



HELEN SUZMAN FOUNDATION

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Profiles

PROFILE



Patricia de Lille

Patricia de Lille has been involved in politics for the last quarter of a century. With her election as National Vice-President of the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) in 1988 she occupied the highest position for a woman in the trade union movement.

She was elected on to the National Executive of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1990 and led its delegation in the constitutional negotiations prior to the 1994 election. In Parliament she was appointed Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Transport from 1994 – 1999, and was also made the Chief Whip of the PAC. She left the PAC in March 2003 and formed the Independent Democrats.

She was the first South African woman to form a political party of her own, campaign and win seats in the local provincial and national government. In 2006 she was awarded the *Rapport City Press* Woman of the Year award. De Lille serves on the boards of the following organisations: Age-in-Action; Nazareth House HIV/Aids Children; St Joseph's Home for chronically sick children; Helen Suzman Foundation; Nelson Mandela Children's Fund; African Monitor; and Arab-African Council.

She is Chancellor of the Durban Institute of Technology (DUT) and a member of both the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption and the African Parliamentarians' Network against Corruption. She is the recipient of various international and domestic awards and honours.



Sandra Botha

Sandra Botha was an activist for many years in the Free State Province before becoming a candidate for elected office. She became a Member of Parliament in 1999 and has had a stellar career in Parliament.

She served on various Select and Joint Committees of Parliament and served as the Chairperson of the Democratic Alliance Parliamentary Caucus. In 2004 she was honoured by being appointed as Chairperson of the House, a position she has subsequently relinquished. Botha was elected as the Leader of the Official Opposition in the National Assembly by the Democratic Alliance Caucus in 2007.

Her policy interests vary and include women's issues, issues affecting the African continent, human rights and economic policy. Her personal interests embrace art, architecture, travel in Africa and reading.



Jonathan Faull

Jonathan Faull holds a Bachelor's degree in Politics and Economics and an Honours degree in Political Philosophy from the University of Cape Town.

Faull worked as a parliamentary researcher before moving to Johannesburg in 2001 to help found and work for the economic think-tank, the Economic Development Growth and Equity (EDGE) Institute. He has also worked with and for various international academic institutions as a consultant and organiser, and has worked as a strategy consultant in the South African party political sphere. He joined the Political-Information and Monitoring Service (PIMS) in 2004 as Political Researcher.

His work focuses on party politics, electoral and parliamentary strategy, the politics of the tripartite alliance, inequality and social justice.



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Andries Nel

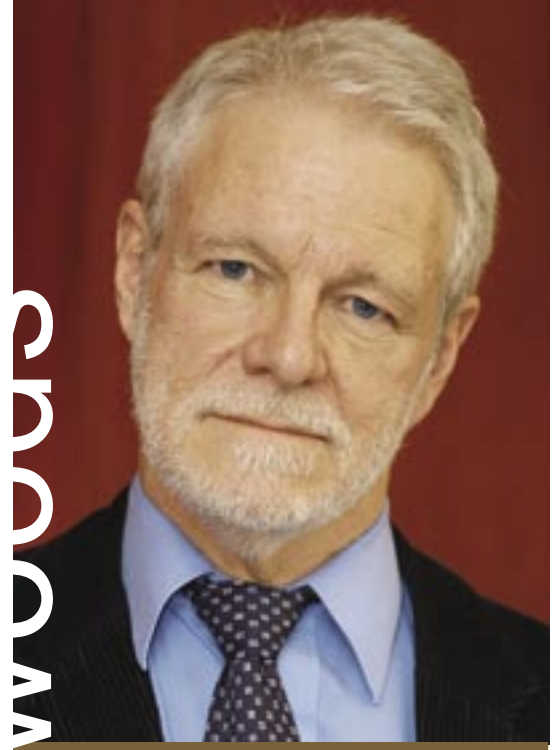
Andries Carl Nel was born on 2 October 1965 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA to South African diplomats. He studied law at the University of Pretoria.

He has been active in politics since high school and was involved in the National Union of South African Students (Nusas), South African Students Press Union (Saspu), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Students for Human Rights, the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), the African National Congress (ANC) and African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). From 1996 to 2001 he served on the National Executive Committee of the ANC Youth League and worked at Lawyers for Human Rights from 1990 to 1994 as co-ordinator of its Capital Punishment and Penal Reform Project.

In 1994 he was elected a Member of Parliament in South Africa's first democratic Parliament and served on a number of committees and ad hoc committees. During the Constitutional Assembly from 1994 to 1996 he served on Theme Committee 5: Judicial Systems.

In 1999 he was re-elected as a Member of Parliament. From 1999 he served as the ANC Whip on the Justice Committee. Since 2002 he has served as Deputy Chief Whip of the ANC.

He lives in Pretoria and has been allocated Atteridgeville as his constituency.



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Gavin Woods

Dr. Gavin Woods holds three Master's degrees in the fields of Economics, Public Finance and Business Administration and a PHD in Economics. He has studied at universities in South Africa, at Teufen St Gallen in Switzerland and at Fairfax in London.

After a varied career in the corporate and NGO sectors Dr. Woods was elected to Parliament in 1994 where he has had a distinguished career. He has served on the Standing Committee on Finance and the Joint Budget Committee. He chaired a sub-committee of Parliament that wrote the Public Finance Management Act and served as Chairperson of Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts from July 1999 to March 2002 – crucially during its efforts to probe the Strategic Defence Procurement Package. He served as a Member of the National Audit Commission and is a Member of the Office of the Auditor General's audit committee.

Dr. Woods is a Professor in Public Finance at the University of Stellenbosch and publishes widely as well as speaking at various international conferences on issues ranging from economic policy to public financial management and the curtailing of corruption.



Raenette Taljaard

Raenette Taljaard is the director of The Helen Suzman Foundation. Taljaard, a former DA MP, served as Shadow Minister of Finance from 2002 and was a member of the Portfolio Committee on Finance. She also served on numerous other parliamentary committees, including the Standing Committee on Public Accounts during the arms deal investigation.

Taljaard lectures part-time at the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Public and Development Management and locally and abroad on the regulation of private military and security companies.

Taljaard is a Yale World Fellow, a Fellow of the Emerging Leaders Programme of the Centre for Leadership and Public Values (UCT's Graduate School of Business and Duke University) and a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.

Taljaard holds a BA in Law, RAU (University of Johannesburg), a BA (Hons) in Political Science, cum laude, RAU (University of Johannesburg), an MA in Political Science, cum laude, RAU (University of Johannesburg) and an MSc in Public Administration and Public Policy, cum laude, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Taljaard publishes widely.



Sipho Seepe

Professor Sipho Seepe holds a Dip Sci (Ed – Unibo), B.Sc Ed (Physics – Unibo), M.Sc (Physics – Wits), M.Ed (Harvard University), PhD (Physics – Uni. Nwest), and Advanced Management Programme (Henley UK).

He is the Director and Head of The Graduate Institute of Management and Technology. He has served as the Academic Director of Henley Management College, Southern Africa, and as the Acting Vice-Chancellor of Vista University, and was appointed in 2002 as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Vista University.

He held teaching positions at various levels both locally and abroad and writes extensively on a wide array of matters of public interest, and was a columnist and an associate political editor of the *Mail & Guardian*.

He is a recipient of the prestigious Fulbright South African Researcher Grant and Harvard South Africa Fellowship.

Seepe was involved in a number of research capacity-building initiatives among the historically disadvantaged institutions in South Africa and has served on several committees in this regard.

Prof Seepe serves on the HSF and SAIRR boards and was invited by the Presiding Officers of Parliament to serve as member of a panel tasked with reviewing Parliament's performance with regard to its constitutional mandate.



HELEN SUZMAN FOUNDATION

Future Politics: Change, Coalitions or Status quo?

Introduction

Introduction

Last year The Helen Suzman Foundation (HSF) started the Quarterly Roundtable Series. We aim to use this series to further public discourse on matters of national interest and national importance, and we have already hosted two roundtables. The first dealt with the impact of political culture on democratic institutions, and in the second, we looked at the review of Chapter Nine institutions.

Today we have the great privilege of having a number of our leading luminaries in the political arena with us. It is a great honour and privilege to host them, and to have them take the time out of their political schedules to be with us in a year of considerable political development and political evolution.

They really need no introduction, and I will just briefly go through their names: Dr Gavin Woods of the National Democratic Convention (NADECO); Andries Nel,

Today, unlike in the past, we are dealing with complexity.

currently the Acting Chief Whip of the African National Congress (ANC); Jonathan Faull, a political analyst with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA); Prof Siphoswe Seepe, Head of the Graduate Institute of Management Technology (GIMT) and a board member of the HSF; Sandra Botha, the new leader in Parliament of the Democratic Alliance (DA); and Patricia de Lille, leader of the Independent Democrats (ID) and a board member of the HSF.

It is a great privilege to host them.

RAENETTE TALJAARD



Welcome

Welcome

Thank you for coming to what has almost become a trademark of The Helen Suzman Foundation to encourage dialogue, which is very necessary for a number of reasons. Today, unlike in the past, we are dealing with complexity. There was a time when the notion of being right and being wrong was quite easy, where apartheid was unifying in terms of both sides. There were those who were pro and those who were anti, and we never succeeded in trying to imagine, and to conceptualise, the post-1994 South Africa. Now the notion of simply being black and white, being liberal and illiberal, and heroes and villains, has become much more confusing, and to deal with that requires dealing with the complexity.

There's no greater sense of complexity than having a ruling party that is also a liberation movement, and that remains the case. Part of it could be deliberate, part of it could be an inability to deal with the conditions of freedom and democracy, but it is that type of

complexity that requires us to enter into more serious dialogue. And The Helen Suzman Foundation could not have found a better way of phrasing it. Rather than dealing with the issues of opposition politics, they suggest that we should look into the future – hence this dialogue being on the subject of future politics, coalitions, change and the status quo.

(The political cartoonist) Zapiro says he sees more similarities [than differences] between now and the past. This can be contested, but there are certain things that remain the same.

I would like to thank our panellists for making the time to be here. Given that I have always been more on the left, I thought I should start with the extreme left and move to the extreme right, not that that indicates the position of people in the political spectrum. Without much ado, I call on Patricia de Lille to kick-start the discussion.

SIPHO SEEPE



Patricia de Lille

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning. It's always a relief to get out of Parliament and do some constructive work.

If we want to look into the future, we also have to look at our history, and therefore I want to deal first with race and politics.

Our opposition parties are currently defined in the context of being the minority versus the majority. We need to find more ways to deal with this issue. Also, fear is exploited in opposition politics. Again, it's linked to race, and as opposition parties we should not continue to exploit this fear just for the sake of votes. We must, as opposition parties, speak truth to power, but we must also speak to the issue of principle.

What then becomes the question is your credibility to speak that truth to power, and so we must redefine opposition politics to cut across issues. We need to breach the divides of the past. We need to breach the divides between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the HIV-positives/HIV-negatives, and all the divides of the past that we have inherited.

