the nation, and I think here comrade Ronnie...I'm saying the Communist Party made some mistakes, because I really do think that non-racialism of the Freedom Charter is very different from the 1969 Morogoro tactics of the ANC... but anyway, I think that the ANC in my view has had a historical commitment to non racialism, publicly, explicitly so, and I think I'm arguing that I think that's waning.

On the role of Black Consciousness, that is great. These are the intellectual resources that we need to retrieve from the past. I'm not saying BC has the answers, but given where we are in our society, BC was a conversation about Gavism and so on.... But it does have a sort of indigenous impulse in it, it does speak to our reality in some ways. Psychological emancipation is important, not just for the colonised but for all of us. I think there are important progressive impulses in this ideology we can work with, and we need to talk about. The point about culture, and what is racism, I'm going to leave it to you also.

- 6) If you believe in non racialism, you have to believe that social issues can be described without referring to people's skin colour or racial background, and you also have to believe that that is preferable to describing social conditions using skin colour as a convenient tag. If you accept that you have to go further and accept that it may take discipline on your part if you come from a traditionally race conscious background. And if you cannot do that you have to accept that,

then you have to accept that you are a fellow traveller on the path of Dr Hendrik Verwoed. You may not agree on his solutions, but you will be a person who believes that social solutions will not be able to get away from racial backgrounds. And in South Africa, there is a massive lack of discipline, in personal discipline, in finding other explanations of our own societal issues, on explanations which do not rely conveniently on the traditional tags. Racism is so convenient, it's so easy, it excuses one from thinking. And if you take that into the public sphere, you have to accept, very sadly for a number of South Africans, that you may not benefit from a certain racial classification. That is not an excuse – to me, if you look into our past, you cannot simply use the definitions from our past that so many South Africans have suffered from. We cannot take these into the future if we are going to talk about non-racism.

**Vishwas:** You know I think that the ANC ...the choice that was made about non racialism in 1955 at the adoption of the Freedom Charter, using race groups as the basis of that discourse, was a moral choice, It was a positive moral choice. It wasn't like the choice that Verwoed made, which was an evil choice. There was a different moral consciousness here and a different basis for embracing races to make the point about non-racism.

I think more than that, it's simplistic to say we need to abandon a social understanding of race in this society and just be colour blind. I think it won't work. I do believe that for us to leave race behind and that's possible, I mean liberal democracies haven't solved this problem...Obama with his own version of a 'post-race liberalism' is still facing these realities, and that is an advanced liberal society. I do think that underlying all of this is a material question and that is how do we develop this country? I really do believe that if we don't address the legacies of exclusion, of dispossession, we won't be able to move beyond race, and that's the fundamental issue.

- 7) Today South Africa and in the context of the Western Cape in particular we're seeing a rise in tribalism. Should the result of the last local government elections where the ANC lost the Western Cape to the DA be a wake-up call for the ruling party?
  
- 8) Firstly my question goes to the issue of African nationalism. Vish, maybe I misunderstood you, you seemed to describe African nationalism as something that came with Queen Victoria, 200 years ago, and it's hard to see why you saw such an old school view of African nationalism. .... Secondly, where are the youth? We can easily speak about these things in our age, but if we're not engaging with the future leaders of our country, this could be something we debate into our twilight years but those who make tomorrows decisions do not have the opportunity to engage. Finally, the romanticisation of Nelson Mandela. If he is the man he was why could he not stop the ANC taking the route it has taken? If he's

as powerful as we say he is, why has the ANC moved away from the discourse of non racialism? There seems to be a discord between Mandela and the public and Mandela and the ANC.

**Vishwas:** In terms of African Nationalism ...I don't think Marxism, going back to the national democratic revolution issue, I think Marxism has struggled with nationalism. And I don't think Marxism in the twentieth century produced a theory of nationalism. And actually, the kind of relationship we've seen between Marxism and nationalism has been a contingent one, it's been based on the conditions of struggle, and I think the lesson coming out of that for practical struggle is you can't ignore nationalism. Nationalism has two faces to it – this ugly, dark face and it can be imbued with racism and all kinds of things, but it can also be inflected in a positive way. The Cubans use revolutionary nationalism in their political project – we did it here as well. And it wasn't about imbuing nationalism with elements that were retrogressive. In the South African context it was imbuing nationalism with a positive imagination.

In terms of the national democratic revolution and the CST, I think it was very much part of that attempt to contest nationalism, to give it that revolutionary impulse. CST, 'Colonialism of a Special Type', was a theory that communism brought in the 50s, and the CST gave us a particular type of analysis gave us a special understanding of the relationship between capitalism and racist oppression. And this understanding rubbed off onto the ANC. The NDR became part of the political lexicon of the ANC, as the influence of the Communist Party became stronger, this became also the discourse of the ANC; the ANC wasn't using the language of national democratic revolution in 1955 when it adopted the Freedom Charter, but that came subsequently with that influence.

