

DRAFT DEBATE ON RACISM BY MEC VR SHONGWE 24 APRIL 2012

Honourable Speaker, the African national Congress was formed based on very strong principles which continue to this day, to serve as a pillar and a reference point for the people of South Africa, Africa and the World.

The wisdom and the vision of the leaders of this gallant organisation, the conviction on what kind of a South Africa do we need has passed the tests of times, it has allayed all fears and proven to the world that Africans too are human beings with a capacity to think like any other human race.

For hundred years now, the ANC has led the struggle against racism and oppression, organising mass resistance, mobilising the international community and taking up the armed struggle against apartheid. All this was done and work continues to this day fight amongst other things, racism.

The ANC has never in its policies believed that oppression, exploitation and the subjugation of a black person in their land of birth was something should continue to characterise South Africa beyond 1912 hence it was formed. That is why, leaders of the stature of Pixely Ka Isaka Seme, John Langalibalele Dube, ZR Mahabane and others took it upon themselves map a way forward for the oppressed, dispossessed blacks after the formation of the Union of South Africa which excluded them from the affairs and running of the country because of their skin colour.

That is where we come from as an organisation and our commitment to a humane, just and better living condition for all can never be questioned. The ANC has always understood its stance and the kind of society it want to build.

The ANC fought symptoms of racism even long before 1948 when the Nats came to power. The 100 years of existence is a stark reminder to all of us of the role the ANC played in working to unite the country.

Slavery is a clear indication of how Europe and the West viewed Africans and other races which became victims purely because of the colour of their skins. Our experience as blacks in South Africa is that of growing up in a society where we were the poorest by any measure, coming from background of the uneducated and unemployed, mainly employed in menial jobs.

On the same vein, we had racially charged policies like the job reservations acts, which reserved specific jobs for specific races in South Africa. The colour of the skin was used to determine the kind of job one was able to do or not to do.

The Bantu Education added an insult on the injury by denying black learners an opportunity to go into educational fields of their choice on the bases of the colour of their skin. This included the kind of professions they would later choose in life.

Former President Mandela believed and confirmed before courts that he had cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities irrespective of the colour of the skin. He cherish this ideals informed by what the ANC stood for.

Honourable Speaker, this then, leaves us with a responsibility to understand in interpret correctly what he meant when he said, "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination".

Our efforts to redress and empower the black majority in South Africa that have been denied opportunities and deliberately rendered refugees with limited right in the land of their birth, have on many occasions encountered serious resistance from the white minority through their racist organisations.

Honourable Speaker, I am deliberately relating the debate to Former President Nelson Mandela because, many of those who are today claiming to be loving him better than all of us, are the once who are defeating the very ideals that Madiba stood for.

They contradict every word he uttered and forgetting that he made this commitment knowing very well that he could be hanged yet he maintained that this ideals, if needs be, he can be killed for believing in them.

Honourable Speaker, they want us to accept that our children should be called refugees in their own country yet on the other hand they tell us they love Madiba and the ideals he stood for.

It is a norm that areas with greater economic activities would be attractive human beings of any race. However it is interesting that blacks in this country and the children of the Eastern Cape for instance become refugees for moving to greener pastures in the Western Cape, their own country.

When Former President FW De Klerk attacks the ANC for wanting to have reviews on the constitution, they refer to Codesa negotiations and also pointing out that the ANC is not the ANC of Madiba.

They raise such backward arguments in order to fool the people of South Africa to believe that they are the best defenders of Madiba's ideals.

It is such incidences that immediately expose the DA and its followers as the most racist organisation. The colour of the skin in their understanding determines the intellect and capacity to think. The level of inferiority is determined by whether you are white, Black, Coloured or Indian.

Honourable Speaker, does the DA and their children (Afri-forum) have any commitment to nation building or they are exclusively preoccupied with securing the interest of the privileged white population in South Africa.

We did not hear Steve Hofmeyer saying a thing when the children in the Eastern Cape were insulted and called refugees in their own country which has a constitution that guarantees them the right to live, work and study anywhere in South Africa.

We only read a three sentence statement from the DA about the Commandos in Carolina. The question is Honourable Speaker, would they have reacted in the same manner if the Commandos were trained by the ANCYL ...?

We would have the DA, Afri-forum, Steve Hofmeyer, and all other likeminded racists led by Helen Zille running all around making all sorts of noise.

Farm workers continues to bear the brunt from their Bosses yet in the eyes of the defenders of the ideals Madiba stood for, such brutalities does not require their attention.

We must refuse to be brainwashed by the racist organisations that are capable of going on a spree kissing and hugging blacks only to dump them immediately after election and further call their children, refugees.

We should refuse to be made to believe that black people are angry and violent, as people who disregard the lives and properties of other people which is a case on the Commando story. This view is very flawed and it is propagated by the racist people who want innocent young white people to think that blacks are barbaric and inhuman.

Honourable Speaker, I must thank the Chief Whip of the Majority Party, the ANC for making us engage on this matters. We have not been able to have a dialogue or we refuse to have one on some of the critical issues facing the nation and its people. These are some of the issues which threaten social cohesion in this country.

In the name of national reconciliation and social cohesion which is very important for the success of the nation we must further commit to issues such the transformation of the economy and the liberation of all people and black people in particular.

The demon of racism requires real efforts from all section of our society if it is to be defeated. For as long as we denounce it in public platforms and practice it in real life, we must know that we are far from the ideals which Former President Madiba committed and sacrificed his life for.

Our freedom and all the human rights that comes with it as enshrined in our internationally acclaimed constitution are rubbished to the core by acts and elements which seek to use race in order to determine capacity and intellect. If opportunities and better life continues to be determined on the bases of race and deliberately undermine other races, then we should accept that we are far from the ideals which Madiba stood for.

Lastly Honourable Speaker, I am calling on all disciplined revolutionaries to join us in the ANC as we tackle this demon head on. The ANC is home to all South Africans who want to build a truly democratic, non-sexist, NON-RACIAL and prosperous South Africa.

It is home to Honourable Benadie and Honourable Masango, and I am crossing my fingers Honourable Speaker that Mr Masango will not be called a political refugee soon.

I thank you.