Opposition politics also reflect division. As leaders, we should not pander to this division. In terms of race politics, the DA

If we want to look at the future, we also have to look at our history, and therefore I want to deal with race and politics.

and the ANC are products of the past, and they tend to take these divisions of the past into the future, into our new political dispensation. We need a way to lead politics out of this, to look at the new generation. Some members of the old generation are too steeped in their ways, and it's almost impossible to change that.

The option is to find principles that remain pragmatic; we must find a balance, we must acknowledge economic disparities and race disparities. We must try very hard to build a non-racial society. We also have to correct the imbalances of the past with social and economic justice. In an ideal society, race could be dropped, but in a transitional society like South Africa we must acknowledge it, we must acknowledge the imbalances of the past. Just look at our schools today. We are all victims of our past, and we must make everyone comfortable with the idea that to be an African is an inclusive concept. That is the challenge.

I am a South African, which means that I live in the south of Africa. African does not mean black, we can't be that rigid. We can say that we are coloured, white, Indian, as long as we do not negate our Africanist identity. We must not suppress our origin, but do not make it the dominant force. We must move towards a common citizenship.

Multi-party democracy is very key to the development of South Africa, because we must provide more choices for South Africans because of our diverse society. I don't think that we would ever survive in a two-party state. So multi-party democracy is important, and after 13 years we can see that our democracy is beginning to settle. Some parties might stay, and some parties might go, and I think that is quite normal. South African voters are also beginning to look more at the issues rather than at political parties, and therefore, if you are an issue-based party, you are able to breach the divides.

I want to share some of the experience of the Independent Democrats in a working relationship with other parties – not coalitions or alliances; we have working relationships with both the ANC and the DA – but relationships, based on

We will always remain firm on principle, and flexible on strategy and tactics.

government principles, political principles and policy principles. And, broadly defined, when we talk about political principles, we talk about the principle of non-racialism, anti-racism. We are committed to fighting racism in every form.

We also believe that a balance needs to be struck between equality and equity. Equality is defined by the ID as meaning treating every South African equally. Equity is defined by the ID as instituting certain interventions, which in some instances may mean a redistributive agenda through cross-subsidisation and/or redress, in order to address the imbalances and distortion of the past.





Broadly, on our government principles, we believe that we need to work together, and in that working relationship we need to seek consensus as far as possible, but we should also disagree on issues publicly if we want to. We also believe in transparency, oversight, accountability, anti-corruption, and co-ordination and co-operation. We believe that for any working relationship to be effective and sustainable between parties, there needs to be a clear

We believe in co-operation and consensus, as far as possible, but we are not so naïve as to think that politics and power are without conflict and competition.

mechanism created for co-ordination and co-operation. So we have established those mechanisms with all the political parties that we work with.

In terms of the broad policy principles, we are pro-poor, pro-transformation. We believe in black economic empowerment. We believe that basic services must be provided. And so when we are in a working relationship, and not in an alliance or a coalition, all of these issues will certainly guide us.

As social democrats, left of centre, we are committed to democracy and democratic governance. We are committed to seeing to it that government and the state live up to the commitments to their citizenry, and especially the poor. As social democrats we do not apologise for pursuing pro-poor policies, and engaging the private sector on the basis of creating growth and wealth that would help to address the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and inequality in our society.

Pro-poor does not mean pro-ANC. As social democrats we harbour a clear set of governance and political principles, and we always clearly articulate this to other parties. We believe in co-operation and consensus, as far as possible, but we are not so naïve as to think that politics and power are without conflict and competition. We are not in the game of opposition for the sake of opposition.

In conclusion, as our name says, our identity is one of social-democratic leaning. We treasure our independence, and we are beholden to no one party in South Africa. In some municipalities in the Western Cape, where we've constituted the councils with either the DA or the ANC, in each case we were guided by a principle of

de Lille

power or principle of purpose to form that working relationship.

We believe that what South Africa needs is an injection of this breed of politics. Whatever decisions we may take in future, we will always remain firm on principle, and flexible on strategy and tactics. And I think we can at least be proud that we've made the beginnings of a contribution that plays politics by both conflict and co-operation, informed by conscience and principle.

After 13 years of our democracy, we must be careful not to generalise. We must be careful not to see our voter base as homogenous, but that they do have choices, and that they do stand up for those choices. I was saying to Gavin Woods earlier on that there is really a vacuum between political analysis in South Africa and what is really going on on the ground, because when you work with the grassroots on a day to day basis, you find the analysis of the South African political situation is far removed from there.



© Taryn Carr



Sandra Botha

What I do not foresee is that the status quo will still be operative in 2010. It makes the possibility of coalitions much stronger and change, I believe, inevitable.

I thought we should start at 2010 and look back, and what I see is the country in a deep state of excitement about the coming event. I needn't spell out what the event is. Infrastructure almost ready – not quite, a bit of worry.

Crime is being kept under control by fairly draconian measures. Although it's translating into some unhappiness about the infringement of the Bill of Rights, we're staying with it. Zimbabwe has collapsed. It's being assisted in recovering by South African funding, military assistance, private companies and a trickle back of commercial farmers. The SABC is totally state run; I don't know if that's changed. Inflation, double figures. Affirmative action has given way before the needs of delivery, and Minister Zuma, the Mrs, is in the Presidential chair, while Thabo is directing from the ANC's side. It could be that the unsuccessful Zuma is leading a breakaway faction of the ANC in opposition in Parliament, or could there have been a deal? – something I quite like, the idea of a President and a Prime Minister, so we'll have a President Zuma and a Prime Minister Zuma. The scenario is as good as any, I think. What I do not foresee is that the status quo will still be operative in 2010. It makes the possibility of coalitions much stronger and change, I believe, inevitable.

It's more difficult to look from the present vantage point to 2009. Considering the fate of MP Madlala-Routledge, there is clearly no place for dissidence in the ANC of President Mbeki, and I'm not speaking of AIDS dissidence. I'm not quite sure; if Andries weren't here I would have kept in a paragraph that I've taken out now because I don't want to have a fight with him. But I'm not sure who is actually calling the shots in the present government. Could it be the Msimangs that are telling Mbeki what to do, or is it vice versa? I find it very interesting.

But let me come to the opposition, and the DA in particular. We're in a very fortunate position of having finished with the leadership election with sufficient time to concentrate on the election, and not internal battles. Organisationally, we are in good shape, as well as financially – very important, compared to the position we've been in when we were facing previous elections. The DA is new in many meaningful ways, not least having two women in charge, and having a new approach to opposition politics by virtue of the personalities you have there, contrary to what Ms de Lille may think and suggested earlier on.

My view of the future, and I'm concentrating on fairly limited issues, is

Sandra Botha

that our development has been shaped since 1994 very much by the early demise of the Government of National Unity (GNU). And the breaking up of that did the country a deep disservice. The very reason for its conception, which was nurturing a new social cohesion, was disrupted very early in this period, where democracy for every participant was a new experience, and particularly, I think, for the Nationalists.

We speak of our fragile democracy, and part of this, I think, is due to this childhood damage caused by the break-up. The ANC's efforts to accommodate the New National Party (NNP) in its ranks in 2002, I think, was an effort to achieve what the GNU was supposed to do, but the divide had already established itself in the form of growing opposition politics and the search for credible new leaders – hence the success of Tony Leon. The fallout around the Vlok/TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) issue, and De Klerk sort of crying foul, is part and parcel of the very demise of the GNU which he himself had brought about. You will see why I'm dwelling on this, and where it leads me to.

I think we need to engage everyone again in the political process, that is, the 50% of potential voters who don't vote, 50% of people in this country don't vote, and I haven't expanded on the reasons for this. There are many, but what is true is that half our population is voiceless. Politicians have lost the trust of the voters through floor-crossing, through the incidences such as Travelgate, and also as a result of our pure proportional list system, the latter of which has come under spotlight again in the issue of the past Deputy Minister of Health.

We have also not managed to place our unequal society at the core of our political discourse, and have failed to point out that no political party and its supporters are immune from this structural problem. It is incumbent on political leaders to establish this unity of purpose, albeit with indifferent philosophical and policy paradigms in relation to both poverty and nation building. And it is with this in mind that different models of co-operation must come to the fore, be they coalitions to govern or to oppose.





Jonathan Faull

Firstly, thank you very much for inviting me, Raenette. I'm the only non-politician on the panel so I'm likely to be the least charismatic. Moreover, my role, not being a politician, is slightly different. I will not and I shouldn't indulge in visionary statements and so forth; my role is instead to try to assess the current context, and look for trends for the future. It is a very dangerous exercise to engage in for analysts, professional researchers on the political terrain, because divining the future is, after all, what you stake yourself on. So the trick is to say as little as possible, limit oneself, cover oneself and make no definitive statements.

That said, we're not dealing with a blank slate. Politics is an extremely contextual phenomenon, rooted in societies, traditions and established practices, and reflecting on the past and the current context thus has the potential to draw lessons for the future. My presentation will focus on key trends in our developing political culture, comparative successes and failures, and apply these speculatively to the future.

The post-apartheid milieu has been characterised by the increasing dominance of the ANC, and the collective failure of the opposition to mount a significant challenge to the ANC or its alliance. The ANC currently rules in

Represented opposition is characterised by fragmentation along ideological and racial grounds. Opposition voices often drown each other out in petty intra-party squabbles.

all nine provinces and in five of the six metro municipalities. Of all the opposition parties, only the DA is represented in all of the provincial legislatures and metros. Moreover, all opposition parties are characterised by regional biases and, to a lesser extent, issue-oriented or ethnically limited constituencies.

For observers of the South African political landscape, not one of the current political parties represented in Parliament constitutes a serious threat to the incumbency of the ruling party in the contemporary period. This observation is not without some grounds. Represented opposition is characterised by fragmentation along ideological and racial grounds. Opposition voices often drown each other out in petty intra-party squabbles. And those that focus on the ANC often do so focusing on the niche concerns of existing opposition constituencies, and the discourses articulated in a school that washes over the voters within the ANC fold.

The electoral performance of opposition bears this out. In 1994, just over 7 million valid votes accrued to parties other than the ANC. In 1999, the net opposition vote shrank by almost 2 million votes to 5,3 million votes. The ANC itself lost just over 1,5 million votes, but still managed to

Jonathan Fauli

increase its Parliamentary representation as a consequence of the generally lower poll. In 2004, opposition voters, weather-beaten by floor-crossing, perceptions of political expedience on the part of their representatives, and the final acrobatic flip-flop on the part of the NNP, turned out in even lower numbers, with the opposition vote shrinking further, by just under 12% of the votes that had accrued to them in 1999.

In contrast, in the context of a lower poll, the relatively small real increase in the ANC votes, just over 250 000, translated into a large proportional gain, taking the ANC over the two thirds mark and on the verge of 70%. A similar pattern has emerged at the local government level. In 2000, just over 1 million votes accrued to parties other than the ANC, constituting 39,31% of total votes cast. Relative to 1999, when 33% of the vote was won by opposition parties, this was a significantly better showing.