- 9) (Ronnie Kasrils) Vish, thanks very much. It's been a long time since I heard you preaching. I really enjoyed it. I have two points to make. One is, the question of what we can learn from our history. One thing we can learn, and I think Vish touched on it, and this he was tackling from a certain point of view, but one thing we can learn in this is that we live in a class and racially divided country, particularly town and countryside. It is something we learned in struggle, and I'm not talking about who led at various times in our history, but in the struggle against apartheid and racism, and class oppression, we've seen throughout our history, people coming together, across the class-race divides, and across the gender divides, and this must help us in the post apartheid phase. I might be marginalised in the Communist Party and the ANC but I still belong to these organisations.

The second Vish, you refer to the national democratic revolution, which is a rather loaded code-term for the Communist Party and the Left. I am not sure how many people followed you in that respect. The ANC and the Communist part started the alliance saying we're engaging now in the national democratic revolution stage of our country. Now I do believe we need to create the unity of our people, we need to build a South African nation, which we don't really have,

let's put aside all this nonsense about rugby and cricket. But, in the real sense – of how we relate to each other. The national democratic revolution that you saw in Tahrir Square, you saw the Egyptian people chanting in the face of a police state, in the face of Mubarak, they began to chant, 'Egypt! Egypt! Egypt!' And my understanding of that is that they wanted an Egypt that was strong, independent, not bowing down to any colonial powers of the West - that was standing on its own feet. I believe that the road to that is through a socialism. Maybe the route to that is through a Swedish social democracy. But Vish, the question there is what we're seeking and why there's such a rift in the ANC. Because I would say they're not tackling this particular question, and they're stagnating in a neo colonial style capitalist economy, so I'd really like to have an answer on that.

**Vishwas:** Ronnie, I'm not sure where the Communist Party is today in terms of trying to understand the relationship between Marx and nationalism in South Africa. It needs to be grounded in a new analysis of the South African political formation. It needs to really look closely at the social relations in this country. I don't see that kind of intellectual work happening in the Communist Party. I think it's become more pre-occupied with the politics of power... in the end, nationalism is constructed, you can put into it what you want. And here historically the Communist Party put it into it a progressive articulation. I am not sure if that is happening right now.

10) I think the question of non racialism is a non question. In a society that is racist, that is sexist, that is homophobic, you can't be anything but anti racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic. The question that we need to ask Vish, is how these constructs relate to the maintenance of class society. The basis thereof is class. When one talks about the unity of class in a truly democratic way, we also get away from the fundamental poison of nationalism.

**Vishwas:** And I think that partly speaks to my friend in the back there about nationalism. I think we need to be rigorous about nationalism. The analogue for the time we're living in right now is the 1930s Great Depression. And it's interesting that under those conditions we saw the rise of fascism, and in the world today we're seeing the neo right emerge in Europe, you're beginning to see xenophobic politics. We are beginning to see the dark sides of the construction of identity. I think the task of the left is to contest that, and to not let these socially constructed cleavages to pull apart society. That is a strong possibility today. In terms of what's happening in Egypt, and the kind of political imagination that's on the streets, what's striking about Egypt is that you're not seeing vanguards lead this. In the twentieth century the national liberation template was about the vanguard. Here you're seeing a rolling process where peoples' struggles are throwing up leadership as they walk forward and confront the power structures of that society. Whether that can go further to institutionalise change will be interesting question in itself.

11) I'm a teacher and I'm a bit concerned about what has come out of this meeting concerning non racialism. I am a human being, I am a South African and I will fight injustice. The whole question of race is a power game, and we use that ...it's

about power, and if we don't move away from racist attitudes in South Africa we are doomed. And if adults don't understand what non-racialism means, what about the youngsters in the schools? I teach non racialism, we fought for non racialism, we must now practise non racialism.