But in 2006, despite the addition of 2,5 million voters to the voters' roll and a net increase in the number of valid votes, turnout remained relatively constant at 48%. In 2006, the ANC increased its vote by 3,5 million and the DA by just under 800 000, yet the net opposition vote fell by just under 150 000 votes to 33,6% of all votes cast. A consequence of higher ANC votes in the context of lower opposition turnout was to increase the share of the ANC's votes.

The lack of support for opposition parties was felt in the DA. The party only took 14,7% of the national vote, a 5,6% decrease from the 2000 elections, and in the Western Cape it won 39,3%, representing a fall of 11% in its share of the Western Cape vote in the local government elections. While the DA was able to increase its vote in absolute terms, the comparatively larger increase in ANC votes, and the fall-off in opposition turnout, had the effect of increasing proportional gains for the ANC.

We can conclude that, in general, electoral outcomes in the post-apartheid period have been characterised by two relatively constant trends. One is that few voters have crossed the ideological line between the ruling party and the opposition in the years 1994 to the present, and compounding this failure is the fall-away in net opposition turnout. This is a crucial issue in the context of South Africa's electoral system, which has resulted in comparatively higher rises in the ANC representation.

A useful thought experiment to illustrate the importance of turnout in the South African system is to think of a birthday cake. If it's my birthday, I buy a cake, I invite ten of my friends to come and attend the party. If all of my friends arrive, they each get a tenth of the cake. However, if only five come, they get essentially 20% of the cake, double the size. In the same way, all voters who vote in an election contribute to a 100% representational tally to be divided up proportionately among parties.





Jonathan Faulkner

The effect of voters who stay away in elections is to increase the power of those votes that are cast. If opposition voters stay away in higher numbers than ANC supporters, the effect is to increase the proportional power of the ANC vote, as illustrated through election outcomes. Where substantive change has occurred, it has manifested in a shuffling of representation among parties in opposition to the centre-right of the ANC where the vote is concentrated among minority groups.

While coalitions have added a new component to representation and executive government in South Africa, it should be remembered that in many instances the coalitions themselves were necessitated by declining opposition returns.

Some reflections on coalitions: 13 years into our democratic project South Africa has witnessed a number of coalitions, some successful, but mostly unsuccessful in terms of delivering change to the representational edifice. The GNU at a national level and in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), as well as coalition governments in the Western Cape involving both the opposition and the ANC, have

formed executives at all levels of government. We have also seen coalitions formed for electoral purposes, specifically the initial DA project, which sought to circumvent an election cycle and unify aspects of the opposition to face down the ANC juggernaut, and the so-called Coalition for Change, now much forgotten and swept under the carpet, which the DA, IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) and UCDP (United Christian Democratic Party) formed to contest the 2004 elections.

As our politics have matured, so too have the politics of coalition forming. Initial projects did not benefit smaller partners, perhaps with the exception of the DP's coalition with the NNP in the Western Cape. Through the GNU, both the NNP and the IFP saw their fortunes decline relative to the senior partner of the ANC, as did the IFP in KZN. The initial DA project failed as a consequence of a lack of a shared vision and the expedience of certain politicians. The Coalition for Change sought to secure executive power in KZN and consolidate the official opposition's position in the North West, but failed on both counts due to the conflicting nature of the net constituencies, convoluted strategies, and opposing political traditions, notably traditional authority in the case of the IFP and the UCDP, and liberalism's traditional antagonism to traditional authority. Since the 2006 local government elections,

a number of sustainable coalitions have emerged at the local level. Most of these formations are dominated by either the DA or the ANC, and it remains to be seen if the junior partners will benefit from the relationship in the medium to long term. Sustainability and success depend on the relative balance of forces in the region concerned, the ability of coalitions to withstand floor-crossing, which we'll see in two weeks, and careful political management that guarantees both short and medium-term benefits for all the parties concerned.

While coalitions have added a new component to representation and executive government in South Africa, it should be remembered that in many instances the coalitions themselves were necessitated by declining opposition returns. Beneath the surface of these seemingly cohesive partnerships, the dynamics of post-apartheid opposition politics and its challenges remain, and there is no visible evidence that coalition-building is working to overcome these challenges.

With regard to succession, the DA recently completed a relatively smooth and successful change in its national leadership collective. Significant consensus coalesced around the national leader in Helen Zille, and the party's rank and file are likely to feel emboldened by perceptions of a new strategic direction. This may well give the DA a bump in turnout in the 2009 elections.

Given the conundrums of the ANC in the Western Cape, victory in the provincial poll either as a single party or a coalition is very much on the cards. With regard to the ANC, succession is still very much a work in progress, and the politics of the ANC and tripartite alliance remain very fluid at this point.

The nature of the ANC beast is such that a divided party is a weakened party. The ANC movement has emerged from ten years of democratic rule with a strong and ascendant electoral base, a functional party apparatus across the length and breadth of the country. However, as the country has progressed and its democratic project under the ANC's programme of transforming society has

started to bear fruit, the ANC itself has had to change, incorporating new constituencies, notably business, interest groups and lobbies, and with them the tangential challenge of cohering this diversity into a unified political project premised on its inherent mandate and mass base.

I'm afraid, for those of you who are fans of change, we should expect more of the same. Our polity is very much in flux, but the politics is more or less the same as it's always been.

Contingent to these conscious, spontaneous and organic political challenges are the operational, managerial challenges – and the current implicit battle between Jacob Zuma and Thabo Mbeki is deepening the malaise within the organisation, driving divisions between constituencies and traditions, and, moreover, within these constituencies and traditions themselves. A compromise of the traditional fall-back position of the ANC does not appear to be in play at this point, and a significant and large component of the ANC base may exit the December conference both defeated and alienated. That said, an appeasing peace, which is very likely, could settle sufficient bad blood to ward off any negative effects for the 2009 election campaign.

My conclusion is that, in general, the status quo will prevail. There is nothing to suggest at this point that in 2009 any political party will make significant inroads into the ANC support. The challenges for the opposition remain as they were, to energise lacklustre supporters and to win black support. In turn, the ANC's challenge is just to remain the same, to build consensus, avoid internal conflict and maintain its grassroots machinery. Notwithstanding the extremely unlikely event of a split in the Alliance, I'm afraid, for those of you who are fans of change, we should expect more of the same. Our polity is very much in flux, but the politics is more or less the same as it's always been.



I need to identify a point of departure, and our point of departure as the ANC would be that the politics is about solving problems. It's not a game in which one team tries to outwit or to gain more votes than another.

Andries Nel

Andries Nel

Thank you very much for the opportunity to engage and exchange ideas on this topic, but before giving an ANC perspective, I think it would be worthwhile to examine today's topic itself a bit more closely. The topic is Future Politics: Change, Coalition or Status Quo. Now in those few words I think there's a lot to think about.

Firstly, we're asked to talk about politics, and not any politics, but future politics. But I think before we talk about future politics, we need perhaps to pause and get some understanding of what it is that we're talking about when we talk about politics. I'll say a bit more about that later.

Secondly, after the colon it says: "Change, Coalition or Status Quo." Now the way that's presented is as if those are opposite and mutually exclusive categories, that there can be change, or there can be coalition, or there can be status quo, and I think that's a contestable notion. In fact more than contestable, I think it's just wrong.

But to come back to the issue of politics, I think we need to identify a point of departure, and our point of departure as the ANC would be that the politics is about solving problems. It's not a game in which one team tries to outwit or to gain more votes than another. I think that's a very shallow conception of politics. For us

politics is about solving problems and, in fact, the reason why the ANC was created was to solve the problems that the people of South Africa faced as far back as 1912, before that, and still continue to face.

So for us, whenever we talk about politics we need to discuss it in relation to the question of whether we are succeeding in solving the problems faced by the people of our country. If we had more time I would have liked to have elaborated on the nature of those problems, because I think an inaccurate understanding of their nature often leads to many mistakes and misconceptions.

For us, the point of departure must be to analyse our society, obviously, from the perspective of certain principles. We believe in democracy, in non-racialism, non-sexism, unity, prosperity; we need to evaluate our society from that point of view, to identify the problems faced by our society and to diagnose them correctly. And once we've done that, then to look at society itself, because those problems are created by human beings, and it requires more human beings to solve them. Society's problems can only be solved by society itself. So we need to look at what forces there are in society who have both the interest and the capacity to help us solve those problems. We then need to mobilise and to organise them to do exactly that.

That would be our starting point, and therefore the ANC seeks to mobilise all South Africans to contribute to the transformation of our country. And in doing that, we appeal to the common sense of South Africanness and a shared sense of responsibility for our common destiny, among all citizens of South Africa, black and white.

But having said that, we also know that any major historical process, especially of the magnitude of the one that confronts us, will be driven by a core of classes and strata in society that objectively stand to benefit from that change, and, together,

have the capacity to drive such change. For us, the project of transforming our country, of solving the problems faced by the people of our country, requires an organisation – we would say a national liberation movement – that, firstly, understands the interconnection between political and socio-economic challenges in society. Secondly, a liberation movement that has the capacity to lead these forces in society, motive forces in achieving our objectives. Thirdly, such a liberation movement would have to master the terrain of electoral contest. It would have to, because we're a constitutional democracy, we have elective bodies.





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Andries Nel

Those are very important institutions. And therefore, as the ANC, we do contest elections, but that's not the beginning and the end of our politics.

Such a liberation movement would also need to build broader partnerships in society, in the process of reconstruction, development,

It's the challenge of a liberation movement to be able to harness all of those forces in society, and to manage their differences and their contradictions, while keeping them in line in pursuit of their common interests.

nation-building and reconciliation. And lastly, it would need to conduct itself both in its internal processes, and in relation to society at large, in a way that represents the society of the future that we want to see. Given the nature of our problems, it requires a multi-faceted approach.

And we would say that a liberation movement needs to be active at the level of the state, the economy. It needs to be active in organising people, it needs to be doing ideological work, it needs to be contesting ideas in society. And it needs to be active

on the international front because, especially in a globalising world, no country can solve its problems in isolation from all others. So that would be our conception of politics, and what is necessary in the context of South African society to do, to solve our problems.

I would have liked to elaborate on these things, and to talk in particular about the challenge of mobilising forces in society to address these problems, and all the difficulties involved in that. Because there are many. In our society, workers, women, rural people, young people, all have particular problems and particular interests. Small businesspeople, big businesspeople, all of those groups in society stand to benefit from change, and have the capacity to help change society. But the interests are different and, at times, contradictory. And it's the challenge of a liberation movement to be able to harness all of those forces in society, and to manage their differences and their contradictions, while keeping them in line in pursuit of their common interests.

Many of the discussions relating to the Alliance and its predicted imminent break-up relate to those issues. If we had more time I could elaborate more – it's natural that there would be tensions in the Alliance, but I think

We really need to steer clear of the notion of opposition as an end in itself, and look more to opposition as a means to an end. And then ask what that end is.

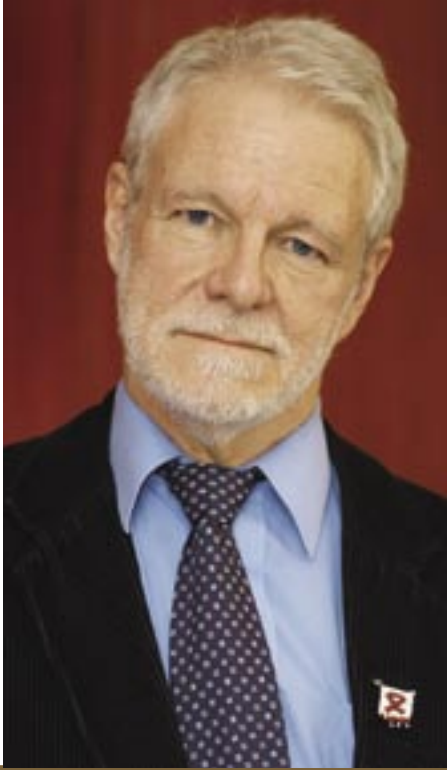
Nel

its eminent demise is a bit far-fetched. But seeing that I do respect time, I'll make the last couple of points.

I've said that I think we need to avoid a narrow and a shallow conception of politics as being confined to electoral politics. A second point, in relation to opposition politics, is that I think we really need to steer clear of the notion of opposition as an end in itself, and look more to opposition as a means to an end. And then ask what that end is. To talk about opposition for the sake of opposition, as if it's some natural amenity – just as water and air is good for you, so opposition is good for you – is a very loose way of thinking about things. And our recent experience has shown that parties or coalitions formed on the basis of opposition for the sake of opposition are inherently unstable, and tend to be very short-lived. More often than not they turn out to be little more than federations of the disgruntled, which further contributes to their instability.

In conclusion, as the ANC we believe that there is continuity in change. We're very clear what the problems are that our society faces, and what is necessary to overcome those problems – what is needed in terms of mobilising people to overcome them and to be a part of solving them. That is both the politics of our past and the politics of our future. And we again appeal to everyone to join us in that project.





The ANC stands alone intellectually on the major debates regarding transformation, regarding the social and economic aspects of our lives, and on propositions such as developmental states. And I think that further illustrates the ineffectiveness of opposition as it currently stands.

Gavin Woods

I also had a double take when I looked at the question posed by this afternoon's topic and had to decide, was the question asking me to say what I want in the future, or what I see in the future? I've chosen the former and so have converted the topic slightly, but picked up on its essentials by asking the question: should opposition parties, some or all of them, now consider a coming together or not? And my position, backed by my little party, I think should be apparent from the campaign I've been conducting in recent weeks, which some of you might know of through the newspaper articles, etc, through which I've been trying to stimulate discussion among opposition parties with a view towards the possibilities and the desirabilities of their merging into an altogether new party.

I've argued the proposition on the basis of what I believe to be a comprehensive range of research-backed observations and assumptions. And I now list these assumptions, and have to do so fairly cryptically because of the time limitations. I think the first observation, which a lot of commentators make, is about the emergent attitudes within the ANC, which are typical in international experience of a party that's too large and has been in power for a long period. I think there's a degree of over-sensitivity towards criticism, arrogance on some issues, and even complacency creeping in.

The ANC is a party with some very impressive successes, some of which continue, but, on the other hand, an almost inevitable non-performance starts creeping into a party in that position. And that doesn't augur well for a new democracy, and the wish to deepen that democracy. It doesn't augur well for a multi-party system. And, most seriously, it doesn't augur well for the delivery of essential and other social services; in other words, the issue of government performance.

We counter this with a further assumption, as Jonathan pointed out, and I'd go way beyond Jonathan, regarding the ineffectiveness of the current opposition parties, which in fairness is mainly due to their size relative to that of the ANC. But it goes beyond that. They by and large have narrow preoccupations, and an analysis of their performance would show that they are generally ineffective, and of very little influence on anything that the ANC government does, especially regarding policies and important decisions.

On the other hand, given a newspaper leak, they can be effective in holding government to account for some scandal. So they pick up on a few negatives, but don't engage in the major issues that really do change the fortunes of the country. And they're just totally absent in any

major debate. The ANC stands alone intellectually on the major debates regarding transformation, regarding the social and economic aspects of our lives, and on propositions such as developmental states. And I think that further illustrates the ineffectiveness of opposition as it currently stands.

And my next contention, as Jonathan also says, is that the ANC's political order of things is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future – ten to 15 years, but who knows? Maybe even beyond that.

We speculate about a sufficiently fundamental split within the ANC Alliance to change that. I would suggest that's highly unlikely. The ANC does have problems at the moment. But I think it's to be expected that, being the astute party it is strategically, it will produce a leader who will probably have a uniting effect on the party, a new leader who will take Helen Zille off the front pages of the paper as he becomes the flavour of the year in the run-up to the elections. Strategically, they

showed us in 2004 how they effectively employed state resources in delivery to make sure they appeased disgruntled communities. And the Markinor Survey of two months ago shows that there's no pending split within the ANC, and if there were to be, it would be so small, it wouldn't really affect their dominance.

Also unlikely is the growth of any existing political parties. I have a very elaborate analysis of them, party by party, to explain the baggage that some of them have, the ceilings that others have come up against, and just general loyalty and identity issues which, in one way or another, limit meaningful growth in the next ten to 15 years.

Therefore, unless at least the larger opposition parties come together as a considerably larger and more formidable political force within the multi-party system, this worrying situation I describe, with its national implications, will simply continue to grow and deepen. An appropriate initiative should be taken,





I would argue that this concept of a new party is feasible, and it's plausible. From a size point of view, if we were to combine, say, the DA, the IFP, the UDM and the ID, for example, we have 23%. If we were to gain even a quarter of the stay-away voters, that would be a further 12%. We're talking 35%. With maybe another 5% from other smaller parties who join in, you have 40%; 40% of the total vote, which leaves 60% for the ANC and a couple of the other parties.

Gavin Wo

preferably by leaders of the opposition parties, and promoted by the media and civil society and whoever else is concerned, because the context is one of national concern. It's bigger than political parties. It's about the system, and what makes it work more effectively.

A point I'm omitting here is the linkage between competition and performance. It's a universal truism that given competition, one's performance is enhanced. So, ANC: falling performance, no competition. But whether it's on the sports field, or in business, or in any other arena of human endeavour, that competition is essential.

On this proposition of a new party, I have very developed arguments. I believe anyway that it should not be a coalition; it

should rather be a merger. And it shouldn't be how Andries described it a moment ago, a federation of the disgruntled. It shouldn't be a ganging up against the ANC, it shouldn't be a collection of the desperate. It should be a new party, new image, unambiguous, coherent, uniform and positioned in such a way that it not only unites the parties it's composed of, but represents some of those issues that appeal to the 50% of non-voters that Sandra referred to, and gets them to come back into the voting alliance.

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that would be a further 12%. We're talking 35%. With maybe another 5% from other smaller parties who join in, you have 40%; 40% of the total vote, which leaves 60% for the ANC and a couple of the other parties.

So the figures I'm talking about are not highly exaggerated, they're not necessarily wishful thinking. They're fairly conservative in some ways, to show it's in the realm of a possibility of changing the order, of producing the competition. And whether that party, on its own merits, one day takes over from the ANC, that's a different debate. Now we're looking for somebody to provide competition to the ANC, to enhance performance for the good of the country.

I also believe it's possible because there's very little that keeps most of the opposition parties apart. They invent issues, they claim the ideologies of all extremes from yesteryear. But as we see, in the modern world there's a convergence of ideologies. I sit in Parliament day in, day out, and they speak on an issue basis. That ideology they claim never really comes through. So there's very little keeping

them apart, but there's a lot to bring them together, because they are all well-intending parties who have very similar value systems, and it wouldn't take much to develop a common vision and an alignment of policies. Emerging from this, it would, I think, also be plausible for them to attain a strong and positive common public image, which would be very important – an image of this new party, new in a way that it's not just a collection of the old. It's a party that is free from baggage, a party organised in such a way that it has an infusion of new leaders. It's a party which must be predominantly black led, and in its makeup one proposes a process to make it feasible and workable, with an accommodation of existing leaders' egos, where these are problems. There's accommodation of existing structures, in that the merger process takes place within a clearly predetermined and agreed - to framework of negotiations. It's independently facilitated, and the publicity, the branding, and the consideration and growth strategies are all mapped out to make sure that this new initiative achieves the potential which I'm proposing it might have.



Questions

Question one:

My name is Joe McGlewer. I've noted that in the panel's presentations no prominence was given to political funding; we're talking multi-party democracy. And on the other hand, on a lighter note, one would expect the DA and the ANC to be silent on this issue because they are facing the birthday-cake scenario. If we would like to have a multi-party democracy per se, I am of the opinion that the parity in the political funding must be addressed. Then we will observe the opposite of what IDASA has said concerning political parties being active in certain regions within South Africa.



Question two:

I'm Frans Cronje of the Institute for Race Relations. I've got a question that goes to Andries. You told us that we shouldn't have opposition parties for the sake of opposition, which I think is quite correct. But you didn't have time to tell us what the end of opposition parties should be, and perhaps you could do that now.

Question three:

My name is Nkosana Sibuyi. I did not hear anything about issues related to proportional representation. There's been a debate in the country on the electoral system. At some stage even Dr van Zyl Slabbert was appointed to look into those particular issues. What are the panel's views on the electoral system in the country as it relates to a proportional representation?



Question four:

Raenette Taljaard, the Director. I've hesitated to ask a question, but Andries, some of your comments made me want to. And I've also been a perpetrator of both politics with a big P and a small p. And it's a very interesting discussion that you've tried to further about the way in which the ANC engages with politics beyond elections. I think that's a thought-provoking issue that I certainly will dwell over intellectually.

But something that I've been increasingly concerned about is this growing distance between people and public representatives. It can't only be reduced to the electoral system, although it plays a large part, it can't only be attributed to the quality of public representation, in whichever way it expresses itself. But there is a very profound sense of distance – and it's not only by virtue of Khutsong burning, or other social service delivery issues coming into the public domain quite in the way that they are.

I do think that that distance ought to concern all politicians, whether you're asking yourself questions about what it means to be in the ruling party, or whether you're asking yourself questions about branding a new opposition party in whatever configuration or coalitions. The burning issue now, even beyond the succession debate, is what do you do in a 13-year-old democracy when people lose the veneration for the value of the vote that they sacrificed for, that they fought a liberation struggle for? When people start staying away from polls to this extent, I think that supersedes anything, beyond electoral systems, beyond succession, beyond re-branding opposition or creating coalitions. And if I were still a politician I would be lying awake at night about what happens when people lose their sense of value for the vote, as an expression of voice. I wondered if anybody other than Andries wants to comment on that.