- 12) You haven't mentioned xenophobia except in passing. I think it's very important in our struggle, not only in South Africa but across the continent. The issue of xenophobia has to be raised at this moment in time. We're strong on what we are against, but what are we putting it in its place. Is there such a thing as a 'race'? When I grew up in the 60s and 70s, we were taught that there was much racism in the world today, but on the issue of race, there's only one human race. The father of the Cuban revolution, Jose Marti ..he said...oh I've forgotten, the point I want to raise is that should we at this stage call for internationalist solidarity. This is answer I believe.
- 13) I'd like to add to the comment that the gentleman in front made about the youth - where are they? We'll go into old age debating these issues and not have the leadership to take this country forward. The question is, post 1994, have we developed a South African identity? I heard Vish speak about education being contested terrain and also terrain for criticism, and the question I have is why have we failed to build 'citizenship' into our curriculum where we actively teach our children what it means to be South African, and what it means to have the values of the charter embedded in our daily practises? I work with schools, I work with youngsters, and I can tell you the trauma of what children are facing as a result of what is playing itself out, not only in the political arena, but over the weekends when people meet at a social level, when people engage in school car parks, the kind of trauma that is being played out regarding bullying regarding class, race, etc, can only be dealt with from the very foundations of schooling. And I'm questioning why it is that we haven't for example in countries where there are more diverse citizenships than ours, embraced 'citizenship'. It doesn't matter what cultural capital a child holds, what ethnic identity a child has, they are Singaporeans first. We will chase after the Proteas until they choke because we're so desperately looking for the South African identify – something that can hold all of us.
- 14) Thank you Mr Chairman. I am no longer an angry young man so I will say what I want to in 2 sentences. In regard to the events which we have witnessed in North Africa in recent days. And the reference that's been made in regard to the role of nationalism as such. I think there's an important lesson which we as people who've struggled in South Africa need to remind ourselves and remind all other progressive people about, that when we speak of nationalism, we need to be very clear that it is part of an anti imperialist struggle, and there's no question of making any kind of allowance for anything else. Because if it isn't part of an anti imperialist struggle then it's bogus, it's part of an attempt to hoodwink the victims of oppression.

When we speak about the history of South Africa and the whole concept of non racialism, there were two voices in this audience this evening I would like to endorse. Because these two voices quite categorically rejected the concept of racism as such, because it is a fallacious concept, it's not a concept we need to argue about. Very recently, there is a gentleman whose name I don't want to name, reminded us that if we go to Sterkfontein, there may be a little man who'd remind us of what it means to be a *homo sapiens*. I think the point I'd like to make is that we should stop paying footsy footsy with whole notion of racism, it's something we've tolerated in this country, even civil society has, even when a man expires and is a dead dead body you still have to classify a dead body as by what race they are classified as. It is absolute disgusting ... utterly unscientific and absolutely obnoxious. We don't need to tolerate this rubbish.

My last comment - I don't know why there was almost an apologetic approach to exploitative societies. Every single exploitative society, including our present exploitative society – neo-capitalism, neoliberalism. They all produce the same kind of thing – corruption, jockeying for position, and corruption which a so called middle class elite plays. In South Africa we still have the wrong notion that the middle class can play a progressive role, that's a piece of historical junk we can dump in the bin of history. They have no role to play.

- 15) Vish, I noticed you were very careful at the beginning to define your terms. You did not define the term 'African', and I think that we're faced with a very serious challenge, that the term 'African' and the concept 'African' has been appropriated to refer to people of Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana etc origin. And the importance is as it refers to the 'mixed' or Coloured population is as follows: it is not whether they are 'brown' or 'mixed' but that they are African, and they have to assert their; African-ness'. I'm not even talking about that population of the white population who call themselves Afrikaaner. I'm talking about the coloured population who have been bred and born and created in this country and I am referring to the Khoi or San. For the last 300 or 400 years in the Western Cape there's been this mixed population, culturally mixed, racially mixed, which in other groups are called '*mistshues*' in Mozambique. Why don't they object to the term African to apply to only a section of the South African population? And it's not about black, because that's a definition only in relation to the whites. How do we understand the term 'African'? Because when we go elsewhere in Africa, they are bemused by the South African use of the term 'African' not to apply to everyone in this country.

**Vishwas:** We've seen the violence that racialised categories can do under apartheid. I actually don't want to go that route tonight. I think the kind of intellectual argument you make is important, but I think it's a question that has to be resolved by a dialogue in the national conversation. We saw the positions – we can map them tonight. One was for 'coloured' one was against. I think it's important, but we're not going to resolve it here tonight. We're going to think as a country about how we talk about identity. The whole

point about citizenship in school, I think that's very exciting. This is part of the failing of the nation building project. What kind of history are we teaching in schools? How are we dealing with education about racism? Stereotypes are one expression of racism, they do not necessarily have intent formulated behind them, but how do you deal with that? How do you deal with racism that's much more pernicious? We need to be educating the next generation about this.

There was a point about internationalism, anti imperialism, international solidarity. I think this really refers to the kind of one nation we're trying to define for ourselves. In 1955 when anti-colonial movements met in Bandung in Indonesia (the ANC was a part of that), the struggle against colonialism and apartheid was an anti-imperialist one. Today it's a question we have to revisit. Some would argue against the imperialist thesis, you have middle powers, you have BRICS, IBSA etc and the geopolitical game is something different. Again I think it's something we need to have a discussion about.

Finally I want to say: to talk about race doesn't make you racist. Race can be a social marker, it can be a social category that can be used in non racist ways. I really think the dream, the one nation dream, the one South Africa dream, is something we all have a responsibility for. I really believe that we need to not surrender it. And I think that in different ways, wherever we locate it, we need to take responsibility for this challenge.