Question five:

Francis Anthoni, Graduate School of Public and Development Management. I want in some ways to underline some of the points that Raenette has raised. Listening to the panel I had a sense of a return visit to the Soviet Union. The future was clear, it was certain. What was uncertain was the past, as people got airbrushed out, as we understand our own past. What is absent today, and it's singularly and alarmingly absent, is a sense of urgency here. I'm not aware of any sense of

crisis in the society, of divining any crisis or coming up with a solution.

Obviously putting the panellists under the discipline of the time produced its own shortcomings, but what is alarming here is that there is no sense of urgency, no sense of crisis. And we can go through the various issues that need attention. This has not been addressed, and I would want to know why there's this absence in our discourse.

Answers



MS DE LILLE: I'll speak to the question on the Van Zyl Slabbert report. About nine months ago in Parliament I asked the Minister of Home Affairs what the status of the report was, because we spent a couple of million rand in producing that report. Her response was that she still needed to put it before Cabinet, and then she would report back to Parliament at a later stage. Eight months later I asked the same question again, and she said, "But there's no need to ask this question again." So we don't know where and what the status of this report is at the moment. The suggestion there for a hybrid system, between constituency and proportional representation, is certainly something that the country can debate.

I want to agree about the distance between leaders and structures and people on the ground; it's true for both government and opposition leaders. And that's why I find that the more effective way to grow any organisation is to go and take up the issues. Four months ago, I visited 16 fishing villages in the Western Cape, engaged with

the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and went back to report. And I can tell you – just that look on the face of the people – "At least you've come back to report!" The environmental issues, the whole issue of the crime summit – there are many issues that not only government, but also opposition parties can run with. The role of opposition parties must not just be to oppose for the sake of opposing, but to add value to what government is doing already. And I think that is the new kind of approach that opposition politics needs in this country.

I disagree with Gavin that opposition is ineffective. Opposition doesn't need to be sizeable to engage with our judiciary. I've taken government to court four times and won. There are many ways that you can engage with our government using existing institutions that underpin our democracy. But, certainly, the challenge of breaching that vacuum and that distance between leaders and grass roots is a challenge for all political parties.



MS BOTHA: On the question about political funding, I have not been in the position to make decisions about that – I know the party has taken a certain stance. My personal view is that certainly the governing party should be declaring its funding, because they're the people who have power and patronage to dispense, and that's where the problem comes in. What is happening now, I think, to opposition parties ... the DA would go to business, that was where most funding came from. The chance of any of those boards now giving them money, in any case, when they've got many directors who are ANC supporters, has disappeared.

So the issue of funding is really very complex, but I think it needs a new look. In particular, I think, in ANC funding lately – and in some other parties; previously there were problems in ours – there is a need to expose these donations to the light because they don't always seem to be as above-board as one would want them to be.

With regard to representation, we certainly would want to change from the present system, the only-proportional system. We want people to be elected in multiple constituencies, and this is part of the proposal, I think, that came from the Slabbert Commission. I may be wrong, but I understand from what I read, Andries, that the Cabinet did not even read the report. It turned it down without reading it. I'm not sure if that's true, but that's what's been written.

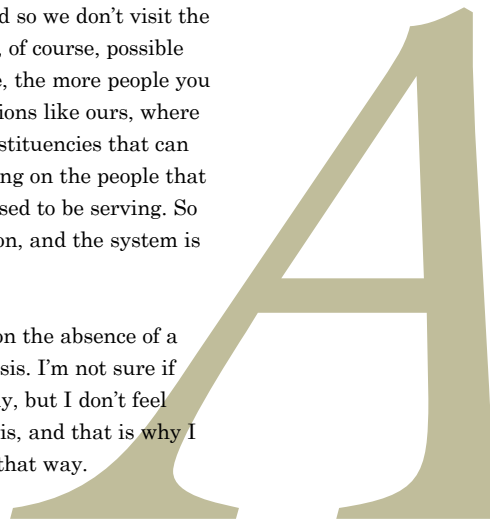
As for opposition for the sake of opposition, I'd like to know why this is such a popular

phrase. Who goes into opposition for the sake of opposition? You're in opposition because you've got a certain point of view, you've got other solutions to problems, you are proposing, or you are criticising what is happening if you think it's not for the good of the people. I find it an overused phrase of little meaning, and I think it's time we moved beyond that.

And, Raenette, about the growing distance between people and politicians, I think to a large extent we've done that for ourselves in what we've done in Parliament in terms of the way we've treated, as I mentioned, the Travelgate Scandal, and in the floor crossing, which we so erroneously supported and which you so bravely, I know, walked out on our decision to support. That has done untold damage.

So part of this is the way politicians have conducted themselves. I think Patricia's also right, that because we are on a party list we don't feel obliged to the voters, we feel obliged to the party bosses, and so we don't visit the voters. I think it's also, of course, possible that the bigger you are, the more people you can visit. But in situations like ours, where you have allocated constituencies that can change, it has no bearing on the people that you are actually supposed to be serving. So it depends on the person, and the system is certainly not helping.

There was a question on the absence of a sense of urgency, of crisis. I'm not sure if I understood it correctly, but I don't feel that we're facing a crisis, and that is why I wouldn't address it in that way.





MS DE LILLE: Just to add one issue on party-political funding, I put a question to the President in June/July this year about when we are going to bring regulations in to regulate it. I was speaking to him as the President of the country and not as the leader of the ANC, and I quoted the IDASA case where the ANC had promised that they would look into the matter. The President then set up a meeting for me with Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, to engage with him on this issue as the ANC. I'm pleased to announce that the ANC has agreed to a multi-party committee that will look into party funding. When we reconvene, the ID will ask Parliament to set up that committee. So we are making progress on that front.

MR NEL: To start with the issue of opposition for the sake of opposition, of the end of opposition. I think what I was saying was, our starting point always must be what are we trying to achieve in society, what problem are we trying to address. If your problem is that the ANC gets too many votes, well, okay, go out and mobilise people who feel the same, but I think it's a fairly shallow politics. It's not for me to say what the end of opposition should be, because I think there would be many ends. In fact, in certain provinces the ANC is in opposition.

So we, as an opposition party, are not angry because in the Cape Town municipality

people have clubbed together, and we're saying, oh, no, they're too big. We're saying we stand for certain policies and principles, which we believe are capable of addressing the problems of the country, including those of Cape Town. And we think that Cape Town would be better served by the ANC implementing the policies and the programme that it has, and that is what we mobilise people around.

My problem in listening to Gavin is that what he's saying here in the context of politics, he could almost as easily have been saying in the context of fashion, that this season black and yellow are in, hemlines are higher or lower, miniskirts

are back, big hair is back. I mean, he was cataloguing it like that – you know, this party of the future needs a black leadership, it needs this, it needs that, it needs that. But nowhere does one get a sense that this party that we're talking about forming is going to be formed to address problems A, B and C and we're going to mobilise X, Y and Z around the resolution of these problems.

To talk about a merger of all of these parties, someone would need to sit down and go party by party, and say, "This party represents who in society, and is trying to solve what problem?" Otherwise you just bring them all together, for what purpose? Because they're aggrieved that the ANC is too popular. Surely that's fairly – I don't know, look, it's a free country if that's what you want to do.

What I'm saying is, let us base our politics on the real problems faced by real people in a real society, and that surely must form the bedrock of our politics. Not how, or what we can bring together in order to achieve what percentages, and to chip away at percentages of this. Then it becomes a very shallow game, in which it's the interests of the players that become paramount, rather than the interests of the people.

Which brings me to the question posed by Raenette. The distance between people and their representatives is something that, I think, would warrant a discussion like this all of its own, ideally based on some solid foundation. Let us have clear terms of reference, let us agree what we're talking about, and ideally maybe even bring in some empirical research – and I'm not saying that what you're saying exists doesn't exist. But it's very easy to generalise and to jump to conclusions. If you say there's this distance, what exactly constitutes that distance?

That's important, because if you don't do that, you then jump to the issue of the electoral system, and I think even a cursory examination would show up the fallacies in that line of thinking. At present – and this again is a whole, complex area of discussion – if one looks at the things that generally, in the media, have been characterised as service-delivery protests, that again is a contestable notion. But very often those things are occurring at the level of local government. Much of the anger of people is being directed at councillors, but the brunt is being felt by the ward councillor, not by the PR councillor.

Now, you might say, "Well, exactly, that proves my point." The connection between the representative and the represented is so strong that the representative's house gets burnt down. For the rest, well, we don't really care about the others. That could be an approach. All I'm saying is that to simply conclude that a particular electoral system is going to make people feel more included, more empowered, I think has its own limits.

I think the challenge that we face is not just the distance between people and representatives, but how, generally, do we empower people to play a role in changing their lives, and to feel that they're changing their lives? We vote once in five years, whether it's in a PR system or a constituency system – but our problems carry on throughout those five years. Have we created effective structures? We've set up things like community policing fora, school governing bodies, ward committees. Those are vehicles that, ideally, should be giving people direct access to play a part in solving their problems. Whether that's happening or not, whether those structures are the appropriate structures, whether we're resourcing them properly, I think those are all relevant questions to ask. The point is, I think it's not just about PR or ward.



DR WOODS: I'll bring two issues together, the parity in political funding and the electoral system. This is a typical example of where opposition parties want one thing, and the ANC don't want it – and there's no debate, it's crushed. Just one of many examples of the ineffectiveness of opposition and the growing arrogance of the ANC. I could list a lot more.

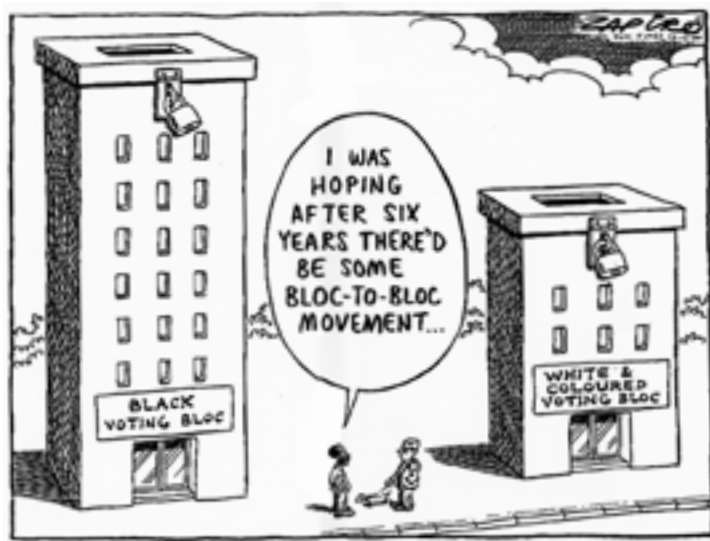
A kind of example, in passing, of the distance between the people and public representatives was the fact that we had this 50% stay-away voter. If one looks at the research and analysis, the opinion surveys, it's clear that with a small percentage of them it's through pure voter apathy, which one gets in every country. But the majority of them are not voting because they have issues with all the existing parties, the ruling party and the opposition parties. So they want a home, and nobody's representing their interests. But they have interests, and that's another reason why we should take note of those interests and see if we can accommodate them in a new home.

Regarding the urgency or sense of crisis, well, I don't see any crisis either. But I do see some looming problems and issues which could ultimately produce a crisis, and there is a degree of urgency to approach those. Hence this campaign I referred to, the timing of trying to get the new party spoken about

now. And I know it's wishful thinking, but if it were to happen within a few months – because it's not a huge logistical exercise – it would have its year and bit to try to present itself before the next election, which does display a degree of urgency.

Of course I found Andries' observations, or his take on my particular presentation as something like a fashion show, besides being very silly, also another example of arrogance, and the fact that the ANC never listen when you do speak. I listed a lot of observations, which I said were research based, so I couldn't give all the details, but I made reference to the alignment of policies among these parties. You know, these opposition parties, Andries, do have policies, and often a lot of research has gone into them. They do think, and those policies are largely about concerns of people in this country.

I referred to the 50% who don't vote, and what their issues are, because you're certainly not representing them. I suggested that these interests be accommodated in this exercise of considering the possibility of a new party. I spoke about the values that we have in common. 'Values' is not a word, one can itemise what those values are, they are issues of substance. I spoke about the common vision to try to accommodate them. So it is not an exercise in expediency with little purpose.



MR FAULL: I'll just touch on some of the questions that I think I can give input on. IDASA's got a long-held, principled position on party funding, that the regulation and transparency relating to private funding of political parties is both necessary and desirable. And I'm interested to hear Patricia's report of her conversation with Minister Lekota, we look forward to that with interest. There are other movements afoot through the ANC Policy Conference and elsewhere, but yes, thus far the ANC's commitment to a process of legislating for the regulation of private funding, in their court papers, in our party-funding court case, has not been forthcoming.

Another important aspect of funding is public funding for political parties, in terms of both the quantity of money that parties receive, and how that money is allocated. We would argue that the current 90% proportional, 10% equity, formula to administer the represented political parties perpetuates the status quo rather than encouraging equity.

And then, on the issue of the amount of money, I would be very happy if more taxpayers' money was given to political parties, and I suspect that that is going to happen fairly soon, arising out of conversations at the ANC Policy Conference.

With regard to the electoral system, I think this can often become quite a facile debate

in South Africa. It's an incredibly complex terrain, electoral systems. Our current system has amazing, good, positive outcomes. I mean, for people who are concerned about minority representation and so on, minorities are currently over-represented in the South African legislatures, and over-represented relative to membership bases of the major parties. [In percentage terms] there are more black people represented on the benches of the DA than constitute membership of the DA, and likewise more members of minority groups on the benches of the ANC than constitute membership.

With regard to representation of women, the current system also throws up very positive aspects. Every vote counts, that's a very important issue and something to be proud of. When George Bush wins by 1%, 49% of Americans are not represented at all, and their votes might as well be thrown in a wastepaper basket.

That said, there are issues of accountability and representation, there is an important debate on other electoral systems, and we would encourage them. I don't think the Slabbert Commission report is necessarily the answer, but the fact that it's been shelved is not a good thing. Seeing the light of day would be good.

I agree with Raenette's general points about representation. I think so-called



service-delivery protests point to much broader issues than just a lack of an interface between representatives and constituents or citizens, a much broader breakdown. When the initial service-delivery protest started in the Free State and Eastern Cape, Minister Sydney Mufamadi pointed out a failure: he said this is a party political problem, and to some extent it is.

Kgalema Motlanthe's consistent answer to the question about what the biggest challenge is for the ANC as an organisation, is the state of its branch structures. At the grass roots there is a massive breakdown with regard to communication and accountability between citizens and political parties, and citizens and representatives, and citizens and representative institutions. And in mediating the citizen voice, in the media, we as the urban middle class, I guess, only hear about these things when people go and put rocks on the N3 outside Harrismith. Those people didn't wake up that morning and say, "We have a problem." Those problems were long-standing grievances which seemingly spontaneously erupted, and were claimed retrospectively by groups that formed as a consequence of

the protests. There was a lot of interesting stuff there.

On the issue of opposition, I agree that organic political formation is very important. The initial DA project, NNP plus DP plus Federal Alliance, was an exercise in the dangers of forming new parties on the basis of bumping up representative numbers, without sharing principled positions. This doesn't in any way rule out the very interesting conversations that Gavin was talking about. But we need to have representation of interests, aspirations and grievances, not representation or deals made in boardrooms.

My final point: I don't know if the 50% stay-away is in reference to the local government or the census figures divided by turnout, because I'm extremely sceptical of the census issue. South Africa, in my opinion, has very good turnout of voters. We compare very well with established democracies and other transitional democracies. If you look at the democracies in the Eastern bloc – I've been lucky enough to spend quite a bit of time in Poland over the years, and they have absolutely pitiful turnout and massive cynicism, which makes South Africans look hugely engaged, by comparison.



Concluding Remarks

CHAIRPERSON: I'll ask Raenette to close this session, and also to thank you for coming, but also, most importantly, to thank the panellists. What is beautiful about the roundtables is that we publish them, and in a sense it's really about the generation of ideas. Our attempts are not really about solving problems, it's about problem posing, and that is very important because it is only in the language of critique that you'll find the language of possibility, and we hold these views because we believe that another future is possible.

Going back to the issue of a turnout, it's not really about the numbers, it's that we expect and should expect something better than other people. We actually take ourselves more seriously. It may also be true that elsewhere you have that massive cynicism, but we want to argue that in South Africa we cannot justify that. And hence the continued concern that emerges from all the parties, and I'm glad that they took that as a challenge, not as something that can be dismissed. As soon as we start

saying they're not doing it elsewhere, we are really becoming minimalist in our approach to democracy.

MS TALJAARD: I certainly need not elaborate on the roundtables or their raison d'être, they were quite articulately dealt with by Prof Seepe. And I certainly owe Prof Seepe a debt of gratitude today for stepping in at short notice to take over the Chair when our Chair cancelled at short notice. And I'd like to thank all my former parliamentary colleagues for not being here today to punt party-political positions, but to engage in an exchange of ideas, which is exactly what was desired. And hopefully the roundtable publication will enrich your discussions in Parliament, because your colleagues will draw on these ideas as well. And, Jonathan, thank you very much for being here. I certainly benefited from some of your analysis, and from many of the ideas that you all shared with us today. I would like to thank the audience for your patience in dealing with these issues with us, and all our speakers for their contributions.

Facing up to opposition politics

COMMENT

RAENETTE TALJAARD



On the eve of the floor-crossing period, the Helen Suzman Foundation invited parties to look into the future

With days to go before the window period for defections opens at all three levels of government, the sorry spectre of floor-crossing has already begun with the expulsion of former Independent Democrats secretary-general and co-founder Avril Harding – already facing sexual harassment charges and disciplinary proceedings – for allegedly planning to form a new political party, the Social Democrats.

The ANC seems ready to discuss the merits and demerits of floor-crossing but not quite yet. First it would like to benefit from this stomach-churning charade by securing gains it failed to secure from the voters directly via the ballot box.

In the same week, the chairperson of parliament's committee of private members' bills, Vytjie Mentor, effectively indicated that two bills – one tabled by the Inkatha Freedom Party, one by the Democratic Alliance – would not stem the tide of the current season of political migrating birds from seeking new homes.

She did give the clearest indication yet that the ANC would probably retain some form of floor-crossing with certain changes – particularly around the 10% threshold for crossers. An ANC MP had the sensible idea to have public hearings to test public attitudes to floor-crossing. The outcome of such hearings is fairly predictable: massive voter anger and cynicism.

But irrespective of these events, the one home truth must certainly be that next month will give clear indications of the state of the opposition parties, the possible future trends in opposition politics and the relationship between the opposition and the ruling party.

On the eve of this floor-crossing period, the Helen Suzman Foundation invited different political parties – not all could be included – to look into the future.

ID leader Patricia de Lille said opposition politics reflected the divisions in our society and that the opposition's leadership must lead instead of pandering to these divisions.

Emphasising the social-democratic leaning of the ID, she emphasised that the party was not beholden to any single other party in SA politics and that it made decisions about coalitions pragmatically on a principle of purpose to form working relationships.

"We can at least be proud that we've made the beginnings of a contribution that plays politics by both conflict and co-operation informed by conscience and principle."



FRAGMATIC: Patricia de Lille says the Independent Democrats believe in working relationships.

she said.

There appeared to be some areas of congruence between the ID leader and DA leader of the opposition in parliament, Sandra Botha.

Emphasising the smooth leadership transition in the DA, its changing nature and the health of the party, Botha also drew attention to the fact that politicians are losing the trust of voters and that politics reflects the inequalities of our society in a microcosmic form.

"We have also not managed to place our unequal society at the core of our political discourse and have failed to point out that no political party and its supporters are immune from this structural problem."

"It is incumbent on political leaders to establish this unity of purpose albeit with different philosophical and policy paradigms in relation to both poverty and nation-building."

"And it is with this in mind that different models of co-operation must come to the fore, be they coalitions to govern or oppose," she said.

Both Jonathan Faull of Idasa and Dr Gavin Woods from Ndedco emphasised that none of the current political parties in parliament posed a serious threat to the incumbency of the ANC, with fragmentation and petty intra-party squabbles defining the terms of their engagement.

As Faull said: "Notwithstanding the extremely unlikely event of a split in the alliance, I'm afraid we should expect more of the same."



SLIPPERY SLOPE: The Democratic Alliance's Sandra Botha says politicians are losing voters' trust.

Perhaps because of this, Woods has been on a lonely campaign to get the opposition to speak the language of amalgamation, as opposed to coalition.

As he asked in a column in *The Star* in May: "So many parties, so many almost identical party programmes. Why not under one umbrella?"

The ANC's acting chief whip, Andries Nel, asked what the end purpose of opposition was: Was it opposition for opposition's sake?

"Our starting point always must be: 'What in society are we trying to achieve? What problem are we trying to address?' If your problem is that the ANC gets too many votes, well, go out and mobilise people who feel the same but I think it's a fairly shallow politics... it's not for me to say what the end of opposition would be because I think there would be many ends and, in fact, in certain provinces the ANC is in opposition."

"So we as an opposition party would not, I mean, we're not angry because in the Cape Town municipality people have clubbed together. We're saying we stand for certain policies and principles which we believe are capable of addressing the problems of the country, including Cape Town. And we think that Cape Town would be better served by the ANC's implementing these policies and the programmes that it has, and that is what we mobilise people around."

One thing is clear: the winds of change are blowing future politics into the ranks of



ODD CASE: President Thabo Mbeki is really the leader of the opposition in the Western Cape.

the opposition. Future politics will be hall-marked by greater degrees of co-operation, irrespective of its form – a trend that might very well be strengthened by the events that flow from September 1.

But the most interesting floor-crossing centre of struggle and future politics is certainly Cape Town. It is clear that September will already bear the budding seeds of the struggle of 2009 – and for once it is not about who will lead the ANC.

It is about whether the DA retains or loses control of the City of Cape Town during the floor-crossing season and what this will mean for the ferocity of the contest between South Africa's largest two parties in 2009 in one of the few provinces where the ANC has mostly been able to govern due to bargains it struck with the NNP or won through floor-crossing.

On a larger canvass, outside of the immediate politics of the tripartite alliance, the next few weeks will also give a clear indication of what can be expected to occur in the overall ranks of the opposition leading into the 2009 election.

It will give a crystal-clear indication of whether the opposition will be able to secure a foothold and grow or continue a slow and steady overall decline as the ANC fights an unseemly spectacle of internal squabbles but retains its sizeable majority irrespective of its factions.

■ *Raenette Taljaard is the director of the Helen Suzman Foundation and a part-time lecturer at the Wits Graduate School of Public Development Management.*



Remnant

THE STAR, 31 MAY 2007

Try to amalgamate opposition

COMMENT

GAVIN WOODS



So many parties, so many almost identical party programmes. Why not under one umbrella?

There is the fairly universal experience which suggests that where a country's ruling party is overwhelmingly large and in power for a long period, that party is likely to become arrogant and complacent and may even begin manipulating the system in order to retain its position of power. And indeed, while not detracting from some remarkable performances by the ANC, such characteristics are becoming apparent in the way they are governing the country. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear many people, including some in the ANC leadership ranks, express a wish for a stronger opposition - one which could better challenge the ANC and in so doing deepen essential democratic processes and stimulate the general performance of government.

Regarding the growing public concern about the depth of democracy and the performance of government in South Africa, surely now is the time to contemplate the present party political order in the country - in view of its direct bearing on the above. And surely now is the time to ask whether urgent initiatives should not be taken to create a more effective order.

Without such thinking, the 2009 general elections will come and go, leaving the ANC as a 70% party, leaving the opposition as a disparate array of ineffectual parties which individually are unable to make a meaningful difference, and leaving an even greater number of potential voters in the "stay away" category.

The central contention of this article is that a substantial change to current voting patterns and voter proportions is entirely possible, given the credibility of the particular perspectives outlined below. Together these perspectives support the amalgamation of the main opposition parties into one new party, which in turn, is able to offer a political home to a significant number of the "stay away" voters.

Firstly there are those perspectives which should encourage the individual opposition parties to realistically consider their purpose and value in the overall political system, as small parties - and to weigh this against what they might achieve as part of a considerably bigger and more influential party.

The DA jumped from a 2% party in 1994 to a 12% party in 2004 - but only by inheriting much of the 20% voter support of the disbanded National Party. As opinion sur-



SIGN OF ARROGANCE?

Supporters of the ruling ANC celebrate at the inauguration of President Thabo Mbeki on April 27 2004 with a poster reading "The ANC will rule until Jesus' come (sic)".

PICTURE: MARK HUTHINGS/RUTERS

veys show, it has become the last refuge of the white voter. As such it is up against its particular glass ceiling and not even the impressive Helen Zille, being a white leader surrounded by other white leaders, will be able to change that. It is a party of much talent, professionalism and some very sensible policy positions, but will remain without influence in the search for, and promotion of, an improving South Africa. It should consider the prospects of integration into something that is bigger, more purposeful and more representative.

The IFP, having fallen steadily from a 10% to a 6% party between 1994 and 2004, and having had its voter base shrink even more markedly in a regional sense, does not have too many options if it wishes to be of significance in the future South African body politic.

The UDM, is another party which has lost significant support and has become regionally trapped.

The ID, as a more recent addition to the opposition ranks, has already learnt that having a media profile and an outspoken

leader is not enough and that, among other things, its potential to grow requires a spread of competent and visionary leaders, especially credible black leaders.

The ACDP as another small party is intent on representing the Christian community, but only secures about 5% of its vote. Similarly the Freedom Front Plus wishes to represent the Afrikaner community, but only receives about 8% of that vote.

It could, of course, be asserted, in contradiction of the amalgamation proposal, that ideological differences would cause fatal incompatibilities between opposition parties.

Excluding the PAC and Azapo, such an assertion is, however, not generally borne out by the day-to-day actions and utterances of the parties.

Perspectives concerning the nature of the new political party should first and foremost discount suggestions of co-operative arrangements or alliances between the existing parties - as is being mooted by the new DA Leader. International and domestic history generally reflects badly on such

arrangements. The proposal offered in this article rather calls for a new, unified, and coherent political party, whose birth and growth is not encumbered with mixed imagery lingering baggage and speculative fault-lines. Its public identity as a political party must emerge in a way which is clear, assured and new.

Of the more difficult perspectives to deal with is how to achieve popular, inclusive and cohesive leadership for the new party.

There could well be powerful individual egos which need to be facilitated through predetermined and agreed-to processes for both the negotiation and amalgamation stages.

Rules which are clear and certain and which, in a participatory and democratic way, ensure rigorous discussion and clarity in relevant decision-making - including that which determines the leaders and the leadership arrangements - are needed.

A further perspective concerning the exploration and negotiation stage would be that which allows participation from significant bodies and individuals currently outside of the political parties in question.

The final perspective returns to the issue of the 50 odd percent (and growing) of eligible voters who presently choose not to vote.

Of course, for many it is just a case of a deep dislike or distrust of the existing array of parties. Whatever, this huge collective of potential voters is significant enough to dramatically change the party proportions within the political order.

A speculative projection of the support of the main opposition parties together with half of the current "stay-aways" is equal to 50% of the total vote. The potential significance of the new party initiative cannot therefore be over-stated.

The above analysis and related opinion dwells on both the obvious and the speculative - but its central thesis is premised on real possibilities - especially insofar as this could impact on the future of our country and all of us who live in it.

Hopefully the public expression of relevant views would be sufficient to convince at least the larger opposition parties of a widespread desire that they unite in order to change the situation which presently threatens to debilitate our democracy and undermine the dream of "a better life for all".

■ Woods is a Naledo MP

BUSINESSDAY

Monday, August 27 2007

Blot on our democracy

IF ANKONS needed further evidence of the general lackiness of the general election process in South Africa, the only thing that would do it is to see the way in which the ANC, in its capacity as the ruling party, has handled the process of the general election. The ANC, in its capacity as the ruling party, has handled the process of the general election in a way that is a blot on our democracy.

At present Cape Town is governed by a coalition of parties dominated by the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Democratic Party (DP), with DA leader Helen Zille as mayor and DP leader Mervyn Dightman as deputy mayor. This coalition of parties is a blot on our democracy. The DA, in its capacity as the ruling party, has handled the process of the general election in a way that is a blot on our democracy.

At the junior partner in the Cape Town coalition, the DP is especially vulnerable to being manipulated by the DA. This has been confirmed in recent weeks, with evidence emerging that a number of DP members have been offered inducements to jump ship, although not necessarily by the DA.

There is not even a pretence that such treacherous activity is intended to be in the best interests of the electorate. It is all about political power, and the obvious, but self-interest, of the individual members and members.

where the argument is favour of free-riding is stronger, since free-riding is an incentive to work and creation to represent themselves.

Last week, the ID heavily rejected one of its MPs, who was elected as a member of the general election. In an effort to prevent the free-riding without ID leaders, the ID heavily rejected one of its MPs, who was elected as a member of the general election. In an effort to prevent the free-riding without ID leaders, the ID heavily rejected one of its MPs, who was elected as a member of the general election.

The ID, in its capacity as the ruling party, has handled the process of the general election in a way that is a blot on our democracy. The ID, in its capacity as the ruling party, has handled the process of the general election in a way that is a blot on our democracy.

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BUSINESS DAY, 29 AUGUST 2007

Reading the writing on the wall from across the floor

WITH decisions pending on whether to ease or end the multi-stage process of floor crossing, the legislative window period, which opens on Saturday, will be closely watched.

The first fortnight of next month will be a testing ground for affirmation of the trend and the worst of floor crossing. The scores will build on the staggered history that floor crossing has assumed in its five years of existence. A "good performance" report and, however, could lead the chance that the African National Congress's (ANC's) December conference will put the issue up for economic recovery rather than floor crossing.

Until the ANC's late policy conference, there was a common sentiment that this creature, which distorts electoral proportionality, was on its way out. But, in essence, the new question is whether the moment might be given a further twist.

With this in mind, the analysis takes stock of the ease and shows floor crossing has assumed in SA, as it has done its history, often parts of the world. It reflects on the question: What is wicked and what is virtuous when it comes to this beast? There may be one floor-crossing history guide as to which of the former's heads might be saved?

It will be the final national provincial floor-crossing window, following on those of 2003 and 2005. It is also the first time that the window for all three spheres of government converges, due to local elections being held only in 2006.

The 2003 wave of floor crossings was unique. Subsequent floor-crossing windows failed to be almost events for the major political parties, but major events for minor parties.

The inconsistency of politicians stands out in this unmaking of SA's floor-crossing movement. Floor crossing is frequently recognised as ethically dubious and politically opportunistic. But, seen with wisdom of time, few parties that have failed the game will have been seen knocking on the door.

It is likely that across the party spectrum, politicians will be looking towards the language of position and power. While striving to minimise the branding of parties, the open secret will also dictate: "Who will you vote for, while you can?"

Political parties, ranging from the South African Communist Party to the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), are generally united in denouncing floor crossing. Many within the ANC, in particular also in Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal are criticised at the ANC policy conference, where the sentiment that floor crossing is counter-democratic in its distortion of the proportionality of the electoral system and its disregard of accountability in the electoral system.

Other provisions at the ANC's policy conference argued for floor crossing to be maintained pending a thorough investigation.

Only the ANC is big enough to be ethically uncomfortable in the floor-crossing rules, given the requirement of a minimum of 10% of



Floor crossing is frequently recognised as ethically dubious and politically opportunistic. But, faced with wisdom of time, few parties that have failed the game will have been seen knocking on the door.

representations to defect. The 2003 and 2005 events showed that the ANC has been the only consistent beneficiary. As a well-respected party in power, the ANC benefits from having more than the rest to lose both marginalised parties and those alienated from their parties. Nevertheless, the lack of honour and dignity of this right causes dismay in the ANC membership.

After initially bewailing, the DA became more reluctant, also beyond its governing alliance in the Cape Town area. In 2005 it suffered a five-MP defection, signalling a mini crash of black African MPs. They claimed to be leaving in search of greater racial parity in the ANC.

SA has moved beyond the heady days of 2002, when floor crossing was introduced to "rescue" former SACP members, captive within the tented DA. The flood doors opened and New National Party (NNP) members joined with the ANC to capture Cape Town and Western Cape, yet were held back from capturing KwaZulu-Natal by means of floor crossing. This phase was part of a longer process of stabilising the party political system in the aftermath of apartheid parties scrambling to find new habitats. It led to a more government where local governments suffered the fallout of NNP-DFP allyship.

Critics of floor crossing lament the fragmentation of opposition it causes, the creation of single-member parties, and party political dilemmas that are light years away from the electorate in whose hands voters on party representation might reside.

Such, however, that the floor-crossing losses that opposition parties have suffered more probably did not alter prevailing performance. The most susceptible to fragmentation — and decimation — are precisely those that were born out of floor crossing. They total 10 and the Independent Democrats (ID) was the only party to graduate into the "viable party" league.

The graveyard of party politics has scattered with specialists of the floor-crossing class of 2003 — National Action, African Independent Movement, Alliance for Democracy and Prosperity and the Peace and Justice Congress. In 2003, some of these parties did not even attempt to crack the

electoral code. Others did, and failed.

The 2004-05 electoral cycle is intertwined with two floor-crossing windows, affording the floor-crossing ally another chance to build themselves, return to their own parties, or to campaign with fellow travellers to form further minor parties. If the floor-crossing parties of 2003 survive till September 2005, election 2005 will be their last conquest for the largely Eastern Cape-based United Independent Front (first party the United Democratic Movement). Federation of Democrats, National Democratic Commission (now party the IFP), Progressive Independent Movement, and the United Party of SA (now party the African Christian Democratic Party), more critical will be a last.

An important criticism is that floor crossing further fuels the creation of small and non-functional parties, automatically creating in itself the challenges of party discipline and constituency obligations. Even parties the size of the IFP and ID are frequently outstripped by the business of functioning effectively.

An unqualified abuse of the floor-crossing device has been minor parties created for the "leaders" to escape party discipline, while creating a veil. The creation of minor parties through floor crossing has also been used to punish and protest against party leaders, rightly or wrongly. Creating one's own party is not more convenient than resignation.

Some abolitionists suggest a threshold of 1,200 (the MP) for a political party to issue Parliament. The problem is this formula would chop parties such as the Pan Africanist Congress, Identity Front and African People's Organisation right out of Parliament, unless they dramatically grow since 2005.

The next few years also taught us that floor crossing might be useful as a device to help resolve party political stalemates at the government level.

However, floor crossing can equally engender paralysis and inaction in government. Some of the scores, floor-crossing parties hold over one another, serving as a sensible (eventually temporary) kingdom. Several small municipalities in, for example, Eastern and Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, are cases in point.

With a focus on the national picture, a further solution to "traffic", combined with consolidation of political parties, would indicate that the time for floor crossing has passed. In 2003, more than 40 MPs found new homes; in 2005 the number dropped to just over 20. Indications are that MP switching could decrease even further this year.

The best case that could be made for the retention of floor crossing is solving the stalemate of government, but there could be equally or better solved through party realignment.

On the balance of evidence, the writing seems to be on the wall for floor crossing, at least, it has to go, irrespective of SA's electoral system.

■ *Business is professor in the Graduate School of Public and Development Management at the University of the Witwatersrand.*



Cartoon by Zapiro
21 August 2007

Relevant Article

CAPE TIMES, SEPTEMBER 17 2007



MORE SEATS, PLEASE: Simon Grindrod, ID caucus leader in the city council, and party chief Patricia de Lille say the municipal committee must be restructured to accommodate more ID councillors. *Picture: LULAMA ZENZILE*

ANC waiting for final figures after floor-crossings

From Page 1

a councillor from the First Community Party. However, Garth Strachan, ANC provincial spokesperson, said the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) would have the final say.

Strachan said: "We came close to getting 10 people in the city Outside Cape Town there is strong opposition to excluding the ANC from government. Our working committee meets tomorrow (today) to look at a final figure from the IEC."

● The National People's Party (NPP) spokesperson, Juan Duvvill, said the NPP would announce today how many councillors had defected to it.

antiz.hartley@ipec.co.za

Only seven MPs cross the floor, but three parties vanish

ANGELA QUINTAL
Political Editor

THREE small political parties have vanished and two new ones were created during this year's floor-crossing in the National Assembly, with only seven MPs opting to defect.

The 13-day deflection period closed at midnight on Saturday and will only be repeated in two years' time, unless the controversial law is abolished.

The most low-key deflection was that of Siso Simons - formerly of the National Party - who crossed the floor in 2005 to become the sole MP of the United Party of South Africa. On Friday he quietly deflected to another caucus, the National Alliance, whose politics remains unknown.

The United Independent Front, also a product of the 2005 floor-crossing, disappeared from the Assembly when its two MPs, Mookabanya Moko and Zolile Ndlovu, crossed to the ANC last week.

The fate of its remaining MP in the National Council of Provinces, Neville Hendricks, who has a seat in Parliament's second House by virtue of the party's representation in the Western Cape Legislature, should be known today.

Hendricks is likely to lose the seat, after the UIF also lost a defector in the Western Cape Legislature to the ANC, leaving it with only one MP.

The ID is down to four seats in the National Assembly, after ID MP Vincent Gore switched party houses and also crossed to

the ANC. However, the damage could have been worse. The ID had been at risk of losing two more MPs, but in the end it managed to hold on to them, after expelling April Harding and Florence Butji before they could cross to another party.

Another serial defector and convicted Transkei fraudster, Craig Marikel, the sole MP for the Progressive Independent Movement, also crossed to the ANC last week, joining his brother Kent, who had defected from the DA in the provincial legislature the week before.

The most high-profile deflection in the National Assembly was that of PAC Deputy President Theodor Gubb. He is of the party's former very wary ally, Mafika Likoko. Gubb joined the African People's Congress

Both had been under threat of disciplinary action by the PAC and used the floor-crossing period to avoid the chop.

Ironically, the only PAC MP to remain true to the party and assume a retouched one seat in the National Assembly, is former party president Mkhondo Phiso, who was expelled in June.

Phiso later won a court bid to reinstate internal members of appeal, but opted not to use the deflection period to cross.

Despite a cynical view of the floor-crossing, a bid to hang on to the PAC's remaining seat, speculation is rife that Phiso's resignation will be upheld next week, sure that he is no longer wanted by the window period. "I have resigned at the week-end but he was not the sole

Although he was wooed by eight parties, Phiso said floor-crossing was unnecessary to "political privatisation" and undemocratic, and he had decided to remain and fight his battles within the PAC.

There are now 14 opposition parties sharing 120 seats in the National Assembly.

Since the last election the ANC has gained 18 extra seats during two floor-crossing periods, bringing its total to 261 in the 400-member house. Freedom Front Plus leader Curro Mkhabela last week warned the ANC was close to getting 15% of seats in Parliament, leaving it in a position to make far-reaching changes to the country's political dispensation - including Section 1 of the Constitution - if it so wishes.

THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT, SEPTEMBER 16 2007

The people's right to be represented must be restored

By JONATHAN FRILL

In the aftermath of the failed anti-inauguration strikes which culminated in the June 17 Berlin uprising of 2002, heralded through the anti-racist, communist symposium - put pen to paper to subjugate the African implications of state socialist dogma.

THE REALITY
After the uprising of the 17th June, the Secretary of the Workers' Union that led the distribution in the Johannesburg. Stating that the people had forfeited the confidence of the government. And would win it back only by submitting to the will of the state. In that case for the government. To dissolve the people. And elect another.

Substantive content for South Africa since 2002, and the word "government" for parliament, and not understand a concept of the most pernicious implications of floor-crossing in South Africa, and a sensible substitute for its diminishing defectors.

At midnight on September 15, the fifth "window of opportunity" - enabling elected representatives

to defect with impunity to one or existing parties - closed. For the first time since the inception of the system, all those figures of representative politics were subjected to the indignity of deflection.

The immediate effects are obvious. The general mood obviously the ruling party is strengthened to the detriment of the collective opposition - weakened through deflection, the proliferation of new, largely irrelevant organisations, and fragmentation - has been upheld. Executive power has changed hands in a number of municipalities, in some perpetuating a cycle of political instability and bad government.

But the Big Shovel Consequence of floor-crossing effectively is "to dissolve the people / and elect another". The constitution frames a system of participatory and accountable politics premised on the right to vote, the equality of all votes, and the right to representation. Every seat, in every representative forum, represents the will of citizens cast in the elections that underpin the entire edifice of democratic politics.

When elected representatives defect from one party to another, they alter the balance of representation dictated by citizens. This effectively violates the voter intent.

tion of citizens and systematically undermines the accountability of representatives to the electorate.

In the 2004 ballot, 13 622 887 valid votes were cast to elect the national assembly. This means that each of the 400 seats in parliament represents 29 022 voters. In 2005, when 20 MPs crossed the floor 279 700 voters were "dissolved" and systematically redistributed without recourse to the electorate.

At present, an additional 30 MPs have crossed the floor, defying another 24 000 voters. The representative number of votes cast in the 2004 election that have been effectively torn up through the expedient of representative vote switching is 1 019 940 - more than 7 percent of the 2004 electorate.

The repercussions of this disenfranchisement lagges the lead.

The additional lead is the asymmetry of deflection that allows politicians to effectively "dissolve the people / and elect another" in the formation of new parties.

Imagine a kind of alien demagogue leaping into parliament, challenging members to cite the number of votes accruing to their party. Over 10 million for the ANC, "pretty impressive" - 20 000 for the SACP - "jolly good" - and a big zero for the African People's

Congress (APC), Federal Democratic Union, United Party of South Africa (UPA) and National Democratic Alliance (Nkomo).

It is Kallikrates in his proposition - a dark, dark corner of the national assembly, about as far from the action as you can get, evade the representative line item, in the house that elected him.

Unofficially, voters are outraged. Only one of the five parties formed in the national assembly through floor-crossing before the 2004 election was returned to that chamber having been endorsed by the electorate. Of the 10 parties formed in the previous vote and parliament before the local government elections of 2006, only two managed to win any representation.

Let us begin, all three of the "survivors" - the Independent Democrats, United Independent Front, and Ndlovu - have been most amenable in the latest round of deflection. What right do these

flouting political projects have to exist? When held up to public scrutiny, will such right to exist?

The distortions of floor-crossing are both anti-democratic and deeply disturbing. What are now routinely referred to as the "unintended consequences" of floor-crossing surely outweigh the pretence of "principled and constructive" that underpinned the passage of the legislation.

Exercise your citizenship voice: write to your representatives decriing the violation of your democratic rights; write to Uysie Mntsoo, the chairperson of the Private Member's Bill committee, which is considering a bill that would put paid to deflection; and if you are a member of the ANC, participate in the debates of your branch.

Re-design with South's participation a living the confidence of the people and most reliable its efforts to win it back.

"The voters" should be to swing the regime of deflection and restore to the people the right to elect and be represented.

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